

# Critical Area Town Training Day 1

Introduction to the Critical Area Program

August 18, 2022





# Overview

History & Background

Critical Area Land Use Designations

Habitat Protection Areas (HPAs)

Q&A

# History & Background



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Introduced in 1984 after EPA study revealed sources for the deteriorating health of the Bay.

All land within the Critical Area is regulated by State law or local Critical Area programs.

The Atlantic Coastal Bays were added in 2002.



# History & Background



## Goals of the law:

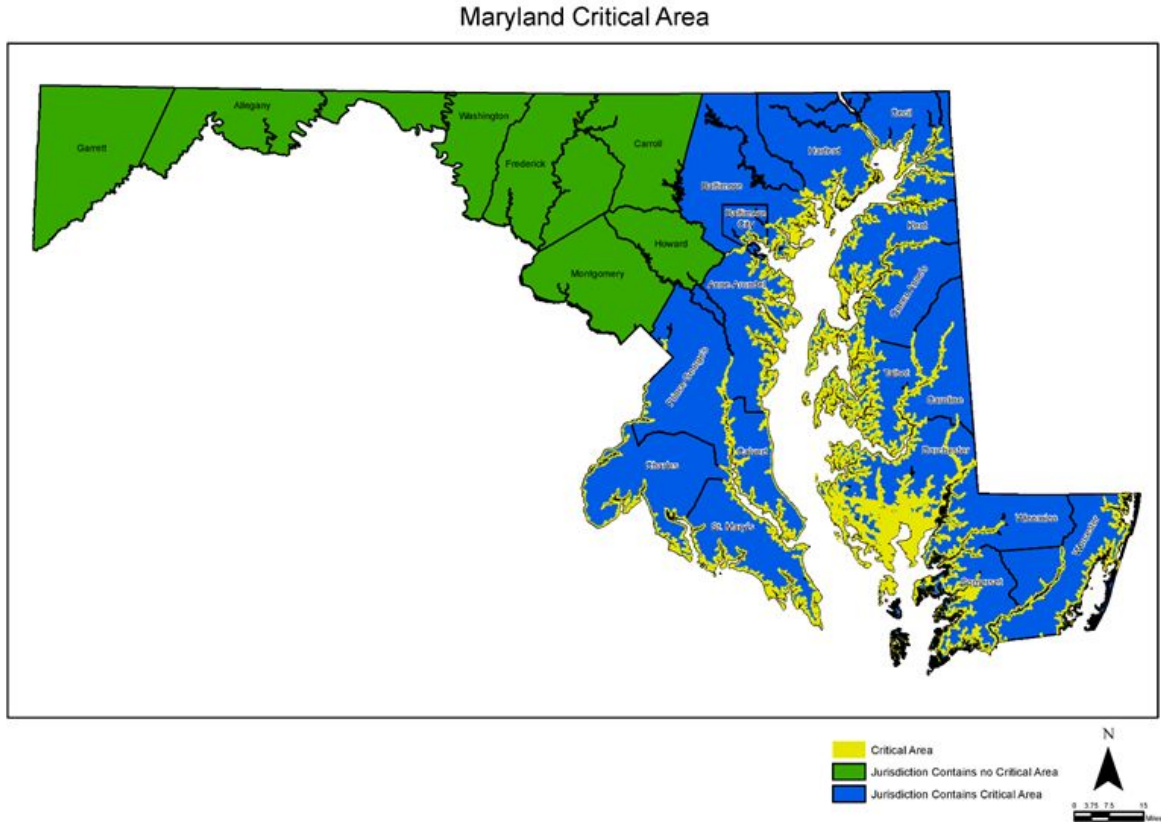
1. Minimize adverse impacts to water quality from runoff.
2. Conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitat.
3. Establish land use policies that accommodate growth & address the fact that the number, movement, and activities of people in the Critical Area can have adverse environmental impacts.

# Where is the Critical Area?

All tidal waters of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays

All land within 1,000 feet of tidal waters and tidal wetlands

Approximately 11% of the State & 5,200 miles of shoreline



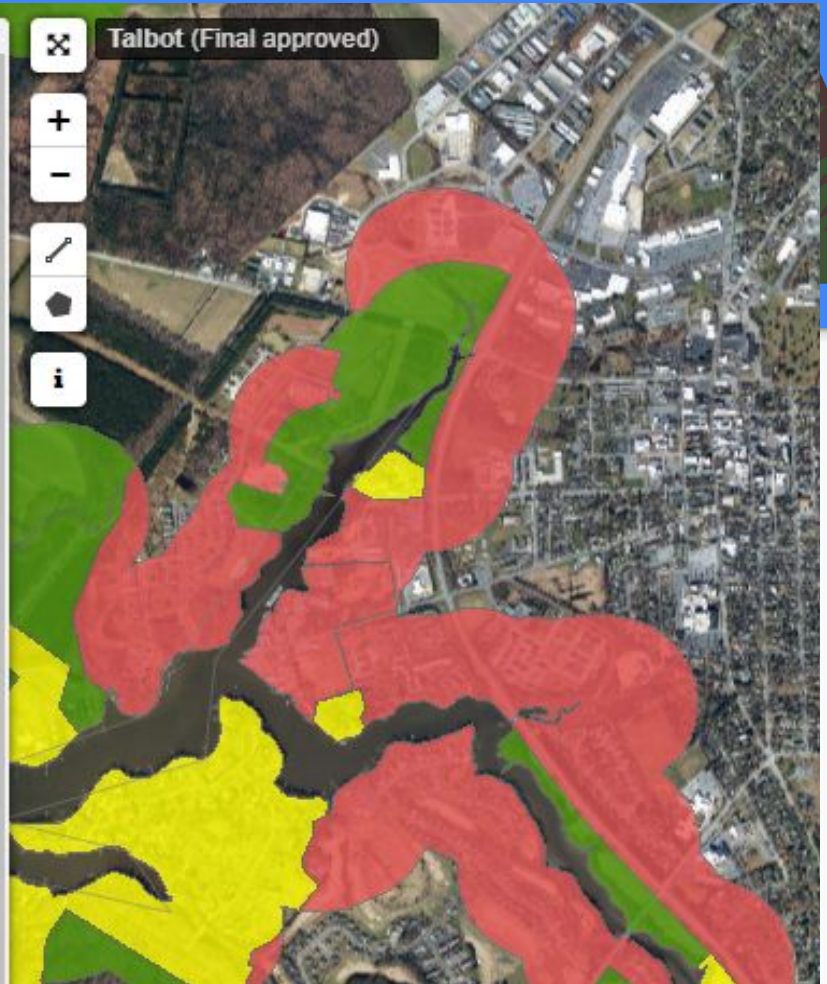
# Legend

## Map Status i

- Initiated map
- Working draft map
- Summary draft map
- Final approved map
- Unavailable

## Designation i

- IDA
- LDA
- RCA
- RCA-DMCF
- UWET
- Federal
- Exempt



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# Intensely Developed Area (IDA)

COMAR 27.01.02.03



Existing urban, industrial, institutional, commercial and other developed areas

Little existing natural habitats

Stormwater management required for development:  
phosphorus pollutant reduction of 10%



# Limited Development Area (LDA)

COMAR 27.01.02.04



Residential and commercial areas of moderate intensity

Some commercial, institutional uses; natural habitats

15% lot coverage limit

Forest clearing is limited

# Resource Conservation Area (RCA)

COMAR 27.01.02.05



Low density development;  
farms, forests, wetlands, fields,  
and open spaces

Commercial uses related to  
natural resources

Density restricted to 1 dwelling  
unit per 20 acres

15% lot coverage limit

Forest clearing limited

# Lot Coverage Requirements



- In general: 15% of a parcel or lot
- Exceptions for grandfathered, smaller lots:

<b>LOT/PARCEL SIZE</b>	<b>LOT COVERAGE</b>
0 – 8,000 SF	25% of Parcel + 500 SF
8,000 – 21,780 SF	31.25% of Parcel
21,781 – 36,300 SF	5,445 SF
36,301 – 43,560 SF	15 % of Parcel
Over 43, 560 SF	15 % of Parcel

# Forest Clearing Requirements



Clearing %	Mitigation
0-20%	1:1
20%-30%*	1.5:1
Over 30%*	3:1 and a Variance

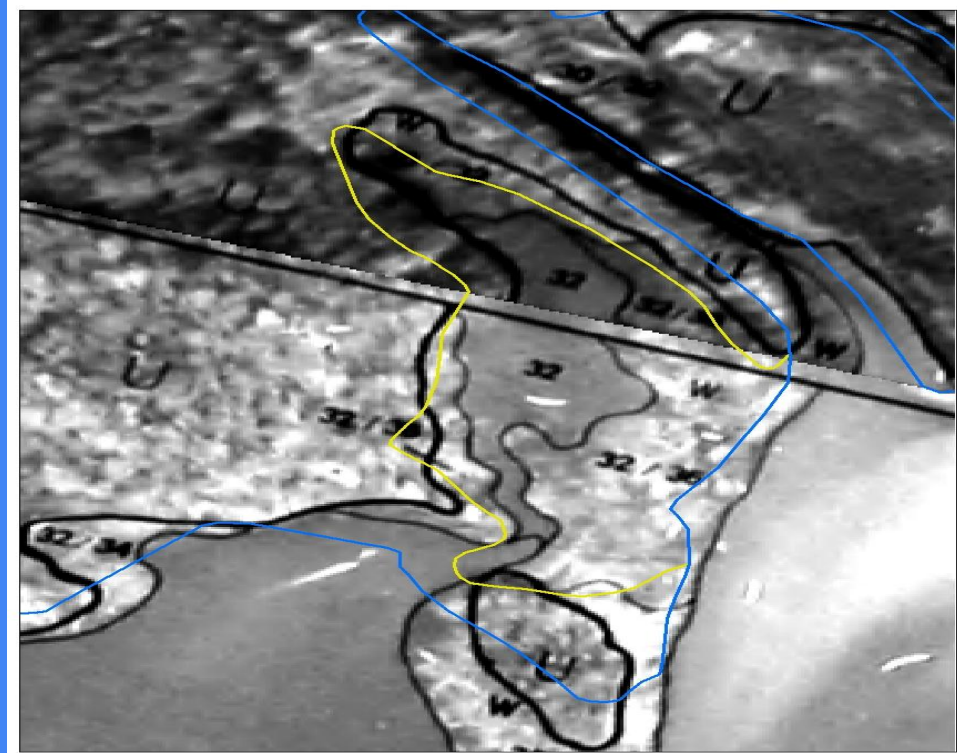
\* - Mitigation is required for all clearing amounts

# Mapping Update - Why Update Now?

Required change from HB 1253 (2008)  
to update 1,000-foot Boundary

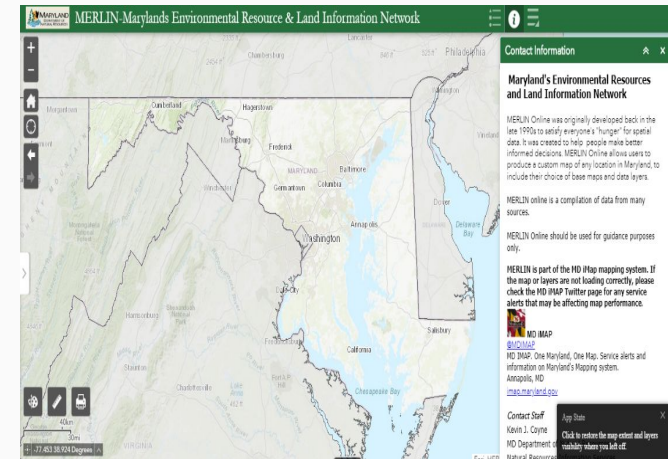
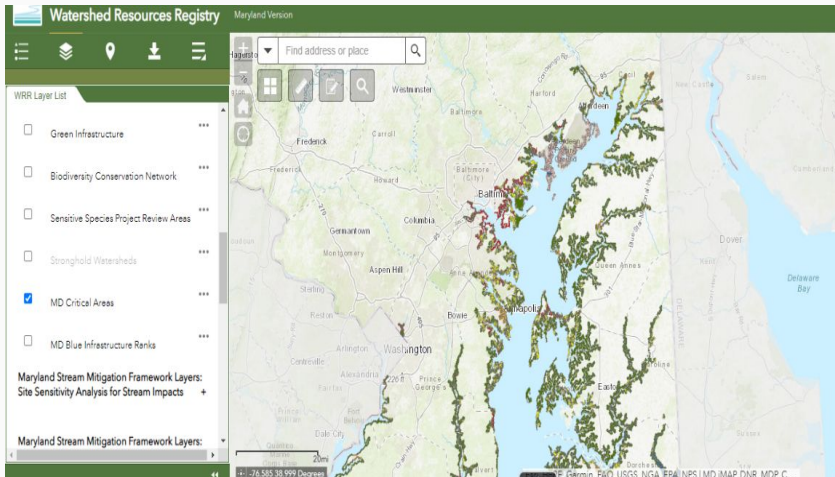
- Base maps were 1972 Tidal Wetlands Maps that were not ortho-rectified or georeferenced
- Boundary was drawn manually – inherent inaccuracies
- State and local governments to work cooperatively to develop maps

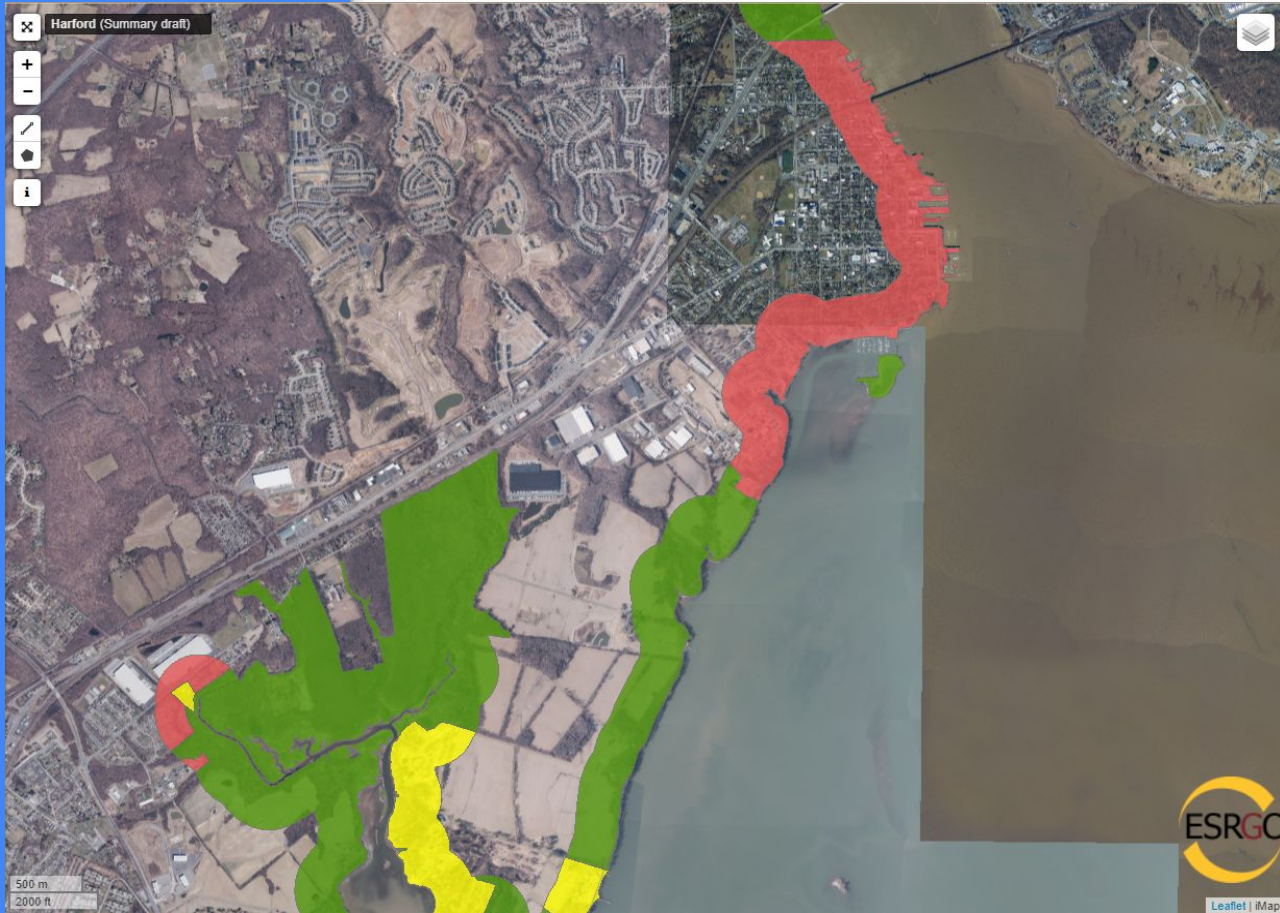
Move from use of 1972 Tidal Wetlands Maps to Critical Area delineated on Statewide Base Map



# Why Update Now?

- Electronic maps are now the industry standard
- Critical Area boundary now web-accessible
  - iMap
  - Watershed Resources Registry
  - MD MERLIN





# Habitat Protection Area (HPA)

COMAR 27.01.09



100-Foot Buffer

Nontidal wetlands

Threatened & endangered species  
habitat

Species in need of conservation

Anadromous fish spawning waters

Forest interior dwelling bird (FIDS)  
habitat

Riparian forests

Historic waterfowl staging &  
concentration areas

Colonial water bird nesting areas

Natural heritage areas



# 100-Foot Buffer





# CAC/Local Coordination

- CAC staff is available to coordinate with local jurisdictions
  - Model Ordinance
  - Program Specific Updates
  - Site Visits
  - Growth Allocations





Questions?

- Question and Answer Session
- Ren Serey, Former Executive Director
- Charlotte Shearin, Regional Program Chief
- Nick Kelly, Regional Program Chief