
Bacon Ridge Natural Area Forest Stewardship Plan

Crownsville, Maryland



Area recommended for reforestation

A County agency charts the course for the long-term protection and enhancement of a valued natural resource in the headwaters of a major Chesapeake Bay tributary.

SERVICES

Conservation Planning

The Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks manages natural resources in 15,000+ acres of parks and natural areas. This includes the Bacon Ridge Natural Area (BRNA), a 900-acre expanse of coastal plain wetlands and forest centered around Bacon Ridge Branch, headwaters to the South River. 630 acres of BRNA are permanently protected through a conservation easement between the County, Maryland Environmental Trust and Scenic Rivers Land Trust. The easement allows use of the land for passive recreation and nature study, and its terms require that a Forest Stewardship Plan be completed for the site. For help crafting this plan, the County turned to Biohabitats.

Biohabitats began by conducting field work to identify, map, and assess the conditions of BRNA's forest communities and associated ecological assets. This included assessing physical features to evaluate potential areas of degraded hydrology and soil erosion. Biohabitats also documented biological impacts such as non-native invasive vegetation and deer browse.

With goals to protect the site's natural heritage, soils, and water quality while allowing passive recreational use, Biohabitats crafted a plan to guide the protection, management, and enhancement of BRNA forests. Recommended strategies included treatment and removal of invasive vegetation; protection and enhancement of wetlands and waterways; improvement and creation of habitat; removal of refuse and trash; and afforestation of available non-forest areas. Considered a "living document" that can be reviewed and updated every five to ten years, the Forest Stewardship Plan will help the County manage this resource well into the future.