



FOREST CONSERVATION AREAS

Located within
public easements,
HOA, county owned
open space, or
preservation
parcels

Our forests belong to all of us.

Whether on public or private lands, our forests provide vital benefits to our communities, environment, and future generations. As stewards of this shared resource, we have a responsibility to conserve, protect, and manage our forests wisely.

Together, we can ensure our forests remain healthy, resilient, and thriving 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.

Protect Our Forest Conservation Easements

Certain activities within Forest Conservation Easements on HOA- or County-owned Open Space or Preservation Parcels are **prohibited and illegal**, including clearing, mowing, dumping, composting, abandoned vehicles or appliances, formal landscaping, ATV use, and structures such as sheds, pools, and fences. These activities can damage or destroy the forest ecosystem.

Permitted uses are limited to walking, hiking, and bird watching.

Help protect these valuable resources by reporting prohibited structures, uses, or disturbances to the Department of Recreation and Parks, Natural Resources Division at 410-313-4725. Reported violations will be investigated and may require restoration, fines, and/or court action.



For more information:

✉ planning@howardcountymd.gov

☎ (410) 313-2350