



FOREST CONSERVATION AREAS

Located within
private single-
family residential
lots or
preservation
parcels

Protect our Private Forests

Our forests benefit everyone, whether they are located on public or private land. Caring for and responsibly managing private forest resources protects wildlife, water quality, and the health of our communities.

Together, through responsible stewardship and conservation, we can protect these valuable resources and ensure healthy forests for generations to come.



Visit our website to get more information:
HOWARDCOUNTYMD.GOV/PLANNING-ZONING



Introduction

Howard County's Forest Conservation Program was enacted pursuant to the requirements of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act of 1991. This law requires local governments to be the guardian of the public trust in protecting and maintaining forest resources. That is why subdivision and land development projects are required to have an approved Forest Conservation Plan as a condition of approval for development. The goal of the program is to protect and preserve trees and other natural vegetation in Howard County by promoting environmentally sensitive design. Additionally, this program promotes the creation of forests in areas where forests do not currently exist or cannot be saved. This document outlines our goal of partnering with you and your neighbors to guard the public trust in protecting and maintaining forest resources.



Things You Should Know

New owners and tenants must avoid activities that damage or degrade forest resources protected by a Forest Conservation Easement. The developer, or its designee, must implement a post-construction protection program that educates occupants about the proper use of easement areas, the developer's ongoing management responsibilities, the required protection activities and their duration, and when long-term responsibility will transfer to property owners or their legal representative, such as a homeowners association.

Owners/tenants must receive:

- A copy of the Forest Conservation Plan or plat identifying all Forest Conservation Easement areas.
- Written information explaining the developer's post-construction management obligations, required access to perform those duties, and when responsibility will transfer to owners or their legal representative.
- A list of permitted and prohibited activities within the easement, as specified in the Deed of Forest Conservation Easement.
- Clearly posted Forest Conservation Easement signs delineating the easement area.
- Any additional educational materials or methods selected by the developer.

Before taking occupancy, ensure you have received your official Forest Conservation Plan, activity guidelines, and boundary signage location map.





Privately Owned Lots or Preservation Parcels

Property owners may install or maintain the following within a recorded Forest Conservation Easement on a privately owned residential lot or preservation parcel, provided that:

- No tree clearing, grading, understory removal, or Critical Root Zone disturbance occurs.
- No impervious paving is installed or drainage or hydrology is altered.
- Wildlife movement is not restricted.
- All required permits are obtained.

Permitted structures and uses include*:

- Children's play equipment, including swing sets, slides, sandboxes, and similar equipment requiring only footing excavation.
- Treehouses under 100 square feet.
- Dog houses.
- Exterior lighting, flagpoles, bird baths, feeders and houses, sculptures, statues, and other ornamental lawn items.
- Firewood piles.
- Flower gardens, landscaping, and compost piles or bins.
- Mulched, gravel, or stone-block pathways.
- Picnic tables.
- Split-rail fences without wire mesh and invisible pet fences.
- Other similar minor structures or uses approved by the Department of Planning and Zoning on a case-by-case basis.

**These allowances do not apply to HOA or County-owned Open Space or Preservation parcels.*