



CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

A. The Future Direction of Land Preservation & Recreation

Maryland DNR has been and will continue to be a champion of the preservation and conservation of public lands for natural resource protections and outdoor recreation use by Maryland citizens and visitors. During the upcoming five years of implementation of the **Maryland Land Preservation & Recreation Plan**, it is important that DNR maintain and expand partnerships with relevant state agencies, federal, county, and municipal agencies, and within the non-profit, academic, and business sectors.

The Strategies and Actions listed below represent the collective efforts of the Technical Advisory Committee, DNR Trails Committee, Maryland state agency staff, stakeholders, non-profits, user groups, and survey respondents. A suggested timeline for implementation was contributed by GreenPlay, LLC.

Because of the high number of actions, it is recommended that a LPRP Implementation Team be created to steward the completion of the actions within the five year time frame, including the development of an annual report outlining the status of the actions to be posted on the DNR website.

B. Strategies and Actions Summary

Strategy #1: COORDINATE			
<i>Local, county, and state collaborative planning efforts for land preservation and recreation</i>			
Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Work with Counties to collect GIS data on outdoor recreation facilities and amenities, including trail heads, to provide a better understanding of the level of service provided.		✓	
Work with public and private partners to maintain accurate GIS-based mapping of trails in the state and make trail data available online and through third party applications and smart phone technology.	✓		
Utilize the public and private survey and inventory data to determine critical gaps and prioritize funding for new trails on DNR lands.	✓		
Work with local governments to coordinate their LPRP's and yearly POS trail priorities with state trail goals and objectives to close critical gaps in the state trail network.			✓
Work with public and private partners to examine the feasibility of developing utility corridors to close critical gaps in the state trail network.		✓	
Require that County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (LPPRP) should include municipal trails and recreation resources.			✓
Collaborate with Maryland Municipal League, the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association and the Maryland Association of Counties to coordinate county and local parks, recreation, open space and trails plans.			✓

Strategy #1: COORDINATE

Local, county, and state collaborative planning efforts for land preservation and recreation

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Coordinate with the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE), county school districts and parks and recreation agencies to encourage the use of DNR lands as outdoor classrooms, with a focus on collaboratively resolving transportation issues.		✓	
Coordinate state and local government resources to avoid duplication of effort and conserve limited resources while working closely with the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) to develop partnerships and establish better coordination in pooling resources to promote and develop trails.		✓	
Develop partnerships with related initiatives to explore collaborative advancement of mutual goals such as Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature and Paths to Parks Initiative.		✓	
Explore user-generated real information on DNR trail systems including mapping, trail conditions and general information readily available on organization websites and social networks.			✓
Include local committees and organizations for people with disabilities when consulting stakeholder groups.	✓		
Maryland Scenic Byways Program should work pro-actively with DNR, Maryland Department of Agriculture, and Maryland Department of Planning to ensure that conservation priorities associated with Maryland’s Scenic Byways are included as part of each agency’s statewide priorities.			✓

Strategy #1: COORDINATE

Local, county, and state collaborative planning efforts for land preservation and recreation

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
In collaboration with the staff of Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), develop a GIS data layer that identifies significant historic and cultural resources found on lands owned and managed by the Department.			✓
Seek opportunities to preserve and interpret cultural landscapes that support DNR's land preservation and outdoor recreation goals.	✓		

Strategy #2: PROMOTE

Economic, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and natural resource protection

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Coordinate with county school districts to develop curriculum-based programs that facilitate the use of DNR lands as outdoor classrooms to help schools meet State environmental literacy graduation requirements.			✓
Utilize the Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature as a catalyst for conversations with local school districts and other parks and recreation agencies to address barriers to schools using parks as informal environmental education sites, including transportation and fees.		✓	
Enrich learning opportunities for formal educators and students by increasing access to DNR naturalists, educators, and natural resource specialists and expanding the use of DNR lands as sites for informal environmental education.	✓		
Work with academic partners in Maryland to conduct Forest Economic Impact Study to show the importance of our state forests, concurrently with carrying capacity studies on overused lands as identified by DNR staff.	✓		
Continue to install nature play areas at parks, schools, and public spaces that encourage creative, unstructured play and nourish a connection to nature.	✓		
Identify and promote opportunities to connect schools and communities to natural areas using trails.		✓	
Develop a campaign to highlight the use of DNR lands for four season outdoor recreation use and align with a health promotion message.			✓

Strategy #2: PROMOTE

Economic, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and natural resource protection

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Enhance park equity analysis GIS data layer with DNR land and water resources to improve participation throughout Maryland's diverse social and cultural populations.		✓	
Utilize the Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails (FAACT) model for developing trail volunteer groups on DNR lands.		✓	
Trails should be developed to enhance and support the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, the Scenic Byways Program and the Canal Towns Partnership.		✓	
Incorporate art and cultural heritage on trails to enhance the users' experience and tell important natural resource and cultural heritage stories.			✓
Showcase Maryland's Native American cultural heritage using trails and interpretive signage to tell Native American stories, develop Indian Heritage Tourism and highlight significant Native American sites.		✓	
Develop thematic trails around important DNR resources such as the Patuxent watershed, farmlands and Native American heritage.		✓	
Provide on-line maps available showing ADA accessible trail systems to provide the full range of trail benefits to people with disabilities. Include information about levels of accessibility and locations of barriers in the mapping data, such as the width, surface characteristics and grade of the trails.		✓	
Add Quick Response Codes (QR Codes) and trail maps at trailheads and visitor centers to educate visitors about poison ivy, deer tick, boating safety, related outdoor skills, and trail information.		✓	

Strategy #2: PROMOTE

Economic, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and natural resource protection

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Document trail use with trail counters to provide valuable resource information to develop support for trails.		✓	
Conduct an economic impact study of trails and greenways.			✓
Incorporate multi-lingual signage, technology, and print publications throughout the DNR system.			✓
Offer cross-cultural programming, cultural festivals, and events.			✓
Continue to employ Spanish speaking staff in parks and nature centers.	✓		
Explore technology to provide website links to county parks; trail systems; water based recreation opportunities; natural, cultural, and historical resources; and camping for a seamless user information search experience.	✓		
Assist friends groups in developing partnerships with businesses to identify trails as an important economic generator (Trail Passport contest), and promoting active lifestyles, healthy eating, and community vitality.		✓	

Strategy #3: ACCESS

To water and land based recreation opportunities for all populations

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Consider opportunities for water recreation access at Patuxent River State Park, Franklin Point State Park, Severn Run Natural Environmental Area, Patapsco Valley State Park, and Frederick and Carroll counties with Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Report priorities.			✓
Build, maintain, and renovate trails to create a sustainable system, adopting best practices for sustainable trail design developed by agencies and organizations such as the U.S. Forest Service, Student Conservation Association, and International Mountain Bicycling Association.	✓		
DNR should inventory its existing trail system to identify ADA accessible trails and determine trails that could be made accessible with the resources available and without significant modification or disturbance to valuable natural and cultural resources.			✓
Create accessible educational programs on accessible trail systems to provide the full range of trail benefits to people with disabilities.			✓
Consult with makers of navigational tools for blind pedestrians so that they can get the information they need to use the trail system.			✓
Improve signage on trails including: how to get back to the trailhead, who can and cannot use a trail, levels of accessibility and locations of barriers, trail etiquette, natural resource information, and stories.		✓	
Establish a convenient system of communication on trail conditions and restrictions for trail users.		✓	

Strategy #3: ACCESS

To water and land based recreation opportunities for all populations

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Examine Wildlife Management Areas for opportunities to provide wildlife-dependent recreational development such as low-amenity camping, fishing/canoeing access, birding, walking, biking and equestrian trails which are compatible with primary wildlife management purposes.			✓
Follow the recommendations of the 2013 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan based on budgetary constraints and state goals.			✓
Increase access to recreational water trails as appropriate.			✓
Seek funds to identify and evaluate historic and cultural resources located on DNR lands, prioritizing evaluation of those resources threatened by sea level rise (Inventory has been started, but is incomplete from previous plan due to lack of resources).		✓	

Strategy #4: CONNECT

DNR trails and public lands to the places people live, work, and play

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
Identify a dedicated funding source for trail design, construction, and maintenance.			✓
Link the trailheads for land and water trails.	✓		
Create connections between trails within Maryland state parks and forests as well as between state, city, county, and federal trail systems.	✓		
Explore opportunities to provide equestrian campsite locations at parks and forests with existing equestrian trails.		✓	
Public/private partnerships should focus on utilizing reclaimed mines, reclaimed sand, or gravel quarries and other similar land to develop Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) parks.	✓		
Work with MDOT and local governments to facilitate changes in statutes and regulations addressing landowner liability and permitting OHVs to traverse between closely located but not contiguous OHV recreation areas, including crossing or traveling parallel to public roads and, in limited areas, riding into local communities for the purpose of buying gas and/or food.			✓
With few exceptions, trails should be designed for multi-use and managed for cooperation among user groups to reduce conflicts.	✓		
Include linear outdoor recreation facilities as part of green infrastructure planning.	✓		
The State should acquire land adjacent to State parks and expand park boundaries to include additional natural and cultural resources and to address management issues.	✓		

Strategy #4: CONNECT

DNR trails and public lands to the places people live, work, and play

Actions	Immediate/ Ongoing	Short-Term (1-2 years)	Long-Term (3-5 years)
In cooperation with the ongoing program development of the Maryland Conservation Corps, Civic Justice Corps and Department of Education, develop working relationships with school systems to engage high school students in trail construction and maintenance projects on DNR lands as a means to fulfill community service requirements.		✓	
Explore working with County and local governments to engage youth in bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts using Safe Routes to Play and Safe Routes to School strategies.			✓

C. Implementation

Implementation of the Strategies and Actions in the ***Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan*** will require dedicated attention and review by the leadership and staff of the Department of Natural Resources and its sister agencies.

The suggestions below are provided to insure the plan remains a valued resource for decision making and public engagement with DNR policies and priorities for the next five years.

1. Post the Strategies and Actions, as well as links to the various chapters of the plan, prominently on the DNR website and distribute the link electronically to DNR leadership, staff, Technical Advisory Committee, and other relevant stakeholders.
2. Designate a multi-division team of DNR staff to lead the implementation process.
3. Develop an annual report on the progress of implementation for public distribution.
4. Conduct in-house and outreach meetings with stakeholders to review the plan's progress.
5. Include references to the Strategies and Actions in future planning documents.