



Visions & Decisions

Winter/Spring 2011

The Washington County Planning Department's Bi-Annual E-Newsletter

WATER RESOURCE ELEMENT

By: Mike Thompson
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House Bill 1141, passed by the General Assembly in 2006, requires that the county prepare a Water Resources Element (WRE) to its Comprehensive Plan. A draft of this element has been prepared through the efforts of the Office of the County Administrator, the Division of Public Works, Environmental Management, and Planning and Community Development. This amendment was prepared under the guidelines developed by the Maryland Department of Planning that outline the items that are to be addressed for assessment of water supplies, wastewater and stormwater. The WRE will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and Water and Sewerage Plan for the County.

The WRE was completed at the watershed level and looks at the overall County as well. Strategies provided in the Plan are suggested mechanisms to achieve the goals both at the watershed level and at the County level to address not only local water resource impairments and issues, but also to address the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) and initiatives to clean up the Bay. The Plan covers the area within the geographic boundaries of Washington County.

The Plan should be viewed as a living document that requires modifying and updating as new or more defined data becomes available. It should be recognized that the recommendations and initiatives will need to be refined and modified to reflect the ever changing technologies and data utilized in making these decisions.

The proposed amendment has been forwarded to the Maryland Department of Planning and the State Clearinghouse for review. The State will respond in approximately 60 days with comments, which will likely cause some revisions to be made by the County. After revisions are made, a public hearing will be scheduled on the amendment by the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

Copies of the Draft WRE can be reviewed at all branches of [the Washington County Library](#), the [Planning Department](#), and on the [County web site](#).

If you have any comments, please forwarded them to Mike Thompson, Planning Director, via mail or email.

IN THIS ISSUE:

[Water Resource Element](#)
[CREP Program Easements](#)
[2010 Census Data Summary](#)
[Water & Sewerage Plan adoption](#)
[Upcoming Meetings](#)
[Word Search](#)

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For newsletter questions/comments or to be added or removed from our email list, please contact Misty Wagner-Grillo at mgrillo@washco-md.net



CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

This easement program is part of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the United States Department of Agriculture and the State of Maryland. The focus of the MOA is to protect water quality by removing marginal agricultural land from production and replacing it with best management practices including riparian buffers, stabilization of highly erodible soils and restoration of wetlands. There is a two-tier system to accomplish these water quality improvements. First the landowner enters into a 15-year lease contract (CREP contract) to take land out of production and to install best management practices for water quality. For some of that land, a second step involves permanently protecting the land taken out of production and the best management practices on it by selling a permanent conservation easement.



Currently there is a leasing program for CREP, but the State has made \$12.5 million available to make the CREP areas into easements in perpetuity. Those in the CREP program include landowners that create buffers on highly erodible land or next to a waterway and landowners that restore natural wetlands. We reported in our [Spring 2010](#) newsletter that Washington County has been working with 5 property owners to receive permanent CREP easements. We are happy to report that we have now settled 3 of those pending CREP easements totaling approximately 100 acres of buffer and waterway protection.

If you are interested in the program and are currently enrolled in the CREP program, please contact Eric Seifarth at eseifarth@washco-md.net

SUMMARY DATA FROM THE 2010 CENSUS

By: Jennifer Kinzer
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The U. S. Census Bureau released summary data from the 2010 Census for the State of Maryland on February 9, 2011. The State of Maryland grew by 477,066 people between 2000 and 2010, a 9.0 percent gain, which ranked Maryland 15th among the 50 states. Both the total change and the percent change during this period were the smallest rate increases since the 1970 Census.

Overall, Washington County grew by 15,507 people between 2000 and 2010, an 11.8% change which ranked our county's growth rate 10th out of the 24 counties in the State.

Other notable facts include:

► The Town of Keedysville had the largest population increase of 670 people, a 139 percent gain, with the Towns of Smithsburg, Boonsboro, Williamsport, Hagerstown and Sharpsburg all showing modest increases.

► The Town of Clear Spring had the largest population decrease of 97 people, a -21.3 percent change, while the Towns of Hancock and Funkstown also lost population.

More detailed Census Tract and Block level data is expected to be released this summer.

In the meantime, anyone interested in looking at the Census data for the State of Maryland should visit the Maryland Department of Planning's State Data Center at this link, <http://planning.maryland.gov/msdc/home.shtml> for more information.

COUNTY WATER & SEWERAGE PLAN ADOPTED

The 2009 County Water & Sewerage Plan update is adopted and effective as of November 9, 2010 by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The BOCC held a joint public hearing for the proposed updates with the County Planning Commission on August 30, 2010.



The adopted plan is now being reviewed by the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) and is subject to revisions from their input. MDE comments are anticipated by late March of this year.

The adopted Water and Sewerage Plan can be viewed on the Office of [County Attorney webpage](#) under resolution number: [RS-2010-24](#).

UPCOMING MEETINGS

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS:

- April 4, 2011
- May 2, 2011
- June 6, 2011
- July 11, 2011
- August 1, 2011
- August 29, 2011

All Regular Monthly [Planning Commission](#) meetings will be held in the County Administrative Annex conference room located at 80 West Baltimore Street. Meetings begin promptly at 7:00 p.m.

REZONING/TEXT PUBLIC MEETINGS:

- There are no meetings currently scheduled for 2011. Please check our website in the upcoming months for meeting dates.
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[Rezoning](#) Public Meetings will be held at the Washington County Court House in Court Room # 1, 95 West Washington Street (unless noted otherwise on the agenda). Please use the entrance located on Summit Ave. Meetings begin promptly at 7:00pm. *Meeting dates are subject to change. Please check our website for up-to-date information.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

- April 6, 2011
- May 4, 2011
- June 1, 2011
- July 6, 2011
- August 3, 2011
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The [Historic District Commission](#) meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm in the Administrative Annex Conference Room 1A.

CONSULTANT OUTREACH MEETINGS

- April 11, 2011
- July 15, 2011

Outreach meetings will be held in the County Administrative Annex conference room located at 80 West Baltimore Street. Meeting begins promptly at 9:00am

WORD SEARCH

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

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AGRICULTURE

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HABITAT

NATIVE GRASSES

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

WATER QUALITY

WILDLIFE

CHESAPEAKE BAY

ERODIBLE SOILS

INCENTIVES

PERMANENT EASEMENT

STABILIZATION

WATERWAY PROTECTION

CROPLAND

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

LANDOWNERS

RESTORATION

STREAMS

WETLANDS