

## CHAPTER 6: SENSITIVE AREAS PROTECTION

### Existing Policies and Regulations

1. Centreville and Queen Anne's County both have extensive existing policies and regulations designed to protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas. Both jurisdictions have adopted Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Programs and Ordinances which comply with State law and have been approved by the Maryland Critical Area Commission. Both jurisdictions have adopted forest conservation ordinances which are approved by the State. Both jurisdictions have approved stormwater management and floodplain ordinances. In addition there are Federal and State regulations in place which protect tidal and nontidal wetlands located in and around Centreville. The State also regulates groundwater protection and water quality.
2. Copies of the Town of Centreville's programs and regulations can be reviewed at the Town Hall. Copies of Queen Anne's County's programs and regulations can be reviewed at the County Department of Land Use, Growth Management, and Environment.
3. The Queen Anne's County 2002 Comprehensive Plan and the County's Zoning Ordinance comply with the sensitive area protection mandates of the Maryland Economic Development, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 (1992 Planning Act, as amended in 1997 to include an 8<sup>th</sup> vision). The recommendations contained in this section of the Plan are designed to address identified gaps in the overall environmental protection program. By addressing these recommendations the Town will be in compliance with the 1992 Planning Act and Chesapeake Bay Critical Area law.
4. The following objectives were developed for the Town's 1998 Community Plan and have been incorporated here due to their continued validity:
  - a. The Town and County should continue implementation of their existing environmental protection programs and ordinances and adopt new or refined policies and regulation so as to comply with changes in State law.
  - b. As new development occurs within the Centreville Growth Area, every effort should be made to ensure that it is designed and built to avoid and/or minimize adverse impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.
  - c. Perennial and intermittent streams and adjoining natural buffers should be protected from the adverse effects of development.
  - d. Habitats of threatened and endangered species should be protected from the adverse effects of development.

- e. Steep slopes of 15 percent or greater should be protected from the adverse effects of development.
- f. Lands within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area should be protected from the adverse effects of development as prescribed by the Town and County Critical Area Programs and Ordinances.
- g. Nontidal wetlands should be protected from the adverse effects of development as prescribed by State and Federal Regulations.
- h. Forested areas should be protected from the adverse effects of development as prescribed by the Town and County forest conservation regulations as mandated by the State Forest Conservation Act.
- i. Floodplain areas should be protected from the adverse effects of development to the extent that these areas are already protected by Chesapeake Bay Critical Area regulations, wetland regulations, forest conservation regulations, and proposed stream buffer regulations.

### **Specific Environmental Protection Recommendations**

The Town of Centreville lies at the heart of the Corsica River Watershed - the confluence of the river's three major nontidal sub-watersheds. Queen Anne's County encompasses all of the land area outside of the Town of Centreville's corporate limits that is within the Corsica Watershed. Accordingly the Town and County should join in a watershed planning approach directed specifically toward the health of the Corsica River through the following actions:

1. The Town should continue to update its Critical Area Program and Ordinance to be consistent with changes that occur to the State Critical Area law. The State Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission provides the Town with the part-time assistance of an environmental planner who can assist the Town in updating its Critical Area Program and Ordinance.
2. The Town and County should amend their Chesapeake Bay Critical Area programs to include provisions for premapping of potential growth allocation areas in and around Centreville. This entails the identification of those properties within the Critical Area that may be eligible for growth allocation based on the Land Use Plan described in Chapter 4 (Land Use Concept). Premapping is a way to ensure that a property's Critical Area Classification (RCA, LDA, IDA) is consistent with the Town's Community Plan and County's Comprehensive Plan for the Centreville area. The actual award of growth allocation should not occur until a property is ready to develop and it can be demonstrated that growth allocation is necessary and appropriate. Every

effort should be made in the design of future development projects to minimize the amount of growth allocation needed to develop a property in a manner consistent with this Plan and Town or County Critical Area regulations, depending on location. The award of growth allocation for a development project does not exempt the development from any applicable sensitive area protection regulations contained in the Critical Area Ordinance.

3. The Town should adopt stream buffer protection regulations in its zoning ordinance for lands outside of the Critical Area. In order for these regulations to be consistent with County rules, a 100-foot no-disturbance buffer should be adopted for perennial streams and a 50-foot buffer instituted for intermittent streams.
4. The Town should adopt regulations in its zoning ordinance requiring that larger-scale development proposals on lands outside of the Critical Area be submitted to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Heritage and Biodiversity Conservation Program, for review in order to ensure that any potential adverse impacts to sensitive habitat areas are avoided. DNR will advise if any special precautions are needed in the design or construction of the development. Similar reviews already are required for lands within the Town's Critical Area.
5. The Town should consider ordinance initiatives related to recommendations for programmatic change as outlined in the report entitled "Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy - Final Report, September 2004" (WRAS). Land use regulations recommended in the WRAS include the following:
  - a. Ordinance to establish an Urban Growth Boundary, the limits of which must be consistent with TMDL for a calculated maximum future conversion of agricultural land.
  - b. Ordinance establishing a greenbelt together with a per unit assessment through the building permit process for preservation targeted only to the greenbelt area.