

Anne Arundel County
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board

2025 Annual Report



Doepkens Farm, 2002

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INTRODUCTION

Anne Arundel County has a long standing commitment to preserve agricultural land and forest land in perpetuity through various County and State-funded preservation programs. The Agricultural and Woodland preservation program was established 1990 and is charged with the mission of promoting the preservation and permanent protection of agricultural land and woodland in Anne Arundel County by offering information and assistance to the agricultural community.

As of December 31, 2025, the County holds:

- **59 Maryland Agricultural Land Foundation easements**
- **21 Rural Legacy and Community Connection easements**
- **83 County Agricultural and Woodland easements**
- **65 District agreements**

protecting 17,723 acres of land across Anne Arundel County, Maryland

The five-member Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board (Board) is an integral part of helping the County meet these goals. The Board meets at least quarterly to advise the County as it promotes preservation of agricultural and woodland properties through the purchase of County and State funded easements. The Board helps the County by developing long term goals for the program, and offers oversight and guidance on issues relating to the acquisition and management of new and existing easements.

These programs are invaluable tools that promote agriculture and forestry as viable sectors of the local economy, preserve rural landscapes, manage growth and development, encourage the use of best management practices to reduce runoff, promote healthy streams, and discourage the loss of prime agricultural and forest land to development.

ABOUT US

The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board was first established in County Code in 1990 and current Code provisions are contained in Article 17, Title 10. Members serve five year terms and are appointed by the County Executive. The Agricultural Preservation program operates under the Office of Planning and Zoning and the Agricultural Preservation Program staff facilitates Board meetings, and sets agendas, in collaboration with the Chairperson.

The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board consists of a Chairperson and four Board Members. All five members are appointed by the County Executive, three (3) of whom shall be owner-operators of commercial farms who earn fifty (50) percent or more of their income from farming. The term of each member shall be five (5) years, serving no more than two (2) consecutive full terms. One member must also have a background or experience in forestry.

BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Board Members	County Staff
Stephen Hopkins, Chair (term expires 5/20/2027)	Christina Pompa, Deputy Planning and Zoning Officer
Kayla Griffith (term expires 9/30/2029)	Michael Stringer, Program Manager
John Houser, forestry representative (term expires 9/30/2029)	Billy Gorski, Agricultural Planner
Emily Wilson (term expires 1/31/2029)	
Ricky Catterton (term expires 3/17/2029)	

Board Meetings were held on January 21, April 10, May 22, June 26, July 30, October 16, and December 11, 2025. A September 3, 2025 meeting was scheduled, but there was not a quorum. Public notice and agendas for Board meetings were posted online so the public was made aware of the time and topics for the meetings. Meeting minutes were prepared and posted online after they were adopted by the Board in the subsequent meeting.

2025 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS

- The Agricultural Preservation Board members continued to communicate with members of the County's agricultural community to assist in generating program interest.
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) easements
 - An easement was recorded on a 120 acre farm in June 2025 with funding from the FY2024 MALPF cycle. The easement was fully funded by the State.
 - Offer letters were sent to five landowners who had applied for easements in the FY2025/26 MALPF cycle. Two of the offer letters were signed and are moving to closing. The two properties are a combined 119 acres. The State will provide \$995,757 and the County will provide \$217,593 to pay for the easements.
- Rural Legacy. The County signed a grant agreement for \$891,655 with the State in November 2024. After working with multiple landowners, a letter of commitment was signed by the owners of a 136 acre farm in 2025. County staff are working with State Rural Legacy staff to finalize the deed of easement, which is expected to be signed in 2026.
- County Agricultural and Woodland Easements
 - One application was received by the April 2025 deadline to place an easement on a 192 acre farm. The application was recommended for approval by the Board and the deed of easement was signed on December 16, 2025.
 - One application was received by the November 2025 deadline to place an easement on a 38 acre property. The Board recommended to not proceed with this application because of concerns of lack of development potential based on Critical Area and regulatory restrictions and demand for funding for other, higher priority properties.
- The Board discussed potential updates to the County Code and Regulations for the Agricultural and Woodland Preservation. An Ad Hoc Working Group was convened to provide additional perspective to the Board and Staff on potential updates to the Program. The Working Group met with Board Members present on July 30 and September 3, 2025.
- The Chair of the County Forestry Board attended the October 16 meeting to share updates on that Board and discuss issues related to agriculture and forestry.
- Emily Wilson served on the County Agriculture Commission as a representative for the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board. Michael Stringer also served on the Agriculture Commission as an ex officio member.
- Emily Wilson served on the Region 8 Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee

- County Agricultural and Woodland Preservation Program staff coordinated with OPZ Long Range Planning staff to draft recommendations and strategies for the Region 8 Plan related to agriculture.
- County Program staff held regular meetings with staff from the Soil Conservation District and the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation to coordinate efforts and leverage resources.
- County Program staff attended meetings of the MALPF Board.
- County Program staff attended meetings of the Farm Bureau Board.
- County Agricultural Program staff attended meetings hosted by the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) in May and November 2025 designed to build capacity and share information among land trusts and land conservation partners.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2026

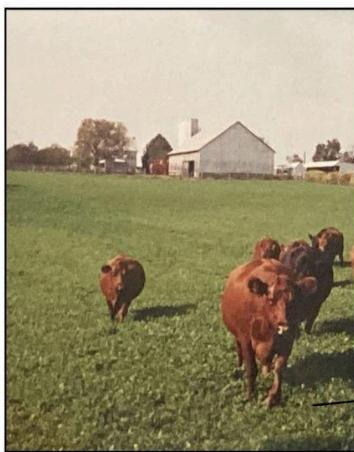
- Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board members will continue to be the voice of the Agricultural Preservation Program when they meet with members of the community.
- County Agricultural Program staff will continue to promote the program by mailing out marketing material, and will rely on partnerships with the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation, Farm Bureau, Scenic Rivers Land Trust, and the Soil Conservation District to further disseminate program information. Marketing will focus on properties with agricultural district agreements and properties adjacent to existing easements.
- Staff will maintain an inspection schedule in 2026 and update the database as new information is obtained on existing easements.
- County Agricultural Program staff will work to implement goals, policies, and strategies of the County's General Development Plan (Plan2040) and Region Plans related to agricultural and woodland preservation. .

HIGHLIGHTED PROPERTIES

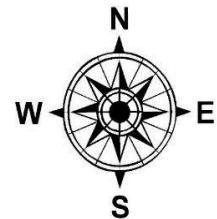
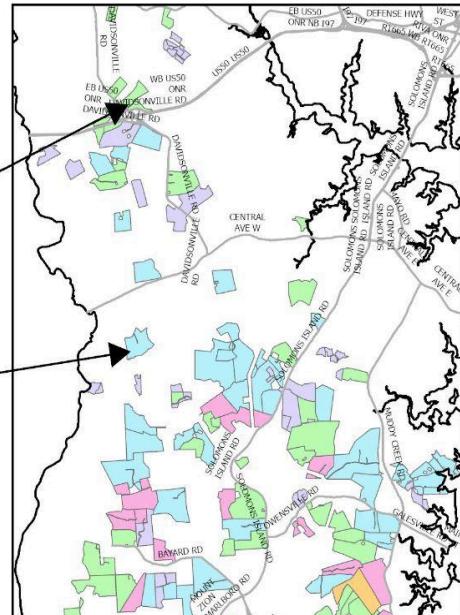
DOEPKENS FARM

The 192-acre Doepkens farm is located at 2657 Davidsonville Road. The Doepkens family has owned and worked the farm for over a century. This history of farming extends further back as it was part of Middle Plantation. William P. Doepkens and his wife Marjorie wrote a book documenting the artifacts they unearthed and history of the farm back to the 1600s.

The farm is located in a prominent location as one of several farms along Davidsonville Road (MD-424) between US-50 and Crofton. Placing an easement on the property will support the family transitioning ownership to a new farmer at an affordable price. Along with other preserved farmland and parks, the land creates a green buffer between the developing Crofton community and rural South County.



VICINITY MAP



MACKEY FARM

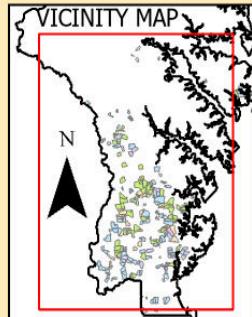
Land Preserve LLC acquired this 128-acre farm at 3843 Queen Anne Bridge Road in 2023 to keep it in agricultural use. They applied for a MALPF easement as contract purchasers and signed the deed of easement in June 2025. The property is located next to the Davidsonville Recreation Center and is adjacent to other large farms. There are approximately 57 acres in agricultural production, and 56 acres of forest. The agricultural operation is in a small grain rotation. The farm meets the required soils criteria with 62% class I, II, or III soils.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

AGRICULTURE & WOODLAND PRESERVATION



BROADNECK AREA



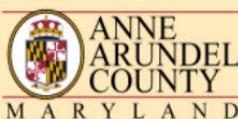
Legend

- County, State & Federal Properties
- Rural Legacy Area
- Priority Preservation Area

Agriculture and Woodland Preservation

- Anne Arundel County District
Agreement
- Anne Arundel County Agricultural
or Woodland Easement
- Anne Arundel South Easement
(Rural Legacy/DNR)
- Maryland Agricultural Land
Preservation Foundation-MALPF
Easement (MDA)
- Community Connections Easement
(DNR)

REVISED January 2026



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA