



MONOCACY SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Developed by the
Monocacy Scenic River Citizens' Advisory Board
September 2016

Cover Image: MD28 Bridge over the Monocacy at the
Monocacy Natural Resource Management Area

The Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan 2016

Dedication, experience, and a respect and concern for the Scenic Monocacy River, its riparian habitat, water quality, and its watershed describe the overall efforts of the Monocacy Scenic River Board. They spent many hours in the creation and review of the update to the 1990 Study and Management Plan, deliberating issues and making final recommendations. The River Board also extends its gratitude and thanks to those people who previously served on the Board, and to all who appreciate, admire, and utilize the Monocacy River. It's the River Board's hope that the 2016 Monocacy River Management Plan will ensure that future generations will encounter a healthy, vibrant, resilient Monocacy River and will enjoy and protect the River, its corridor and watershed.

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Executive Summary

The Monocacy River, designated as one of Maryland's Scenic and Wild Rivers, is noted for the rich and diverse bounty of its waters and beautiful scenery along its shoreline. As one of Maryland's greatest treasures, the River provides public drinking water, wildlife, habitat, aesthetic beauty, and instills community pride. Yet, nearly three centuries of development have dramatically changed the natural and cultural resources of the River. The challenge of protecting this valuable resource is difficult in a watershed that continues to experience change and population growth. Stewardship and responsible care of any asset—including a State-designated Scenic River—requires targeted action and decisions to ensure long-term health, function, and protection.

This Plan replaces the 1990 Monocacy Scenic River Study and Management Plan. It describes the River's multiple features, unique environmental resources, its natural and cultural history, and linkages to land and the surrounding community. The Plan contains recommendations for consideration in addressing protection of unmodified forested landscapes and enhancement of riparian areas in the River corridor through land management strategies, planning, and various preservation programs.

The recommendations in the Plan are included at the end of chapters 4 through 9 and also included in the Appendix. Some of the recommendations for action and implementation are directed at the Monocacy Scenic River Citizens' Advisory Board, the official Frederick and Carroll County advocate for the River. All other recommendations are offered specifically for consideration by Frederick and Carroll Counties, the City of Frederick, and the Town of Walkersville, Maryland.

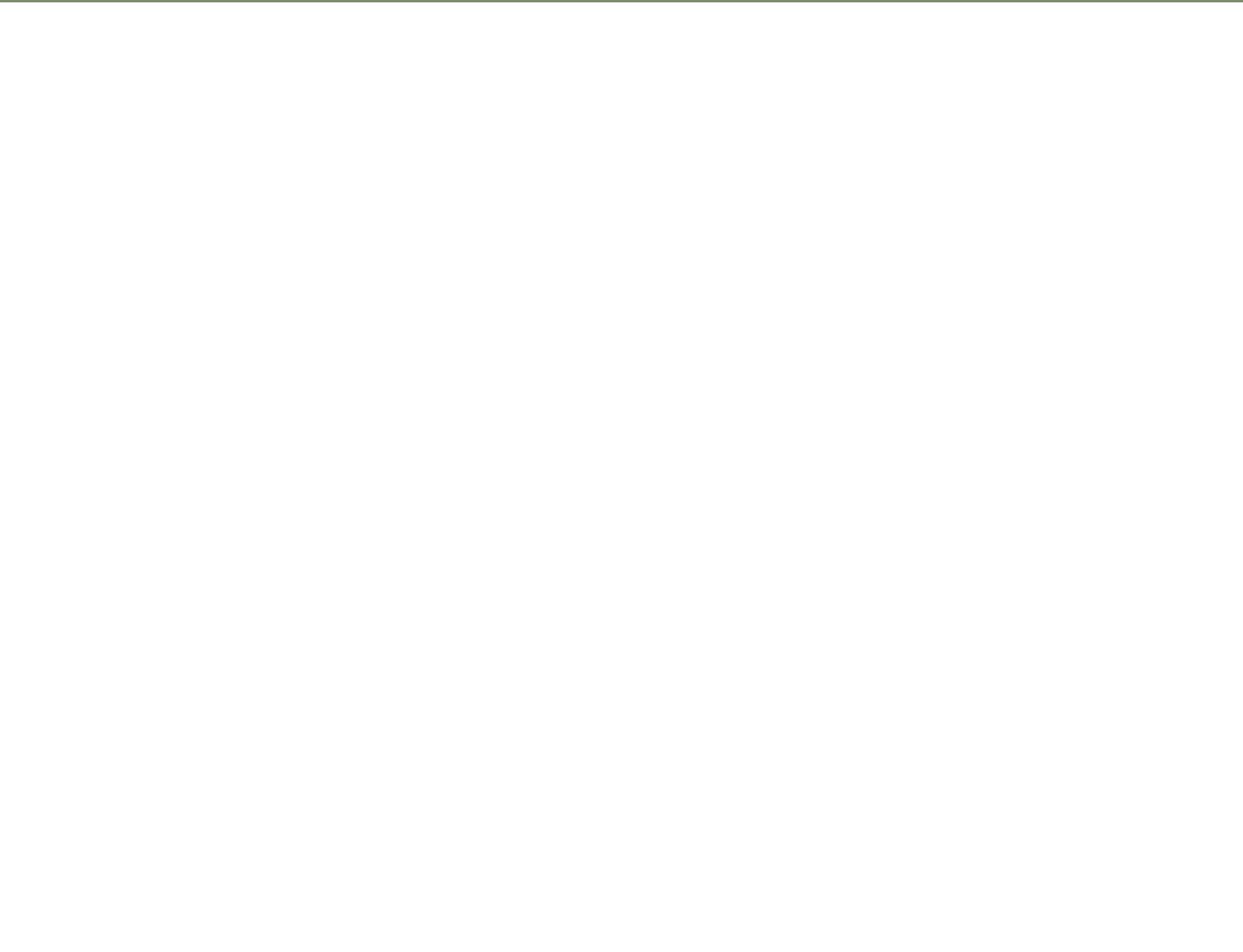
Some of the recommendations may require legislative action for proper implementation. The recommendations are proposed for consideration and to encourage collaboration among all parties to improve and protect the Monocacy Scenic River's unique and sensitive resources. The goal of the recommendations is not to stop development or impede agriculture and other initiatives, but to advocate for sustainable land uses and activities that respect and protect the River, its corridor and watershed. This Plan recognizes the need for cooperative efforts among citizens, citizen groups, government agencies, and other organizations in order to protect and enhance the valuable resources of the Monocacy Scenic River.

Key recommendations for consideration include but are not limited to the following:

- Restoration of land within River-front Ecologically Significant Areas
- Reforestation of critical gaps for wildlife habitat, bank stability, flood attenuation, and viewsheds
- Creation of a community-based Monocacy Riverkeeper
- Promotion of River access and recreation
- Increased public awareness about the River through public relations and educational programs
- Enhanced stewardship of agricultural lands in the River corridor for water quality protection, consistent with continued agricultural viability and economic contributions
- Creation of the Monocacy River Resource Protection Area to protect, conserve, and enhance significant Monocacy River resources, ecological functions, and values that benefit the community.

This Plan was provided to the governments of Frederick and Carroll Counties, the City of Frederick, and the Town of Walkersville for review and comment. The Plan was also posted on the websites of Frederick County and Carroll County, with notices for public comment placed in local newspapers.

The recommendations contained in this Plan will be tracked and the Plan will be reviewed by the River Board for update, as appropriate, at least every five years.





Aerial View of LeGore Bridge

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*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago;
the second best time is now.*

Chinese proverb

GOALS OF THE MONOCACY RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Maintain and restore the ecological health and productivity of the Monocacy River and its corridor
- Improve the River's water quality
- Promote land use compatibility and attention to environmentally sensitive areas to maximize conservation and sound use of the Monocacy's riparian resources
- Identify and facilitate appropriate uses and protective measures for significant scenic and ecological areas, historic and archeological sites, and other valued River-related resources
- Provide resource information about the Monocacy River for local, state and federal governments, elected officials, civic groups, environmental organizations, and the residents of Carroll and Frederick counties
- Develop multi-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination for the management and protection of the Monocacy River corridor
- Increase public awareness about important Monocacy River resource values through outreach and environmental education



PREFACE

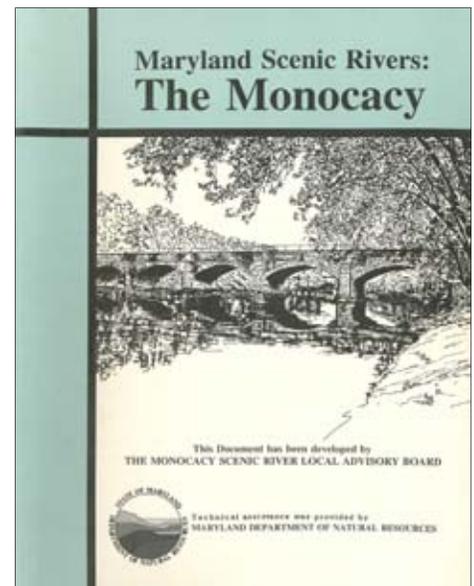
Monocacy Aqueduct in the C&O Canal National Park

The Monocacy River and its tributaries are a valuable and rich resource that provide water for domestic consumption, fish, and wildlife habitat, effluent disposal, recreation and many other uses. The Monocacy River Management Plan is a coordinated effort that directly addresses riverine resources and related issues and makes recommendations for the protection and conservation of those resources.

The 1968 Maryland Scenic and Wild Rivers Act called for the protection of Maryland’s river resources through an organized program of inventories and land use planning. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Monocacy Scenic River Citizens’ Advisory Board (River Board) created the initial *Monocacy River Study and Management Plan* in 1990, which was approved by both the Carroll County and Frederick County Boards of Commissioners, and by the Maryland General Assembly in 1991 through House Bill 1123.

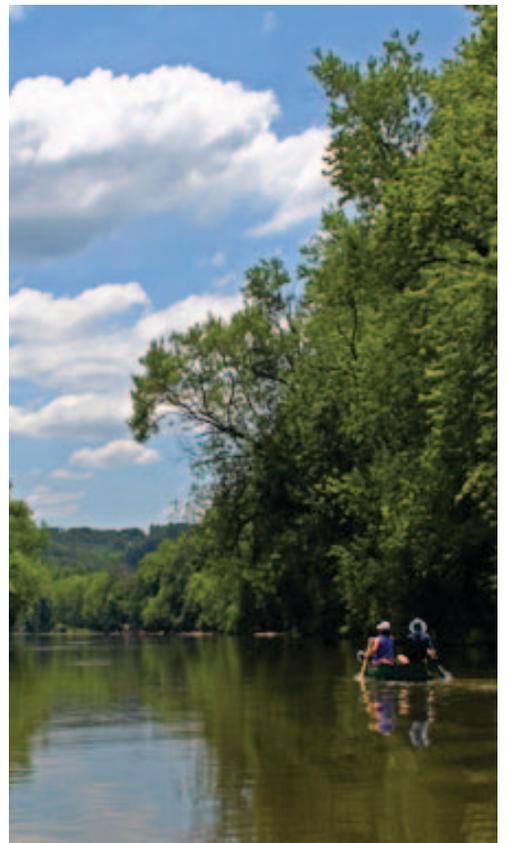
The *1990 Plan* has been used, to varying degrees, for input or for providing guidance on a variety of federal, state, and local programs, policies, and regulations, and on public and private projects. In 2015, the River Board, Frederick County, and Carroll County initiated an update to the *1990 Plan*, to reflect current knowledge, status, and condition of the ecological, social, and political environment related to the Monocacy River, its corridor and watershed. “The study and plan will require future revisions to address newly evolving conservation issues,” is a statement from the Preface in the *1990 Plan* that is now being realized. The River Board enlisted the support and engagement of various governmental partners, professional acquaintances and others in the update to the *1990 Plan*.

Recommendations contained in the 2016 Monocacy River Management Plan will be tracked and pursued by the Monocacy Scenic River Board. The 2016 Plan will be reviewed, at least every five years, for update as appropriate.



*Who hears the rippling of rivers
will not utterly despair of anything.*

Henry David Thoreau





INTRODUCTION

Railroad bridge north of the Monocacy Aqueduct

Beginning in headwater streams in Adams County, Pennsylvania and flowing over fifty miles through central Maryland, adjoining Carroll County, Maryland and cutting through Frederick County, Maryland – the Monocacy River is the largest Maryland tributary of the Potomac River. The Monocacy River has sustained human populations for nearly ten thousand years, from tundra mammoth hunters to Native American woodland villages along its shores, to our growing modern communities.

In the 1970's, great public effort arose to protect the Monocacy from a government-proposed water supply system for the Washington region (further detail in chapter 6). The Monocacy was to be dammed at Sixes Bridge Road in Frederick County. A "Save the Monocacy" campaign was started and subsequent efforts to enact a Maryland Scenic River regulation, advisory boards, and programs and protection plans for those rivers began. The Monocacy Scenic River Citizens' Advisory Board was created, and the current Plan is the result of its efforts to renew preservation and protection efforts and to educate and inform the communities it serves.

The Monocacy River Watershed is a 970-square-mile-basin, which drains into the Potomac River approximately 20 miles above Washington, DC. At its origin, at the confluence of Marsh Creek and Rock Creek on the Mason-Dixon Line, the River falls on average three feet per mile to its mouth at the Potomac River. Water from these sources has served as a drinking water supply and a treated effluent disposal system. The lands have provided agricultural soils.

The Monocacy, as a scenic river, has provided many recreational opportunities and a home to a variety of wildlife and fish. Along much of its course, the river appears as it did when Native Americans walked its banks, albeit with several prominent and noticeable impacts by land development and a corridor with reduced canopy cover that detract from its scenic qualities.

In recent years its use as a drinking water supply has declined, and its treated effluent has improved greatly with Enhanced Nutrient Removal systems throughout the watershed and consolidation of sewerage systems.

However, historic stormwater practices and land uses have taken a toll, resulting in watershed-wide Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) for sediment, nutrients, and bacteria. The array of chemicals

introduced, as elsewhere, include modern pharmaceuticals and other substances whose aquatic impacts are not fully known.

The fate of the Monocacy River, as for the Chesapeake Bay, lies upon the balance between sound land uses, agriculture and development, and human activity practices, down to the individual level. The administration of policies and regulations governing these issues have increased greatly in recent years and is costly, but necessary in order to achieve water quality standards of the past, a resilient river corridor, and a healthy and sustainable future for the Monocacy River and our communities.

The River Board members would ask that you enjoy the many benefits of the river and learn what impacts we can work together to mitigate so that we achieve protection goals and hand down a cleaner waterway and healthier river corridor for the future residents of the communities through which it passes.



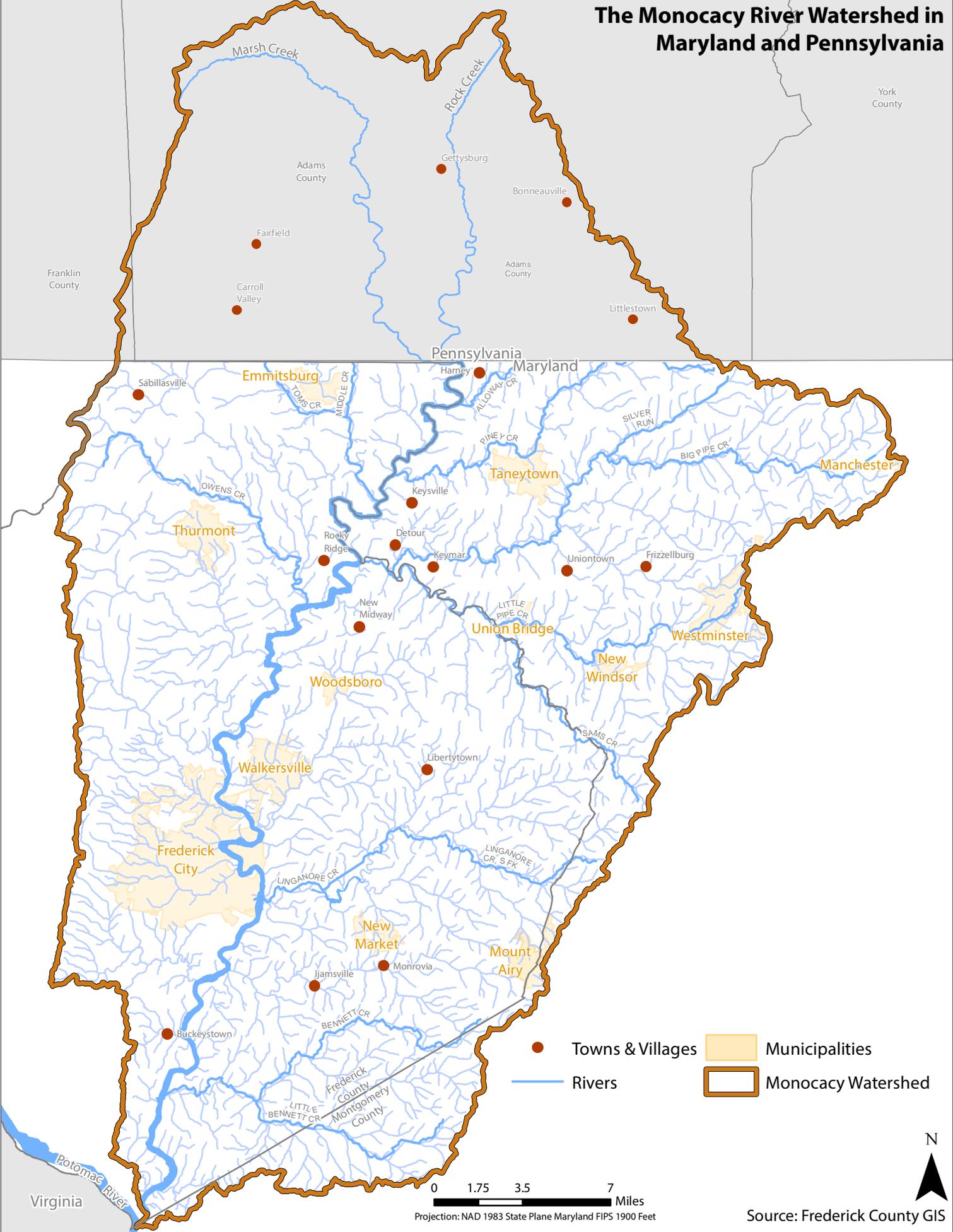
Scenic Rivers Planning History

The first organized attempt to restore the Monocacy resulted in the creation of the Interstate Monocacy Watershed Council in 1949. After studying the problems of the watershed, the Maryland State Planning Commission released Publication Number 70: *A Program for the Monocacy Watershed*, in 1951(1). The report recognized that some federal and state conservation efforts were underway to restore the watershed's resources, but these efforts were not coordinated and were usually inadequately funded. The report's major recommendations were to dramatically increase soil and water conservation efforts and to reforest extensive areas of the watershed. Water quality needed to be improved, local wildlife habitat needed restoration, and recreational resources required careful development. This simple message, although 60 years old, is as true today as it was then.

After the Maryland Scenic and Wild Rivers Act of 1968 was adopted, the first inventory, Scenic Rivers in Maryland, was released by the Maryland Department of State Planning in 1970 (2). The Monocacy River was identified as a significant state resource, worthy of immediate study, and as a prime candidate for State Scenic River designation. On April 30, 1974, the Monocacy River was added to the Maryland Scenic River System.

The scenic river planning process was initiated in 1976 when the Frederick and Carroll County Commissioners were contacted to assist with the organization of the Monocacy Scenic River Citizens Advisory Board. The River Board met for the first time in 1978 and participated in a recreational use study conducted by the University of Maryland.

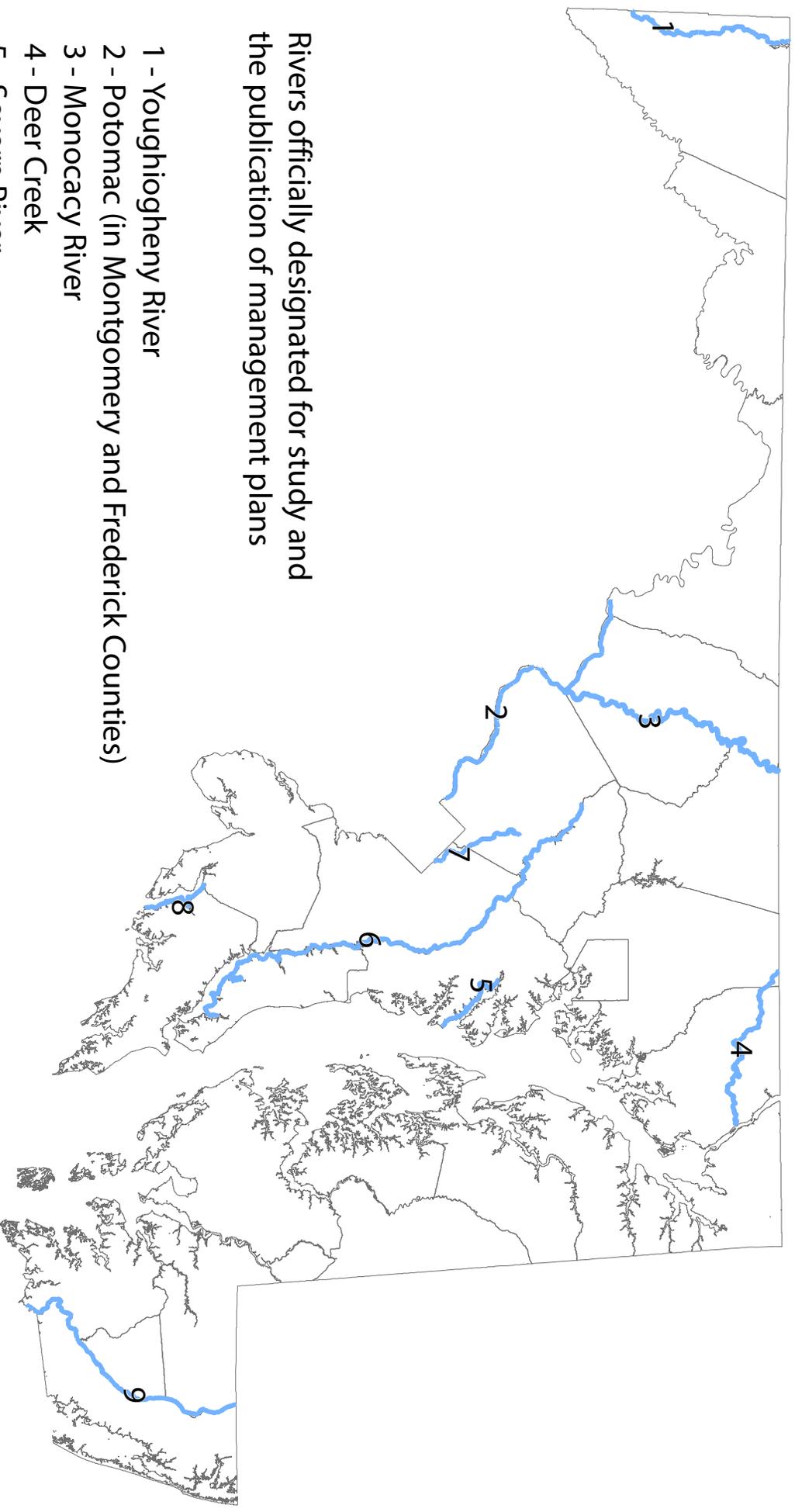
The Monocacy River Watershed in Maryland and Pennsylvania



0 1.75 3.5 7 Miles
 Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane Maryland FIPS 1900 Feet

N
 Source: Frederick County GIS

Maryland's Scenic and Wild Rivers Program



Rivers officially designated for study and the publication of management plans

- 1 - Youghiogheny River
- 2 - Potomac (in Montgomery and Frederick Counties)
- 3 - Monocacy River
- 4 - Deer Creek
- 5 - Severn River
- 6 - Patuxent River
- 7 - Anacostia River
- 8 - Wicomico River and Zekiah Swamp
- 9 - Pocomoke River

Source: 1990 Monocacy River study and Management Plan

In 1982, the National Park Service published The National Rivers Inventory which identified American rivers that were eligible for National Scenic River designation. Fifty-two miles of the Monocacy from Bridgeport to the Potomac, were identified as eligible for National Scenic River designation. The river was described as possessing significant natural and recreational resources as well as outstanding Native American archeological resources (3).

Scenic River Board

The River Board is comprised of ten members, five appointed by the Carroll County Commissioners and five appointed by the Frederick County Executive. The River Board’s membership also includes an ex-officio member from the City of Frederick, and a number from the Frederick County Farm Bureau. Staff support to the River Board is provided by both county governments.

The Board reviews and makes recommendations on federal, state, and local programs, policies, and regulations, plus public and private projects, including land use and development proposals. They serve as advocates for the River and its varied resources. Over the years, the River Board has been actively involved in many wide ranging and varied issues that could impact the River, its corridor and watershed. Both county governments support the River Board and, as one of many volunteer bodies in both counties, it provides an opportunity for residents to become engaged stewards of the Monocacy River. Annual reports of the River Board’s many actions and accomplishments can be found at the following:

<http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/194/Monocacy-Scenic-River-Citizens-Board>
<http://ccggovernment.carr.org/ccg/lrm/msr/>

There have been two events recently that highlight an environmental issue and the actions taken by the River Board to address it. In 2013, with the assistance of Junior Fire Company No. 2 in Frederick, the River Board hauled nearly 70 tires and other debris from a one mile stretch of the River near Monocacy Boulevard. Again in 2014, the River Board targeted another one mile section of the River near Woodsboro and removed close to 100 tires from the River’s banks and channel. This gives a perspective on the magnitude of the tire dumping problem in the River and lack of care or awareness of the river resource.

Each spring for the past six years, the River Board has hosted and participated in a public clean-up event along the Monocacy River in Rivermist Park (Monocacy Boulevard in Frederick), as part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation’s Potomac River Watershed dedicated clean-up day. The annual Potomac River Watershed clean up event has been ongoing for over two decades and is designed to not just remove rubbish from the shared environment, but to raise awareness of trash generation and disposal issues. The River Board looks forward to continuing in this yearly public engagement and river beautification project with the public for years to come.

