



**ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT      COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

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Eric S. Colvin, Commissioner  
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner  
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

**NEWS RELEASE** *for Immediate Release*

**No. 2022 – 226**

**December 8, 2022, 9:30 a.m.**

**Rural Legacy Area Expanded; 1.3 Million Awarded in Grants for St. Mary's County Conservation Efforts**

**LEONARDTOWN, MD** – On October 12, 2022, the Maryland Board of Public Works, Rural Legacy Board approved an expansion of 17,065 acres in the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area, almost doubling the size of this preservation boundary. Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development requested the expansion of the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area, which was supported by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County. The additional acreage represents environmentally significant land bordering the St. Mary's and Potomac Rivers, as well as areas surrounding the Naval Air Station Patuxent River's Webster Outlying Field (WOLF). Conservation within the Area will provide water quality benefits and prevent encroachment on the Navy's operations at WOLF.

Additionally, the Rural Legacy Board unanimously approved more than \$27.1 million in Rural Legacy Program grants for conservation easement acquisitions, reflecting the highest annual amount appropriated since 2002. St. Mary's County's two Rural Legacy Areas are part of this grant award. Funding from these grants will permanently protect working farms, forests, open space, shorelines, and wetlands — plus cultural and historical resources.

**The Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust received a grant for \$852,262 for the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area.** These funds will be used to acquire conservation easements to protect forests, natural and archeological areas, farmland, and historic sites. Portions of the Area are designated by the Smithsonian Center for Natural Areas as critical wildlife habitat in need of protection. The Board approved the designation of the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area in 1998.

**Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development received a grant for \$493,984 for the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area.** This grant will match Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funds to acquire conservation easements protecting the Area's rich farmland, forests, wetlands, historic sites, and wildlife habitat. The Board approved the designation of the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area in 2006.

To date, over 29,000 acres of land have been permanently preserved through various agriculture land preservation programs in St. Mary's County.

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St. Mary's County Commissioner Randy Guy expressed his gratitude to the governor and Board of Public Works for the grants; "This funding will support our mission and ongoing work to preserve our county's environment, heritage, and rural character," Commissioner Guy said.

**To learn more about local land preservation and conservation programs, please visit:**  
<https://www.yesstmarysmd.com/industries/Agriculture-and-Aquaculture/Preservation>.

**To learn more about the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area, please visit** <http://www.somdrdc.org>  
or contact the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development at (240) 577-6413.

**To learn more about the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area, please visit** <https://ptlt.org> or  
contact the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust at (301) 862-3421.

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