

park acquisition and development. We are employing a consultant of national reputation to prepare the plan for submission to the Legislative Council next fall. It is our hope that the plan will embrace a program setting forth the needs for the next decade or so and will give us a basis on which to build an extensive park and recreation program.

Maryland is very fortunate in being situated geographically in the center of the great population belt, with an abundance of opportunity for industrial development. With the economic growth that may be expected in these circumstances will arise a growing need for the acquisition and development of more parks and recreational areas. There is every reason to believe that the population of Maryland will continue to grow by leaps and bounds for the next several years. This will create many problems for us, particularly in the metropolitan areas surrounding Baltimore and Washington. Moreover, new metropolitan areas undoubtedly will develop around such cities as Frederick, Hagerstown and Salisbury, requiring many day-use facilities for the recreational needs of families.

Recognition of our responsibilities in this area is to be noted in the capital improvement budget approved at the recent session of the General Assembly. Capital appropriations totaling \$2,325,400 are provided in that budget for land acquisition and for development of the land already acquired. Included in this capital program are \$1,375,400 additional funds for land acquisition in the Gunpowder River construction of roads in Elk Neck State Park; \$150,000 to acquire land Valley State Park; \$146,000 for the purchase of land and the construction in Seneca Creek State Park; \$160,000 to buy land in the Susquehanna State Park, and smaller sums for numerous other projects. It was a pleasure to me to recommend these increased appropriations for a service so vital to the lives of our people now and to future generations.

I congratulate all of you here for the interest you are displaying in promoting a sound recreational program for the health and enjoyment of the people of our State. I hope all of you will leave this conference with renewed inspiration to continue your good work of improving the quantity of outdoor recreational resources to the spiritual, cultural and physical betterment of all of us.