



## Carroll County a leader in Ag Land Preservation

Carroll County's Agricultural Land Preservation effort is the most successful in the State of Maryland, preserving more farms and more acres through the purchase of conservation easements than any other county. Carroll County's program also ranks among the top five such programs operated by local governments in the United States. Operating since 1980, the Carroll program has preserved more than 650 farms comprising more than 70,000 acres. This brochure describes the programs offered by the Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation office.



410-386-2214

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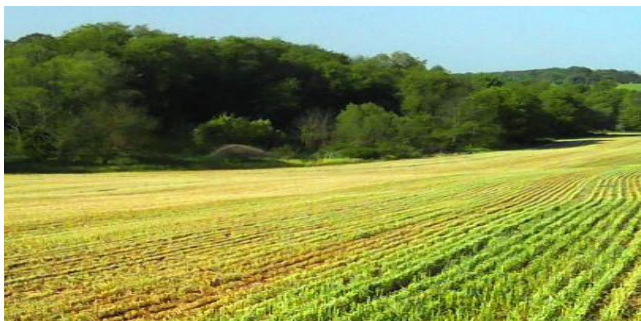
# Agricultural Land Preservation Programs



## Carroll County Maryland

**Agricultural Land Preservation**  
225 North Center Street, Room 214  
Westminster, Maryland 21157

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Program Manager: J.P. Smith Jr.



## Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

**Program Purpose:** To preserve agricultural land for the future by paying willing landowners to permanently retire the development potential of their land. This is accomplished through agreement with the landowner on terms of a Deed of Conservation Easement and recording the easement in the Carroll County Land Records.

**Type of Easement:** Agricultural conservation easement in perpetuity held by Carroll County Commissioners.

**Payment Options:** The Carroll County Ag Land Preservation Program offers two payment options to better serve our farm community:

1.) Installment Purchase Agreement (IPA) – offer is 40% of a formula-derived fair market value, due at end of 20-year term during which the IPA pays twice yearly five percent (5%) tax-free interest which in effect doubles the offer amount. At end of term owner receives balloon payment of full offer purchase price;

2.) Lump-sum payment – offer is seventy percent (70%) of formula-derived fair market value, paid in full at settlement.

### Eligibility Factors and Criteria:

1. A minimum of 60 acres is required, or, if fewer than 60 acres, must be more than 30 acres, AND: a.) be adjacent to a preserved farm; b.) have a minimum of 4 lot rights; and c.) may not request to retain any lot right. Properties of fewer than 30 acres are not eligible unless adjacent to preserved land of same owner.

2. Properties must have at least 50% USDA Class I, II or III soil capability.
3. All properties must have subdivision potential.
4. All applications must be approved by the Carroll County Ag Preservation Advisory Board and by the Board of County Commissioners.
5. All properties will be ranked by qualifications including soil quality and location.

**Limitations on Development:** No development for non-agricultural uses. Retaining a future residential lot is discouraged and will result in a reduced easement offer price unless property has no dwelling, in which case a nonsubdividable dwelling is allowed. Requests considered on a case by case basis.

**Conservation practices:** Seller agrees to periodic inspections of the property and to establish stream buffers, obtain a Forest Stewardship Plan within two years; conservation plan implementation required.

**For More Information:** Call Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation, 410 386-2214.



## Carroll County Critical Farms Program

**Program Purpose:** To boost our local agricultural economy as well as the County's land preservation effort by assisting farmers in the purchase of valuable farmland. The Critical Farms Program provides more than half of the purchase price or value at settlement to a contract purchaser of a farm.

**Type of Easement:** Purchase assistance obligates the applicant to enter into a permanent agricultural conservation easement with the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF).

The Critical Farms Option Agreement requires the applicant to apply to sell a conservation easement to MALPF. At settlement of the easement the amount paid by County toward the land purchase is returned to the County, and any remaining dollars go to the owner.

### Eligibility Factors and Criteria:

1. Property should be comprised of at least 75 acres.
2. At least 50% of soils must be USDA Class I, II or III.
3. Property must have development potential.
4. Process begins with determining eligibility, and purchaser presenting a copy of a contract of sale.

**Purchase Assistance:** Purchase assistance will be 52.5% of the purchase price or appraised fair market value, whichever is lower.

**Stewardship:** Seller agrees to allow periodic inspections of the property and to implement a soil and water conservation plan and where applicable, a forest stewardship plan. Other requirements in the easement may apply.

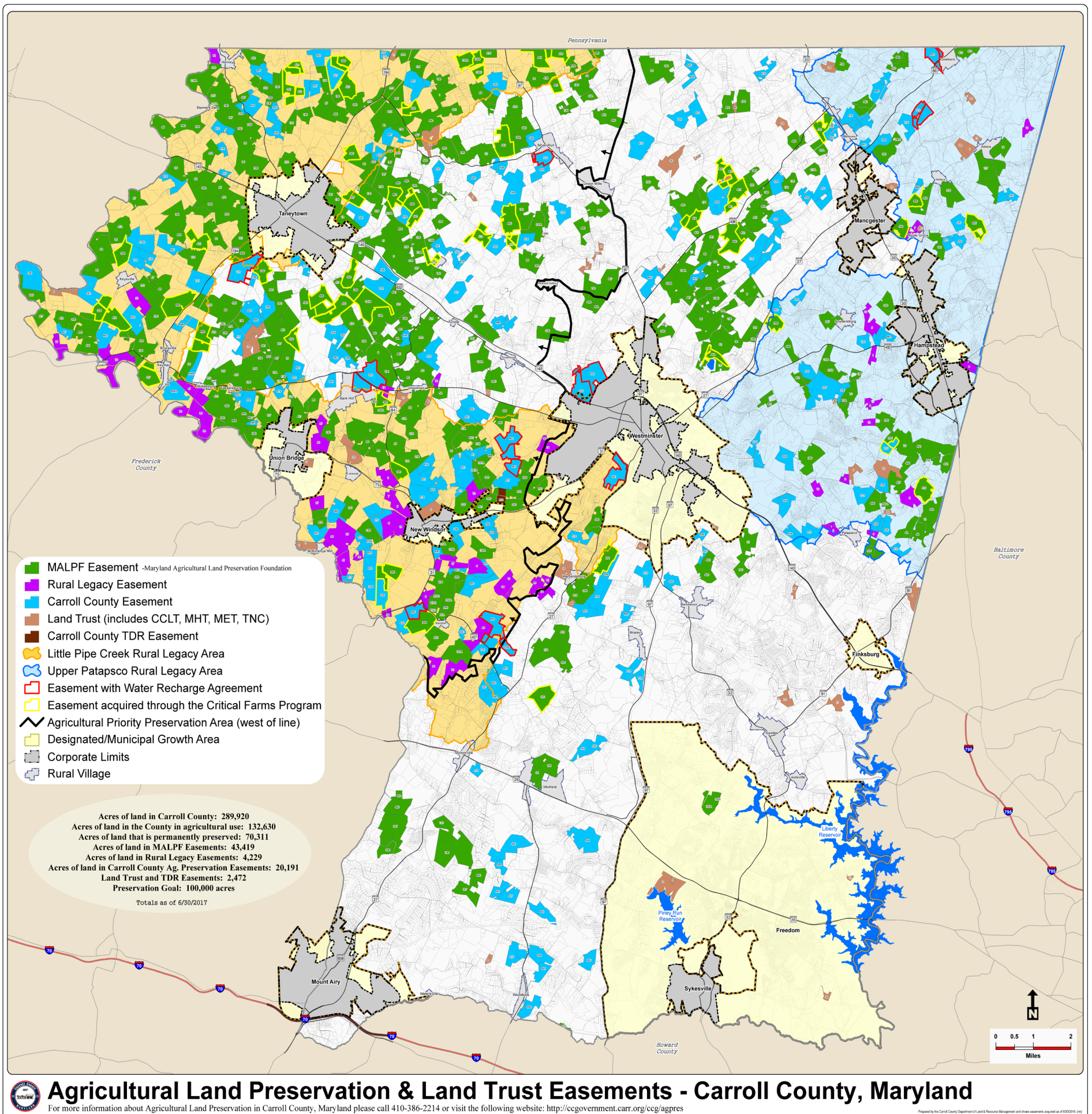
**For More Information:** Call Deborah Bowers, Program Manager, or J. P. Smith Jr., Preservation Specialist, at 410 386-2214.

## Maryland Rural Legacy Program

**Program Purpose:** To preserve farmland, forestland and environmentally sensitive land for agricultural uses as well as permanent critical habitat protection.

**Type of Easement:** While funded through grants to the County from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Rural Legacy easements are held by the County Commissioners and administered by the County.

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**Agricultural Land Preservation & Land Trust Easements - Carroll County, Maryland**  
 For more information about Agricultural Land Preservation in Carroll County, Maryland please call 410-386-2214 or visit the following website: <http://cggovernment.carr.org/cc/agpres>  
 Prepared by the Carroll County Department of Land & Resource Management and these easements acquired as of 6/30/2017. © Maryland Dept. of Agriculture, 2017.

**Eligibility Factors and Criteria:**

1. Properties must be located within a designated Rural Legacy Area (RLA). There are two approved Rural Legacy Areas in Carroll County: Little Pipe Creek RLA in the west/northwest portion of the County and the Upper Patapsco RLA in the east/northeast portion. Call our office to determine eligibility.
2. Properties must have development potential. Preference is given to properties over 30 acres, however, in some cases smaller properties may be considered.

**Limitations on Development:** Only agricultural structures may be constructed. In some cases the right to reserve a building lot may be permitted, however the easement purchase price will be significantly reduced.

**Easement Value:** The easement value or purchase price is determined by a formula based on development potential, parcel size, contiguity to existing easements, soils, and natural resources to be protected.

**Stewardship:** Seller agrees to allow periodic visits to examine required stream buffers and land conditions in



accordance with the total resource management plan and forest stewardship plan requirements.

**Method of Payment:** Landowners receive lump sum payment. **Information:** Call 410 386-2214.

**Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program**

**Program Purpose:** To preserve agricultural land for the future by paying willing landowners to permanently retire the development potential of their land.

**Type of Easement:** Agricultural conservation easement in perpetuity held by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, administered through the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

**Payment Options:** Lump-sum payment – offer is 70% of appraised fair market value or applicant’s asking price, whichever is lower, paid in full at settlement.

**Eligibility Factors and Criteria: Properties must:**

1. Be at least 50 acres, or, adjacent to a preserved farm.
2. Have at least 50% USDA Class I, II or III soils.
3. Have subdivision potential.
4. Be approved by the Carroll County Ag Preservation Advisory Board and by the Board of County Commissioners.

5. Be ranked by qualifications including soil quality and location.

**Limitations on Development:** Other than agriculture, uses related to agriculture may be approved, and home based businesses. Requests for future dwellings, for example, for family members, are considered on a case by case basis.

**Conservation practices:** Seller agrees to periodic inspections of the property and to implement conservation practices including forest stewardship.

**For More Information:** Call Carroll County Agricultural Land Preservation, 410 386-2214.

**Carroll County Land Trust and Maryland Environmental Trust**

If your property does not meet the qualifications of any programs offered, you may be able to donate or sell a conservation easement to a nonprofit conservation organization called a land trust. If your land has conservation value and at least one building right to retire, donating an easement can provide tax benefits in addition to protecting the environmental attributes of the land. The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) or the Carroll County Land Trust (CCLT) will work with you to complete the necessary documentation. In addition to potential income tax benefits at the state and federal level, a local Carroll County property tax credit is available for donated easements. Contact the Carroll County Land Trust or MET through their websites or call the CCLT at 410 848-8247.