

5. AGRICULTURE

PURPOSE

Farming and Agriculture are primary sources of income and employment in Culpeper County, as they have been for most of its history. Farmland represents nearly half of the land use in the County, although that percentage has declined over the last five years due to residential and commercial growth. In 2002, 51.3% or 125,121 acres of the County's total land mass was in farm use. In 2007, that number had declined to 45.7% or 111,370 acres. Although 13,751 acres of farmland were lost, the total number of active farms in Culpeper County decreased to 667. In 2007 cropland accounted for 50% of farmland in Culpeper County, with pasture accounting for 28%, woodland 18%, and other uses 4%.

PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOIL

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA-SCS) Soil Conservation Service Farmland rating system classifies soils with the following designations:

Prime Farmland

Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops.

Farmland of Statewide Importance

Land in addition to prime that is of statewide significance for production and identified as such by state agencies (USDA-SCS and Extension Service).

Table 5.1 provides a list of the significant agricultural soils and shows that approximately 213,565 acres or 87.1% of the County have these soils.

Table 5.1

CULPEPER COUNTY PRIME AND OTHER IMPORTANT FARMLANDS				
SOIL NAME	SLOPE CHARACTERISTICS	CLASSIFICATION	ACRES	PERCENT
Ashburn-Dulles complex	0 to 2 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	532	0.2
Clifford loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	2,814	1.1
Clover-Penn complex	0 to 2 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	2,661	1.1
Clover-Penn complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	1,673	0.7
Culpeper sandy loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	5,310	2.2
Delanco-Kinkora complex	0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded	All areas are prime farmland	213	*

Edgemont sandy loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	920	0.4
Elsinboro-Delanco complex	2 to 7 percent slopes, rarely flooded	All areas are prime farmland	1,861	0.8
Fauquier silt loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	3,478	1.4
Germanna silt loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	2,828	1.2
Glenelg silt loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	2,166	0.9
Minnieville loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	512	0.2
Penhook silt loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	2,536	1.0
Rapidan silty clay loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland	2,050	0.8
Alanthus - Myersville complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	5,326	2.2
Alanthus - Myersville complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	3,726	1.5
Blocktown-Yellowbottom complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,923	1.2
Cardova-Edgemont complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	365	0.1
Cardova-Edgemont complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	258	0.1
Catoctin -Fletcherville complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	769	0.3
Catoctin-Alanthus complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,035	0.8
Catoctin-Alanthus complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,063	0.8
Clifford loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	3,178	1.3
Dulles-Nestoria complex	0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	3,574	1.5
Dulles-Nestoria complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	1,616	0.7
Edgemont-Culpeper complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	14,850	6.1
Edgemont-Culpeper complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	710	0.3
Edgemont-Rixeyville complex	15 to 25 percent slopes, very rocky	Farmland of statewide importance	7,488	3.1
Fauquier silt loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	6,289	2.6

Fletcher-Myersville complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	69	*
Fletcher-Myersville complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	68	*
Flume loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	825	0.3
Flume-Goldvein complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	375	0.2
Germanna silt loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,300	0.9
Germanna silt loam	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	464	0.2
Glenelg silt loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	9,122	3.7
Glenelg-Rixeyville complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	3,923	1.6
Halifax gravelly fine sandy loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	106	*
Happyland-Flume complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	643	0.3
Haymarket-Jackland complex	7 to 15 percent slopes, bouldery	Farmland of statewide importance	527	0.2
Haymarket silt loam	15 to 25 percent slopes, very bouldery	Farmland of statewide importance	364	0.1
Jackland and Haymarket soils	0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,150	0.9
Jackland and Haymarket soils	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	8,539	3.5
Jackland and Haymarket soils	0 to 2 percent slopes, very bouldery	Farmland of statewide importance	284	0.1
Jackland and Haymarket soils	2 to 7 percent slopes, very bouldery	Farmland of statewide importance	4,317	1.8
Meadowville loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	1,086	0.4
Montalto silty clay loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	387	0.2
Montalto silty clay loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	692	0.3
Montalto silty clay loam	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	189	*
Ott-Kelly complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	5,406	2.2
Ott-Kelly complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	533	0.2
Penhook silt loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,120	0.9
Penn-Nestoria complex	0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	1,798	0.7

Penn-Nestoria complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	5,350	2.2
Penn-Nestoria complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	565	0.2
Rapidan-Penn complex	7 to 15 percent slopes, rocky	Farmland of statewide importance	8,974	3.7
Rapidan-Penn complex	15 to 25 percent slopes, rocky	Farmland of statewide importance	1,015	0.4
Rhodhiss-Mine Run complex	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	10,788	4.4
Rhodhiss-Mine Run complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	9,535	3.9
Sycoline-Kelly complex	0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	9,695	4.0
Yellowbottom loam	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	2,647	1.1
Yellowbottom loam	7 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	10,265	4.2
Yellowbottom-Goldvein complex	2 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	848	0.3
Yellowbottom-Milldraper complex	15 to 25 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	414	0.2
Codorus silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	Prime farmland if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season	6,423	2.6
Codorus and Meadowville soils	2 to 7 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season	9,778	4.0
Comus silt loam	0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season	6,257	2.6
TOTAL			213,565	87.1

* Less than 0.1 percent

USDA SOILS SURVEY - CULPEPER COUNTY, VIRGINIA soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov

5.1 CULPEPER COUNTY 2010 2030

PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS



RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

FAUQUIER COUNTY

LEGEND

- Prime farmland.shp
- Farmland of statewide importance.shp

MADISON COUNTY

STAFFORD COUNTY

ORANGE COUNTY

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY



Prepared by
Culpeper County Planning Department



AGRICULTURAL PROFILE OF THE COUNTY

The Census of Agriculture, taken every five years, is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and many other areas. The data and comparisons presented below are based on the 2002 Census of Agriculture and the 2007 Census of Agriculture.

CULPEPER COUNTY AGRICULTURE 2007			
	2007	2002	PERCENT CHANGE
Total Number of Farms	667	669	0%
Land in Farms	111,370 acres	125,121 acres	11%
Average Size of Farm	167 acres	187 acres	11%
Market Value of Production	\$27,137,000	\$36,713,000	26%
Crop Sales	\$12,796,000	\$18,851,000	32%
Livestock Sales	\$14,341,000	\$17,861,000	20%
Average Per Farm	\$40,685	\$54,877	26%
Government Payments	\$376,000	\$694,000	46%
Average Per Farm	\$3,244	\$5,984	46%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 2007 Census of Agriculture

As a major industry, agriculture is an integral component of the County's economy. Maintaining the continued vitality of agriculture is necessary to achieve and preserve a balanced tax base and a diverse, healthy economy benefiting all of the citizens of the County. Agriculture is also an important part of the County's cultural heritage, having existed, and flourished, in Culpeper for more than three centuries.

STATEWIDE RANKINGS FOR CULPEPER COUNTY

MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD	Value/Quantity	Rank
Total Value of Agricultural Products sold	\$27,137	27
Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse	\$12,796	19
Value of livestock, poultry, and their products	\$14,341	30
VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP		
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	\$3,819	26
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	\$163	50
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	\$99	47
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	\$7,357	10
Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	\$106	10
Other crops and hay	\$1,253	21
Poultry and eggs	\$34	53
Cattle and calves	\$7,414	25

Milk and other dairy products from cows	\$6,198	11
Hogs and pigs	\$59	30
Sheep, goats, and their products	\$131	20
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	\$430	17
Other animals and animal products	\$74	23
TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY ITEMS		
Cattle and calves	23,039	23
Quail	7,912	4
Pheasants	2,559	3
Horses and ponies	2,071	9
Sheep and lambs	1,167	19
TOP CROP ITEMS (acres)		
Forage-land used for hay, silage, and greenchop	27,089	16
Corn for grain	6,026	25
Soybeans for beans	5,279	26
Corn for silage	2,699	9

AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural and Forestal Districts are established under guidelines set forth by the Code of Virginia, §15.2-4300, to protect agricultural and forestal lands. Districts are initiated by local landowners on a voluntary basis. There are approximately 49,485 (as of June 5, 2009) acres of land in fifteen Agricultural and Forestal Districts in Culpeper County (see map 5.1) representing 20.53% of total County land. The newest Agricultural and Forestal District, Point of Fork, was created in June 2007.

CULPEPER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTAL DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	ACREAGE	EXPIRATION DATE
Alum Springs	1,235.59	September 2012
Brandy Station	6,612.53	October 2012
Brandywine	2,583.95	August 2012
Catalpa	2,387.41	October 2012
Colchester Farm	4,28.25	March 2017
Crooked Run	249.17	January 2018
Deatherage Run	6,875.4	August 2012
Hazel River	1,239.41	September 2012
Horseshoe Farm	4,226.05	September 2014
Point of Fork	290.58	June 2015
Raccoon Ford	1,237.63	August 2012
Remington/ Kelly's Ford	4,422.62	June 2013
Rillhurst Farms	1,188.44	November 2016
Stevensburg	14,099.36	September 2012
Waterford Run	2,408.12	August 2012
TOTAL ACREAGE	49,484.51	

Agricultural and Forestal Districts allow the County to protect and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural and forestal lands for the production of food and other agricultural and forestal products. The preservation of agricultural and forestland is a major instrument to provide support to the local agricultural economy. Agricultural land uses preserve open space, enhance watershed protection, complement public recreation and ecotourism and insure other environmental benefits.

Agricultural and Forestal Districts identify the areas where significant commitments have been made to agricultural production. Significant agricultural soils, identified in the Environment Chapter of this Plan (TABLE 4.1), are soils that have the potential for high agricultural and forestal production. Soils information coupled with the site assessment portion of the Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) system equation that identifies the social and economic viability of existing agriculture and the location of those areas in agricultural districts provides the County with a tool to identify significant agricultural areas.

The LESA system was developed by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service to help localities protect valuable farmland. LESA involves the evaluation of land in two parts: 1) soil suitability for agricultural and forestal purposes and, 2) site assessment. Local representatives determine the site assessment factors. These factors are given point values; with maximum points assigned when on-site conditions support the continuation of agricultural use. The maximum points possible for site assessment is 350. This information, combined with the presence of a significant agricultural score of 260 or greater and with 30% or more of the site containing significant soils, makes a site very desirable for retention in agricultural or forestal land use.

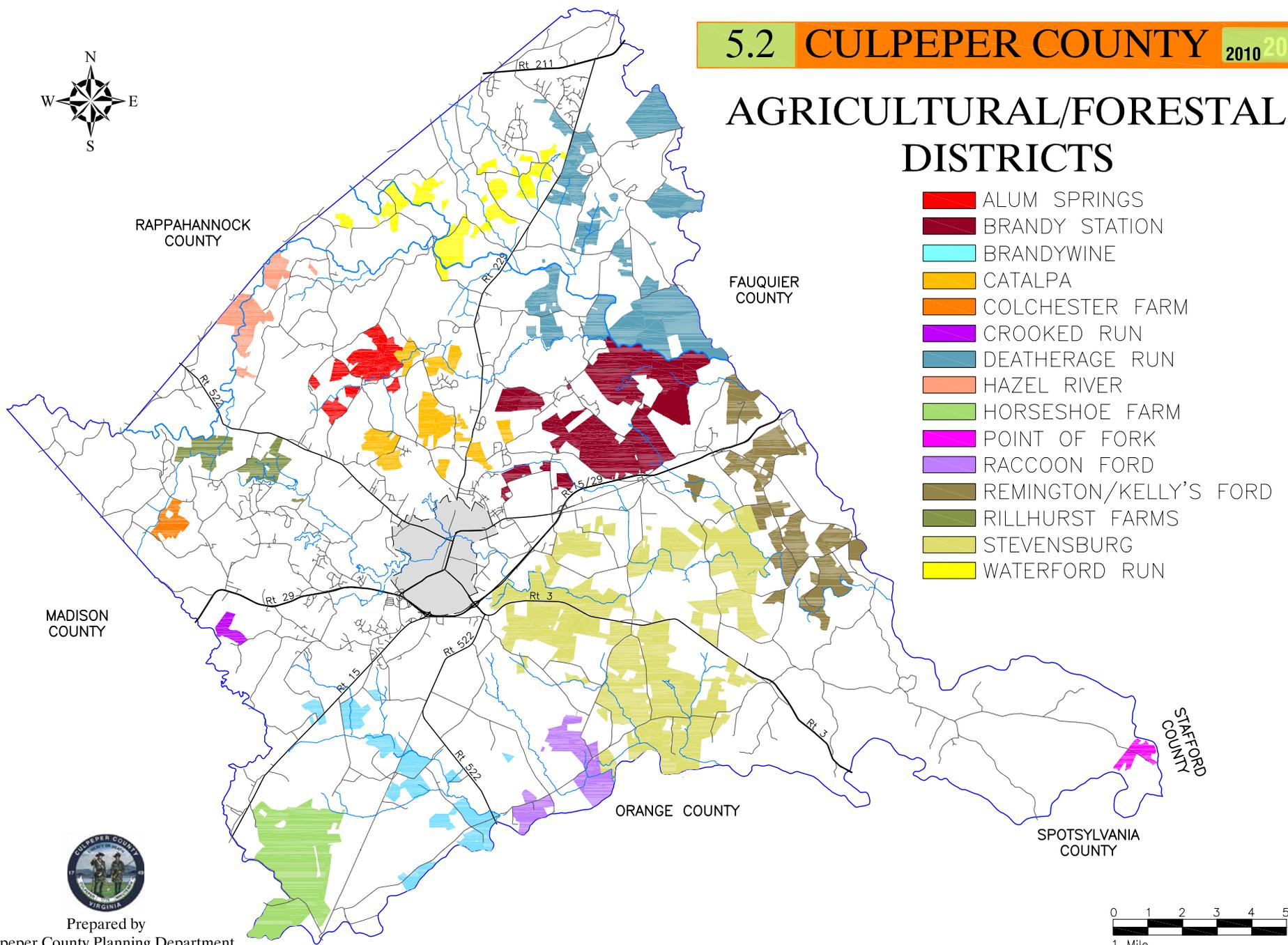
Once an Agricultural and Forestal District is formed, it must be reviewed periodically. State code requires that the review period be set at a minimum of every 4 years but not to exceed more than every 10 years. In Culpeper County, each of the fifteen districts was established with an eight-year review cycle. Benefits include protection from nuisance complaints, assurance of continued qualification for land use taxation, and protection for condemnation without the Board of Supervisors' approval.

Despite the rapid growth that occurred in Culpeper in the last five years, enrollment in Agricultural and Forestal Districts only decreased minimally. This is most likely due to the eight-year cycle of each district and the public hearing process required in order to withdraw prematurely from a District. In 2005 there were 50,857.91 acres enrolled in Agricultural and Forestal Districts in Culpeper County. Currently there are 49,484.51 acres enrolled. This represents a 2.7% decrease in enrollment over the past five years.

5.2 CULPEPER COUNTY 2010 2030

AGRICULTURAL/FORESTAL DISTRICTS

- ALUM SPRINGS
- BRANDY STATION
- BRANDYWINE
- CATALPA
- COLCHESTER FARM
- CROOKED RUN
- DEATHERAGE RUN
- HAZEL RIVER
- HORSESHOE FARM
- POINT OF FORK
- RACCOON FORD
- REMINGTON/KELLY'S FORD
- RILLHURST FARMS
- STEVENSBURG
- WATERFORD RUN



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5.3 CULPEPER COUNTY 2010 2030

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS



RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

FAUQUIER COUNTY

LEGEND

- VIRGINIA DEPT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES EASEMENT
- VIRGINIA OUTDOORS FOUNDATION EASEMENTS
- OTHER

PARCEL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY VIRGINIA OUTDOOR FOUNDATION AND PIEDMONT ENVIROMENTAL COUNCIL

MADISON COUNTY

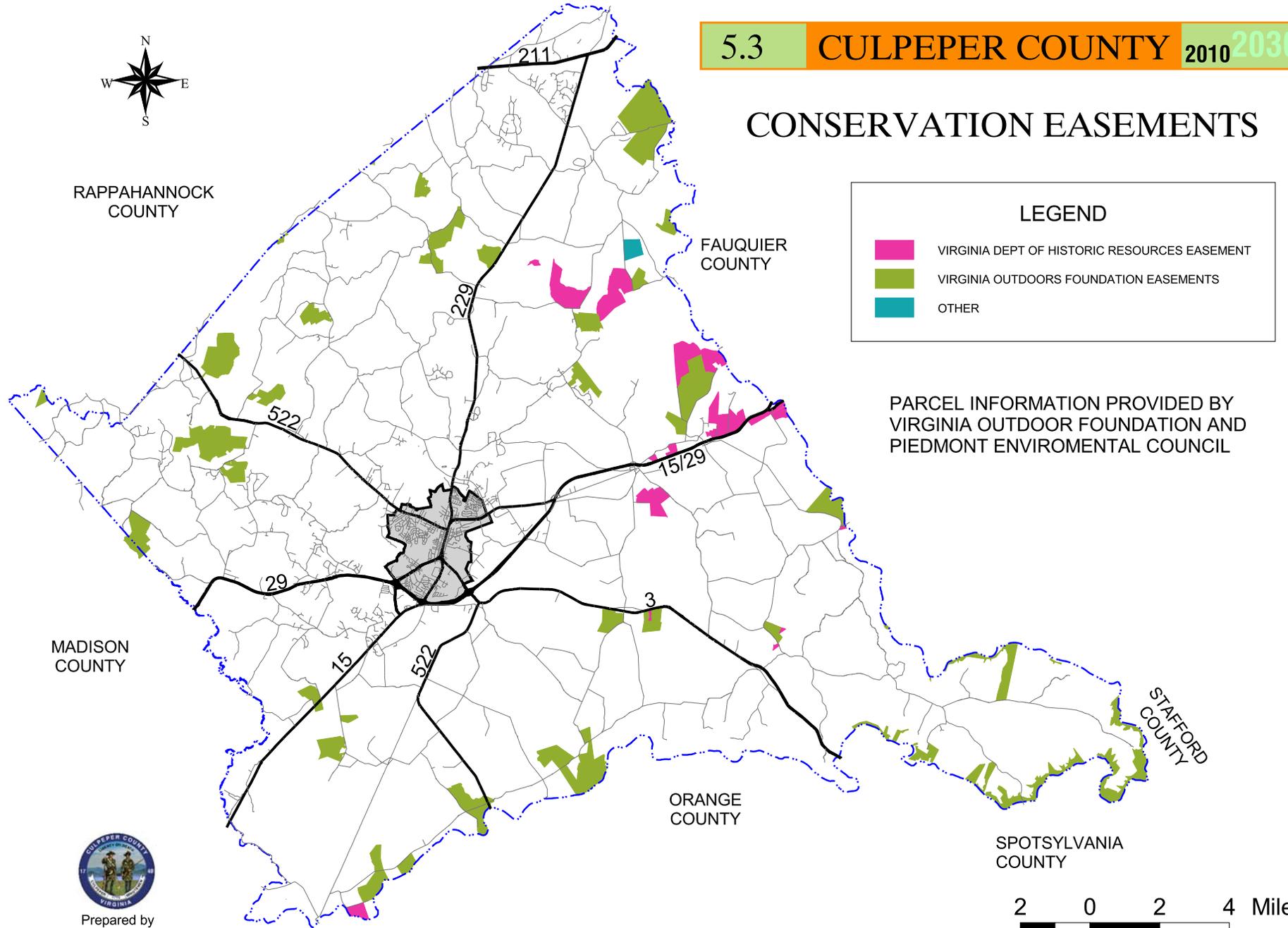
ORANGE COUNTY

STAFFORD COUNTY

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY



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LAND USE TAXATION

Land use taxation provides tax relief to farm and forest enterprises that meet the minimum acreage requirements detailed in Section 58.1-3230 of the Code of Virginia and provided for in Article II, Section 12-14 of the Culpeper County Code. Approximately 149,106.97 (March 11, 2009) acres of agriculture and forestland are currently enrolled in the program. The County also provides for Agricultural and Forestal Districts in which participants voluntarily restrict development of their property, generally for an eight year period. Approximately 49,485 (June 5, 2009) acres of land are currently enrolled in this program. Additions to existing districts and the establishment of new districts would further enhance the current agricultural and forestal district program and have positive economic and environmental impact on the County.

PROTECTION OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The current zoning regulations which govern the A-1 and RA districts provide for limited development on lot sizes of five and three acres, respectively. It is a recommendation of this Plan that regulations be revised to encourage cluster development and to provide incentives for preservation of open space.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The local Virginia Cooperative Extension office offers a wide variety of services for the Culpeper farming community including financial planning and analysis, budgeting, farm tenure arrangements, agricultural computer applications, marketing, farm tax management and estate planning, agricultural policy, and farm labor management. In addition to those services, the extension office also offers pesticide safety training, soil testing and fertilization recommendations, insect, disease and weed identification and control measures, pesticide testing, forage testing, plant and feed toxicology, and manure testing.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

A conservation easement is a simple legal agreement between a landowner and a government agency or a non-profit conservation organization that places permanent limits on the future development of the property in order to protect the conservation values of the land. The easement terms are negotiated between the landowner and a public agency or a qualified conservation organization. Except for rights explicitly given up in the easement document, the landowner continues to own, use and control the land. An easement is a particularly useful tool for ensuring protection of Culpeper's agricultural lands because an easement lasts forever: It applies not only to the current landowner, but also all subsequent owners of the property.

In Culpeper County, 2,200 additional acres were permanently protected in 2009. There are more than 11,000 acres of privately conserved land in the County (see map 5.3).

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPEMENT RIGHTS

The 2005 comprehensive plan sought to implement a purchase of development rights (PDR) program locally in order to preserve significant agricultural lands. In September of 2007 the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors adopted Appendix D of the Zoning Ordinance entitled “Agricultural Lands Preservation”. This appendix established a countywide agricultural reserve program by which the County is able to acquire the development rights on eligible parcels of farmland. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote and encourage the preservation of farmland, environmentally sensitive resources, and open space in the rural portion of the County by means that are voluntary, rather than regulatory. As funding is made available, this program will allow the purchase of agricultural land preservation easements from qualifying land owners. The purchase of development rights permits the landowner to continue agricultural use of the property while extinguishing their right to develop the property further.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPEMENT RIGHTS

Transfer of development rights (TDR) is a market based technique that encourages the voluntary transfer of growth from places where a community would like to see less development (called sending areas) to places where a community would like to see more development (called receiving areas). The sending areas can be environmentally-sensitive properties, open space, agricultural land, wildlife habitat, historic landmarks or any other places that are important to a community. The receiving areas should be places that the general public has agreed are appropriate for development because they are close to jobs, shopping, schools, transportation and other urban services. As a complement to the County’s newly adopted PDR program, a TDR program should be developed and implemented when economically viable. The TDR program should also be closely tied to the urban development areas (UDAs) which are addressed in Chapter 12 of this Plan.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

General

GOAL: MAINTAIN AGRICULTURE AS A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC BASE.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage the continued use of prime agricultural land for farm and agricultural uses.
2. Maintain monetary incentives to encourage continued agricultural production. Programs such as Land Use taxation serve to encourage agricultural use and to provide incentives to maintain open and forested lands which do not generate demand for services.

3. Work with the appropriate state and local agencies to promote agriculture and forestry and expand markets for Culpeper County agricultural and forestal products.
4. Encourage the development of agricultural and forestal support businesses and industries within the County which complement and support agriculture.

GOAL: PROTECT, PROMOTE AND ENHANCE AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY AS A LAND USE.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain and encourage continued enrollment of land in Agricultural and Forestal Districts.
2. Protect farming operations from encroachment of incompatible land uses.
3. Structure plans and ordinances to ensure appropriate development of lands adjoining agricultural areas.
4. Weigh the value of land use and policy decisions on agriculture.
5. Encourage landowners to convert marginal pasture or cropland to forestland.
6. Encourage woodland landowners to develop and use a woodland conservation plan which addresses timber stand improvement, utilization of damaged timber, sound harvesting techniques, pest control and reforestation.
7. Encourage landowners to utilize the forestry practices offered in the Chesapeake Bay Cost Share Program.
8. Study the feasibility of implementing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program, in order to discourage growth in areas of prime farmland.

