

The Land Reclamation Committee studies, recommends, and approves procedures for reclamation, conservation, and revegetation of areas affected by open-pit mining within the State. The Committee also reviews all mining and reclamation plans, progress reports, and final reports. The Committee establishes plans and methods of procedure, as well as practical guidelines, for the prompt and adequate reclamation, conservation, and revegetation of all lands disturbed by open-pit mining of bituminous coal within the State (Code Natural Resources Article, secs. 7-205, 7-501 through 7-505, 7-509, 7-510, 7-515).

FOREST AND PARK SERVICE

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The Forest and Park Services, formally two separate units administered under one director, were combined in 1982 to form the Forest and Park Service (Chapter 184, Acts of 1982). The Service works to serve the forest management and recreational needs of the people of Maryland. It manages Maryland's natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources by three programs: General Direction, Cooperative Forestry, and Forest and Park Management.

The General Direction Program provides direction, administrative support and services to the other two programs in Forests and Parks. Budget, personnel, purchasing, training, fleet management, radio communications, safety, equal opportunity, and public information functions directly serve the cooperative forestry and the forest and park management programs.

The Cooperative Forestry Program provides assistance to private forest landowners, municipalities, and other governmental units in the management of their forests and individual trees. The goal of the program is to improve and maintain the economic, aesthetic, recreational, environmental, and social contributions of trees, forests, and forest related resources for the benefit of people. The program has five major elements: cooperative forest management, resource utilization, resource planning, resource protection, and urban-community forestry.

The Cooperative Forestry Program takes forest management expertise to the 95,800 private landowners and the political subdivisions of the State. Forest fire prevention and control, forest insect and disease control, forest land management, for-

est watershed management, reforestation, and urban and community forestry represent the main thrusts of the program. While such programs as fire prevention and control, reforestation, and the application of technical forestry to individual forest acreages have a long history in the Service, urban and community forestry is, in part, new. The new program emphasizes working with developers, builders, architects, and city and county planners in careful developmental planning and large-scale forestry projects. Supervision of utility trimming and municipal tree care programs continues to be an important facet of urban and community forestry. The urban forestry concept includes individual shade tree consultations to private landowners, as time permits.

The Forest and Park Management Program administers and manages Maryland's State forests, parks, scenic preserves, historic monuments, and natural environmental areas. While providing recreational opportunities throughout the State, the Management Program preserves the natural resources, and insures multiple use and a sustained yield of forest resources.

Program projects are found in all parts of Maryland, from Potomac and Garrett Forests in Garrett County to Assateague on the Atlantic Ocean, from Elk Neck in Cecil County to Point Lookout in St. Mary's County. The program is comprised of 53 management projects, including four State forests, ten multi-use parks, fourteen general recreation parks, seven waterfront parks, six natural environmental areas, ten historic or scenic sites, one roadside picnic area, and one natural resources management area. Of the fifty-three projects, thirty-nine are operational, and fourteen are either under development or acquisition.

The thirty-five operational State parks provide a wide variety of interests from day-use activities such as picnicking and hiking to camping and cabin occupancy, which permit more extended enjoyment of these unique areas. Swimming, fishing, nature study, and sightseeing are also popular. The facilities contained in State parks and forests, along with the roads, land, and utilities, represent a fixed asset totaling approximately \$170 million.

Each year six million people visit the State parks and forests. Construction activities are under way at many of these areas where new facilities are being installed to improve existing ones and provide additional recreational opportunities for the park visitor.

Historical and nature interpretive programs, designed to increase visitor awareness, are conducted in the majority of areas. Annually, they serve more than 300,000 people.