



Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation

FY 2023 Annual Report



A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders,



This past year saw the inauguration of Governor Moore and the beginning of his administration. MALPF staff were honored by a visit from Lt. Governor Miller and enjoyed sharing the history and successes the MALPF Program has achieved. During the 2023 legislative session (the first session under the Moore administration) a record high budget for FY24 was approved for MALPF (almost \$95 million).

By fall 2023, MALPF settled 70 of the 91 offers to purchase agricultural easements in the FY22 application cycle, and entered into 112 contracts to purchase agricultural easements in the FY23 application cycle. The continuous acquisition of MALPF easements speaks to the Program's success in bolstering the agricultural industry by providing an influx of funds to landowners of newly MALPF-eased farms. The ongoing dedication and commitment of the MALPF Board of Trustees, staff, attorneys, appraisers, and all our county partners ensures that the MALPF program will continue to protect Maryland's farmland well into the future.

At the end of FY23, MALPF has preserved 2,654 farms across Maryland, totaling 355,820 acres of land, at a public investment of over \$907 million. In July 2023, MALPF received 269 new FY24 applications to sell an easement to the State through the MALPF program, of which 233 were accepted by MALPF, and forwarded to the Maryland Department of General Services for appraisal.

It continues to be my honor to serve as MALPF's Executive Director. I remain unceasingly amazed by MALPF's continued growth and unwavering commitment to recognize and respond to the needs of Maryland's ever-changing agricultural industry.



Sincerely,
Michelle Cable
Michelle Cable
Executive Director

(L to R: Chana Turner, Michelle Cable, Sec. Kevin Atticks, Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller, Sarel Cousins, Rama Dilip, Kim Hoxter)

What is the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)?

The primary purpose of **MALPF** is to preserve sufficient agricultural land to maintain a viable local base of food and fiber production for the citizens of Maryland. The state program purchases development rights on farms and restricts them to only agricultural uses by using perpetual agricultural conservation easements, which are recorded in the land records. In other words, the program pays landowners to continue what they have done for years, decades, or sometimes a century or more — farm their land.

MALPF easements allow for all types of agricultural operations to be conducted on the farm. The easement defines agriculture/agricultural uses as “any use of the easement property which directly contributes to the production, conversion, processing, storage, or sale of agricultural products generated on the easement property and/or management of products such as livestock, horses, poultry, crops, trees, shrubs, plants, other vegetation, and aquaculture.” It is important that the terms of the easement allow for owners to grow and evolve as the agricultural industry changes through the years.

Established in 1977, and has since grown into one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country.



Charles County Farm



Eligibility and Criteria

SIZE: The minimum easement size is 50 contiguous acres. If a property is less than 50 acres, a landowner may still be eligible to apply and should visit our website to review Fact Sheet 12, "Small Properties in the Agricultural Land Preservation Program," or confer with the local program administrator.

If a property is contiguous to an existing easement, the landowner may apply to sell an easement regardless of the acreage.

PRODUCTIVITY: An easement is purchased on land that is either currently being used for producing food or fiber or has the capability to do so. Woodland management and harvesting operations are eligible to join this program. The productivity of the soil as measured by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Soil Conservation Service Land Classification System is a major criterion. Soil requirements for the property to qualify to participate in the program are:

- At least 50% of the land is classified as Class I, II, or III soils; - or -
- If the land is wooded, 50% of the land is classified as Woodland Group 1 or 2 soils; - or -
- If the reason the land could not meet the above conditions was because of flood-plain or wetland soils, those areas could be excluded as a percentage of land; - or -
- If there is an insufficient percentage of Class I, II, or III soils alone and there is an insufficient percentage of Woodland Groups 1 and 2 soils alone, the land would qualify if the combination of the two exceeded 60%; - or -
- Land with lower soil capabilities may qualify under certain conditions.

LOCATION: Land that lies within the boundaries of a 10-year water and sewer service area plan is generally ineligible unless it has extraordinary productive capability and is of significant size.

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS: A property must have at least one unused development right associated with the property to sell an easement.

LOCAL CRITERIA: The criteria listed above are the minimum eligibility standards set by the state. The program is administered jointly by the county and state. The county may impose criteria which could be in addition to or more stringent than the state. The county also ranks the applications in order of priority and may be limited by MALPF in the number of applications that are forwarded to MALPF in an application cycle.

2023 Legislative Update

Senate Bill 470/HB 631 – Maryland the Beautiful Act

The Maryland the Beautiful Act (the “Act”) passed into law with an effective date of October 1, 2023. Among other things, the Act mandates that 30% of Maryland will be conserved by 2030 (30 x 30), and 40% of Maryland will be conserved by 2040 (40 x 40). Agricultural acres are included in the 30 x 30 and 40 x 40 plans.

As a stakeholder, MALPF is working with the Smart Growth Subcabinet to develop and publish a plan (the Plan) to meet the State’s conservation goals. The Plan is due July 1, 2024, and shall be updated as needed, but not less than every five years. In addition to the Plan, an annual report on the State’s progress toward meeting the conservation goals is due beginning December 1, 2024.



Harford County Farm



FY23 Report on the Certification of Local Agricultural Land Preservation Programs

Maryland's Certification of Local Agricultural Preservation Programs, known as the **Certification Program**, was created in 1990. The goals of the program are to:

- Preserve the important role agriculture plays in maintaining the state's high environmental quality;
- Encourage development of county agricultural preservation programs, which complement the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation's (MALPF) preservation efforts; and
- Employ agricultural land preservation as a tool to manage growth.

Counties able to demonstrate they have an effective program to preserve productive farmland and forests are eligible to participate in the Certification Program. Local preservation programs consist of a combination of preservation tools such as low-density agricultural zoning, purchase or transfer of development rights programs, right-to-farm policies, support for agricultural businesses, and the designation of agriculture as the best use of certain lands.

To qualify for and retain certified status, counties are required to designate a Priority Preservation Area (PPA). Counties concentrate their preservation efforts and program funding into their PPAs in order to preserve large contiguous blocks of agricultural and wooded land.

Participation in the Certification Program by interested counties is voluntary. Certified counties enjoy the benefit of retaining 75% of their locally generated agricultural transfer tax revenue, while non-certified counties retain 33%. All retained revenue must be spent or encumbered for qualifying land preservation expenditures within six years of collection, otherwise those collected funds revert to MALPF. The increase in participating counties' share of the agricultural land transfer tax helps to support and enhance their preservation programs in ways that best meet local goals and needs.

In FY23, **Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, St Mary's, and Worcester** counties were recertified through joint action by the **Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)** and the **MALPF Board**. To determine eligibility for recertification, MDP reviews each county request against the Certification Program's regulatory requirements, and then makes a recommendation to the Secretary of Planning and the MALPF Board.

As of June 30, 2023, 17 of the 23 counties are now certified. Recertification reports were due on October 1, 2023 (extensions are available) for Charles County, whose certification periods end on June 30, 2024. Interim certification reports are due from **Calvert, Caroline, Harford, Prince George's, Talbot, and Washington** counties.

A 5-year recertification period is required by law for county farmland preservation programs that MDP and the MALPF Board determine to be consistently effective in achieving preservation goals.

MALPF Board of Trustees Field Trip

The MALPF Board of Trustees (“Board”) continues to hold its monthly meetings virtually, with the Board, MALPF staff, county partners, landowners, and other interested parties participating either through their computers, or by phone. The virtual Board meetings have been efficient and successful, with the Board electing to maintain meeting virtually rather than returning to in person meetings.

MALPF staff organized a field trip for the Board this year to visit a MALPF easement farm, giving the Board an opportunity to meet the landowners, learn about their farm, and to continue learning about different types of agricultural operations throughout Maryland. The MALPF field trips are not Board meetings, but learning opportunities, as well as an avenue for the Board members to interact in person with each other again.

This year’s field trip was to Willowdale Farm, in Baltimore County, which is owned and operated by the Harrison family.

Dr. Michael Harrison sold an easement to MALPF in 2002, and has continued to operate his equine veterinary practice from the farm, while specializing in breeding and raising thoroughbred horses.



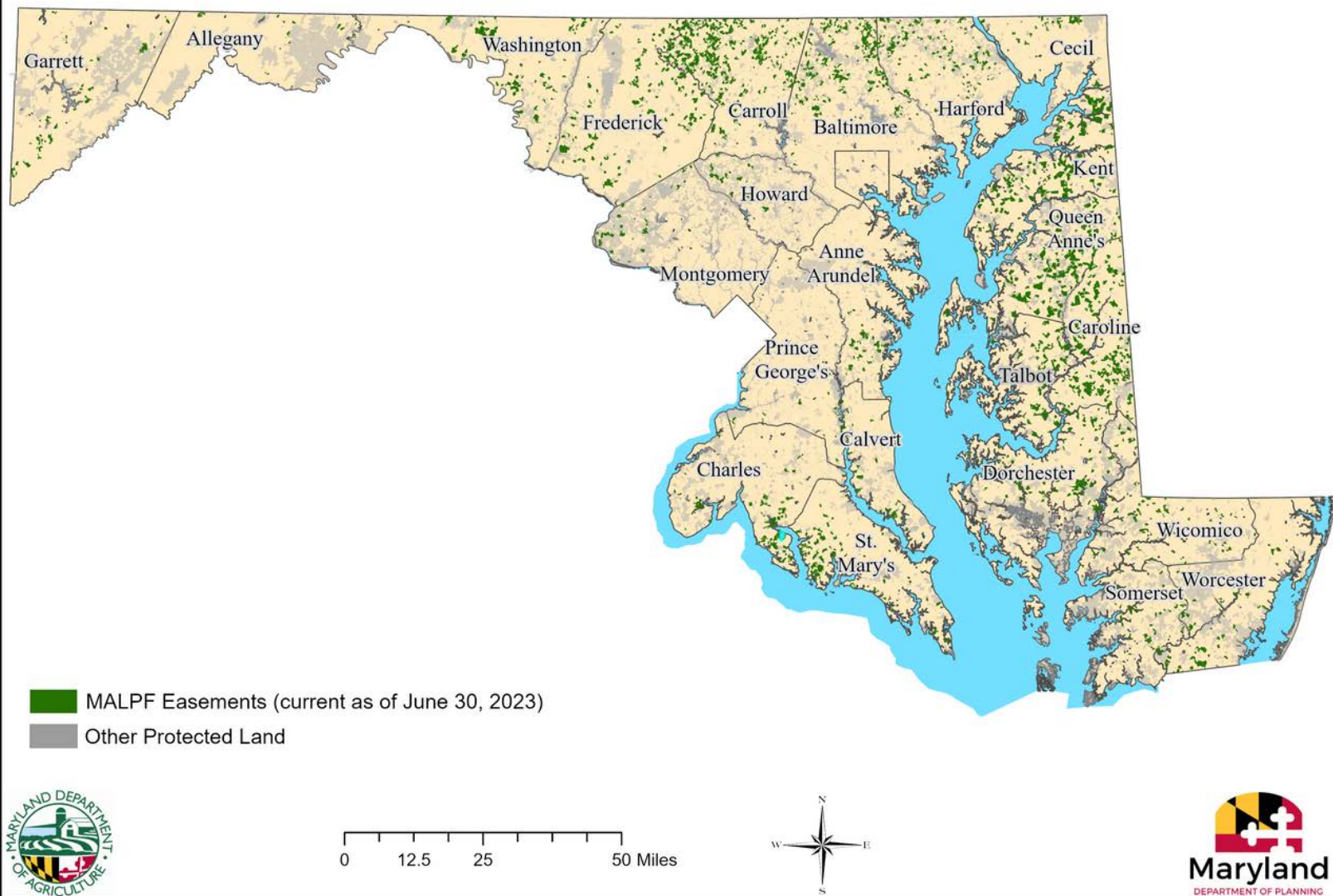
The farm has diversified through the years, including growing or raising horses, cattle, hay, row crops, fruits, and vegetables, with the next generation of Harrisons involved in the operation. Most recently, the farm operations have diversified further still, with the establishment of Farmacy Brewing, an on-farm brewery and tasting room using products grown on the farm in the brewing of several craft beers. The Board and staff learned a great deal about both the equine veterinary practice, and the creation of the on-farm brewery and brewing process, the challenges involved in both, and how the MALPF easement program provided timely financial benefits to the family.

The Board is looking forward to field trips continuing in 2024, with the plan to visit a handful of farms of varying operations around the State. Getting out and meeting the farm owners, and seeing the farms in person, provides both the Board and staff opportunities to see the impact that the MALPF program has made around the State.



MALPF Statewide Easement Map

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Easements



Easement Settlements in FY23

COUNTY	NUMBER OF EASEMENTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES	ACQUISITION COST		AVERAGE FARM SIZE IN ACRES
			AVERAGE PER ACRE	TOTAL	
Baltimore	7	502	\$7,435	\$3,733,823	72
Caroline	3	361	\$2,220	\$801,731	120
Carroll	11	648	\$5,878	\$3,806,192	59
Cecil	1	95	\$6,561	\$625,500	95
Charles	12	1,148	\$2,634	\$3,023,680	96
Dorchester	2	201	\$3,011	\$605,071	100
Frederick	5	764	\$5,229	\$3,993,761	153
Harford	3	308	\$6,885	\$2,118,028	103
Kent	2	418	\$3,465	\$1,449,617	209
Montgomery	2	279	\$6,453	\$1,797,750	139
Queen Anne's	7	1,227	\$3,623	\$4,446,204	175
St. Mary's	3	337	\$4,698	\$1,581,289	112
Talbot	3	189	\$5,991	\$1,133,763	63
Washington	2	479	\$4,548	\$2,179,297	240
Wicomico	2	145	\$2,688	\$389,277	72
Worcester	4	413	\$2,387	\$984,992	103
TOTALS	69	7,513	\$4,348	\$32,669,975	109

Note: There were no settlements in Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Garrett, Howard, Prince George's or Somerset County

As of June 30, 2023



Easement Acquisition Costs in FY23

FISCAL YEAR	NO. OF FARMS	ACQUISITION COST	ACRES
FY77-FY06	1,708	\$342,578,700	236,259
FY07	70	\$40,297,919	9,592
FY08	106	\$78,270,208	13,810
FY09	79	\$68,588,962	9,787
FY10	68	\$52,814,641	8,816
FY11	14	\$6,783,740	1,527
FY12	41	\$21,217,570	4,692
FY13	16	\$7,925,597	1,773
FY14	52	\$26,302,733	6,117
FY15	33	\$19,569,931	4,324
FY16	31	\$17,719,957	4,219
FY17	28	\$17,062,423	4,481
FY18	56	\$29,561,084	7,402
FY19	46	\$23,838,120	5,530
FY20	65	\$31,486,292	8,335
FY21	91	\$43,127,680	10,656
FY22	81	\$46,821,477	11,002
FY23	69	\$32,669,975	7,513

As of June 30, 2023

MALPF Board and Staff

Appointed Board Members

William Allen, Chair, Member At-Large
Cricket Goodall, Vice Chair, Maryland Farm Bureau Representative
Gilbert O. Bowling, Jr., Member At-Large
Catherine Cosgrove, Member At-Large
Gary Dell, Member At-Large
Elizabeth Hill, Maryland Agricultural Commission Representative
Joseph W. Wood, Member At-Large
J. Bruce Yerkes, Maryland Grange Representative
Vacant, Young Farmer Representative

Ex-Officio Board Members

Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Maryland State Treasurer
Honorable Brooke E. Lierman, Maryland Comptroller
Honorable Kevin Atticks, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture
Honorable Rebecca Flora, Maryland Secretary of Planning

Foundation Staff

Michelle Cable, Executive Director
Chana Turner, Lead Administrator
Sarel Cousins, Administrator
Rama Dilip, Administrator
Kim Hoxter, Administrative Officer
Amanda Massoni, Fiscal Specialist



County Program Contacts

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<p>ANNE ARUNDEL Jane Cox Dept. of Planning & Zoning 2664 Riva Rd. 4th Floor Annapolis, MD 21401 (410) 222-7444 <i>Chair: Maureen Heimbuch</i></p>	<p>FREDERICK Anne Bradley Planning & Permitting 30 North Market Street, 2nd Flr. Frederick, MD 21701 (301) 600-1474 <i>Chair: Andrew D. Toms, Esq.</i></p>	<p>ST. MARY'S Priscilla Leitch Dept. of Econ. & Com. Dev. P.O. Box 653 26737 Radio Station Way, Suite E-1 Leonardtown, MD 20650 (240) 309-4022 <i>Chair: Steve Reeves</i></p>
<p>BALTIMORE Megan Benjamin Baltimore Co. Dept. of Planning 105 West Chesapeake Ave, Suite #101 Towson, MD 21204 (410) 887-3480 <i>Chair: Richard M. Bernstein</i></p>	<p>GARRETT Siera Wigfield, Senior Planner Office Of Planning & Land Management 203 South 4th Street Room 208 Oakland, MD 21550 swigfield@garrettcountry.org (301) 334-7477 <i>Chair: Gary Berkebile</i></p>	<p>SOMERSET Catherine Skeeter Planning & Zoning Somerset County Office Complex 11916 Somerset Avenue Princess Anne, MD 21853 (410) 651-1424 <i>Chair: Grayson Laird (acting)</i></p>
<p>CALVERT Jennifer David Dept. of Planning & Zoning County Service's Plaza 3rd Floor 150 Main Street, Suite 304 Prince Frederick, MD 20678 (410) 535-1600 x-2338 <i>Chair: Wilson Freeland</i></p>	<p>HARFORD William Amoss Planning & Zoning 220 South Main Street Bel Air, MD 21014 (410) 638-3235 <i>Chair: John Stump</i></p>	<p>TALBOT Elisa Deflaux, Dept. of Planning & Zoning 215 Bay Street, Suite 2 Easton, MD 21601-2782 (410) 770-8034 <i>Chair: Robert Saathoff</i></p>
<p>CAROLINE Beth Beales Long Range & Agricultural Planner Dept. of Planning & Codes Health & Public Services Building 403 South 7th Street, Suite 210 Denton, MD 21629 (410) 479-8113 <i>Chair: Beth Carmean</i></p>	<p>HOWARD Joy Levy Planning & Zoning 3430 Courthouse Drive Ellicott City, MD 21043 (410) 313-4382 <i>Chair: Jamie Brown</i></p>	<p>WASHINGTON Chris Boggs Wash. Co. Dept. Planning & Zoning 747 Northern Avenue Hagerstown, MD 21742 (240) 313-2447 <i>Chair: Bob Meyers</i></p>
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<p>CECIL William Goldman, Planning & Zoning wgoldman@ccgov.org 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Suite 2300 Elkton, MD 21921 (410) 996-5220 <i>Chair: Shelly Hastings</i> Vice Chair: Norman Anderson</p>	<p>MONTGOMERY Mike Scheffel 18410 Muncaster Road Derwood, MD 20850 (301) 590-2856 <i>Chair: Michael Jamison</i></p>	<p>WORCESTER Katherine Munson Natural Resources Division Worcester County EP 1 West Market Street, Room 1302 Snow Hill, MD 21863-1070 (410) 632-1220 X1302 <i>Chair: vacant</i></p>
<p>CHARLES Charles Rice, Dept. of Planning & Growth Management ricec@charlescountymd.gov 200 Baltimore St. La Plata, MD 20646 (301) 645-0651 <i>Chair: Charles E. Bowling</i></p>	<p>PRINCE GEORGE'S Jeanine Nutter Soil Conservation District Field Service Center 5301 Marlboro Race Track Road Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 (301) 574-5162 X3 <i>Chair: Stephanie DeVille-Eugene</i></p>	

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Lt. Governor Aruna Miller
Secretary Kevin Atticks
Dep. Secretary Steven A. Connelly

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