

To: Environmental Matters Committee in support of HB 296 (Wildlands)

From: Mattawoman Watershed Society

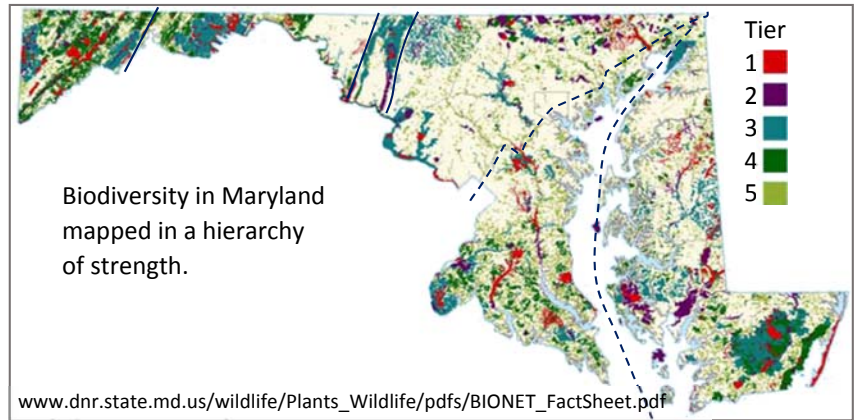
The Mattawoman Watershed Society has over 1000 supporters throughout the state, and especially in southern Maryland. MWS strongly supports the new Wildlands designations because they will better protect the integrity and authenticity of biodiversity for visitors, researchers, and outdoor education students alike.

Wildland designation is an important step toward improved conservation of Maryland's remaining biodiversity (map).

In particular, a great majority of the new Wildlands will better conserve aquatic resources in the form of islands, streams, rivers, estuaries, wetlands, swamps, and marshes. Many

are in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and hence benefit restoration efforts. Importantly, life that depends on aquatic resources is among the most vulnerable.

As an example of how the new Wildlands will help people come to know the "best of the best" of Maryland's lands and waters, Mattawoman Creek has been called by state fisheries managers "the best, most productive tributary to the Bay." Both the Mattawoman Expansion and the Chapman Forest Wildland nominations help preserve the headwaters to this important resource. In addition, prospects will be improved for over two dozen state-rare species, declining migratory fish, and nearly 2000 acres designated as Important Bird Areas by the Audubon Society.



**Some aspects of the Mattawoman & Chapman Forest Wildlands**

