

# THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

## Trails & Greenways Committee

### Spotlight on Somerset County Trails *by Katherine O. Rizzo*

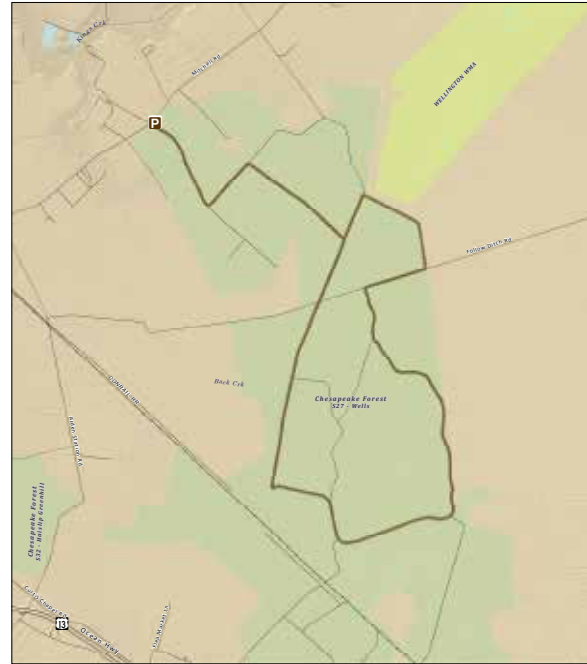
Somerset County is home to four public parks with equestrian-use trails. These parks are part of the Chesapeake Forest Lands, which spread out across Somerset, Dorchester, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. In Somerset, these Chesapeake Forest Lands are: E. Mace Smith Complex (1,708 acres), Haislip Marumsco Complex (1,379 acres), Peters McAllen Complex (934 acres) and Wells Complex (1,915 acres). Trails at all four parks vary in distance and are natural trails.

Chesapeake Forest Lands were formed by Maryland's purchase of most of the former land holdings of the Chesapeake Forest Products Company, which was comprised of 238 parcels totaling more than 58,000 acres of the lower Eastern Shore. In 1999, Maryland purchased 29,000 acres and The Conservation Fund, on behalf of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, purchased an additional 29,000 acres. In December of 2000, The Conservation Fund transferred the deed on their acres to Maryland. Since then, the Chesapeake Forest has increased in size to 75,376 acres.

In addition to providing recreational areas, these forests protect Maryland's natural resources and maintain the rural character, economy and heritage of the area. Protecting these areas from development also protects the shorelines on five different river systems that feed into the Chesapeake Bay. As DNR's website says, "the forests include some of the last large segments of unbroken forest in a region that is largely agricultural in nature [and they] include more than 6,000 acres of wetlands and comprise portions of 23 separate watersheds, many of which have been given a high priority for conservation action under the Maryland Clean Water Action Plan. They contain established populations of threatened and endangered species, including the Delmarva fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger cinereus*), bald eagle, and some 150 other species that have been identified as rare, threatened, or endangered in the region."

Trail riders can expect to see a variety of native trees and bird species. The area is under the Atlantic flyway, so riders will also see migratory birds following food, heading to breeding grounds, or traveling to overwintering sites. Some areas are open to permitted hunting so be sure to check all park websites through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources before planning a trail riding outing.

For the Wells Equestrian Trail, park in the lot on Mitchell Road. The main trail loop is 5.8 miles through a growing loblolly pine forest. This trail was specifically designed for horseback riding but is also used by hikers and cyclists.



<p><b>Wells Equestrian Trail</b> Chesapeake Forest Lands Somerset County, MD</p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p>		<p>Regional Map</p>
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### Trail Clean Up Project at Morgan Run!

For the 29th year, the Carroll County Equestrian Council featured a Trail Work Day at Morgan Run NEA in Sykesville where a crew of 19 worked on the trails and maintenance of the parking area. Volunteers mowed the trails, worked on removing downed trees that blocked trails and cut back vegetation encroaching over the trails. Volunteers from CCEC, Freedom Lions Club, TROT and individual community members participated and enjoyed a picnic lunch provided by CCEC volunteers.

Thanks to PVSP Management for providing maintenance and MCC staff to assist. By providing the Gator for the MCC crew, the huge task of removing a large downed tree was accomplished. Mowing/trimming around the rocks in the parking area should reduce ground bees. We were able to accomplish so much more this year with PVSP support!

Join us at Morgan Run NEA (Ben Rose Lane, Sykesville) on Sunday July 10, 2002 from 9 a.m. - noon. Bring your own tools.

To register contact Carolyn Garber 410-549-5141 or ccecofmd@yahoo.com.

Submitted by: Carolyn A. Garber, CCEC Secretary