



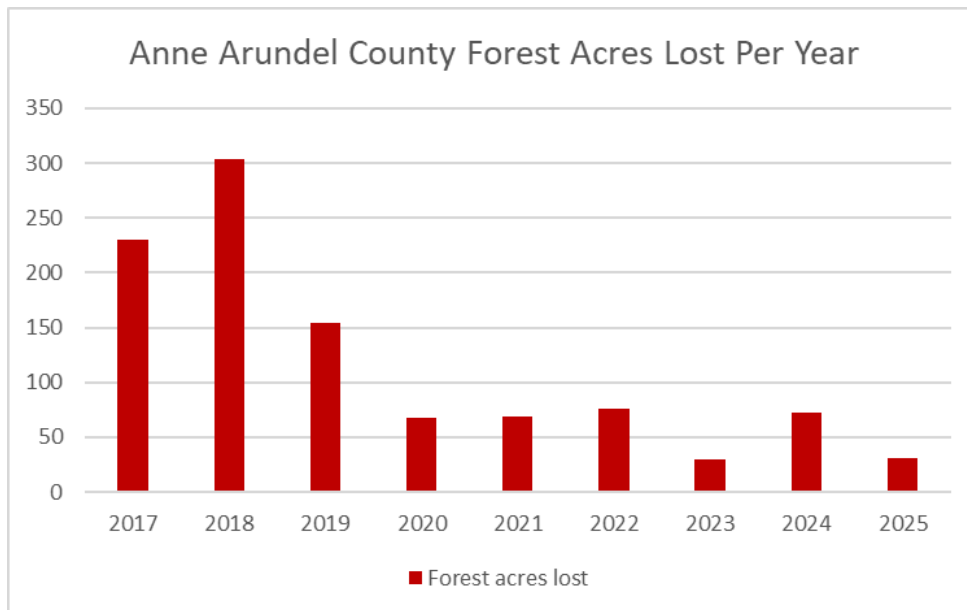
2025 State of the Forest Executive Summary

In 2018, Anne Arundel County commissioned the Chesapeake Conservancy to undertake a study, examining changes in county forest cover evident through aerial photographs over time, to begin to get a handle on the nature and scale of tree loss across the jurisdiction. The product of that work effort showed that from 2010 to 2017, the county lost around 2,775 acres of forest, nearly 300 acres per year.

In response to those findings, the Pittman administration and the Anne Arundel County Council passed Bill 68-19, the Forest Conservation Bill, which tightened up the forest clearing allowed for new development projects significantly. Since the passage of that legislation, in 2019, there has been considerable interest in exploring its impacts, as well as better understanding the nature of forest gain, loss, and protection across Anne Arundel County.

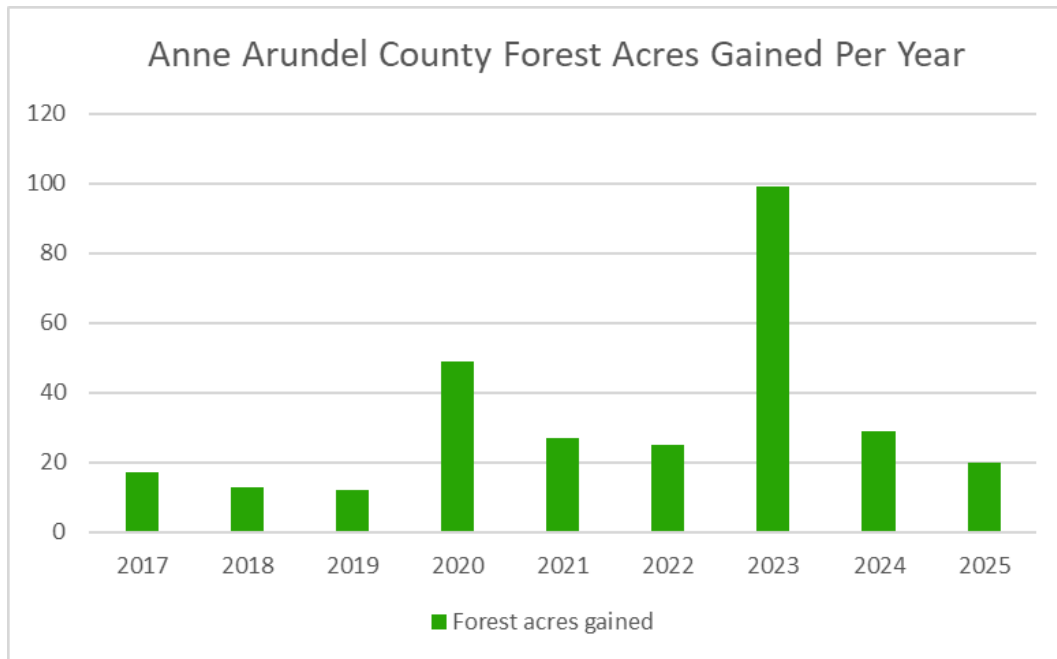
Since 2023, the County has pooled data from the variety of agencies and private partners working in the forest regulation and protection arena to create a publicly-accessible, online GIS tool documenting parcel level impacts to forest throughout Anne Arundel County. That tool is populated with development-related data back through 2017, and harvest and land protection data back as far as 1989. The data in this tool has been updated through Fiscal Year 2025 and the intention is to have this tool updated annually into the future as a tool for public education and to inform policy decisions.

Key Takeaways:



The passage of Anne Arundel County's Forest Conservation Bill coincided roughly with the advent of the COVID-19 shutdowns that disrupted society for a year and half, so it can be

somewhat difficult to fully disaggregate the impacts of either factor on what happened in 2020 and 2021. That said, Anne Arundel County has experienced dramatically less tree clearing, on average, in the six years since the passage of the bill than it did in the three years prior to its passage - averaging around 58 acres lost from 2020 through 2025 versus 229 acres lost from 2017 to 2019. Those numbers have continued to remain low since 2022, even after the pandemic ended.



Conversely, the County saw a modest, but significant, increase in the forest gained over those two timeframes. From 2017 through 2019, the County added around 14 acres of new forest per year. During the 2020 to 2025 timeframe, the County added around 42 acres of new forest per year, with 2023 alone seeing almost 100 acres of forest planting.

That said, even with reductions in forest loss, and increases in forest planting and preservation, Anne Arundel County still remains in a situation where it is experiencing net forest loss - largely through development activity - on an annual basis. As of the beginning of FY26, that deficit is about 14 acres per year.

Anne Arundel County and its partners are protecting hundreds of acres of land, including large swaths of forest, on an annual basis. Through the development process, as well as through easements added on properties by local land trusts, over 5,600 acres of forest have been permanently protected during the period examined.