

Nanjemoy



Naturally



**A SHARED
VISION
2002-2032**

Nanjemoy Naturally

Nanjemoy is a hidden treasure in Charles County and a tremendous natural asset for the state of Maryland. Located less than 30 miles from the nation's capital, it is home to approximately 3000 people, 2000 great blue herons, 50 nesting bald eagles, a fleet of 160 sunken ships, 50 million year old fossils, and numerous historic and archeological sites from every period of American history. Nanjemoy has a rich history, and a future full of possibilities.

Nanjemoy is a vibrant and diverse community, committed to preserving the natural beauty, culture and history of the area. The name of Nanjemoy evolved from Native Americans who lived here from the 1600s and 1700s. Some current residents can trace their roots to revolutionary times when George Washington owned land in Nanjemoy. Recent residents have been drawn here by the beauty and solitude of the area. These residents have joined with other interested citizens to form a vision of the future of our community. While most residents would like Nanjemoy to stay the same, many realize that change is inevitable. This vision proposes to direct this change in a way that will honor the past, to respect our natural resources and to protect our quality of life while addressing current needs and providing a viable community for future generations.

About this Vision Document

This Vision Document is the product of a series of meetings that took place in Nanjemoy from May 2001 to August 2002. About 50 people attended these meetings on a regular basis, although many others participated, contributed and were part of the Vision Team. This document is a compilation of ideas collected from surveys and public meetings, information gathered by team members and workgroups, research, and input from experts in many fields.

Through this document, a 30-year plan is proposed for Nanjemoy, a vision of how the community will look in the future. The intent is that this document be used for future proposals, documents and funding requests.

Nanjemoy Naturally - A Shared Vision (2002-2032)

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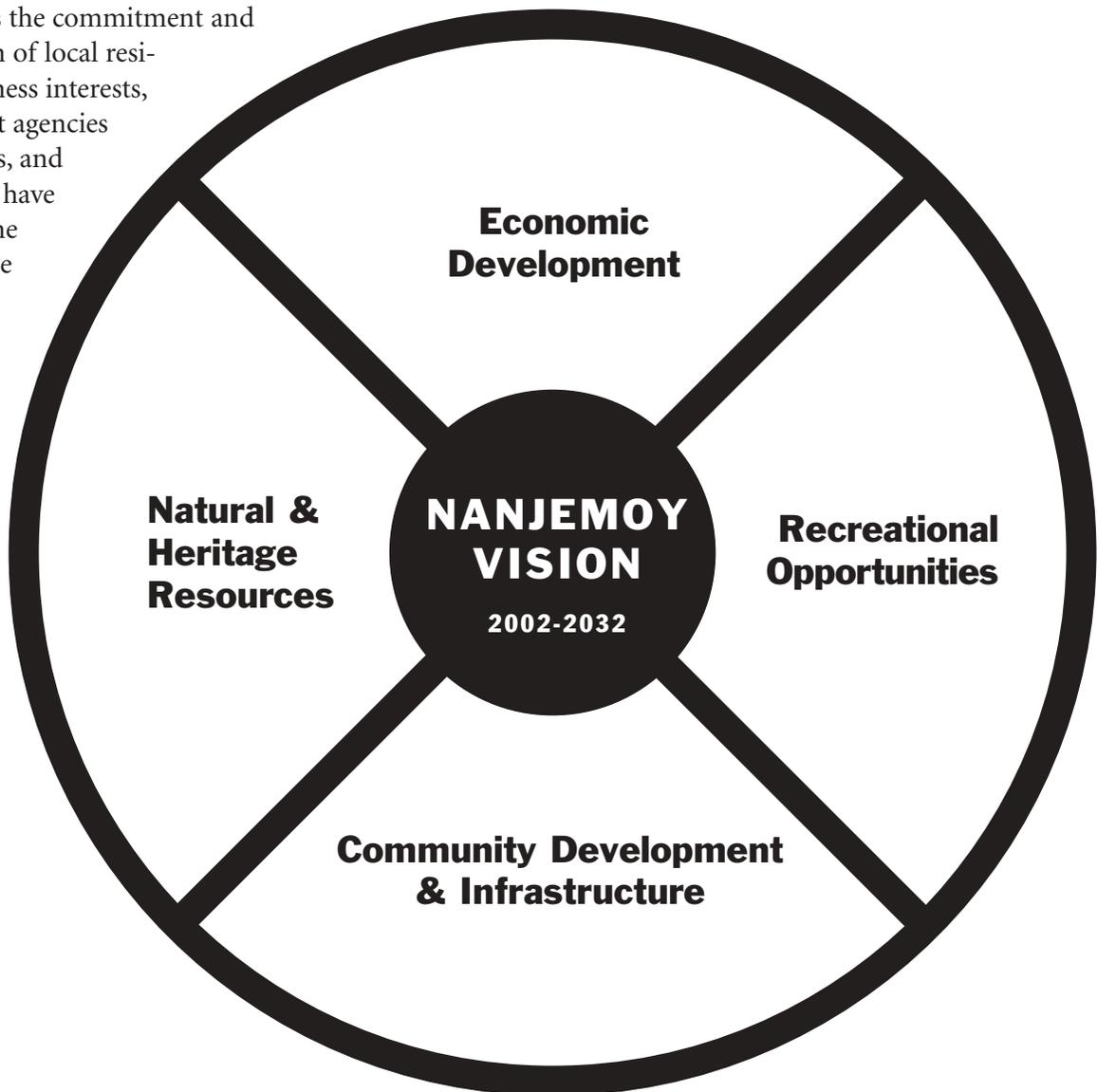
Nanjemoy Vision Area



The Nanjemoy Wagon Wheel

A wagon wheel is a sturdy object. It has a hub, spokes and a round metal band that connect all of the parts. If all parts fit together smoothly, the wheel can move forward and a well-constructed wheel will keep the wagon rolling in spite of any bumps in the road.

The wagon wheel is an appropriate symbol for Nanjemoy. It reminds us of our agricultural, fishing, shipping and trading past while it gives us a mechanism to move toward our vision for the future. It represents the hard work and the dedication of many citizens. The hub of the wheel represents our shared vision. The four sections defined by the spokes represent different but equally important aspects of our vision: Natural and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Recreational Opportunities and Community Development and Infrastructure. The band that connects the wheel is the commitment and cooperation of local residents, business interests, government agencies and officials, and others who have a stake in the future of the area.



Nanjemoy Vision Process — The History

In December 2000, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the State of Maryland and Charles County entered into an agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, stating that the three groups would work together to develop plans for all public lands purchased in the Nanjemoy area.

In April 2001, BLM conducted a workshop to facilitate local involvement in the planning process. Residents and interested citizens came to realize that a more comprehensive plan was needed for the Nanjemoy area.

In May 2001, a newsletter was sent to all households in Nanjemoy, and emailed to 300 others, asking people to share their vision of the future of the area. On May 30, 100 people attended a community meeting held at the Nanjemoy Community Center. In addition to the meeting participants, surveys were gathered at Little League games, Nanjemoy Community Day, Nanjemoy Heritage Day, Oak Grove Baptist Church and by email. From more than 250 surveys, four major focus areas emerged: environmental, economic, recreational and social. A workgroup was formed for each area. Workgroups updated their progress in large group meetings which were held on the following dates.

	DATE	MEETING FOCUS	FACILITATOR
2001	May 30	Community Meeting and Surveys	Team of Presenters
	June 10	Formation of 4 Workgroups	Terry Cummings
	June 24	Goals of the Workgroup	Tammy Vitale
	July 10	Workgroups Examine Needs	Terry Cummings
	September 25	Economic Report and Heritage Day Plans	Mike McCook
	October 23	Outline Vision Process, Group work	Connie Dunbar
	November 27	Recreation Report, Murray Levy attends	Mark Rose
2002	January 21	Vision Outline and Support- Glenn Eugster	Sherwood Shankland
	March 2	Workshop with Stakeholders	Sherwood Shankland
	March 28	Sort Group Work, Outline for Document	Sherwood Shankland
	May 19	History—How the Past Affects the Future	Sherwood Shankland
	June 25	Preview Document and Action Plans	Sherwood Shankland
	July 27	Preview Revised Document and Action Plans	Sherwood Shankland
	August 21	Action Plans	Deanna Wheeler

All meetings were open to the public. Meetings were advertised by roadside signs throughout Nanjemoy, e-mail to over 350 households, website postings on nanjemoy.net, announcements at various meetings, notices in church bulletins and phone calls. The March 2, Vision Workshop invited over 70 stakeholders including businesses, government agencies, citizens and organizations. Consensus from the March workshop, workgroup reports, surveys, monthly meetings, Charles County documents and related information is the basis for this document.

A Vision for Nanjemoy in 30 Years

G O A L S

- **Protect** and enhance the quality of life for residents of Nanjemoy
- **Preserve** the natural environment and water quality
- **Foster** sustainable economic growth to support this community vision
- **Increase** awareness of our heritage and promote enjoyment of our natural and recreational resources
- **Involve** citizens in decisions that impact the local area

In 30 years, the Nanjemoy area will be one of the few wild, natural regions in the Washington Metropolitan area. Large tract of contiguous public lands will provide opportunities for hiking, bicycling, camping, birding, picnicking, horseback riding and hunting. Clean waterways will be available for boating, paddling, fishing, swimming and water trails. People will discover history and culture from every period of American history; they will also find the beauty and spirit of nature in Nanjemoy.

The environment will be cherished and respected. Wetlands, streams, creeks and the river will be clean after years of effective sediment and septic control. Wildlife corridors will be free of intrusion. Crabs and fish will be abundant, and large sturgeons will be a frequent sight. Fish will be toxin free and a catch-of-the-day will be eaten without concern.

Economic development will be centered on Nanjemoy's natural beauty and heritage. Small businesses, cottage industries and farming will flourish. Visitors will be able to take a driving tour of Nanjemoy and shop at homes of local artisans, the general store, cafe, and the local heritage museum's gift shop. They may choose to crab or fish with local watermen, kayak around sunken ships, view a large variety of birds and other wildlife, stay at bed and breakfasts, visit working farms and enjoy the peacefulness of a natural environment.

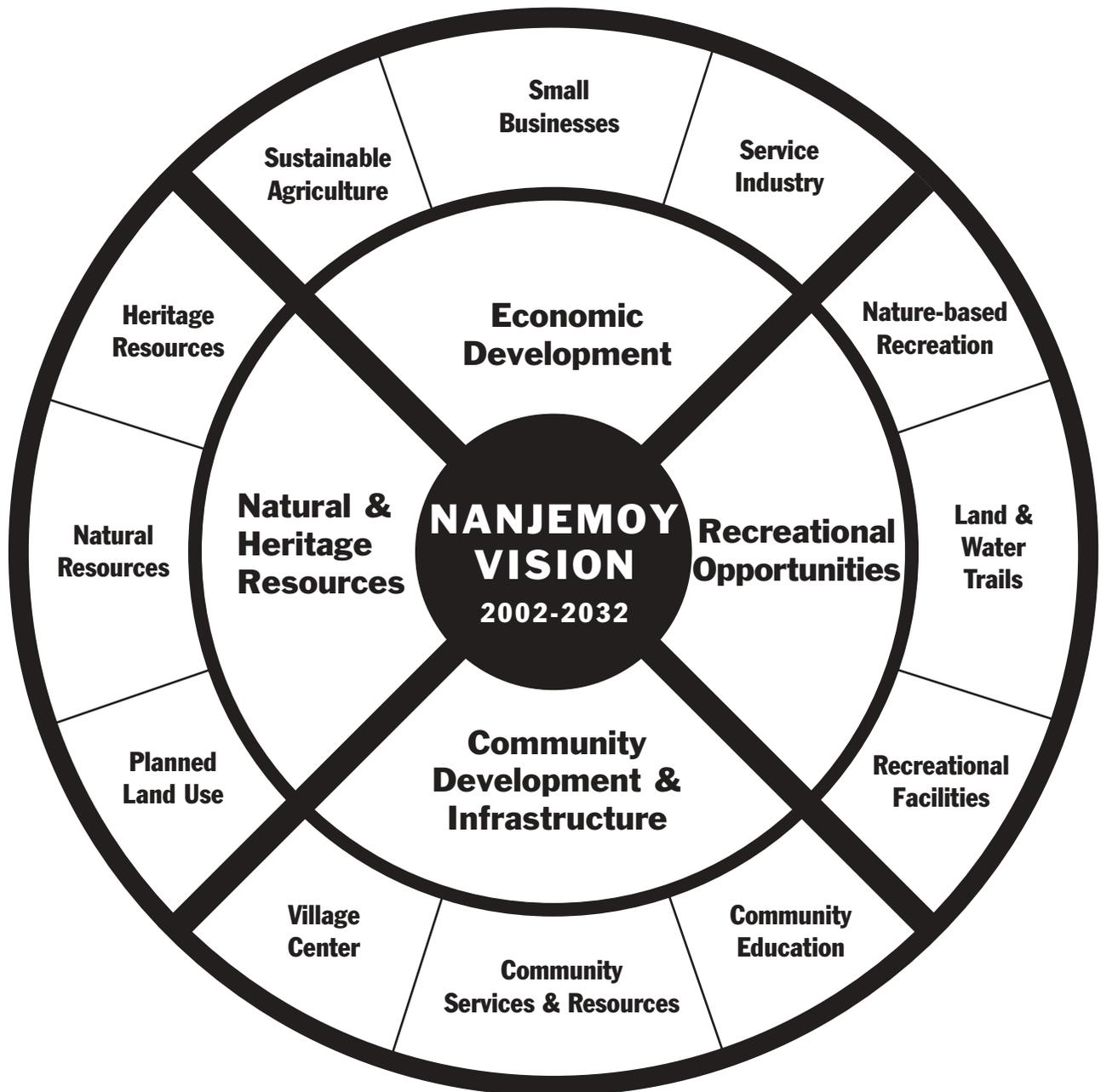
Nanjemoy's citizens will take great pride in the appearance and cleanliness of the area. The infrastructure of roads, bridges, public buildings and signs will complement the natural surroundings. Development will enhance the rural character of the area and an acceptable level of housing will be standard for all citizens.

The citizens of Nanjemoy will enjoy a higher quality of life. More citizens will work at home through telecommuting or home businesses. There will be facilities for recreation and team sports, areas in which to picnic and swim and community-oriented activities to enjoy. A village center will contain health services, an expanded post office, sports facilities and other services that support the community. Job training and adult education will be available. The local school will be a model school. The churches will continue to be a focal point for many families. Community celebrations will be anticipated from year to year.

Nanjemoy will be an example of residents and government working together to preserve the unique qualities of the area for generations to come.

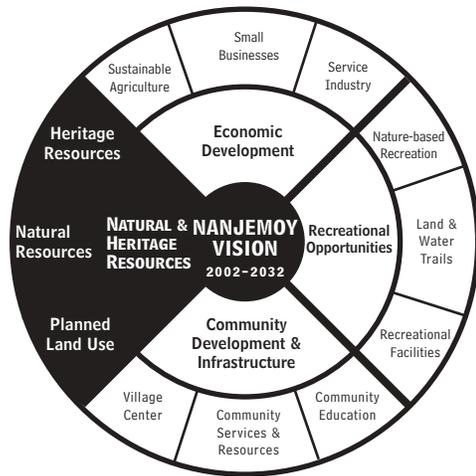
Nanjemoy Vision Framework

The chart below shows the scope and framework of the Nanjemoy Vision. The vision framework includes an outline with a narrative summary of each spoke and related topics. It is based on consensus from the workgroups with supporting documentation from County, State and Federal agencies. The complete reports of each workgroup are located in the appendices of this document.



Natural and Heritage Resources

Conservation, preservation and protection of heritage and natural resources will be given priority in every initiative and land use decision.



NATURAL RESOURCES

- Compile a comprehensive inventory of natural resources for use by groups and individuals
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Educate citizens and increase awareness about ways to protect natural resources including the water quality of streams, Nanjemoy Creek and Potomac River
- Designate scenic areas
- Designate Riverside Road/Rt. 224 as a scenic/protected road

HERITAGE RESOURCES

- Compile a comprehensive inventory of historical and cultural resources for use by groups and individuals
- Protect and/or acquire heritage resources
- Strengthen connections with Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management and Department of Tourism
- Establish a committee from public sector and local citizens to develop a heritage plan that supports the Nanjemoy vision.
- Design and place interpretive kiosks at significant heritage sites
- Develop consistent, aesthetically pleasing signs for heritage sites that respect the natural surroundings
- Establish a museum to study, record, illustrate and celebrate the natural, historical and cultural resources of Nanjemoy

PLANNED LAND USE

- Promote rural village concept
- Maintain rural, wooded character of the area through
 - ~ Forest legacy
 - ~ Zoning regulations
 - ~ Land purchases for public use, conservation and preservation
 - ~ Conservation easements and transfer of development rights (TDRs)
 - ~ Environmentally sensitive infrastructure for public land
 - ~ Signage for public land and natural/historical/cultural sites designed to respect the environment and rural character of the area
 - ~ Cluster housing
- Restrict clear cutting
- Increase public awareness of conservation and transfer of development rights (TDR) program
- Prohibit high impact/commercial land use in areas with high natural value

Charles County should take the lead in every effort to purchase, protect and or conserve open space and culturally/historically important sites (Fermata, p.21).

Nanjemoy is rich in natural resources. Bordered by the Potomac River, this area contains large tracts of contiguous forests, where nesting forest birds and abundant wildlife can be found. The Nanjemoy Creek, one of the State's most unpolluted watersheds, provides a nesting site for 2000 Great Blue Herons in one of the Eastern coast's largest rookeries. Nanjemoy provides habitat for a large population of Bald Eagles, Osprey and diverse waterfowl. The rare Dwarf Wedge Mussel, an endangered species, is found in the upper regions of Nanjemoy Creek. Large beds of submerged aquatic vegetation provide spawning areas for fish and crabs and feeding grounds for migrating geese and ducks. It is essential that the conservation, preservation and protection of these natural resources be given priority in any land use decisions in this area.

The State of Maryland and Charles County are committed to protecting natural/heritage resources. In 1992, the State of Maryland adopted the Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act. Seven land use visions for Maryland's future are identified by the State and implemented in the Charles County Comprehensive Plan (1997, p. 1-1):

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of the above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

Although these visions are in the Charles County Comprehensive Plan, "...the Plan acknowledges that the County's rural areas will become increasingly attractive to development and existing strategies may be insufficient to protect important resources." (Charles County Comprehensive Plan, 1997, p.15-15).

The simple tactics of leaving the habitat alone can afford the County the luxury of investing in a long term management plan...It is possible to purchase land today without worrying about the funds to develop it because the natural habitat increases in value as a nature tourism resource simply by leaving it alone (Fermata, p.21).

The Comprehensive Plan outlines specific goals, objectives and strategies to address the protection of natural resources and preservation of heritage resources. Preservation concepts in the plan include historic overlay zones, historic districts, village centers, and scenic roads and landscapes.

In 1999, the Charles County Commissioners adopted the Land Preservation and Recreation Plan. The Plan encourages greater preservation of open space through the establishment of linked greenways and a greater emphasis on protection of County heritage resources. Its overall goal is "to create a physical and social environ-

ment which accommodates the recreational needs and interests of County residents and demonstrates Charles County's commitment to protection of sensitive resource lands" (Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, p. 95).

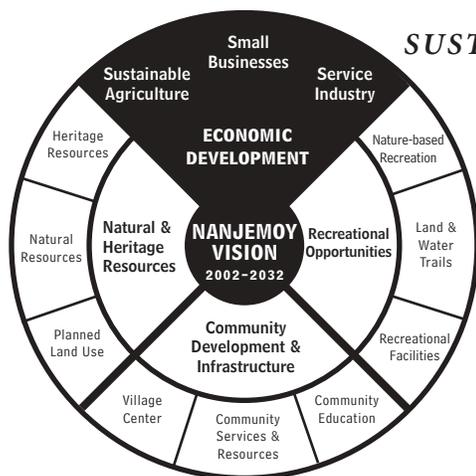
The Charles County Commissioners and the Department of Tourism contracted a study in 2000 conducted by Fermata. The study, Nature and Experiential Tourism Report and Recommendations for Charles County, MD, states, “Heritage tourism thrives in areas that preserve their authenticity...Every opportunity to preserve culturally, historically, or naturally important land must be made. Preservation can be done through purchasing, leasing, conservation easements, mitigation, oil spill restitution, or reaching agreements with landowners” (Fermata, p. 21). [Nature tourism] requires an investment in habitat, which is shorthand for “buy more land” (Fermata, p. 20). Heritage resources in the Nanjemoy area include paleontology sites, historical and archeological sites dating back to Native Americans, and the sunken ships of Mallows Bay. The County has begun heritage preservation through a survey of historic sites. Seven structures have already been identified in Nanjemoy. Local residents have also inventoried historical resources in the area.

The value of our natural resources is undisputable. The Charles County Comprehensive Plan, Land Preservation and Recreation Plan and the tourism study by Fermata make it clear that planned land use and decisive action must be well crafted and implemented to protect natural and heritage resources that will otherwise be lost.

Douglas Point—Keep this pristine area wild and green. If the County wants to attract nature tourists, strip mining, clear cutting woodlands, and building machinery to reach ships in a dredged channel is not the way to go. The additional noise, dust, and traffic will not increase the quality of life for current residents, and it is doubtful that it would attract new companies other than similar extraction-related ones. Charles County leaders and citizens should do what they can to see that as much of these forests and wetlands are left undisturbed if the community is going to commit to a comprehensive nature tourism plan. Today’s leaders of Charles County must have the foresight to preserve natural resources for the future dividends-aesthetic and financial—that they will pay in the future.
(Fermata, p. 36).

Economic Development

An economic development plan and council will direct and support increase sustainable economic growth that respects the natural and heritage resources of Nanjemoy.



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Preserve the agricultural heritage of greater Nanjemoy
- Foster and support alternatives to traditional farming
- Encourage techniques to preserve water quality, such as Integrated Pest Management, while discouraging intensive use of chemicals
- Improve public awareness of conservation easements, agricultural easements, and transfer of development rights (TDR's) programs that sustain agriculture and protect rural landscapes

SMALL BUSINESSES

- Conduct an inventory of natural and heritage assets that could support economic development
- Foster and support viable and appropriate small businesses, particularly those related to outdoor recreation and heritage tourism
- Seek grants to fund small business development

SERVICE INDUSTRY

- Identify and support sustainable service industries for our community and visitors
- Strengthen connections with Charles County Department of Tourism, Planning and Growth Management and Economic Development Commission (EDC)

The overall vision for community character in the Rural Areas is to preserve rural character in an economically sustainable manner. This means preserving agricultural, forested, marsh and waterfront landscapes, protecting important views, scenic vistas and references to County history and culture, and maintaining and enhancing rural villages. New economic activity is necessary to keep the rural areas vibrant, but it respects and fits into the older, existing landscape rather than taking it over and dominating it. (Charles Co. Comprehensive Plan, 1997, 14-16)

Sustainable economic development is a priority in this area. Traditionally, Nanjemoy residents have farmed or worked on the water. In recent years, farming has declined and the waters provide little income. Agriculture in Charles County, which includes farming, fishing, forestry and mining, now comprises less than 1% of the local economy (Census 1990). Alternatives such as greenhouses, pick-your-own farms, aquaculture, alpaca farms, cut flowers and vineyards are being explored to replace tobacco and traditional farming.

According to the 1990 Census for Nanjemoy (3rd Election District), 1517 people out of 1600 people in the workforce commute to work with an average travel time of 43 minutes. Only 147 people are self-employed. Although there are few job opportunities in Nanjemoy, there exists a high potential for home-based businesses, from cottage industries and arts/crafts, to technology/internet related jobs.

Attracting heritage and nature travelers does not require the vast capital investments needed for industrial parks, shopping malls, casinos, and amusement parks. Yet, in a sense, it requires something even harder to come by than money: it requires a commitment to protecting and enhancing the habitats that support wildlife viewing. (Fermata, p. 6)

One strategy for economic development in the Nanjemoy area is through heritage tourism. Heritage tourism involves an assessment of Nanjemoy's unique cultural and natural resources and investing in planning and marketing strategies to attract visitors to the region. Charles County's interest in furthering recreation and heritage tourism opportunities was captured in the contracted report, *Nature and Experiential Tourism, Report and Recommendations for Charles County, MD* (Fermata, 2000). The report evaluated the County's most significant cultural and natural resources, and provided recommendations for planning, marketing and implementation. The report also identified the economic impacts of the tourism and heritage tourism industry. In 1998, tourists in the County spent

over \$58 million and 820 people were employed in the industry. Tax receipts were \$2.7 million and local hotel receipts were approximately \$450,000. The Office of the Governor reported that in 1999, Maryland's 47 state parks and six state forests had more than 10 million visitors statewide. The 2000 Year End Maryland Heritage Travel Report found that of the total tourism visitation in the State, approximately 27% of all trips are heritage tourism related.

The County's nature tourism (Fermata) report describes how local economies are bolstered by nature and heritage tourism. In a Delaware Bay shore tourism study, almost 40% of birders who visited had incomes of over \$100,000. These travelers spent \$667 per person on trips averaging four days equating to \$121 per day in expenditures per person. This includes direct expenditures but it does not account for multiplier or "ripple" effect on the local economy. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis and the study consultants estimated that a conservative, average tourism multiplier for food and lodging in the heritage tourism business is 2.0. The \$121 per person spent by a birder on the Delaware shore actually generates about \$240 in the local economy.

More importantly, the Fermata report recognizes that Charles County, and especially Nanjemoy, is in an enviable position to capitalize on the growth and interest in heritage tourism and especially birding. The county has diverse landscapes consisting of tidal rivers, wetlands and upland coastal forests; it has one of the most dense populations of nesting Bald Eagles and Great Blue Herons in the lower 48 states; it is only 45 minutes from Washington DC; Nanjemoy, a designated Heritage Greenway, is bordered by the Potomac River; it encompasses Nanjemoy Creek, which is nationally recognized for its outstanding ecological resources; and the Nanjemoy area is well known for its documented Native American archeological sites and its role during the colonial period, War of 1812 and Civil War. The report summarizes these observations by saying that, "simply put, Charles County is positioned to offer these millions of visitors an opportunity to experience the natural history that shaped and fashioned the founding of our nation."

Key recommendations in the nature tourism report state Charles County must have a "plan to maximize the nature-viewing potential of county, state and federally owned properties ..." (Fermata p. 5). This includes several nearby protected properties such as: Chapman's Forest, Mattawoman Natural Environmental Area, Maxwell Hall, Friendship Farm and Mallows Bay/ Douglas Point. In addition, the report discusses the Lower Potomac River Conservation Strategy, noting the outcome of the effort will result in increased public water access and improved water quality protection. The Fermata report evaluates and makes recommendations for heritage tourism opportunities for Mallows Bay, Friendship Farm, Purse State Park and Douglas Point. The report's recommendations are compatible with Nanjemoy's vision.

Experiential tourists, however, are searching for the natural, historical, and cultural heart of the region, and their defining principle is authenticity...Nature tourism, like historical and cultural tourism, is a quest for the essence, the soul of a region.
(Fermata, p.13)

Nature tourism involves more than protecting what already exists. It requires a long-range commitment to expanding natural resources and restoring habitat that has been altered or destroyed. Nature tourism habitat needs expansion for the health of the environment, but it also needs expansion for the health of the businesses associated with it. (Fermata, p.20)

Mallows Bay

- Birding
- Kayaking/canoeing (possibly off limits during nesting season)
- Interpretive Center at ship graveyard

Purse State Park

- Birding/wildlife
- Biking Trail

Friendship Farm

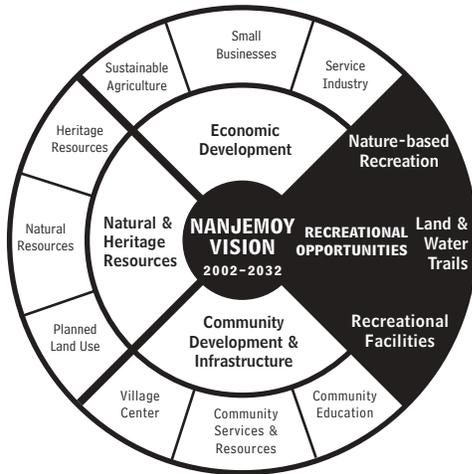
- Hub for outdoor/nature tourism: canoeing/kayaking, hiking, camping, fishing
- Nature/Visitor/Interpretive Center
- Working Farm

Douglas Point

- Habitat protection

Recreational Opportunities

Diverse recreational opportunities will be provided that respect the natural and heritage resources, quality of life and rural nature of Nanjemoy.



NATURE-BASED RECREATION

- Coordinate with government agencies in planning uses for public lands
- Improve water access
- Increase number and types of natural habitat viewing areas from the public
- Develop consistent signs and informational pamphlets reflective of the natural surroundings

LAND AND WATER TRAILS

- Create a network of trails for various interests and abilities
- Install consistent signage, information boxes and parking when appropriate, at trailheads
- Monitor and maintain trails
- Establish sites for primitive camping where appropriate

RECREATION FACILITIES

- Support a village center sports/recreation complex
- Enhance complex with picnic areas, concession, playground and restrooms

Over the past decade, the number of people participating in outdoor recreation on a monthly basis has risen to 67% of the population. The five most popular forms of outdoor recreation are walking (42%), swimming (40%), driving for pleasure (32%), picnicking (32%) and fishing (28%) (Roper Starch, 1999). The popularity of birding has risen 155%, the fastest growing outdoor sport since 1982.

These and many more recreational opportunities are abundant in the Nanjemoy area. Access to water allows opportunities for swimming, power boating, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, water sports, sailing, crabbing, clamming, and touring. Examples of land-based activities

include hiking, birding and nature viewing, driving tours, bicycling, horseback riding, hunting, camping, stargazing and fossil hunting.

According to a study completed in 1997, 32% of the American people 16 years and older go hiking 13 times or more a year. Hikers tend to be both women (46%) and men (54%). 60% of these hikers are 35 years old or older and 52% are married. The household income of 43% of this group is more than \$50,000 (ORCA, 1997). While hiking is an extremely popular recreational activity, it does not result in significant impact to the environment.

Outdoor recreation contributes to both the physical fitness and mental well-being of County residents and visitors. Recreation sites, facilities and open space are important components of Charles County's quality of life. (Charles County Comprehensive Plan, 1997, p.12-1)

In Nanjemoy it is possible to provide for all types of water activities while preserving environmentally sensitive areas. A low impact but widely practiced activity is paddling. Nanjemoy boasts outstanding recreational opportunities for paddlers. From touring the sunken ships at Mallow's Bay and fossil hunting at Douglas Point, to birding and fishing in the numerous marshes along the shoreline, paddlers experience the beauty of nature. The excitement of finding a first shark's tooth, catching a first fish, and spotting an eagle grasping a large fish in its talons creates lasting memories.

Areas along the shoreline which have already been developed or highly impacted by past use could provide launch facilities for powerboats and fishing piers for non-boaters. Some of the nation's best bass fishing is on Nanjemoy's waters. Increased access to the water will provide greater recreational opportunities by residents and visitors.

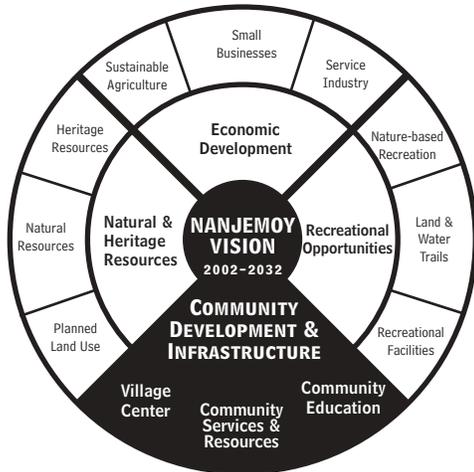
Open land near the village center could be developed as a sports/recreation complex and community center. This would meet the immediate need of local residents for playing fields, give focus to the rural village concept and protect our natural resources. In all cases high impact activities should be located in less sensitive areas or where development already exists.

Wilson Farm/Mallows Bay, Douglas Point, Maryland Observatory, Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area, Doncaster State Forest and Friendship Farm are public lands. These public lands with future acquisitions create large tracts of contiguous forested land. The demonstrated interest and commitment of residents dedicated to the preservation of Nanjemoy's significant resources offer an opportunity for local, state and federal cooperation to create a unified recreation and preservation plan. With proper planning and management Nanjemoy's recreational opportunities may be enjoyed now and preserved for future generations.

Open space provides "breathing space." It is open land for recreation. It is open land noted for its natural beauty and scenic value. Open space is also land where resources are protected, preserved or put to productive use; land that performs a function vital to man. (Charles County Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, 1999, p. 2)

Community Development and Infrastructure

The quality of life will be enhanced through community involvement and appropriate social and public services.



VILLAGE CENTER

- Strengthen connections with Charles County Planning and Growth Management and Charles County Public Facilities
- Plan and develop the Nanjemoy village center

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RESOURCES

- Enhance and support social services that meet the basic needs of residents including standard housing and indoor plumbing
- Assess the need for additional public transportation
 - ~ Strengthen connections with Charles County Community Services
 - ~ Establish a ride-share board
- Promote a clean environment through community awareness, pride and ownership
- Establish a satellite recycling center
- Develop or enhance ties with nonprofit civic groups such as Habitat for Humanity and Lions Club
- Create a local directory of businesses and services
- Promote increased communication
 - ~ Improved cellular services
 - ~ Internet postings (nanjemoy.net)
 - ~ Community resource center
 - ~ Community newsletter, meetings and bulletin postings

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- Expand available adult education and job skill training to meet the needs of citizens and local employers
- Expand youth programs
- Establish satellite library services

Election District 3 in Charles County includes most of Nanjemoy. According to the 2000 Census for this area, 3169 people live in Nanjemoy, the median age is 36.7 years old as compared to the County's 34.6 years old, 73.4% are 18 years or older, 65% are white, 34% are Black or African American, and 77% of the citizens live in family households. According to the 1990 census, the median family household income was \$36,378. 160 out of 1150 houses lacked complete plumbing and 103 lack complete kitchen facilities. 19% of the people live below the poverty line. 60% of the people earned a high school diploma. Most people (92%)

commute to work, 66% of the workers drive alone, 26% share a ride and 0.5% use mass transportation. The average length of commute is 43 minutes.

Most of Nanjemoy is zoned in the Agricultural Conservation District. This zoning district attempts to “preserve the agricultural industry, prevent scattered uncontrolled development, and retain the rural character of an area.” (Charles County Comprehensive Plan, 1997, p.15–_) The area of Nanjemoy located on Rt. 6 and Liverpool Point Road is designated as a Village Center. "The concept of the Village is included in the plan to recognize and provide for the special needs of the rural unincorporated population centers. Villages perform a number of functions in the growth management program, including serving as rural service centers and locations for rural residential development. Characteristics common to most of the villages are post offices, country stores and, frequently, fire departments. Villages tend to be residential in character, but they can offer some employment through limited commercial services as well as public or institutional uses... The Plan’s objective for Villages is to preserve and enhance their present character so that they may continue to act as rural service areas and to serve their traditional roles in County Life." (Charles County Comprehensive Plan, p. 4–13)

Nanjemoy could sustain a rural village—a livable, pedestrian-friendly area where community facilities, social services and commercial development could be concentrated. This concept would make these resources convenient for the community and would spare areas which are more environmentally sensitive. The village center would contain a post office, a library and a substation for the Sheriff’s Office. It would also be the location for a complex of sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas and a community center.

Community Services would be enhanced with a person acting as a liaison between community groups, school, churches and government agencies to help individuals in need. Expanded health and dental services will be available. Programs would be established which would support our youth, but would also help to build connections across generations. Celebrations and special events will foster community spirit.

Public transportation will be enhanced to carry people to commuter hubs to connect to work and places outside of Nanjemoy. It will also be available for after–school and Saturday activities. Parking lots will be established for carpooling and for visitors to the area. Bike routes/lanes will be established. A ride–share board would be posted and maintained in the Village Center.

Quality housing would be available for all and would replace the substandard units some of our neighbors now live in. The concept of cluster housing would be explored. Information on building options for environmentally healthy housing would be easily available to citizens. A “green” infrastructure for all public buildings and facilities would be encouraged.

Through education and community involvement, Nanjemoy would be maintained as a clean and trash–free environment.

Nanjemoy's Assets

- The citizens of Nanjemoy
- The support of local churches, clubs and organizations
- Roads ideal for bicycling
- Proximity to Washington, D.C. by car
- Working Farms
- Minimal noise pollution
- Minimal traffic
- Dark skies/minimal light pollution
- Cleaner air and water

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Potomac River
- Tidal Nanjemoy Creek
- Nanjemoy Creek Great Blue Heron Rookery
- Streams
- Marshes and wetlands
- Large submerged aquatic grass beds
- Maryland Point Swamp/Mudd Marsh
- Thorne Gut
- Beaverdam Creek and Hancock Run – Dwarf wedge mussel habitat
- Large fish populations
- Fish spawning areas and hatcheries
- Diverse birds and wildlife habitat
- Rare, threatened and endangered species
- Old growth forests
- Thousands of acres of forested land
- Scenic roadways and vistas
- Large tracts of undeveloped land
- Miles of undeveloped Potomac River waterfront
- Dark skies for astronomical observations

PUBLIC PROPERTY

- Douglas Point
- Purse State Park
- Wilson's Farm/Mallows Bay
- Friendship Farm Park
- Walter's Landing

HERITAGE SITES

- Budd's Ferry
- Sandy Point
- Mallows Bay and ship graveyard
- Clifton Beach Resort (WWII prisoner camp)
- WW I Mystery Building, poured concrete
- Liverpool Point and wharf
- Maryland Point Observatory
- Hooker's Camp
- Riverside Wharf
- Stave Mill (sawmill for wooden barrels)
- Grist Mill on Nanjemoy Creek
- Churches
- African American Slave Graveyard
- Native American Burial Sites
- Friendship House
- Efton Hills House
- Archeological sites
- Old cemeteries
- Smith Point
- Maryland Point

- Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area (WMA)
- Doncaster State Forest
- Naval Observatory

BOAT ACCESS

- Friendship Landing
- Walter's Landing

SMALL BOAT/CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH

- Friendship Landing
- Walter's Landing
- Mallows Bay

HUNTING

- Chicamuxen WMA
- Doncaster State Forest
- Purse State Park
- Private hunt clubs

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS/SERVICES

- Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental Coalition, Inc. (N-PEC)
- Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development
- Conservancy for Charles County
- Southern Maryland Audubon Society
- The Nature Conservancy
- Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Educational Center (NCEEC)
- Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School
- Nanjemoy Little League
- Kamp Accomplish
- Camp Merrick
- Melwood Retreat Center
- Charles County Department of Social Services
- Charles County Community Services
 - ~ Senior Program
 - ~ Meals on Wheels
 - ~ Head Start
 - ~ Even Start
 - ~ Health Care
 - ~ Alcoholics Anonymous
 - ~ Dental

HORSE RIDING/HIKING/BICYCLING TRAILS

- Doncaster State Forest – horse riding/hiking/bicycling
- Friendship Farm – hiking
- Douglas Point – hiking
- Purse State Park – hiking
- Chicamuxen WMA – hiking/bicycling

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

- County
- State
- Federal Government (Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service)

- Nanjemoy Community Association
- Nanjemoy Volunteer Fire Department (NVFD)
- NVFD Auxiliary
- Ironsides Rescue Squad
- Charles County Sheriff's Office
- Nanjemoy History Writers
- www.nanjemoy.net
- Southern Maryland Astronomical Observatory at NCEEC
- Charles County Soil Conservation District
- USDA Agencies
 - ~ Rural Development
 - ~ Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - ~ Farm Services Agency
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources

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NANJEMOY: A Historical Overview

by Norma L. Hurley, June 2002 © all rights reserved

ANCIENT AND NATIVE PEOPLES

Before colonists from Europe arrived in the Western Hemisphere, the Nanjemoy area was home to ancient tribes and peoples. Scholars believe that these ancient tribes/peoples were present for thousands of years in pre-history. Most native groups who were present when the colonists arrived were relatively small and were fishers-hunters-gatherers; some additionally cultivated the land and grew vegetables and fruits. Some native groups moved around seasonally; others remained close to a major site year-round. Colonists called those sites villages. Today these Eastern native groups are referred to as Woodland Indians or Native Americans.

Small native groups in this area were peaceful for the most part and banded together to protect themselves from larger, more aggressive Woodland Indian groups who engaged in war to control the smaller subgroups. A larger hierarchical group ranging along the East Coast were the Iroquois. The Indian sub-groups at the bottom of the Iroquois pyramid included one located in our area, whose name colonists pronounced as Nanjemoy. English spelling variations of this word changed over the years; this group had no written language.

EARLY AND MID COLONIAL PERIOD

Colonists from several European countries arrived in this area starting in the 1500s. The European countries wanted wealth to enrich themselves, be it from gold, furs, tobacco or anything else of value. In the first part of the 1600s, colonists explored the region [Nanjemoy] for things of value. There were no large native settlements along this part of the Potomac River. Colonists, sailing aboard their private vessels and accompanied by wives and families, other leaders, indentured servants and the ship's crew, chose sites that offered easy access to land as well as a good harbor. The oldest land records go back to about 1634 and all are preserved in the county courthouse.

Colonial leaders were usually the heirs of well-to-do European families, and were well educated. They started clearing land and building simple homes. Some colonists had already lived in St. Mary's County and were experienced with agriculture suited to the area. Fields were prepared to grow tobacco, corn, wheat and other crops. Fisheries -- measured amounts of land along the river and a certain distance from shore -- were set up. Other houses and storage buildings were constructed. The shipowner often used his ship to entertain guests because it was much more comfortable than the first homes they built.

Indentured servants served for four-five years and then had earned the opportunity to apply for land of their own and were provided a suit of clothes, seed corn and some tools. Many of these ventures did not succeed due to the servants' lack of education, initiative and experience. More European colonists continued to arrive and chose land on which to live, build, farm and fish. Several professional leaders, e.g., doctors, surveyors, lawyers, set up practices. As indentured servants completed their contracts, slaves were brought in to take their place. Labor was the greatest agricultural need.

LATER COLONIAL PERIOD

More land was cleared, population grew, a busy shipping industry increased along the shores (of present-day Nanjemoy). Tobacco, furs, wood, alcoholic beverages, were traded with European countries and other East Coast ports. Settlement in the interior of Charles County, especially along Port Tobacco Creek, offered more opportunities for professionals and various practices to move where they would have larger clienteles. More settlers arrived and occupied any Nanjemoy area site which might be sold or vacated.

During the colonists' efforts to free themselves of domination by their mother countries, several wars and insurrections were fought. Independence from England was declared in 1776, the Revolutionary War was fought and the United States of America was born. All the settlers were affected by the unrest, wars and changes. A number of smaller wars were fought as well as The War of 1812. The country's leaders, some of whom were local people, wrote a Constitution.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, the local area had periodic economic downturns during which land values dropped and later rose again. A Civil War -- the War Between the States -- was fought, primarily to clarify states' rights (including the slavery issue) as opposed to a central government. Several southern states seceded; Maryland did not. However, Southern Maryland sided with the Confederacy and surreptitiously supported the South whenever they could. Residents' lives were turned upside down in the conflict. During and following the Civil War, slaves were emancipated and slavery was abolished. Many men's lives were lost in the war, leaving the women to carry on. A large former plantation, taken over by the government and divided among former slaves, gave each about 50 acres of land, some tools, a draft animal and perhaps seeds. People worked hard to survive and former slaves organized their own churches.

During the Civil War, land had been cleared to give an unobstructed view from Hilltop to the Potomac River to watch for spies and troop movements. This was the worst deforestation of land in Charles County history; trees and shrubs were planted on the barren land; nature worked to reforest itself also. People reestablished fisheries and farms and worked to rebuild the shoreline industries. Charles County's largest amusement park was located here, but later burned in 1888. More economic downturns occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Shipping was conducted at the various docks even though road-building in the county was increasing.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

World War I, Prohibition, the Great Depression, and World War II affected this area. Fishermen overfished sturgeon and caviar factories were closed. Tomato canneries closed, partly due to a large alcohol industry carried on during Prohibition; much effort went into whiskey production - using grain, canning jars, wild berries, and the efforts of men, women and children; it was very profitable. Other problems included dumping of old World War I ships in the river, agricultural neglect during Prohibition, lack of work during the

Depression, placement of a prisoner-of-war camp here during World War II, a growing need for workers at the Naval powder plant (producing munitions for the wars) in Indian Head. Farmers also fished and worked at the powder plant to eke out a living; entire families helped carry this burden.

Before cars became common, there were many one-room "stores" in homes – about every mile or two; saloons were also common, every two-three miles [most saloons were later destroyed by fire and no-one wept]. Later there were also a number of gas stations and larger general stores. One- and two-room schools were located throughout the area, racially segregated. In 1930, the white schools were consolidated into one building. In 1964 school desegregation began.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, farm acreage declined. The last shipping dock closed in 1970. Lumber mills were fewer; stores and gas stations closed due to lack of customers; workers got jobs out of the area for higher wages although many chose to continue to live here; small private gravel pits were used less often; a large gravel mining operation was operated; the area successfully fought placement of a nuclear plant here; population grew and students were bused farther to school.

Non-destructive uses of the land and area gradually emerged, e.g., parks; boat launching facilities; a small observatory; a Lions Club camp; a training facility for handicapped persons; an environmental education center for the public schools of the county; a Great Blue Heron rookery; clean-up of the river, creek, and streams; a community center offering various services.

In the 1980s and following, the community showed a marked increase in appreciation of natural resources of the area, environmental education and activities, preservation of flora and fauna, rural life, cleaner air and cooler temperatures, peace and quiet. Later, a second gravel mining proposal was defeated and a Vision Group was formed to work to preserve the life prized by the residents and to plan for the future. A third mining proposal is currently underway and residents are preparing to challenge it.

REPORT: Environmental Work Group

Introduction

The Potomac River shoreline in the Nanjemoy area and the largely forested Nanjemoy Creek watershed are outstanding natural resource areas. The low human population, the many thousands of acres of forests, the wetlands and tidal marshes, the tidal Nanjemoy Creek, the many miles of forested stream valleys, Potomac shoreline and the wide tidal Potomac River are features which make the greater Nanjemoy area such a valuable natural resource area. The charge of the Environmental Work Group was to identify the important natural areas, to describe their specific natural resource values and to make recommendations for the protection, conservation and use of these areas.

Valuable Natural Resource Areas in Nanjemoy

The Potomac shore area along Rt. 224 from Budd's Ferry Road to Nanjemoy Creek is mostly undeveloped and largely forested. The undisturbed forested shoreline provides nesting habitats for Bald Eagles and many species of forest interior nesting birds. The wide tidal Potomac River in this area has high populations of several fish species and provides a much used feeding area for Bald Eagles, Ospreys and for Great Blue Herons from the nearby Nanjemoy heron rookery. The marshes and wetlands along the shore provide important habitat for wildlife: beavers, nesting waterfowl such as Wood Ducks, Red-headed Woodpeckers and many other nesting birds. The marsh along Rt. 224 south of Smith Point Road, Thorne Gut Marsh along Rt. 224 about 2 miles south of Smith Point Road are especially valuable natural areas. The smaller marshes/wetlands such as those on the Douglas Point property and in Purse State Park are also valuable natural areas because of their features and the large surrounding forested buffer areas. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area is the land along tidal shorelines extending 1000 feet inland from the shoreline at mean high tide. The Critical Area has been given considerable regulatory protection. The first 100 ft. of the Critical Area has additional protective regulations. Unfortunately, some recent court decisions have weakened the protection of the Critical Area. Bills have been introduced in the 2002 session of the Maryland Legislature to restore strong protection for the tidal shoreline areas intended by the Chesapeake Bay Program.

The tidal section of Nanjemoy Creek with its largely forested shoreline and many tidal marshes is also an especially valuable natural area. The many nontidal tributaries of Nanjemoy Creek appear to have for the most part adequate forest buffers and are in good health. From July 1997 to May 2000, water quality sampling was done by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center on streams in Charles County. The results for the five streams sampled in the Nanjemoy watershed indicated good water quality. Total dissolved phosphorous concentrations in Nanjemoy were about 40% of those in the two most polluted streams sampled in the county. Nitrate concentrations in Nanjemoy were about 17% of those in the two most polluted streams. Sampling of benthic macroinvertebrates done by volunteers in 2000 in the Nanjemoy Creek watershed yielded ratings in the fair to good range for the benthic index of biological integrity (the IBI index).

The upper tidal section of Nanjemoy Creek from Friendship Landing to the Rt. 6 bridge and its marshes and shoreline areas is a Natural Heritage Area, NHA-19, one of the four NHAs in

Charles County. Natural Heritage Areas are areas designated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) because of their outstanding plant or animal communities.

The upper section of Thorne Gut has been designated as a Nontidal Wetland of Special State Concern by DNR. This area contains 6 rare plant species, one at the northern extreme of its range. This swamp provides important wildlife habitat and is likely to support rare amphibian species.

Sections of Beaverdam Creek and Hancock Run provide habitat for the globally endangered Dwarf Wedge Mussel and are becoming increasingly protected by land acquisition along them by the Nature Conservancy. The forest area along the downstream sections of these tributaries west of Rt. 6 is the site of the Nanjemoy heron rookery, the largest Great Blue Heron rookery in the east north of Florida. This tract is also owned by the Nature Conservancy and hence is well protected and managed.

The many thousands of acres of forests in the Nanjemoy area are also valuable natural areas both because of the protection the forests give the tidal waters, streams, marshes and wetlands and because of the wildlife and plant life habitats they provide. The quality of the forests in the area vary because of age, past uses and soil characteristics. More detailed information on the characteristics of the forests in the Nanjemoy area would be useful in prioritizing forests for protection or for public acquisition.

Residential and Commercial Development Impacts

Most of the Nanjemoy area along Rt. 224 remains in a natural state, but some recent residential development has occurred and is continuing along many of the other roads and highways in the greater Nanjemoy area. Examples of such residential sprawl development can be seen in the Hill Top-Welcome-Gunston area, along the western tidal shore of the Port Tobacco River, along Rt. 344, Rt. 425 and along some sections of Rt. 6. If the present rate of residential development in the greater Nanjemoy area continues, there will be a significant loss of forest with serious impacts on the natural resources of the area. Loss of forest acreage and increased impervious surface area will degrade the present good water quality of the streams and tidal waters in the Nanjemoy area. While some additional residential and commercial development is needed to strengthen the economy of the area, it is clear that preserving and protecting the valuable natural areas of Nanjemoy must be given high priority in making land use decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Lands

In general, current and future public lands along the Potomac shore and Rt. 224 should be managed to protect and maintain their natural resources. Table I lists the public parklands and protected lands in the greater Nanjemoy area. (The areas owned by the Department of Defense are also listed.) Passive recreational uses (e.g., nature observation and hiking) should be permitted in most areas of these public lands. Foot trails can be established where needed. Access into areas where public use could impact rare, endangered or threatened plant and animal species should not be allowed. Foot access to the shoreline for fishing and nature observation

should be provided. Bicycles and motorized vehicles should not be allowed on any of the natural areas of these public lands. Table II lists the known sites in the area available to the public for launching motor boats. Continued use of the Wilson (Mallows Bay) facility is recommended for non-powered boats. Since motorboats can disturb wildlife and their wakes can seriously damage submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and emergent shoreline vegetation, new publicly accessible motorboat launching sites should not be provided. Primitive landing sites for kayaks and canoes should be established in a few areas on public lands along the shoreline for the water trail proposed by the Charles County Office of Tourism.

Protection of the Natural Resources on Private Lands

The purchase of additional land by the Federal, State and County governments and by groups such as the Nature Conservancy should be supported and encouraged along the Potomac River and elsewhere in the Nanjemoy area. Landowners should be educated on the benefits of conservation easements and encouraged to put their property under conservation easements held by the Maryland Environmental Trust and the Conservancy for Charles County. The Nanjemoy Vision Group should support the strengthening and enforcement of the Critical Area regulations. But, most importantly, the Nanjemoy Vision Group should work with the Charles County Government to implement more protective zoning and land use regulations for the valuable natural areas in Nanjemoy and thereby save them from development. In addition to down-zoning, the county should encourage the use of transferable development rights (TDRs) which would protect farm and forest land from subdivision development. Because of the serious environmental damage that commercial operations such as sand and gravel mining operations can cause, commercial land uses should not be allowed in areas with high natural values or in stream valleys, areas with steep slopes or near tidal streams or wetlands.

Tourism

The establishment of facilities needed to support the passive recreational uses of the natural areas on public lands in the Nanjemoy area should be supported. The economic benefits of increased use of the Nanjemoy area by tourists are important both to the Nanjemoy community and to the protection of natural resources here. To maintain the scenic and natural resources values of the Rt. 224 corridor, new commercial facilities for tourists (e.g., gas stations, restaurants, convenience stores, bed-and-breakfasts, etc.) in this area of Nanjemoy should be located in the Nanjemoy Village Center. More needs to be accomplished to identify the historic and valuable natural areas in the Nanjemoy area and to plan for their protection and use in nature/heritage tourism.

Legislation

During each session of the Maryland State Legislature, many bills are introduced which affect the environment. The passage of some of these bills will increase the protection of our natural resources; the passage of others could harm or destroy these natural resources. The Nanjemoy Work Group should review these bills and work for the passage of the bills which will help in the protection and preservation of natural resources of Nanjemoy and to defeat the passage of bills which could harm these resources.

TABLE I: Public and Protected Land in the Greater Nanjemoy Area

FEDERAL LANDS	ACRES
Parklands	
Thomas Stone National Historic Site	~240
Douglas Point (BLM)	~550
Total	~790
Army & Navy Lands	
Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head	~3,500
Blossom Point Proving Grounds, U.S. Army	1,600
Maryland Point Naval Observatory	~10
Total	~5,110
STATE LANDS	
Mattawoman Wildland	1,600
Chicamuxen WMA	382
Doncaster State Forest	1,521
Purse State Park	149
Smallwood State Park	631
Douglas Point	~600
Wilson Farm	509
Total	~5,392
COUNTY PARKS	
Friendship Landing East	240
Friendship Landing West	135
Total	375
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY	
Great Blue Heron Rookery & Stream Corridors	1,220
SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY	
Nanjemoy Marsh Sanctuary	58
TOTAL Park & Protected Natural Areas Acres:	7,835
TOTAL Military Acres:	5,110

TABLE II: Boat Launching Sites in the Greater Nanjemoy Area

LAUNCHING SITES ON PUBLIC LANDS	
Friendship Landing (County Park), Nanjemoy Creek	
Walters Landing, Nanjemoy Creek	
Smallwood State Park, Mattawoman Creek	
Chapel Point State Park, Port Tobacco River	
Wilson Marina, Mallows Bay	
COMMERCIAL LAUNCHING SITES	
Goose Bay Marina, Lower Port Tobacco River area	
Port Tobacco Marina	

REPORT: Economic Work Group

Mission

To create a viable plan that promotes the natural beauty and heritage of the Nanjemoy area as the engine for economic development while building local infrastructure for Nanjemoy residents to improve their economic well-being.

Assumptions

- The Nanjemoy area is home to natural and cultural resources that could be compromised, depleted or destroyed through traditional commercial development activities.
- Those same natural and cultural resources constitute a marketable tourism commodity.
- The majority of Nanjemoy residents would prefer economic development that preserves those natural resources and the traditional rural lifestyle.
- The agriculture, fishing and timber industries in the region are not sustaining the area's economy at an acceptable level.
- There is an unacceptable level of poverty in the area and a need to increase the tax base to improve basic infrastructure and social services.

Plan

The work group owes a debt of gratitude to Donald G. Shomette who produced a white paper study that presents the case for investing in tourism that protects and promotes the natural and cultural history of the Nanjemoy area. This work is available online at nanjemoy.net/vision. The paper describes the natural areas of the area as defined by its extensive shoreline: wetlands, forests, wilderness areas, creeks and the Potomac River and its myriad tributaries. The paper discusses responsible stewardship of these resources, as well as maritime, archaeological and cultural riches.

The work group approached its task of planning for local economic improvements while maintaining the rural environment so valued by residents and visitors by:

1. Reviewing the inventory of resources available
2. Studying regional and national tourism trends
3. Reviewing local economic and demographic data
4. Listening to Nanjemoy residents who have been active at community meetings, while recognizing that there are many more unheard voices

The work group believes that there is a market for passive and active recreation and tourism dependent on the natural and cultural riches of the area. But to preserve and protect those riches, the development of these tourism and recreational outlets must be guided by a carefully constructed master plan. Taking a traditional business approach, the work group recommends the following formal planning steps:

1. Devise and verify through public involvement a statement of economic need and acceptable outlets to meet that need.
2. Conduct an inventory of assets that could support new or enhanced economic development.

3. Identify business opportunities based on those assets that will at the same time preserve them.
4. Conduct market research to determine the viability of those business opportunities.
5. Prepare a master plan for business development for Nanjemoy.
6. Offer development incentives.
7. Monitor progress and reevaluate the implementation process.
8. Establish a nonprofit citizen-based council that represents the interests of economic development, especially tourism-based development.

The work group recommends initiating these activities at the community level through Step 2, while encouraging residents to become increasingly involved in existing County, regional, and State government commissions and groups integral to economic and tourism planning and implementation. Steps 3 through 7 should be accomplished through the existing government infrastructure, monitored by an association of committed citizens, as suggested in Step 8.

While the work group has dedicated itself to defining a long-term solution, it recognizes that there are short-term actions that could be taken that would net modest but positive results. Several examples include:

1. Become active in the planning of an expanded Friendship Park.
2. Ensure adequate signage for Purse State Park and other public lands
3. Organize a River Festival for Fall 2003

REPORT: Recreational Work Group

Mission

To provide recreational opportunities that emphasize the natural, cultural and historic resources while preserving the environment, quality of life and rural nature of Nanjemoy

Our Vision

1. Create economic development through careful planning and wise use of our recreational opportunities and resources.
2. Meet the needs of the local community for playgrounds, ball fields, etc.
3. Assure access to the water for everyone.
4. Provide opportunities for environmental education.

Nanjemoy is unique in the variety of leisure time activities it offers. The Potomac River, Nanjemoy Creek, and various other waterways and wetlands provide opportunities for water-based recreation: swimming, power boating, fishing, canoes/kayaks, watersports, sailing, crabbing, clamming, touring. Opportunities for land-based recreation are also abundant: hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, hunting, camping, bird watching, stargazing, fossil hunting. In addition, open-space offers great potential for recreation such as ball fields, picnic areas, etc.

It is unusual for an area with so much to offer, so close to a major metropolitan area, that it has remained relatively untouched. In fact, most recreation activity is now organized on an individual basis, and in a piecemeal fashion. We propose a plan for Nanjemoy that would offer a unified system of leisure activities and recreational opportunities, improve the quality of life for local residents, and attract visitors and revenue from outside the area, while protecting the unique natural, historical and archaeological assets.

Our Vision for Recreation/Leisure Activities

Nanjemoy contains environmentally sensitive areas, significant fossil and historic sites, and a rich cultural heritage that should be protected for future generations. However, the desire to enjoy our resources should also be recognized and can be easily accommodated. We propose to locate the higher impact activities in less sensitive areas or in areas already developed. What follows are the major ideas discussed by our group and proposed timelines for development. With careful planning, many recreational activities can be accommodated while protecting the undeveloped character of the Nanjemoy area.

Increased Access to the Water for All Boaters

One of the major issues is the lack of available launch facilities, and the overcrowding that occurs at the current locations. In the 53 miles of shoreline in the Nanjemoy area, there are only two public launch sites: Friendship Landing and Walters Landing are free to the public. Further north, Smallwood State Park has public ramps. On weekends and during special events, boaters are sometimes turned away due to overcrowding.

We propose to add two new sites in the area. Wilson's Landing would be rehabilitated and made available to small boats. Because of the shallow depth of the water here, and the location of historic Mallow's Bay, limiting this area to small boats would preserve these assets. Picnic areas, observation areas, hiking trails and restrooms could be established here. This would be an excellent location for kayak/canoe and pontoon boat tours.

The State of Maryland Observatory land on Rt. 224 would be used to construct a more substantial concrete ramp for larger boats. Since most powerboat users seem to be interested in getting to the Potomac River, this location would be most suitable. The water at this location is deeper than at Wilson's Landing, there is little presence of underwater grasses (SAV) and the land area has already been substantially impacted by development. We visualize facilities being gradually improved to meet the needs of users - a snack bar, bathroom facilities, gas and boat supplies, and picnic facilities.

Smallwood State Park (Sweden Point Marina) should be upgraded and publicized. We would like to see this developed into a weekend destination spot - with RV camping, family-oriented restaurants and facilities, playgrounds and a swimming area. This is already the center for bass fishing tournaments and has attracted many visitors to this area. A full-service marina with gas and boating supplies, as well as camper-cabin facilities, are already located here.

		2 YEARS	5 YEARS	10+ YEARS
O B J E C T I V E S	Wilson's Landing - Mallow's Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean out junk boats • Repair old docks & parking lots • Define launch area • Post signs limiting use • Information kiosks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat tours in operation • Manned information booths & exhibits • Picnic areas with tables • Restrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant
	Maryland Observatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up • Design new facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete ramp • Restrooms • Picnic areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant/Snack Bar • Marine supply store - gas, etc.
	Sweden Point & Smallwood Marina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicize • More family oriented • Improved playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primitive camping • RV camping • Swimming area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant/Snack Bar

A Centralized Recreation Site

Recently, a 200-acre parcel located near the intersection of Rt. 6 and Baptist Church Road has become available. We feel that this centralized location could accommodate many community needs, make use of already cleared land and divert high impact activities from areas that are more environmentally sensitive. A centralized, developed site also has some of the greatest potential for generating fees and jobs. We would like the county to study the feasibility of using this property for the purposes listed below, and work with the community to develop this site in a manner pleasing to all. Our timelines would obviously be affected by the process of purchasing the land and the feasibility of using this particular site.

1. There is a growing demand for ball fields, playgrounds and other community facilities in this part of the county. Our sports teams now play on fields at Friendship Landing which cannot accommodate restrooms, concession stands or other amenities that our teams need.
2. Place large playgrounds or gathering places for families in Nanjemoy, now limited to small facilities at the elementary school or the community center.
3. Picnic pavilions, restrooms and refreshment stands could be used for local activities and to accommodate visitors to the area.
4. This area should serve as a trailhead for the Nanjemoy area. Cars, horse trailers and other vehicles could be left while people used the local trails. This should also be the starting point for bird watching, fishing and boat tours. A kiosk with maps and brochures could be at this site.
5. Information kiosks, and eventually a small museum focused on nature, history, and culture of the area. This would be a “hands-on” facility. In the long range, use this as a site for crafts, music and environmental/nature education.
6. 200 acres could accommodate fairly short, handicapped accessible trails through woods, streambeds and fields. Horse and bicycle trails could also travel through this area.
7. A farmer’s market could be located on this site, along Rt. 6 or on Baptist Church Road.
8. Primitive (dry) camping for groups and individuals with shower facilities and restrooms provided.
9. Walking distance to community center, extension library, store and other businesses.

		2 YEARS	5 YEARS	10+ YEARS
O B J E C T I V E S	Playing Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design & develop 3 fields • Horseshoe pits • Basic playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive playground equipment in place • Restaurant/Snack Bar 	
	Picnic Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables, trash cans, grills in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilion for groups (rental) 	
	Trail Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot, information kiosks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manned information booth 	
	Handicapped Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design & layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short trails within central location in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer trails to water in place
	Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiosk for brochures • Design & plan building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site for nature interpretation, education, special events
	Farmer’s Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design & located • Publicized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent facilities in place 	
	Camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites plotted, tables & grills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent shower facilities & restrooms 	
	Special Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flea markets • Community events • Historic re-enactments • Story tellers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals featuring Native American culture, history of area, ecology, etc. 	

A Network of Trails

A unified network of trails to meet various interests and abilities would make this area much more accessible and attractive. Trails would be used to access areas such as Purse State Park and Douglas Point, which we hope to preserve mostly untouched. To avoid potential conflict, some trails could be designated for a specific use - bikes only, horses only, etc. Other trails could be combined: a handicapped accessible butterfly and wildflower trail.

		2 YEARS	5 YEARS	10+ YEARS
O B J E C T I V E S	Hiking Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purse State Park & Chicamuxen Preserve ~ improved signage ~ trail enhanced • Douglas Point trail in place with signage • Overall trail system designed • Plan for maintenance and improvement of trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information kiosk, picnic area • Information kiosk, picnic area • Trails in place with signage • Shoreline Trails - Interconnecting other trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Trail Hike, water fountain • Guided Trail Hike, water fountain • Guided Trail hikes
	Bicycle Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Shoulders marked & Improved along Rt.. 6 & 225 • Design for system of trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information kiosks and maps • Trails developed along power lines & other already cleared areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New trails developed • Guided rides
	Horse Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design connecting trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information kiosks and maps • Enhance existing trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Trails developed • Guided Rides • Shoreline trails
	Handicapped Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Short trail in centralized location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail to scenic area 	
	Water Trails ~ canoes ~ kayaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, location selected • Plan for maintenance and improvement of trails and campsites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites for landing developed • Primitive camping • Information boards • Latrines 	
	Special Interests ~ birding ~ nature trails ~ butterfly trails ~ history trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design & locating • Information at all kiosks on native plants & species & historic sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails with objects labeled in centralized location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Trail hikes • Nature education classes & tours

Make Use of Existing Development

The Nanjemoy area already has facilities that could be used to enhance opportunities for local residents and outside visitors. We would like to work with the various individuals and groups at these facilities to our mutual benefit. This would avoid redundant efforts and offer improved use and potential income to already existing operations. Some of these resources are listed below:

1. *Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center* has a boat dock, an astronomical observatory, a bird rescue facility, a wetlands boardwalk, and a small nature museum.
2. *Smallwood State Park* has a historic site, a large boat launch area and an art museum.
3. *Melwood* has meeting facilities, a conference center, playing fields, ropes course, sleeping facilities, summer camp, catering services, trails, hiking and bathroom facilities.
4. *Nanjemoy Community Center and Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School* have rooms and land already used by the community.
5. *Local churches* have the capability to hold special events, operate refreshment stands, farmers & flea markets.
6. *Chicamuxen* and other designated hunting areas could be better maintained, posted and monitored.
7. *Goose Bay Sand Mine* (Maryland Rock) will eventually be "mined out", and would be appropriate for development, as it has already been highly impacted.
8. *Camp Merrick* has meeting facilities, sleeping quarters, conference area, playing fields, pier.

Economic Development

Leisure activities and economic development can proceed hand-in-hand in Nanjemoy. We see directly related job opportunities: trail and tour guides, maintenance workers, boat and canoe rentals, horse trail rides, construction and trail development, food sales, special events, fees for camping, launching and other activities. As more people come to the area, the possibilities increase: restaurants, a gas station, small stores.

There are many opportunities to enhance the Nanjemoy area through good planning and wise choices. This is the beginning of a process. The committee has developed information and detailed ideas that could not be adequately addressed in this report. We look forward to working together to get a completed plan in place.

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Vision Writing Team:
Loretta d’Eustachio, Millie Hamman, Deanna Wheeler,
Marsha Back and Norma Hurley