



PO Box K, Bryans Rd, MD 20616
www.savecharlescounty.com

- 1000 Friends of Maryland
- AMP Creeks Council
- Audubon MD-DC
- Chapman Forest Foundation
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Clean Water Action
- Coalition for Smarter Growth
- Conservancy for Charles County
- Maryland Bass Nation
- Maryland Conservation Council
- Maryland League of Conservation Voters
- Maryland Native Plant Society
- Maryland Ornithological Society
- Mason Springs Conservancy
- Mattawoman Watershed Society
- Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental Coalition
- Nanjemoy Vision, Inc.
- Potomac River Association
- Potomac Riverkeeper Network
- Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter
- Sierra Club, Southern Maryland Group
- South Hampton HOA
- Southern Maryland Audubon Society
- St. Mary's River Watershed Assn

GetSmart

FOLLOWING GROWTH IN YOUR BACKYARD

SGACC – A Brief History

You most likely know the Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County from our efforts to ensure that Charles County's new comprehensive plan laid out a smart, sustainable blueprint for the county's future. But the coalition was actually formed years before the process to draft the new comp plan began.

Mattawoman Watershed Society and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation created the Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County to stop the Cross County Connector, a costly road project that would have opened up large tracts of land for thousands of new houses. Many battles were fought over this road, which the Army Corp of Engineers deemed "contrary to the public interest" because of the devastating impacts it would have on Mattawoman Creek.

Those battles continued as the County embarked on developing a

new comprehensive plan. The Cross County Connector was finally killed in May 2015, when the Board of County Commissioners voted to defund the project, sending a message to staff that it should no longer be included in the comp plan. But that was only one step toward a better future for the County. Knowing that this new plan represented the last opportunity for the County to change course, the Smarter Growth Alliance was engaged from the very beginning and stuck with it through the 5-year process, accomplishing many of our goals in the final plan.

We have grown throughout that time. The coalition now includes over 20 local, state, and regional organizations. Our organizational missions and areas of expertise vary, but we are all committed to sustainable growth and protecting the natural and historic resources that make Charles County special.

Comp Plan – Next Steps and Highlights

On July 12, years of hard work culminated in adoption of a visionary new plan for Charles County's future. In a 3-2 vote, Commissioners Murphy, Robinson, and Stewart adopted a comprehensive plan that will lead to a better quality of life for all Charles County residents. The new plan conserves treasured natural resources such as Mattawoman Creek, maintains

the County's rural character, and puts the brakes on costly sprawl development.

As a reminder, here are some highlights of the plan:

- Designating Bryans Road as a mixed-use village instead of a major growth center for thousands of new homes

SPOTLIGHT

- Comp Plan Next Steps 1-2
- Waldorf Station Update 2
- Bryans Rd Development 3
- Rural Legacy Areas 4

KEEP UP

- Public Hearing: Appeal of Planning Commission design approving Guilford development
7pm, Tuesday Oct. 11
- Planning Commission Meeting
6pm, Monday, Oct. 17
- Planning and Growth Management Roundtable
2pm, Tuesday, Oct. 20
- Commissioner Amanda Stewart Town Hall Meeting,
Waldorf West Library, Room A, 6:30pm, Monday, Oct. 24

- Protecting the headwaters of the Port Tobacco River and the Mattawoman Creek watershed with a new Watershed Conservation District
- Converting the proposed and defeated Cross County Connector route into a hiker-biker trail
- Conserving ecologically rich acres previously slated for industrial development in the "tech park" in Bryans Road and around Maryland Airport
- Preventing major subdivisions in the Marbury/Rison area and in Marshall Hall
- Calling for a Nanjemoy/Mattawoman Rural Legacy area to help landowners obtain conservation easements
- Including Nanjemoy/Mattawoman in the Priority Preservation Area to help conserve forestland
- Calling for a ban on future fracking

Now the plan must be implemented! The implementation process will include changes to the zoning maps, an overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance, and updates to other ordinances. All of these changes

will be subject to a public process involving both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. The Smarter Growth Alliance will keep you posted as implementation moves forward and there are opportunities for the public to be heard.



SGACC celebration of the new Comp Plan at Gray's Beach in Marbury

Waldorf Station Update

The Chaney Enterprises gateway project, Waldorf Station, which covers 144 acres in northern Waldorf adjacent to U.S. 301, has been proposed as the County's first mixed-use, transit oriented development, or TOD.

According to its design standards, Waldorf Station would "create a memorable gateway to the county . . . attracting business, residents, and tourists from around the region." It would be a pedestrian-friendly community with a mix of residences, offices, shops, and restaurants in attractive, walkable areas. Parking lots would be replaced by parks and tree-lined pedestrian plazas. Everything from mass transit to walking trails would be within walking distance.

However, the project's first proposed tenant, a 194,000-square-foot single-story Super Walmart on 20 acres, with a 12-acre parking lot, does not fit the vision. The gateway development that was supposed to take Waldorf in a new direction was beginning to look like more backwards, outdated planning.

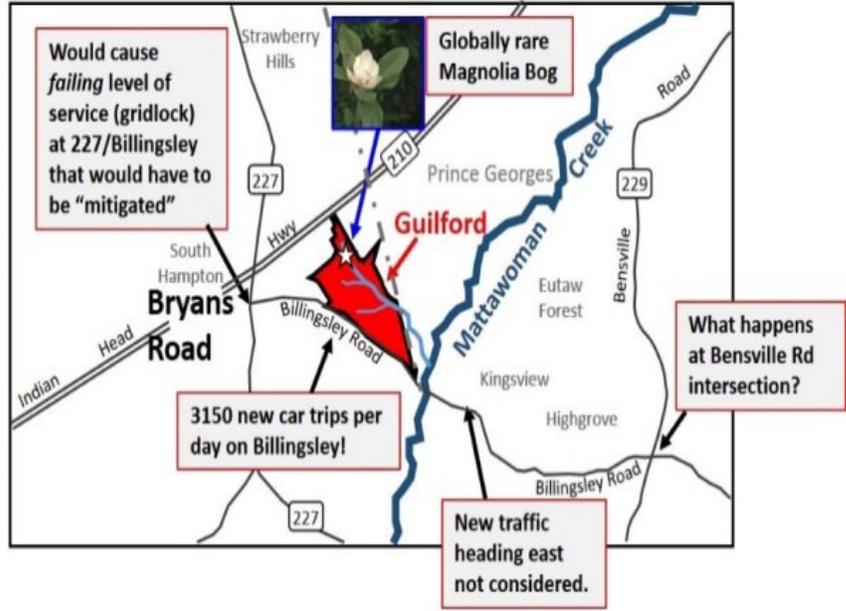
Because of its size, the Walmart store required a special exception from the County's Board of Appeals. In early 2015, Waldorf Restaurant Inc., a company affiliated with Chaney Enterprises, put in their application, kicking off a long, and often contentious, 15-month review process.

But before the Board of Appeals could complete its review, Walmart pulled out of the project and Waldorf Restaurant Inc. withdrew their special exception application. According to a July 25, 2016, Maryland Independent article, Chaney and Walmart were unable to reach an agreement over an extension to purchase the property. So, for the moment at least, it appears there will not be a Walmart at Waldorf Station. However, the Waldorf Station plans, including the 20-acre site designated for the Walmart, are still on the table. And if the two parties come to an agreement, the Walmart project could come back. We shall see.

Proposed Huge Development In Bryans Road Being Challenged

Guilford is a 438-unit subdivision proposed for a 183-acre forested site in Bryans Road. It would increase traffic on an already crowded Billingsley Road by 60% while forever altering the character of Bryans Road—with apartment buildings, townhouses, and detached houses. It threatens a globally rare Magnolia Bog and would damage a Mattawoman Creek tributary with excessive impervious surface. Charles County's new comprehensive land-use plan recognizes how inappropriate this project is by rightsizing Bryans Road to a smaller village, while also zoning the site for low-density development within the new Watershed Conservation District.

Although a preliminary subdivision plan for Guilford has been approved, the project is being challenged before the Board of Appeals by the Mattawoman Watershed Society, a SGACC member, and individuals. Opponents contend that the Planning Commission erroneously approved the project by using a substandard traffic study, by forbidding public input as the result of mistaken legal advice, and by voting before Commission members' questions about traffic and adverse impacts to Mattawoman Creek were fully answered.



Guilford is a leftover of the now dead Cross County Connector (CCC), which would have serviced the site and eventually increased traffic on Billingsley as a result of development. Under the new comprehensive plan, the route planned for the CCC will become a hiker/biker trail.

**Guilford Hearing
Board of Appeals
Tuesday, Oct. 11, 7pm
Charles County Government Building
Please attend to show support!**



Traffic backs up on Livingston Road (Route 227) in front of the Firehouse in Bryans Road waiting to turn left onto Billingsley Road.



Sweetbay magnolia at Bryans Road Bog

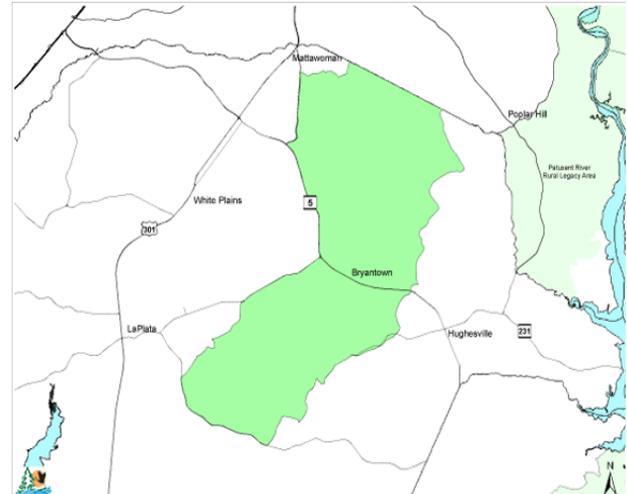
Rural Legacy Areas – What Are They?

Ever wondered what a Rural Legacy Area is? Well, according to Maryland's Rural Legacy website, the state's program was created in 1997 to protect large, contiguous tracts of Maryland's most precious cultural and natural resource lands through grants made to local applicants.

Mostly because of efforts by SGACC, the County's new comprehensive plan calls for a Nanjemoy/Mattawoman Rural Legacy Area to help landowners there obtain conservation easements.

Right now, Zekiah Swamp Run is Charles County's only Rural Legacy Area. According to the state website, it "is abundant with farms, forests, wetlands of Special State Concern, historic and archeological sites, and deposits rich in mineral aggregates. The Area contains the largest natural hardwood swamp in the state and is considered by the Smithsonian Institute to be one of the most important ecological areas on the East Coast."

Zekiah Watershed Rural Legacy Area



Zekiah Swamp Run is included in the County's Tier 4 on the septic tier map, meaning that it is among the most protected areas of the county, with only minor subdivisions on septic allowed. It's expected that the Nanjemoy/Mattawoman area will also be Tier 4 when the final boundaries of the proposed Rural Legacy Area are drawn.

Southern Maryland Audobon Society Upcoming Field Trips and Programs

Saturday, Oct. 15, 8am–noon

Elms Environmental Education Ctr, St. Mary's Cty
49300 St. James Road, Dameron, MD

"Birding 101"—Youths Welcome!

RSVP to Bob Boxwell at 410-610-5124 or
Bobboxwell@hotmail.com

Sunday, Oct. 23, 8–noon

Newtowne Neck State Park, St. Mary's Cty, Compton,
MD

"Birding Newtowne's Fields, Forests and Bays"

RSVP to David Moulton at 240-278-4473 or
moulton.davidh@gmail.com

Saturday, Oct. 29, noon–3pm

Mallows Bay Park, Charles Cty
1440 Wilson Landing Road, Nanjemoy, MD

"Boo!! The Ghosts of Mallows Bay"—Youths Welcome!

RSVP to Lynne Wheeler up to 10am Saturday
301-751-8097 or comstockel@aol.com

Mt. Aventine Manor House, Chapman State
Park, 3452 Ferry Place, Indian Head will
be open for tours 1-4pm Sundays through
October 30. A new exhibit of Native
American artifacts and one on the history and
architectural significance of the circa 1810
west wing of the mansion are on display.
For info call 240-377-6024

Wednesday, Nov. 2, 7:30–9pm

Monthly Meeting Program, Historic Port Tobacco
Courthouse

"Native Grassland Restoration, Management and Avian Studies at the Chester River Research Station"

Dan Small, Field Ecologist, Center of Environment
and Society, Washington College

Saturday, Nov. 19, 8am–noon

Mattawoman Wildlands, Marbury, MD
Meeting location Lackey High School parking lot,
3000 Chicamuxen Road, Indian Head, MD

"Early Waterfowl and Late Migrants on the George Wilmot Trail"

RSVP to Lynn Wheeler at 301-761-8097 or
comstockel@aol.com