



Green Cathedral

Forest Legacy Tract, Maryland

September 2001

The Forest Legacy Program, the inspiration for Maryland's Rural Legacy Program, completed its first Federally funded project in Maryland. On September 25, 2001, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service acquired a Forest Legacy conservation easement on 298 acres along the Severn River, just outside of Annapolis.

The property, known as Green Cathedral, is the largest undeveloped forested parcel along the river, making it an ideal property for conservation. However, the property's forests and river frontage, coupled with the area's ever-growing population, also made it a prime target for residential development. In fact, a construction firm had signed a contract in 1999 with the estate of owner Oscar Sahlin to develop the land into housing lots.

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Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening

The community was keenly interested in keeping the land forested and undeveloped. The developer terminated the contract, thus allowing the Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit conservation organization, to purchase a conservation easement on the property. The Trust for Public Land served as a liaison between the Sahlin estate and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Anne Arundel County, the Severn River Land Trust, and the local community.

"The Severn River Land Trust is grateful to the Sahlin family and neighboring residents who worked so diligently to preserve this land. The location of this property adjacent to the Brewer Pond conservation easement will make a huge difference in preserving the ecological integrity and quality of life of Green Cathedral," said Sandra Parks-Trusz, Executive Director of the Severn River Land Trust.

The USDA Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program contributed \$650,000 and local residents donated about \$200,000 towards the conservation easement's \$1,550,000 purchase price. The remaining

funds were raised by the Trust for Public Land through private donations.

USDA Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth noted, "The Green Cathedral project is an example of the best kind of community-based partnership among Federal, State, and local groups to promote water quality and conserve forests for future generations."

"Preserving our State's natural resources for future generations has been and remains one of our top priorities," said Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening. "Working together with our many partners to save the Green Cathedral demonstrates the sense of urgency and the commitment Marylanders have to permanently protect our resources and open space. Once land like this is lost to bulldozers and development, it can never be recovered."

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. These forests provide essential wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, afford outstanding scenic views, are home to historic sites, and/or provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.



The forests of Green Cathedral will continue the natural process of filtering water that drains into the Severn River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Photo by Donald VanHassent

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