



February 18, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
The Honorable Dana M. Stein, Vice-Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Lower Shore Land Trust supports HB 882

The Lower Shore Land Trust is in support of the proposal to expand the Pocomoke River Wildlands and adjust the Wildlands boundary to create a public access passageway in Worcester County.

The Lower Shore Land Trust has an office located in Snow Hill, and we have been involved in numerous discussions with town leaders, tourism partners, other NGOs, and community members to advance opportunities for economic development for the town. The proposal is consistent with the mission of the Lower Shore Land Trust to increase the protection of important natural resources, enhance recreational opportunities, and support efforts to engage community members and visitors to the region in passive outdoor recreation.

Birdwatching, hiking, and biking rank high among interests for residents and for visitors to the area and expanding trail opportunities and connecting communities to trails and parks has never been more important. The pandemic has shown us that access to the outdoors and nature is critical to maintain both mental and physical health. This project provides an exciting opportunity for Snow Hill to provide residents with new recreational opportunities.

Protecting ecological areas along the Pocomoke River is critical for numerous bird species and a variety of mammals that make their home along the river's riparian areas. The proposed expansion will protect the large landscape areas along the Pocomoke River and provide new recreational opportunities for local communities and visitors to explore and to gain greater understanding of the benefits of land conservation.

With your support, we look forward to working with the Maryland Forest Service, Maryland Park Service, the Town of Snow Hill and other groups and individuals to plan a natural and cultural destination to benefit the region for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Patton".

Kate Patton, Executive Director
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