

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Preservation of Subregion 6’s historic and cultural heritage has an important role in ensuring the longevity and health of the county’s environment, economy, and social resources. Sustainable communities value their heritage, which is essential in developing and maintaining a sense of identity and place. Protecting historic resources and encouraging adaptive use provides the community with an opportunity to embrace and celebrate pieces of history that define and unite the region. Encouraging reuse and rehabilitation of older structures not only helps in reducing the subregion’s carbon footprint but also stimulates the local economy. This “repair first” approach seeks to reduce the waste associated with demolition and rebuilding and to promote reusing existing materials. Repairing older buildings encourages the use of skilled local labor, often at higher wages, to carry out rehabilitation efforts. The key to sustainability is the utilization of the resources that already exist.

While it is important to protect major landmarks and monuments, the safeguarding of vernacular, or common style, architecture is also essential, as these buildings provide unique insight into the agricultural heritage and represent the cultural landscapes familiar to many of the residents of the area. Reinvestment in communities through the reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings can potentially decrease sprawl associated with new construction and support the local economic base. By protecting and encouraging adaptive use of historic resources, the community can create opportunities to embrace and celebrate the history that defines and unites the residents in the county and the subregion.

There are ninety-three resources designated historic in the subregion. Of these sites, 28 are listed in the National Register of Historic Places; the rest are locally designated. This chapter will provide the framework to reaffirm, update, and expand upon previous recommendations to ensure that the heritage within the communities of the subregion are represented in the goals for future preservation and development. Locally designated historic resources fall under several categories: historic sites—properties that are subject to the Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO) and are also eligible to receive county preservation tax credits and grants for approved rehabilitation projects; historic resources—which must be evaluated to become eligible for tax credits and grants and fully protected by the HPO; documented properties—which have inventory forms on file but have no status for protection.



*Smith Farm, within the subregion but also within the Westphalia master plan area, was until recently a working farm which is now slated for a mixed use development.*



*Tobacco barns still dot the landscape despite the tobacco buyout nearly halting all tobacco production.*

This plan will not be recommending additions to the Inventory of Historic Resources.

Subregion 6 offers a unique opportunity for preservation because of a wealth of historic and cultural resources. The wide range of resources is evidenced in the landscape and built environment. The historic properties of Mount Calvert and Billingsley overlook the Patuxent River and have pre-historic Native American archeological sites and historic buildings from the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Agricultural buildings are also important landmarks, such as the Ashland Hay Barn in Upper Marlboro. The subregion also has two Victorian Gothic mansions which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Bowling Heights in Upper Marlboro and Villa de Sales in Aquasco.



State historic markers tell the story of early Prince George's County.

### GOALS

1. Encourage local stewardship and pride by implementing strategies that will increase public knowledge of the area's cultural assets and historic preservation procedures.
2. Ensure that historic sites and resources as part of the subregion's rich cultural heritage are properly documented and protected from the onset of new development through proper and consistent historic preservation practices.
3. Incorporate the region's historic, cultural, and recreational assets into land use planning and the local resource-based economy to support a sustainable way of life.

In 1981, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) adopted, and the District Council approved, the *Historic Sites and Districts Plan*. This plan identified the actions necessary for preservation of historic resources in the county. The HPO was enacted to protect properties on the Inventory of Historic Resources. Today, historic preservation not only stands to preserve historic sites, it is also seen as one of several tools of revitalization and protection of communities and rural areas. Since 1981, additional legislation in the county continues to incorporate historic preservation issues into future planning and smart growth initiatives. Numerous nonprofit organizations active within the community also provide guidance and promote a sense of urgency in the preservation of the county's historic assets through research, grant programs, and community outreach.

## THEMES

This plan seeks to build on these many activities by promoting stewardship of historic resources while also preserving the rural landscape of the subregion. To achieve these goals the plan proposes a variety of means including strategies to promote cultural tourism through the use of themes bringing heritage into the toolbox of economic development.

Within the subregion several significant sites and resources shed light upon the history and development of Prince George's

County and the nation. Protecting these historic assets from underutilization or demolition is critical to sustaining cultural capital in the area. Cultural capital is defined as an asset that symbolizes or generates cultural value within a given community in addition to any economic value it may have. The reuse of historic resources and the education of the public today can set the standards for the development of tomorrow.

To better understand the variety and breadth of these resources, the master plan divides them into two categories: sites and resources that have been officially designated, and sites and resources that have been identified for further study (and in some cases have been documented to some degree) but have not been officially designated.

The diversity of major themes found within the subregion provides opportunities to reach wider audiences of both residents and visitors. Increasing public awareness and appreciation for historic sites and resources can lead to connection with points of attraction in nearby areas outside of the subregion such as heritage tours and trails found in the county. Promoting cultural and heritage tourism can rejuvenate community pride, encourage maintenance of resources, and moreover produce considerable economic returns for the area. The themes below are promoted in this plan.

The subregion remains rooted in its agrarian history and is connected by a network of historic scenic roads and byways. The historic landscapes represent the rural heritage through the presence of plantations, early twentieth century vernacular farmsteads, barns, outbuildings, woodlands, and scenic roads and vistas. These sites and resources provide the subregion with several opportunities to promote its agricultural history along with the chance to utilize these assets as recreational and educational sites. Many rural historic landscapes remain especially in the Rural Tier and also in the Developing Tier, including the Woodland rural agricultural community to the northeast of MD 4 and US 301 as well as the Clagett Agricultural Area to the west of US 301. To promote understanding and appreciation of these unique landscapes, preservation activities and education could be better encouraged through inclusion in school curriculum and property tours of historic properties in public ownership.

One hundred-ninety archeological sites found mainly along the Patuxent River (pre-historic and historic) bear evidence of Native American and early colonial settlement. With careful planning and consideration for impact on the sites, trails for pedestrians and bikes near these areas connected by markers could be used as educational tools. Promoting awareness of sensitive archeological



*The historic stable at Villa de Sales in Aquasco features a slate roof, matching the roof on the main house.*

## Agricultural Heritage



*Barns and other agricultural buildings outside of Nottingham.*

## Archeological Areas

sites in the subregion is important if these significant remnants of history are to be safeguarded.

## African-American History



*The Woodville School, now owned and occupied by Knights of St. John's Commandery #373, was built in 1934 to educate the African-American children in the Woodville/Aquasco area.*

The advancement and growth of African-American communities is recognized in the abundant historic sites and resources within the subregion. The historic properties include residences, schools, churches and cemeteries, and museums. These sites and resources span throughout the area's historic towns in Croom, Naylor, Upper Marlboro, Eagle Harbor, and Aquasco. With research, these important topics of history have the potential for additional designations as historic sites and properties. Collectively, historic assets related to the African-American community have the potential to connect to broader thematic tours and heritage tourism destinations.

## Early Towns/Communities

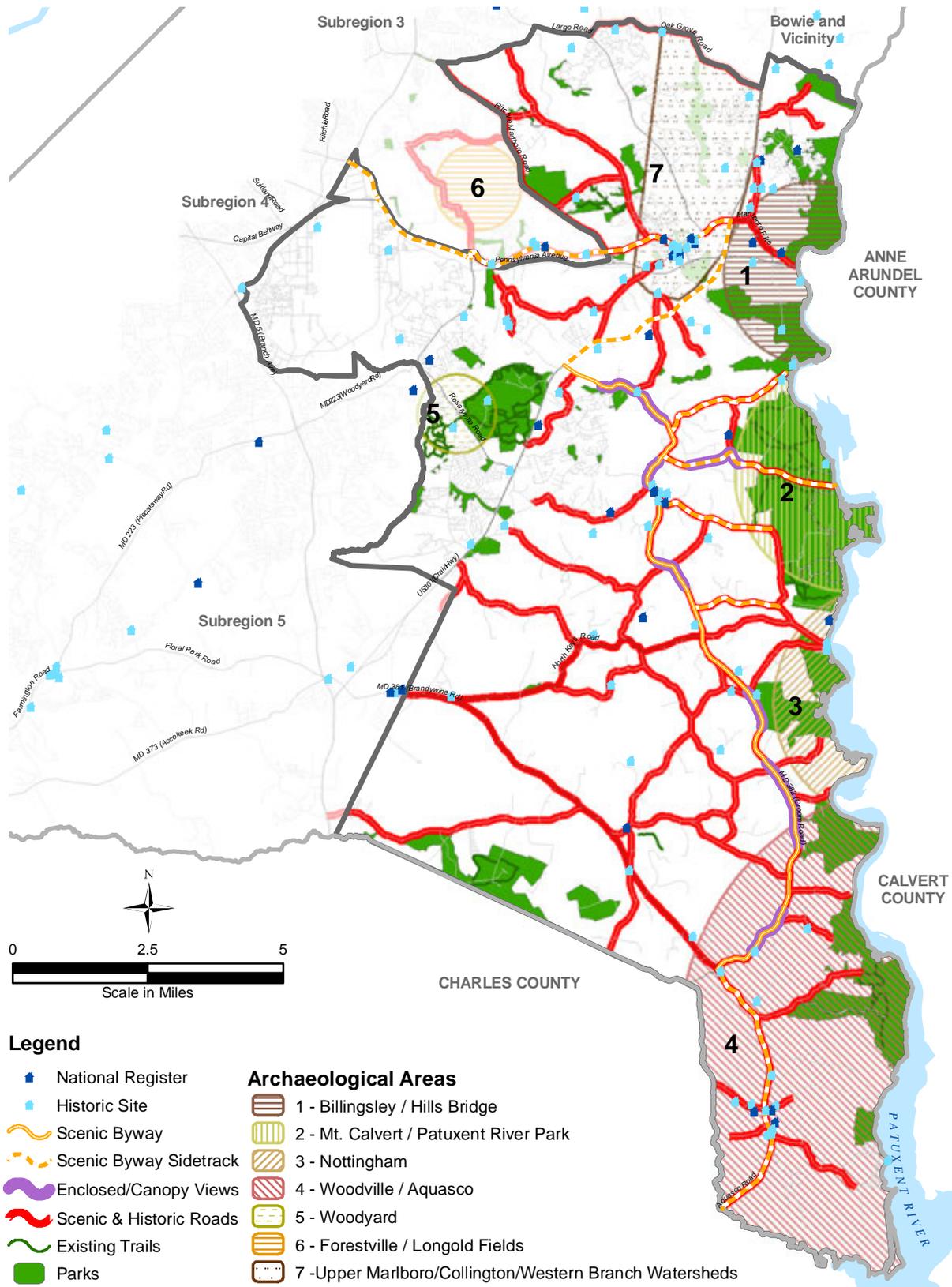
The history of many communities in the subregion is being subsumed by new development and modern buildings. Small villages, such as Aquasco, Croom, and Eagle Harbor, retain much of their historic character and many of the historic resources have been identified through survey and documentation. Landings and river crossings related to trade and the development of industries within several communities showcase development patterns associated with arterial transportation routes. General stores, shops, and churches provide insight into the day-to-day lives of those who lived in these early towns and helped establish the foundation for communities that exist today. These assets offer several opportunities for nomination as historic resources.

## Military History

Historic sites and resources reveal the role the subregion played in several military engagements. Historic resources associated with the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, combined with the presence of Joint Base Andrews, present opportunities for thematic tours associated with the military. Currently, the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 is being celebrated throughout Maryland and promoted through the Star-Spangled Banner Trail driving tour, which traverses through Subregion 6.

Many efforts have been made to document the historic and cultural resources of Prince George's County and of the subregion (see Map 23). Viewing the resources of the subregion as a whole presents the opportunity to connect these resources both, thematically and within proximity to one another. Highlighting these connections can add to the visitors overall experience and foster appreciation for these assets. For example, the Patuxent River Rural Legacy Bike Route begins near Mount Calvert and

# MAP 22: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



## HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND RECREATIONAL ASSETS

ends in Aquasco and provides opportunities to link numerous African-American sites and resources in the area. The trail follows Aquasco Road where numerous sites and resources exist, such as the Woodville School, and continues south along Trueman Point Road where cyclists can find sites such as Trueman Point Landing and Eagle Harbor.

Promoting cultural and heritage tourism can rejuvenate community pride, encourage maintenance of resources, and produce considerable economic returns for the area. To aid in understanding how these resources are connected, they are organized on Maps 24A and 24B by the heritage themes.

Cultural landscapes can be categorized under three categories: landscapes that have organically evolved, that have been designed or manipulated, or that are associated with a particular event or group. This plan seeks to link recreation opportunities such as parks and trails to cultural landscapes that have evolved organically to promote public awareness of the richness of the subregion's history as demonstrated in its abundant historic and cultural resources.



*Picturesque two lane rural roads wind through the subregion.*

Scenic roadways along roads such as Croom Road and Old Crain Highway traverse fertile land while historic roads showcase historic sites and resources. Safeguarding and promoting awareness of these assets will help to protect the region's pastoral landscape. Extensive natural surface trails exist at many parks along the Patuxent River such as Jug Bay, Merkle, Aquasco Farms, and Milltown Landing. As additional lands are publicly acquired, these trails can be expanded and connected.

In addition to trails, equestrian areas and concentrations of tobacco barns have also been highlighted. While there are few historic resources that remain relating to equine activities in the area, large areas of pastures, fields, and woodland in the area accommodate equestrian activities. Various areas also represent the reuse of historic properties for equine-related activities such as the land surrounding Mount Airy in Rosaryville, now known as Rosaryville State Park. Tobacco barns that dot the landscape along much of Croom Road, as well as other areas within the subregion, not only represent the agricultural roots of the area, but also present opportunities for adaptive use.

There are also opportunities to link archeological clusters and themes throughout the subregion. Archeological sites in the subregion are important resources for the interpretation of Native American, African-American, and European-American heritage

in Prince George's County. For 9,000 years, the Patuxent River and its tributaries have provided the necessary natural resources for human settlement. Cultural resources include hundreds of temporary Native American base camps and permanent Native American villages (7,000 BC–1670 AD), countless small and large tobacco plantations based on enslaved labor (1650–1864), small towns supported by agriculture (1684–1950s), and increasingly mechanized farms based on wage labor and crop share agreements (1865–1950s). Each of these resources has left a significant archaeological presence on the landscape. These archaeological resources are scattered throughout the subregion but several areas were identified for their potential interpretive value.

Areas containing multiple archaeological components crossing numerous heritage themes have been identified as interpretive clusters. Each of these clusters contains important archaeological resources owned by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission or another public entity that has potential for interpretive public programs. Archaeological resources identified in future surveys and excavations could add to and greatly enhance the public interpretive programming already in place for each of the clusters.

### *Billingsley/Hills Bridge Cluster*

The Billingsley and Hills Bridge cluster contains 11 identified archaeological sites. Interpretive themes tied to this cluster include nineteenth- to twentieth-century steamboat trade and commerce, late seventeenth-century Native American settlement, tobacco plantations, and Barney's Flotilla and the War of 1812.

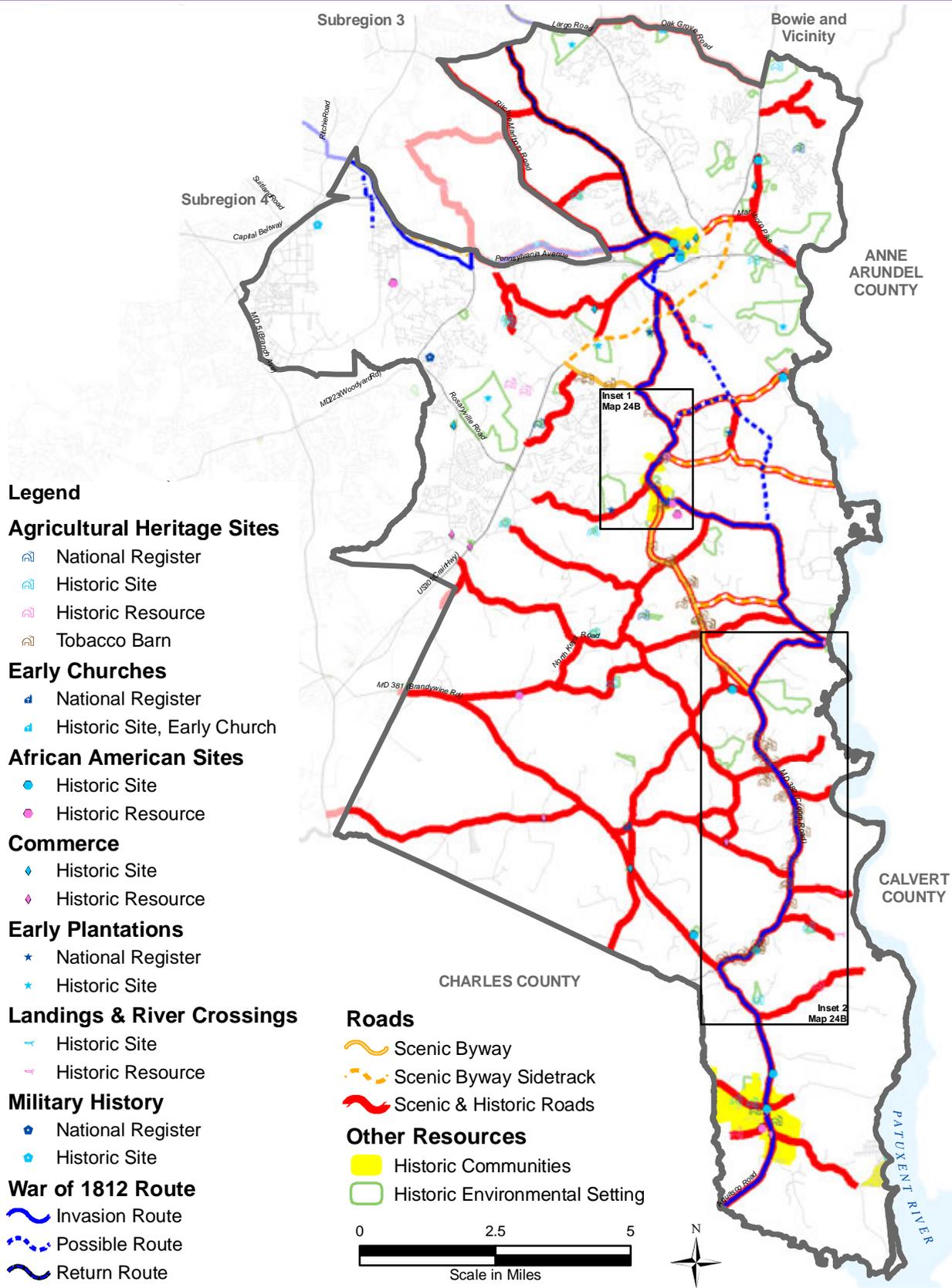
### *Mount Calvert/Patuxent River Park Cluster*

The Mount Calvert cluster just south of Billingsley contains two major public parks owned and administered by M-NCPPC. Public archaeology programs are regularly conducted at Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park, interpreting themes ranging from Native American heritage, early colonial towns, eighteenth- through twentieth-century African-American heritage, and twentieth-century tenant farming. A second resource is Patuxent River Park containing thousands of acres of parkland and interpretive programs linked with archaeological research conducted at Mount Calvert. Ten archaeological sites have been identified in the cluster.

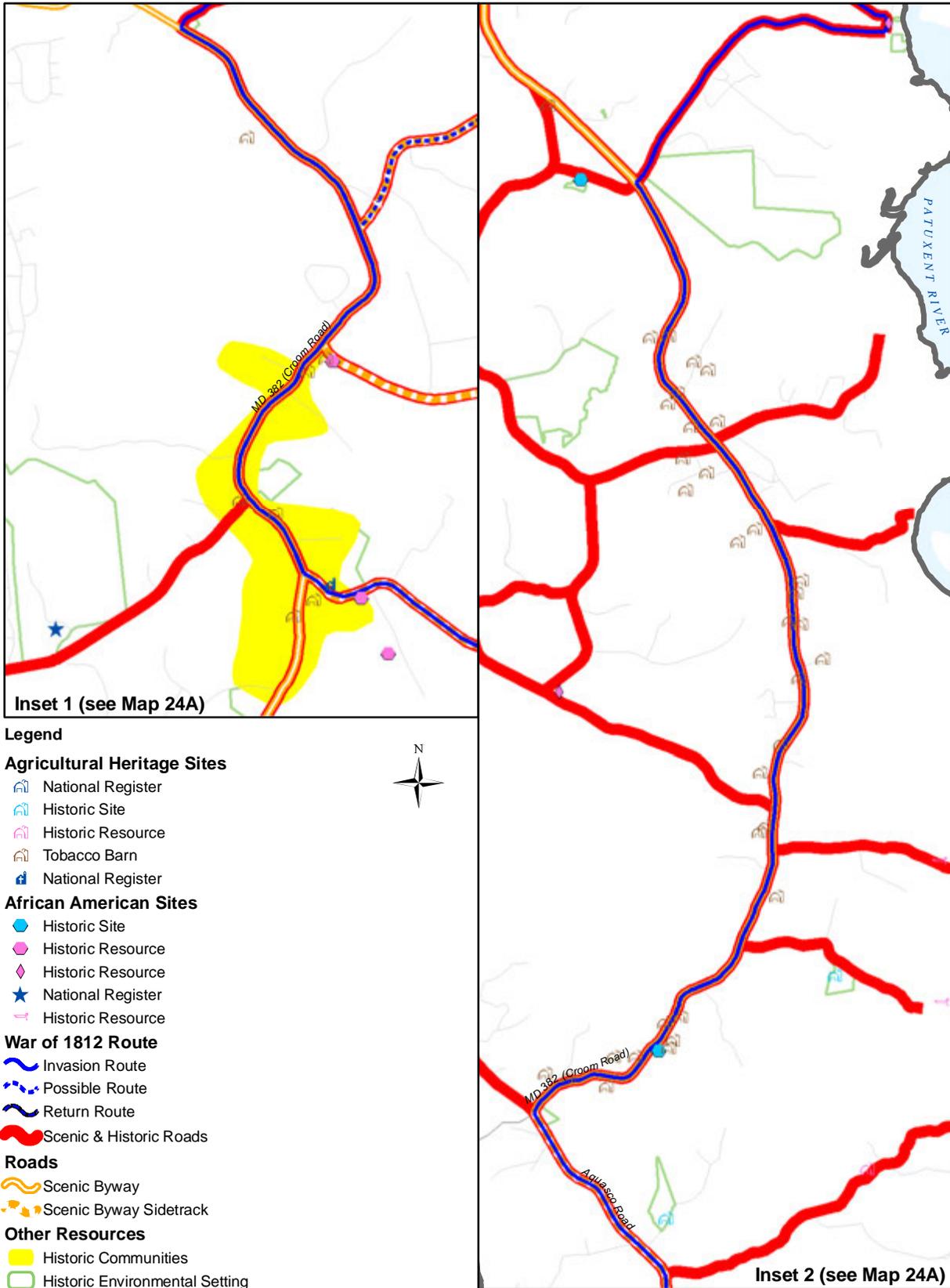


*The historic site Mount Calvert is the only historic structure remaining at the site of Charles Town, the first seat of the Prince George's County government. It is also distinguished by its scenic location overlooking the confluence of the Western Branch and the Patuxent River.*

# MAP 23A: HERITAGE THEMES



# MAP 23B: HERITAGE THEMES





*Mount Calvert Historical and Archeological Park features ongoing archeological research and provides programs and hands-on activities for the public.*

### *Nottingham Cluster*

M-NCPPC owns parkland in and around the historic town of Nottingham including archaeological resources that contribute to the interpretation of town development from the early eighteenth through the twentieth century, seventeenth-century industry, the international slave trade during the eighteenth century, historic Native American villages, and the War of 1812. Forty-three archaeological sites have been identified in the cluster.

### *Aquasco/Woodville Cluster*

The Aquasco/Woodville cluster covers the southeastern terminus of the subregion. Numerous public properties are located in the area including Aquasco Farm and land associated with Patuxent River Park. There is enormous interpretive potential in the area including early colonial settlement, early eighteenth-century African-American heritage, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural African-American communities, nineteenth-century town development, and agriculture. Nineteen archaeological sites have been identified in the cluster.

### *Woodyard Cluster*

The Woodyard served as a central hub of human activity from the seventeenth century to the end of the Revolutionary War. The anchor of the cluster is the Woodyard Archaeological site consisting of Stephen West's Revolutionary War factory. Henry Darnall's seventeenth-century plantation was also located at the Woodyard and contained one of the largest complexes of slave quarters in early Prince George's County. Three archaeological sites have been identified in the cluster.

### *Long Old Fields/Forestville Cluster*

British troops stopped at Long Old Fields on their way to Washington during the War of 1812. Long Old Fields is also important in the development of towns and interior plantations in Prince George's County from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century. Forty-eight archaeological sites were identified in the cluster.

### *Upper Marlboro and Western Branch Collington Drainage Cluster*

Upper Marlboro and the area directly north of the town were important to the history of Prince George's County from the beginning of the eighteenth through the twentieth century. Some

of the themes present in the cluster include town development, the War of 1812, early eighteenth-century commerce and nineteenth-century industry, and development of interior tobacco plantations. Twenty-three archaeological sites have been identified in the cluster.

#### POLICY 1

Promote understanding, appreciation, and pride in the area's assets and cultural heritage as well as historic sites and resources.

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Enhance school curriculum to incorporate local history through hands-on experiences including visits to cultural sites to promote the subregion's history to wider audiences and engage a larger cultural base.
2. Research the history of general stores and country markets and develop interpretive materials to help the public appreciate the contributions of these buildings to the evolution of the rural communities and their importance to the economics of the subregion.



*The Charles S. Early House is a short distance from the railroad village of Brandywine.*

#### POLICY 2

Encourage private and public preservation activities for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Introduce community-based programs in the school system to promote cultural heritage such as thematic oral history projects.
2. Interpret the history of individual buildings, archeological sites and communities through signage, banners, booklets, educational programs, and heritage trails while making connections with national trail and heritage projects.
3. Promote the establishment of historic preservation or conservation districts in areas threatened by incompatible growth throughout the subregion.



*The historic Wyvill House, also known as Linden Hill, is one of several dwellings built by local carpenter John C. Wyvill.*

#### POLICY 3

Encourage stewardship and the adaptive use of historical sites and other cultural capital.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Create a citizen task force to promote cultural heritage in the subregion.

2. Create a community volunteer program to assist in the repair of old buildings and barns and maintenance of cemeteries.
3. Provide workshops on architectural styles and rehabilitation techniques for property owners.
4. Encourage programs that promote the survival of traditional skills/trades such as traditional building techniques and agriculture.
5. Promote the use of the Historic Property Grant Program, which provides grants for up to \$100,000 for the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or acquisition of historic properties.
6. Maximize and expand the use of the county historic preservation tax credit program.

#### POLICY 4

Promote economic development through heritage tourism and recreation.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Participate in the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program, a state program designed to stimulate economic development through tourism.
2. Develop a logo and promotional literature for directing the public to cultural heritage sites.
3. Enact the BARN AGAIN! Program sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
4. Encourage and facilitate civic and historic sites to make available literature on local tourism sites.
5. Celebrate agriculture through establishment of a regular farmers market and annual farm days/tours.
6. Utilize existing incentive programs tied to agriculture such as various grant and loan programs sponsored by state agencies to layer the programs to maximize the benefits to the property owner.
7. Encourage the expansion of existing, and the establishment of new, agricultural uses such as creative “boutique agriculture” and other possibilities for adaptive re-use and preservation of tobacco barns and other agricultural buildings.
8. Develop interpretive materials, thematic driving tours and walking tour maps, and distribute broadly within the local and Washington metropolitan region.
9. Develop interpretive themes for archeological sites.

#### POLICY 5

Participate in regional, state, and national programs related to cultural heritage and historic preservation.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Actively market the tax credit programs (local, state, and federal) for rehabilitation of historic buildings and enhance the benefits of the existing tax credit program by an extension over a longer time period.
2. Provide for no increase in tax assessments for the specific improvements of the project following a restoration project until the next regular tax assessment cycle.
3. Establish density credits or tax credits for retention of open space around historic sites.
4. Amend the zoning ordinance to require larger buffer areas around historic sites and the environmental setting associated with them.
5. Establish a regular schedule for evaluating and re-evaluating historic resources.

#### POLICY 6

Preserve historic farmsteads, barns, and other structures which have historical significance and define the rural heritage of the county.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Work with agricultural, environmental, and land trust organizations to promote protection of resources through easements or other preservation strategies.
2. Establish conservation easements for historic properties with easement-holding organizations.

#### POLICY 7

Maintain and protect scenic and historic roads as valuable contributions to the character of the historic communities.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Expand and introduce new multiuse trails that follow heritage themes and routes.
2. Provide support for small business growth that supports historic communities and provides complementary uses especially at stores or markets located at crossroads.

