

# **SB 477 Support Cecil County Executive.pdf**

Uploaded by: Adam Streight

Position: FAV

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## CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Office of the County Executive  
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 2100, Elkton, MD 21921

**To:** Chair Senator Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee  
**From:** Cecil County Executive Adam Streight  
**Date:** February 11, 2025  
**Subject:** Support for SB 477

As County Executive, Cecil County Government stands with the Town of Port Deposit and the Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) in supporting SB 477 for the following reasons:

First, the amendment to the Great Maryland Outdoors Act (SB 541) regarding Snow Hill was introduced hastily, without input or knowledge from the BDC, the town, or the Cecil County Delegation—until it was too late. These stakeholders were not consulted and do not support the amendment as written due to the hardships it creates, including the loss of viable economic development opportunities and the infringement on a municipality's sovereignty within its own borders. Additionally, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has made it clear that it lacks the resources to develop or maintain this park, meaning the land will likely sit unused indefinitely. There is no precedent for a state park being created without the consent, input, or participation of the property owners, local jurisdiction, or county delegation. Good governance requires listening to the entire community and working collaboratively toward a common goal that serves all interests.

Second, SB 477 aligns with the original intent of recognizing Snow Hill as a historically significant site commemorating Black American history in Port Deposit. Downsizing the park makes it more financially feasible for DNR to maintain, especially in challenging fiscal times. It also allows the BDC, the Town, Cecil County, the Department of Commerce, and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to coordinate efforts toward a viable plan that leverages the site's location, history, connection to downtown, and recreational potential. Ultimately, SB 477 **restores local government's authority over land within its jurisdiction.**

Third, local government must support business and economic development initiatives that generate revenue and create well-paying jobs across most of the Bainbridge property. Reducing the park to a manageable size enables the BDC and the Town of Port Deposit, along with their partners, to secure resources for transforming historic buildings and open space into valuable community assets. This approach enhances the property's recreational, educational, and historic significance. Dormant and inaccessible land benefits no one—SB 477 provides a balanced solution, ensuring the park's cultural and environmental assets thrive alongside responsible heritage tourism and recreational development.

In conclusion, SB 477 offers the best of both worlds, and Cecil County Government stands with our partners in local government, the BDC, and the community in full support.

**final - BDC Written Testimony SB477 2-7-11.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carl Roberts

Position: FAV



To: Chair Senator Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

From: Bainbridge Development Corporation

Date: February 11, 2025

Subject: **In Favor of SB477**

The Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) is appreciative of Senator Gallion and Senator Hershey sponsoring *Senate Bill 477 – Port of Deposit State Park – Size and Scope*. The members of the Bainbridge Development Corporation Board are in **FAVOR** of this legislation.

The purpose of this proposed legislation is to refine current law that directs *“the Department (DNR) to establish the Port of Deposit State Historical Park as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.”* The clear focus of this legislation is to acknowledge the existence of Snow Hill which was a Free Black Community in Port Deposit that existed from the late 1840’s to 1900.

The BDC acknowledges the significance of Snow Hill. The Snow Hill Archaeological Site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since its creation by Maryland law in 1999, the BDC has recognized and respected this historic site and the need to preserve in the public interest.

The BDC looks forward to continuing to work with the Department of Natural Resources to achieve the purpose of this legislation. In addition, the BDC will continue to work with partners including but not limited to the Town of Port Deposit, Cecil County Government, Maryland Historic Trust, the Maryland Department of Commerce, Maryland Department of the Environment, MEDCO and others to fulfill its mission to facilitate the redevelopment of the former Bainbridge Naval Training Center site.

Recently published opposition to this legislation indicates that passing this legislation “would take significant Chesapeake Bay Critical Zone property and leave it vulnerable for continued over-development of our county by outside big business.” This language is not only misleading but false. The BDC is made up of community volunteers nominated by local groups and appointed by the Cecil County Council. The BDC has always and will continue to work with the Town of Port Deposit to seek proposals that properly reuse the property in the best interests of its citizens. The historic treasures of the site will be preserved and highlighted through public access to recreational and civic spaces. The site which sits 200 feet above downtown Port Deposit will be the focal point where citizens can recreate and enjoy the picturesque view of the Susquehanna River at the Head of the Chesapeake Bay.

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Board of Directors

Carl Roberts, Chair    Jim Reynolds, Vice Chair    Chick Hamm, Treasurer

Martha Barchowsky    Mario Gangemi    David Rudolph    Sandra Edwards    Bob Ashby, Jr.    Joe Brant

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BAINBRIDGE  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

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*748 Jacob Tome Memorial Highway – Port Deposit, Maryland Telephone: 410-378-9200  
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 2 Port Deposit, Maryland 21904*

We thank the members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee and ask them to vote in **FAVOR** of **Senate Bill – 477**.

Do not hesitate to call upon us if we can be of further service to you on this or other legislation during Session 2025.

Carl D. Roberts, Ed. D. – Chair  
Bainbridge Development Corporation  
[cdennyroberts1@aol.com](mailto:cdennyroberts1@aol.com)  
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*Carl Roberts, Chair    Jim Reynolds, Vice Chair    Chick Hamm, Treasurer*

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# **CCU support letter for SB 477.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Berge

Position: FAV

February 7, 2025

Chair Feldman & Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for Senate Bill 477 – Port of Deposit State Historical Park

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 477, which refines the size and scope of the Port of Deposit State Historical Park and ensures that preservation efforts remain focused, effective, and sustainable. As the President of Community Connecting Us (CCU), a board member of the Port Deposit Heritage Corporation, and a community partner of the Town of Port Deposit, I have seen firsthand how locally driven preservation efforts have successfully protected and revitalized our town's historic and cultural assets.

SB-477 strengthens preservation efforts by allowing the Department of Natural Resources to dedicate resources to the Snow Hill Archaeological Site, a pre-Civil War free Black community of historical and cultural significance, while ensuring the Town of Port Deposit and the Bainbridge Development Corporation continue their work to stabilize, restore, and repurpose the Tome School campus into an integrated historic, recreational, and cultural experience.

SB-477 is Essential to our community for the following reasons:

**Preservation in Action** – The Town has a proven track record of restoring historic sites, including the Tome Gas House (now home to the Towson Map Turtle program) and the Tome Mansion garden, and supporting historic homeowners through façade grants. This bill ensures these successful local efforts continue.

**Financial Responsibility** – The Town of Port Deposit has access to funding the State does not currently have, allowing for faster, community-driven restoration while ensuring the state can focus its resources effectively.

**Broad Local & State Support** – SB-477 is not about outside developers; it was written by local Senators Gallion and Hershey and is supported by five of six Cecil County delegates, county and town officials, the Port Deposit Heritage Corporation, the Bainbridge Development Corporation.

**Alignment with Long-Term Planning** – This bill aligns with multiple regional and state conservation and heritage initiatives, including:

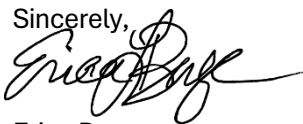
- The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Plan
- The Sustainable Communities Plan
- The Concept Plan for the Restoration of the Tome School Campus & Snow Hill Archaeological Site

SB-477 ensures that local preservation efforts can move forward efficiently, protecting both our historic and natural resources while honoring the past and creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 477.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Erica Berge  
President, Community Connecting Us

# **Final Report.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Gallion

Position: FAV





# **Port of Deposit State Historical Park Report to the Legislature**

**Port of Deposit State Historical Park  
Report to the Legislature per Natural Resources § 5-1012(g)(4) from SB 517, Ch. 602,  
2023**

Submitted on November 4, 2024  
By the Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**For further information concerning this document contact:**

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# Port of Deposit State Historical Park Report to the Legislature

## Background

The Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022 (Senate Bill 541/Chapter 39) mandates that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) shall “establish the Port of Deposit State Historical Park as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.” The Act goes on to require that the “Port of Deposit State Historical Park shall consist of a portion of the Bainbridge Naval Training Center Site, measuring not less than 120 acres and not more than 150 acres...including: the historic Tome School, Snow Hill Archaeological Site, and the Adjacent Wooded Conservation Area.” Each of these sections is highlighted in this report.

The Act, as originally enacted, required Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) to transfer the park property to DNR by June 1, 2023, and required DNR to submit a report to the General Assembly by January 1, 2023. In 2022 DNR submitted its report on the Port of Deposit State Historical Park to the General Assembly. Thereafter, SB517 of 2023 modified the date of the property transfer to provide that BDC transfer the property to DNR by June 1, 2025, and to provide that DNR submit a report to the General Assembly by September 1, 2024.

This report is a progress update and will address efforts by DNR, its partners, and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, to create the Port of Deposit State Historical Park, as well as remaining challenges and items that must be addressed.

The Great Maryland Outdoors Act directed DNR to establish a Stakeholder Advisory Committee to advise the Department on the scope and management of the “Port of Deposit State Historical Park.” For a complete list of members see Appendix 1. Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Advisory Committee. DNR greatly appreciated the input of all of our project partners, advisory committee members, and non-voting members and looks forward to continuing the efforts to create Port of Deposit State Historical Park after the report is submitted.



**Figure 1. Historic buildings from the Tome School**



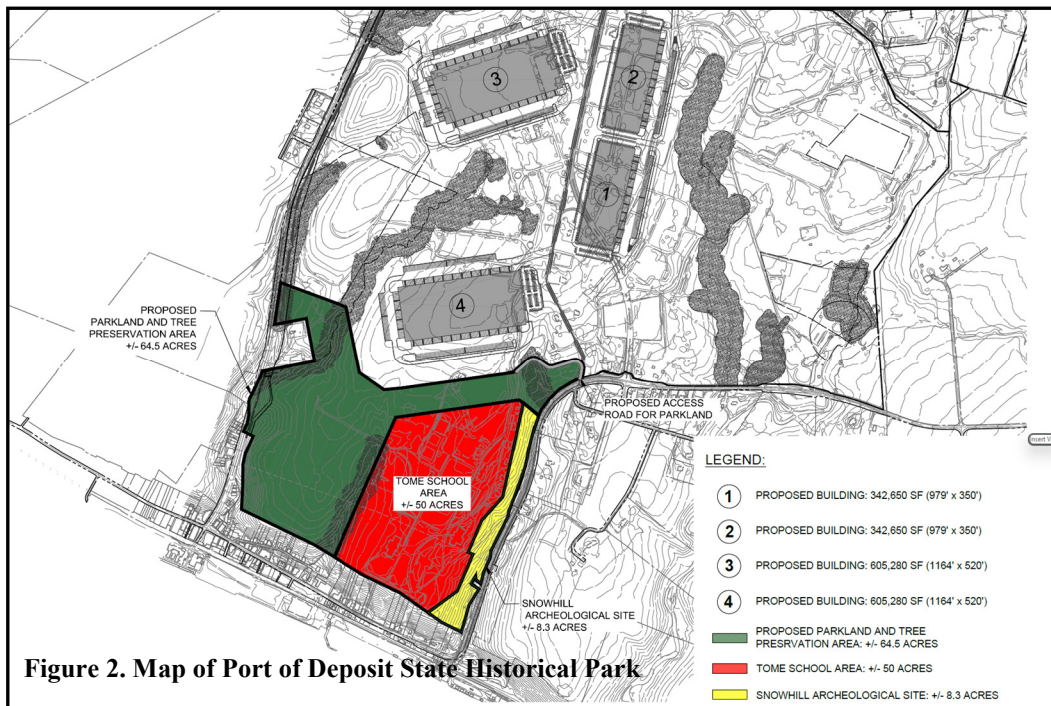
The Advisory Committee reconvened on November 20, 2023. New members were introduced and members received an overview of changes made in the most recent legislation. Notably, the modified deadlines and the authorization of funding for an archaeological survey and soil study of the Snow Hill Archaeological Site. BDC provided a presentation of site history and recent activities. Staff from DNR's Land Acquisitions and Planning (LAP) unit questioned whether certain structures that had been damaged and faced deconstruction could be demolished, stabilized, or repurposed before being transferred to DNR.

The Advisory Committee met on site at the Tome School on January 24, 2024 and conducted a tour of the Tome School site. Additional insights were gained and questions were raised following the tour of the property.

The Advisory Committee met at the Town of Port Deposit's Town Hall on May 14, 2024. Committee members received updates on the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway's Projects and discussed the importance of National Trails for expanded access and funding opportunities. Representatives from the Town of Port Deposit updated members on the strategic objectives of the Town with an emphasis on cultural and recreational development. Representatives from DNR and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) addressed a partnership agreement to conduct a new shovel test pit survey at the Snow Hill Archaeological Site. Lastly, members discussed the obstacles to a recreational usage of the property as a Park, with respect to the United States Navy's (USN) property transfer to BDC for commercial development. BDC shared that USN would likely want to be released from all environmental responsibility, but that USN would also likely request additional data and want a risk assessment to be completed before revisiting the issue of liability.

The Advisory Committee met again on August 21, 2024 and was joined for the first time by a representative from the Cecil County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who expressed concern about moving forward without the involvement of the local African-American community. DNR welcomed the chapter and is working closely with them and the community to arrange a tour of the site. DNR updated members on partnership agreements which had been drafted for the archaeological survey and soil study at the Snow Hill Archaeological Site to be conducted by MDOT, and for a property boundary line survey to be conducted by Bohler engineering, through BDC, on DNR's behalf, to address boundary line issues.

Figure 2., below shows the acreages and the associated properties in a color-coded map.



## Historic Tome School

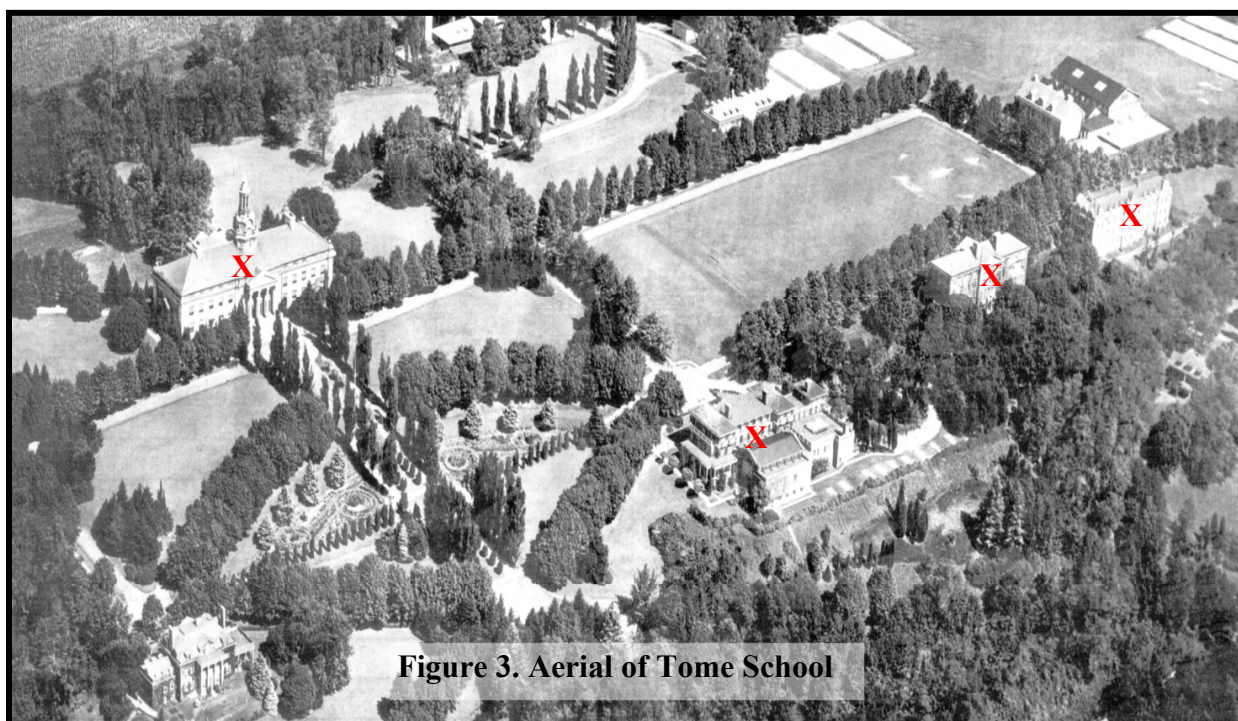
### *Background*

The historic Tome School for Boys was founded by Jacob Tome in 1894 as a nonsectarian college preparatory school for affluent boys. Between 1898 and 1902 a series of granite buildings were constructed on the bluffs above the Town of Port Deposit, overlooking the Susquehanna River, to serve as the school campus. Architects William Boring and Edward Lippincott Tilton designed the structures in the Beaux-Arts style. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., served as consulting landscape architect for siting of the buildings on the property while Charles W. Leavitt, a prominent New York landscape architect, was chosen as landscape architect for the campus. Leavitt worked with architects Boring and Tilton to design the grounds. Later, the property served as the site of the Naval Academy Preparatory School from 1943-1974. The Tome School for Boys Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 for its significance in national architectural, educational, and military history covering the period 1900-1974.

Memorial Hall (shown on the cover of this report) is known as the school's centerpiece and the façade is meant to show the gravitas of the educational facility that was the Jacob Tome Institute. This building held administrative offices, an assembly hall, the library, classrooms, and physics, chemistry and biology laboratories. Also part of the campus were the Headmaster's House, Tome Inn, Harrison Hall, a gymnasium and dormitories. Figure 1., shows the current state of buildings on the property.

Many of the buildings are in various states of disrepair and some have been damaged by arson, as seen in Figure 3. Aerial of Tome School, all of the buildings with red "X" have suffered fire damage, BDC provided the image. Structures include:

- Memorial Hall: Fire in September 2014, used for classrooms, offices, library and auditorium, 53,900 square feet
- Madison Hall: Used as a dormitory with 37 bedrooms, storage, laundry and utility rooms, 11,522 square feet
- Monroe Hall: Used as a gymnasium with a large entrance hall, swimming pool, lockers, bedrooms, 20,900 square feet
- Tome Inn: Fire in May 2020, used for dormitory and guest suites, 36,060 square feet
- Jackson House (condemned): Used as a dormitory, 63 bedrooms, lobby or lounge, storage or trunk rooms, 16,485 square feet
- Headmaster's House: Originally used as a faculty residence, 10,018 square feet



**Figure 3. Aerial of Tome School**

- Harrison Hall: Fire in June 2020, originally used as a dormitory, 77 bedrooms, 20,298 square feet

Positive preservation work on the Headmaster’s House was recently conducted by BDC which expended fund on repairing the roof, removing graffiti, mothballing buildings, and sealing the building.

*Update*

Throughout 2023 and 2024, DNR has continued to conduct site visits and assessment to determine the best path forward. Unfortunately, given the dilapidated and unsafe state of the majority of the buildings and their continued deterioration, it appears that many of them will need to be demolished. Since some of the structures were built using Port Deposit granite, deconstruction was suggested as a means to preserve the history and resources of Tome School. Certain structures are salvageable and can be used to interpret the history of the Tome School and Bainbridge Naval Academy. At the January 24, 2024 meeting the following demolition and deconstruction costs were shared by BDC from IMARK Builders:

- Demolition of cottages: \$271,000
- Deconstruction of 4 structures: \$1,315,000
- Stabilization and reuse of 3 structures: \$21,220,000
- Total: \$22,806,000

DNR requested that BDC get an updated quote for demolition, deconstruction, and stabilization. The updated quote came in well below the previous quote and did not include stormwater management and architectural engineering costs. The April 23, 2024 quote from Paul Risk Construction was \$1,194,198.00.

Given that these structures within the Tome School are all on the National Register of Historic Places, a decision could yet be made to restore all historic structures, but the associated costs would be significantly greater than what is proposed. Alternatively, financial costs could be reduced by deconstructing additional structures and stabilizing and reusing fewer structures, but at the “cost” of diminished historic value.

It is recommended that a full assessment of the remaining buildings be conducted in coordination with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), and updated estimates be obtained thereafter for demolition, deconstruction and/or stabilization, once DNR takes the property on June 1, 2025. Priority would be placed on the Headmaster’s House, the façade of Memorial Hall, and maintaining the historic landscaping and viewshed of the Tome School.

Snow Hill Archaeological Site

*Background*

The Snow Hill Archeological Site was the location of a free Black community which was established in the Port Deposit area by the mid-1800s and it is widely recognized as the first Free Black community in the area. The remains of several structures and other items were identified at the site by MHT archaeologists during a 1982 cultural resource survey. At one point it had a number of residential lots and an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. Free Black merchants and laborers established this community on leased land and worked in and around the Town of Port Deposit. Snow Hill site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.



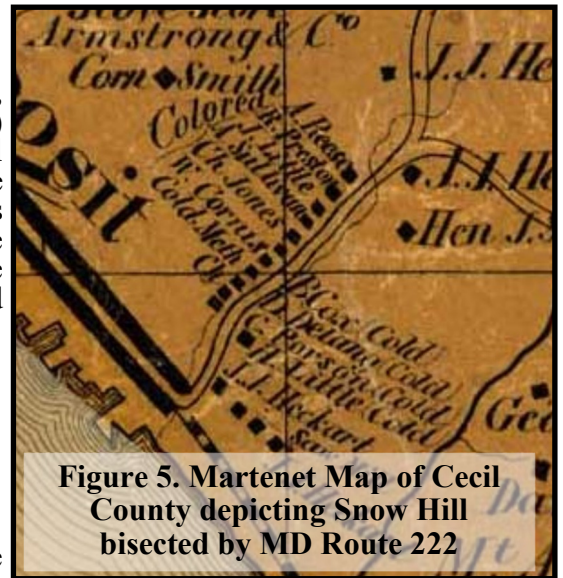
Figure 4. Items found at Snow Hill Archaeological Site

## Update

On June 18, 2024, Dr. Julie Schablitsky (Head Archaeologist, MDOT), Aaron Levinthal (consultant archaeologist with MDOT) and DNR staff did a site visit. Dr. Schablitsky and Mr. Levinthal located the site of Snow Hill based upon the approximate location from the 1982 survey. They found a stone foundation as well as a horseshoe and glass bottles at this remarkable site, see Figure 4. This preliminary survey suggests, however, that the outer limits of the Snow Hill community may actually extend beyond the boundary as identified in the 1982 survey.

Next steps for this important archaeological site include DNR working with SHA and the Town of Port Deposit to conduct archaeology so this site can be properly interpreted.

It should be noted that the legislation only requires half of the site to be part of the State Historical Park, because the other half is on the opposite side of Maryland Route 222 (Bainbridge Road), see Figure 5., showing the Martenet Map of Cecil County, zoomed into Snow Hill.



**Figure 5. Martenet Map of Cecil County depicting Snow Hill bisected by MD Route 222**

The site will be interpreted as a whole and the complete history of this important location will be shared. The map shows the surnames of the inhabitants including Reese, Preston, Little, Sullivan, Jones, Cornish, Cox, Delaney, Parson, Little and Heckert. It also shows the location of the Methodist Church and the Saw Mill. It should be noted that the abbreviation “cold” stand for “colored”. The term “colored” is both archaic and offensive. However, it was used in these historic documents to refer to individuals who are African-American or Black. We do not condone its use and it does not align with our values and practices. A significant portion of this effort will include engaging with the descendant community of Snow Hill.

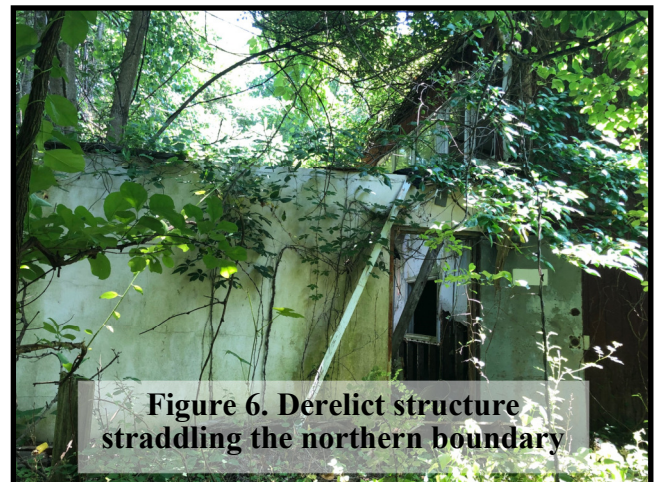
## Wooded Conservation Area

### *Background*

At approximately 64.5 acres, the wooded conservation area is the largest parcel of land and is located between the Tome School parcel and Maryland Route 276 (Jacob Tome Memorial Highway). The parcel has significant elevation, is rocky, has debris piles and includes the northern border of the park.

### *Update*

The Department’s LAP Real Property Asset Management team walked and flagged the proposed northern boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park, which includes a substantial portion of the wooded conservation area. A few days later, on June 17, 2024, staff from MPS and LAP completed a physical inspection of the site, which included a walk along a portion of the proposed northern boundary and portions of the wooded conservation area. Of note, the proposed northern boundary goes through a building (perhaps an old maintenance complex), a raised access road, a significant debris pile, an athletic field, and a wetland. Figure 7. Map of the Northern Boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park, the actual attachment shows comments from the surveyor. The Department is working with BDC to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will provide for a complete ALTA Survey of the property, which will identify all structures, utilities, tunnel locations and other potential matters that will need to be addressed. The proposed northern boundary line will need to be defined before the survey can be finalized. The completed ALTA survey (which will include a metes and bounds description of the property) is required in order to



**Figure 6. Derelict structure straddling the northern boundary**

accurately depict and describe the property to be conveyed to the Department, and must be completed prior to the transfer as it is included in and is a part of the Deed from BDC to the Department.

LAP will procure title to examine conditions and other matters that might be placed on the property, limiting potential uses. It is estimated that due diligence, including title work and survey will cost up to \$100,000 in Program Open Space Stateside funds.

Next steps in this process include working with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on remediation efforts with a Voluntary Cleanup Plan. According to Bainbridge Development Corporation remediation of this area will cost \$106,000 per acre for a total of \$6,890,000. The Department may need to develop a MOU with MDE, or perhaps BDC to obtain various environmental studies and/or reports, as well as to take action to remediate any unacceptable matters. Any remediation should occur while BDC retains ownership of the property, and before the transfer to the Department.

### Staffing

MPS would like Port of Deposit State Historical Park to be a fully staffed park with both permanent and seasonal (10-month contract) staff to supplement the workforce during busy seasons. The recommended staffing level is below:

- Park Manager (State Park Ranger Manager I)
- Assistant Manager (Park Service Supervisor)
- Ranger Lead (State Park Ranger Lead)
- Maintenance Supervisor (Park Maintenance Program Supervisor)
- Park Technician Lead (Park Technician Lead)
- Park Technician (Park Technician II)
- Administrative Assistant (Administrative Specialist III)
- Historian (Natural Resources Planner III)



### Patrolling the Property

The Law Enforcement unit of the Department is the Maryland Natural Resources Police. Once the property is taken by the Department, they will be charged with patrolling and securing the area. BDC currently has a security system in place that uses motion sensors and a public address system.

### Securing the Property

The Tome School and adjacent wooded area contain a multitude of structures and environs that are both physically and environmentally hazardous. The structure located straddling the northern boundary line in the wooded area appears it may contain asbestos or lead, see Figure 6. The Tome School campus contains a system of underground tunnels that were used for a central heating system, which has a number of uncovered hazardous above ground openings. Many buildings which are in a deteriorated condition and at risk of collapse, are open and unsecured. There is presently a chain link fence of varying heights around at least some of the property. In places the fence is compromised completely, or partially, allowing uncontrolled access to the site.

DNR recommends securing the entire perimeter of the property by repairing or replacing the existing fence, as well as installation of new signage. Furthermore, all buildings on site must be reassessed and secured, with signage.

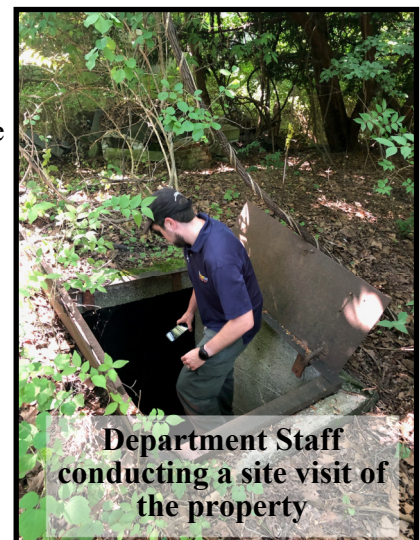






Figure 7. Map of the Northern Boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park

### Property Access and Boundary

On the June 17, 2024 site visit it was apparent that the northern boundary cuts off DNR’s access to the future State Historical Park property by not providing an entrance road. The northern boundary goes along an old fire/access road (Benson Road) off of Maryland Route 222 that is steep, narrow and unfinished. This is clear in Figure 7. Map of the Northern Boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park.

For Port of Deposit State Historical Park to be viable there must be an entrance road for visitors, staff, services and emergency personnel. The DNR proposes that the northern boundary be changed to include Bainbridge Road, the associated paved parking lots, Kidd Road, Tome Road and down to the Tome School Property. Since we would need access to Bainbridge Road and the associated paved parking lots, we would need at least a 20-foot buffer around those areas. The paved parking lots on Bainbridge Road would make an ideal location for an administrative building, visitor center, parking lot, interpretive signage and a trailhead. BDC estimates that an access road (which does not include a new entrance off of Maryland Route 222) would cost \$2,768,000. If required to use the road presently proposed by BDC, the engineering and construction costs would be significantly higher.

Furthermore, the northwestern proposed property boundary contains a small in-holding around a piece of infrastructure along Maryland Route 276. As a result, the property line is jutting out and irregular, which would create greater difficulty for property management.

Since the current access does not allow for adequate build out of the future park, DNR will work with BDC and SHA to create a more effective road system to allow ingress and egress to the park.

## Utilities

Currently, the site does not have potable water, reliable electricity, sewer or internet. Artesian Water provides water to the Town of Port Deposit. According to Bainbridge Development Corporation water, sewer and electricity would cost approximately \$8,000,000.

## Legal Concerns

As previously identified in the 2022 DNR Report and as discussed during Advisory Committee meetings, the initial transfer of property from USN to BDC for commercial development did not contemplate or authorize the creation of a park. Because there is no requirement that the USN agree to further remediation to a recreational standard, it is likely that USN will wish to be released from any liability associated with a recreational land use that may require additional cleanup. DNR's Assistants Attorney General are unable to advise granting any such release until additional environmental assessments and information have been obtained from MDE.

As BDC continues to develop the property, this could present legal issues. Further development would present challenges to managing a historical and recreational area in the same space as industrial areas. Current publicly announced tenants may require permits and right of ways with DNR. DNR Leadership will work with BDC to plan for and overcome these challenges.

## Preliminary Budget

A complete and detailed budget for establishing and promoting Port of Deposit State Historical Park will not be possible until a park master plan is developed. The cost of roads, utilities, and related infrastructure are difficult to project until a conceptual design is completed. However, a preliminary estimated budget associated with the development and operation of this park is provided in Appendix 2., for a total of 56,053,200.00

## Stakeholder Advisory Committee Survey

DNR sent the Stakeholder Advisory Committee a survey on September 17, 2024. The goal of the survey was to gauge the Committee's interest in different features being considered for inclusion in the State Historical Park and their overall opinion of the report. The survey was open for over a month and received seven total responses. The responses are included in Appendix 3. Survey of the Advisory Committee. A summary of the response follow:

- Question #1, Snow Hill is the most important feature.
- Question #2, hiking trails are most important.
- Question #3, historical interpretation is most important.
- Question #4, picnic areas are somewhat important.
- Question #5, sharing African-American history is most important.
- Question #6, special event spaces are somewhat important.
- Question #7, most people were satisfied with the Report to the Legislature.
- Question #8, we received some very interesting and detailed feedback in this write-in portion, which is available upon request.



**Inside Memorial Hall**

## Conclusion

Port of Deposit State Historical Park is full of potential and in time will be home to historical resources that interpret Tome School, Snow Hill Archaeological Site, and the former Naval Training Center, hiking trails, picnic areas and a scenic vistas. Eventually, the Port of Deposit State Historical Park will be a beautiful new addition to Maryland's State parks and a boon to the local community. DNR proposes a phased approach to this endeavor, beginning with the legally necessary, followed by the operationally obtainable.

The first hurdle to be cleared is negotiating a property boundary line with BDC which will provide a suitable road access to support a park. The second hurdle will be obtaining the environmental and legal assurances necessary to support future investments. The first opportunity will be the interpretation of the Snow Hill area, followed by infrastructure improvements, and restoration of buildings at the Tome School.

The goal of DNR and MPS is for all of its properties to be clean, safe, operable and user-friendly. By working with our project partners DNR can fulfill that goal, but more due diligence is needed to adequately determine the type and level of public access that will be possible during these different phases. DNR is scheduled to take ownership of the property by June 1, 2025 but the ultimate success of the Park relies upon a secure funding source to support the restoration, stabilization, staffing, remediation, signage, construction, and everything else that is necessary before the park can safely open. DNR would like to acknowledge current budget constraints and state that there are limited State resources for the capital and operational costs outlined in this report. Funding these efforts would require the State to divert funds from other priorities and needs.



**Department of Natural Resources Staff at Memorial Hall on June 17, 2024**

# **Report 1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Gallion

Position: FAV

**Appendix 1. Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Advisory Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Mayor Wayne Tome, Jr	Mayor and Town Council, Port Deposit
Delegate Hornberger	Cecil County Delegation (House of Delegates)
Delegate Teresa Reilly	Cecil County Delegation (House of Delegates)
Senator Jason Gallion	Cecil County Delegation (Senate)
Danielle Hornberger	County Executive of Cecil County
Jackie Gregory	Cecil County Council
Betty Johnson	Cecil County Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Paula Newton	Historical Society of Cecil County
Clyde Van Dyke	Cecil County Parks and Recreation
Toni Sprenkle	Bainbridge Development Corporation
Julie Schablitsky	Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration

<b>Nonvoting Ex Officio Members:</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Secretary Josh Kurtz	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Anderson	Maryland Department of Commerce
Serena McIlwain	Maryland Department of Environment
Chuck Boyd	Maryland Department of Planning
Elizabeth Hughes	Maryland Historical Trust
Brigitte Carty	Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway
Amy Sexton	Cecil County Public Schools
Morgan Miller	Cecil County Public Library
Dr. Mary Way Bolt	Cecil College

# Report 2.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Gallion

Position: FAV

## Appendix 2. Preliminary Estimated Budget

Number	Item	Description	Cost
1	<b>Planning</b>		
	Develop Master Plan	Planning Consultant	\$ 250,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 250,000.00</b>
2	<b>Staffing</b>		
	Park Rangers, Administration, Maintenance, and Historians		\$ 550,000.00
	Uniforms (Dress and Work)		\$ 20,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 570,000.00</b>
3	<b>Vehicles</b>		
	Trucks	Electric crew cab 1/2 ton (1) and 3/4 ton (3)	\$ 300,000.00
	Heavy Trucks	Diesel dump truck	\$ 100,000.00
	Vans	Electric 12 passenger (1) and 7 passenger (1)	\$ 100,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 500,000.00</b>
4	<b>Demolition, Deconstruction and Stabilization on Tome School Property</b>		
	Demolition of cottages		\$ 271,000.00
	Deconstruction of 4 structures		\$ 1,315,000.00
	Stabilization and reuse of 3 structures		\$ 21,220,000.00
	Design Services (20% for historic buildings)		\$ 4,561,200.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 27,367,200.00</b>
5	<b>Survey and Research for Snow Hill Archaeological Site</b>		
	Archaeological Survey		\$ 300,000.00
	Research		\$ 250,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 550,000.00</b>
5	<b>Wooded Conservation Area</b>		
	Remediation	\$106,000 per acre	\$ 6,890,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 6,890,000.00</b>
6	<b>Fencing to Secure the Area</b>		
	Fence		\$ 30,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 30,000.00</b>
7	<b>Access Road</b>		
	Access Road		\$ 2,768,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 2,768,000.00</b>
8	<b>Utilities</b>		
	Water, sewer, electric		\$ 8,000,000.00
	Internet		\$ 100,000.00
	EV Charging facilities		\$ 100,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,200,000.00</b>

9	<b>Facility Development and Infrastructure</b>		
	Design Services	Architecture/Engineer for Park Facilities	\$ 300,000.00
	Roads and Parking	Construct/Improve roads and Parking	\$ 2,000,000.00
	Maintenance Facility	Construct Pole Barn, Sheds, Fencing	\$ 300,000.00
	Administration Building	Construct an Administration Building	\$ 500,000.00
	Visitor Center	Construct a Visitor Center	\$ 5,000,000.00
	Directional and Entry Signage	Entrance signs, waysides, trail signes	\$ 20,000.00
	Trail Design	Design a trail system that connects to the Town	\$ 20,000.00
	Trail Construction	Construct a trail system that connects to the Town	\$ 100,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,240,000.00</b>
10	<b>Equipment and Tools</b>		
	Tools	Table saws, planer, router, hand tools, etc	\$ 15,000.00
	Grounds Equipment	Mowers, saws, chippers, blowers, plows, etc	\$ 350,000.00
	Miscellaneous	Hoes, rakes, trimmers, etc	\$ 150,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 515,000.00</b>
11	<b>Radios, Communications, and Office Supplies</b>		
	Computers and cell phones	Computers (5), phones (4), printer/scanner	\$ 15,000.00
	Office Furniture	Desks, Filing Cabinets, Shelves, Safe	\$ 15,000.00
	Office Supplies	Pens, paper, staplers, printer ink, etc	\$ 10,000.00
	Radios	Motorola APX (8)	\$ 30,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 70,000.00</b>
12	<b>Programming</b>		
	Signage, Maps, Fliers, Publications	Signage, maps, promotional materials for partners	\$ 70,000.00
	Interpretive Waysides	Develop content, produce panels, install panels	\$ 30,000.00
	Supporting References	Books, resource materios relevant to the site	\$ 3,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 103,000.00</b>
13	<b>Grand Total</b>		
		<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 56,053,200.00</b>



# **Report 3.pdf**

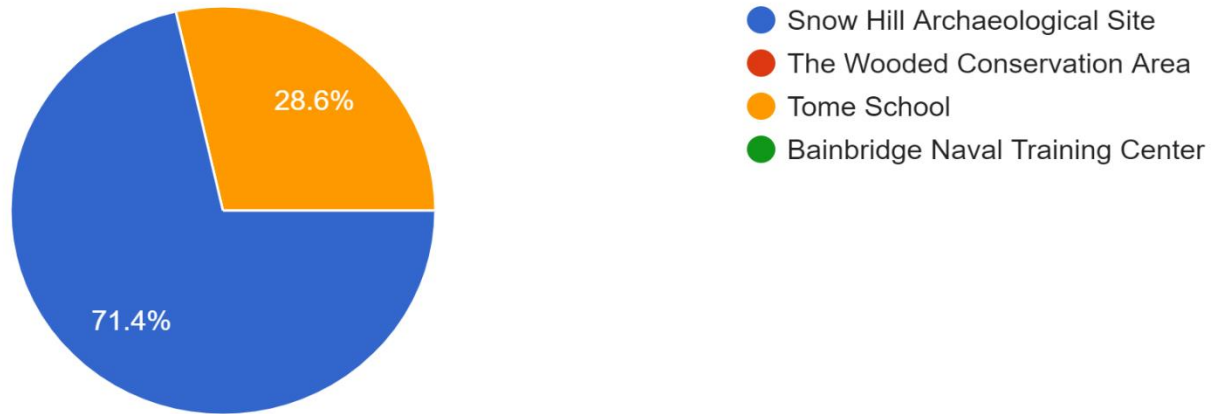
Uploaded by: Senator Gallion

Position: FAV

### Appendix 3. State Advisory Committee Survey Responses

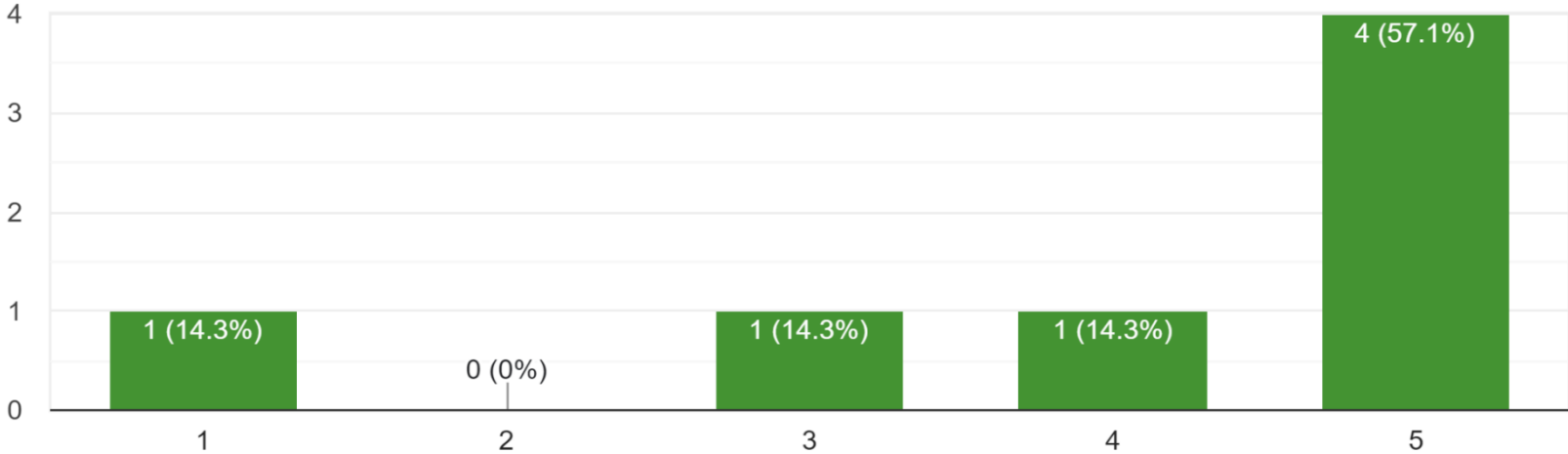
In your opinion, what is the most important aspect of Port Deposit State Historical Park?

7 responses



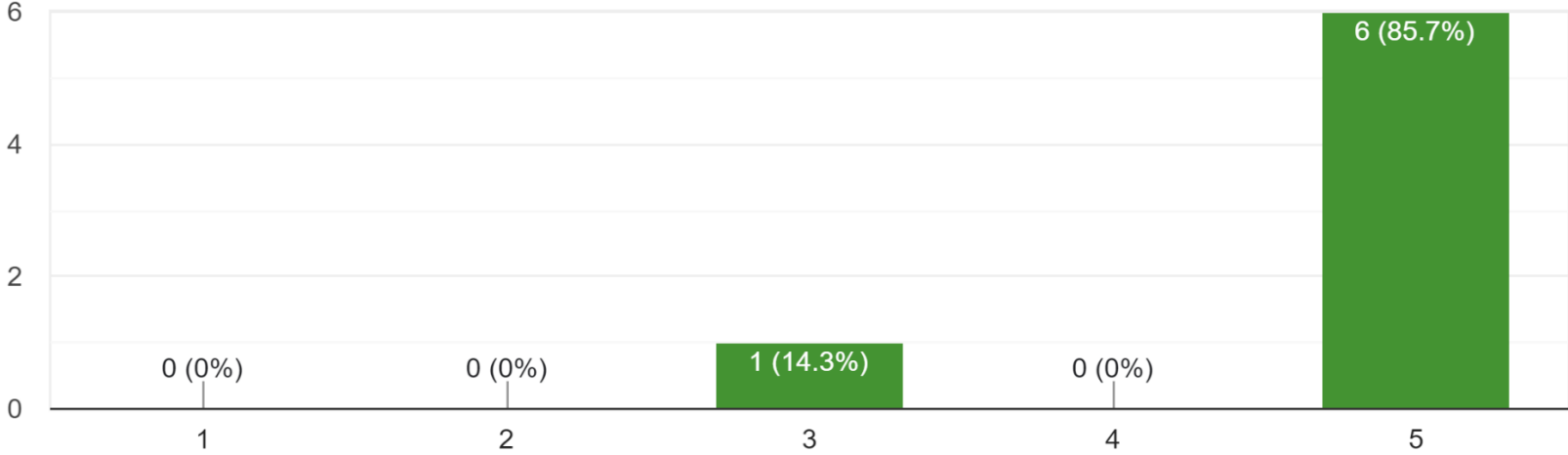
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important hiking trails are to you and your organization.

7 responses



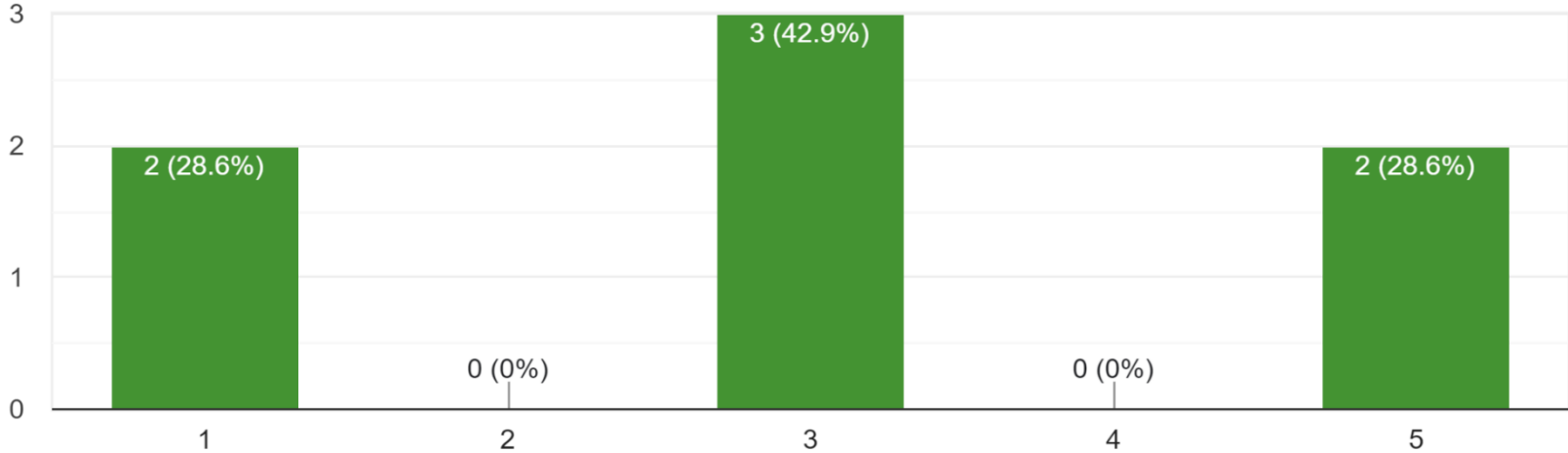
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important historical interpretation of this site is to you and your organization.

7 responses



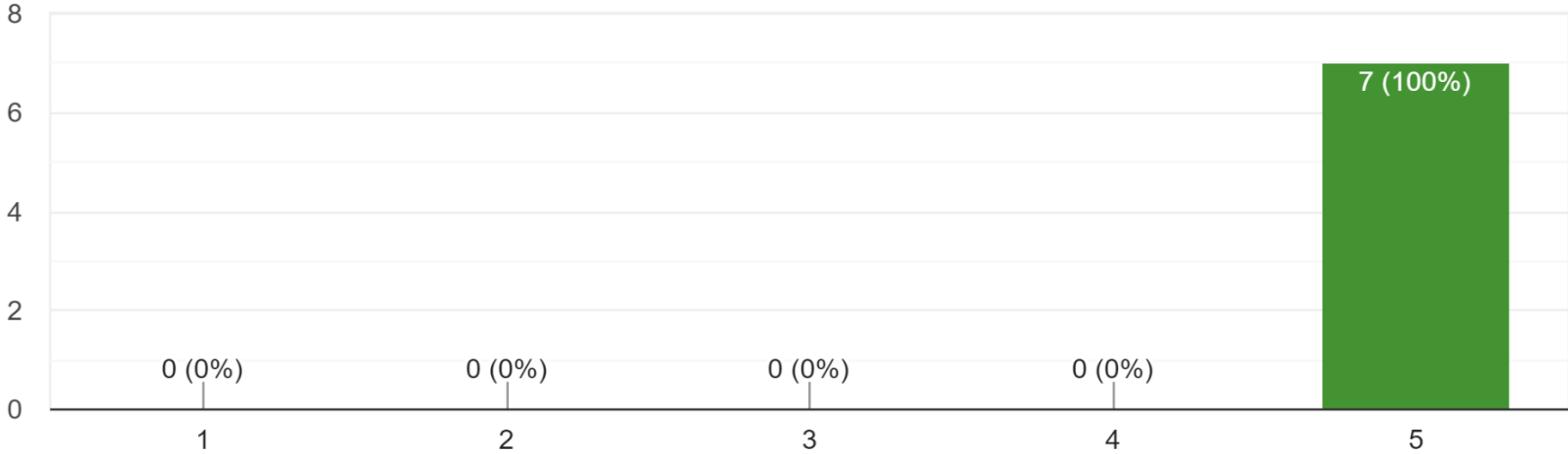
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important picnic areas are to you and your organization?

7 responses



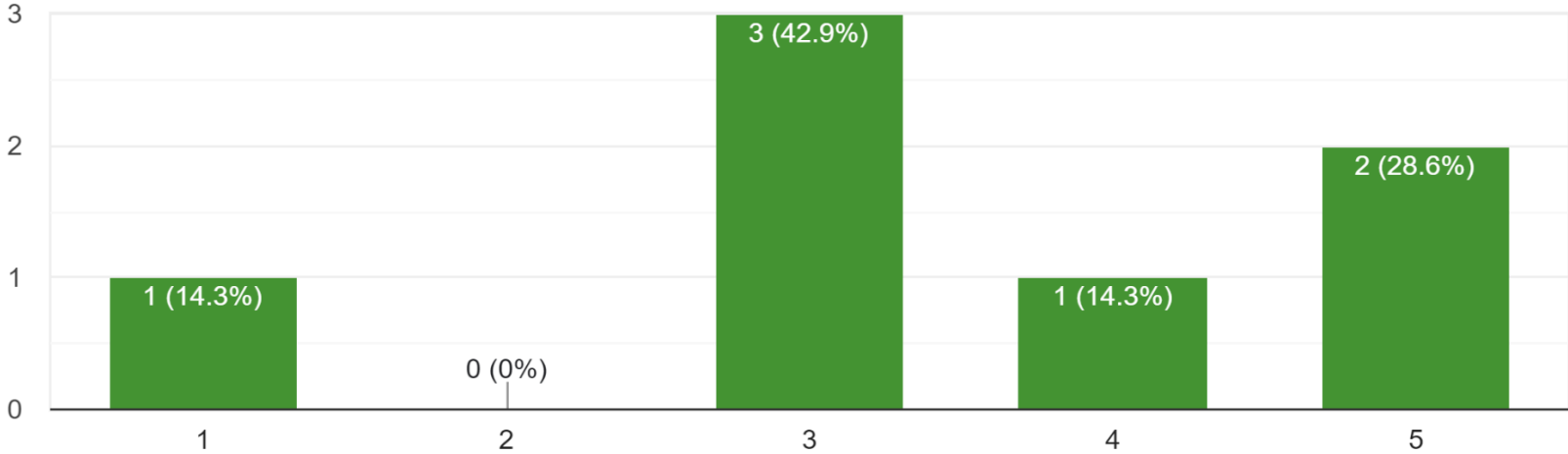
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important sharing the African-American history of Snow Hill Archaeological site is to you and your organization?

7 responses



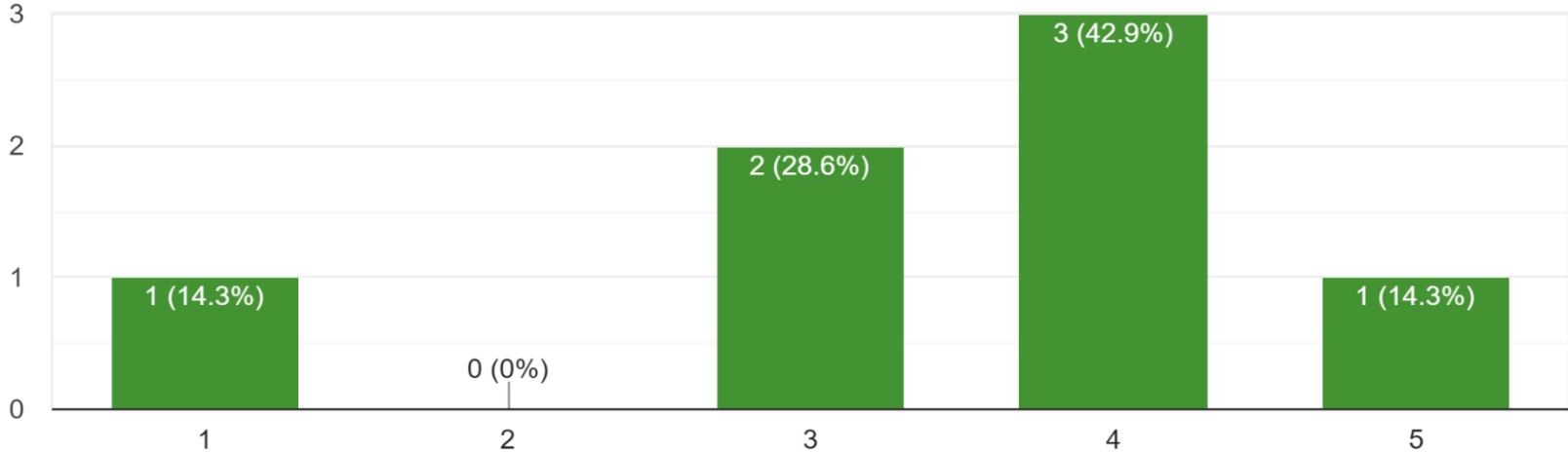
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important creating special event spaces (recreation, weddings, photography, etc) is to you and your organization.

7 responses



# How satisfied were you with the report to the legislature for Port of Deposit State Historical Park?

7 responses





# **SB 477 FAV Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Gallion

Position: FAV

JASON C. GALLION  
Legislative District 35  
Harford and Cecil Counties

Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Jason.Gallion@senate.state.md.us

*District Office*  
64 S. Main Street  
Port Deposit, Maryland 21904

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

RE: SB477 – Port of Deposit State Historical Park– Size and Scope

Position: **Favorable**

In the final days of the 2022 session, the Port of Deposit State Park was amended into the Great Outdoors Act. This amendment was pushed by one Delegate without an official vote of the entire Cecil County Delegation. The Town of Port Deposit came out in opposition to the amendment, but it was too late in the session for corrective action to occur. Adding a Port Deposit State Park was not presented in the original bill hearing where there could have been full public input.

The amendment that was added designated three properties to be transferred to DNR on June 1st, 2023, and called for the creation of an advisory committee and a report from DNR to be presented to the General Assembly by January 1, 2023. The property listed in the Great Outdoors Act is formerly the Bainbridge U.S. Naval Training Center (Bainbridge), which began the process of decommissioning in 1988. In 1999, the Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) was established as a public instrument of the state to develop the former training center. The BDC is managed by the Executive Director and governed by a 15-member Board of Directors, composed of nine residents of Cecil County and representatives of State Agencies. The property includes The Historic Tome School for Boys, The Snow Hill Archeological Site, and a Wooded Conservation Area.

The **initial** report from DNR report concluded that:

“More due diligence is needed to adequately determine the type and level of public access that may be possible or even practicable given the physical, environmental, archaeological, historical, and legal constraints on these sites. The deadlines and constraints codified in statute by the General Assembly, unaccompanied by a funding source, do not allow for that type of due diligence to occur. Allowing time and flexibility to conduct a more thorough planning process that includes robust stakeholder engagement at all levels is needed. This will present the best opportunity for developing a clear, common, shared vision for the future of the sites together with the identification of potential resources to achieve the shared vision. Such a process would yield much better results and provide the greatest chance of achieving success for the community and the State of Maryland.”

JASON C. GALLION  
Legislative District 35  
Harford and Cecil Counties

Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee



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Port Deposit, Maryland 21904

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

With the help of this committee during the 2023 session we were able to push the transfer timeline back, order an archaeological survey, and reconvene a stakeholder committee to receive another report from DNR which allowed us to take a more comprehensive look at this entire proposed project.

Based on this latest report submitted by DNR on November 4, 2024, **as expected and stated previously**, the preliminary estimated budget is \$56,053,200 with no funding source. The Tome property alone would cost \$27,367,200.

Given the fiscal position of the state, my fear is that if this entire property gets transferred over to the State, it will sit with no action being taken due to the high price tag and no funding source. The bill in front of you removes a great deal of cost and gives the park an actual chance to be created and thrive.

The latest report from DNR echoes these concerns by stating: “DNR would like to acknowledge current budget constraints and state that there are limited State resources for the capital and operational costs outlined in this report. Funding these efforts would require the State to divert funds from other priorities and needs.”

The bill in front of you would:

- Push the timeline back up to one year **but does allow the transfer to occur anytime before that year is up once DNR and BDC iron out the boundary details, etc.**
- Sets the acreage limit to 12 to 19 acres
- Designates the Snow Hill archaeological site and adjacent wooded conservation area to be transferred for inclusion in what would be Port Deposit State Park.

The Snow Hill Archeological Site was the location of a free Black community that was established in the Port Deposit area by the mid-1800s. The remains of several structures and other items were identified at the site by MHT archaeologists during a 1982 cultural resource survey. At one point it had a number of residential lots and an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. Free Black merchants and laborers established this community on leased land and worked in and around the Town of Port Deposit. Based on survey responses from the stakeholder group, 70% of responses agreed that Snow Hill is the most important aspect of Port Deposit State Park.

This legislation shows a clear priority to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery. I believe the State Park focusing on Snow Hill along with the rest of the acreage eventually returning to the Town of Port Deposit is the best way to move forward both from a historical and local perspective.

**JASON C. GALLION**  
*Legislative District 35*  
Harford and Cecil Counties

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Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee



**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
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Port Deposit, Maryland 21904

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Gallion".

Jason Gallion

Senator, District 35

**SB477.PortDepositTestimony.2025.02.11.pdf**

Uploaded by: VICKY RINKERMAN

Position: FAV

## Town of Port Deposit

64 S. Main Street  
Port Deposit, MD 21904  
410.378.2121  
www.portdeposit.org



*Wayne Tome, Jr.*

Mayor

*Vicky Rinkerman*

Town Administrator

*Patti Gray*

Treasurer

## TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 477 – PORT OF DEPOSIT STATE PARK

February 11, 2025

**To:** Chair Senator Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

**From:** Town of Port Deposit Administrator Vicky Rinkerman representing  
Mayor Wayne Tome, Jr.                      Councilman Dan Berlin  
Deputy Mayor Kevin Brown                Councilman Tom Knight  
Councilman Dan Berlin                        Councilwoman Randa Thiele

**Subject:** In Support of Senate Bill 477

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here on behalf of the Town of Port Deposit and the elected officials to express our strong support for Senate Bill 477, which refines the size and scope of the Port of Deposit State Historical Park. This area of the Bainbridge property is located on the granite bluff 200' above South Main Street. This property is located within the Resource Conservation Area under the Critical Area Program, Floodplain regulations, Maryland Historical Trust easement, and within our Sustainable Community boundary.

Contrary to published opposition or rumors you may have heard, the Town of Port Deposit and the Bainbridge Development Corporation have worked closely over the past several years to develop a draft concept restoration plan for the Tome School Campus and Snow Hill site, creating a shared vision for this unique area of the Bainbridge property. The draft concept plan was submitted as part of our testimony.

The majority of our State Delegation—two Senators and five of our six Delegates— and Cecil County officials support our plan to restore the Tome School Campus and the proposed amendment to downsize the State park. This is a win-win solution: the Maryland DNR can leverage its expertise and resources to elevate Snow Hill's role in the state's cultural and historical African American narrative, while the Town and BDC utilize strategic partnerships and local resources to advance restoration and preservation efforts on the Tome School Campus to develop and promote historic, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities.

The original Great American Outdoors Act legislation was designed to recognize and celebrate African American history and take advantage of land preservation opportunities throughout the State of Maryland. The Town of Port Deposit supported the original intent of this legislation and remains committed to preserving and honoring African American history in our community. However, the Town opposed including the Tome School campus within the original park boundary because this area does not align with the original intent of this legislation.

### Refocusing on the Historic Snow Hill Archeological Site

Senate Bill 477 down-sizes the proposed State park to 12 to 19 acres, allowing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to prioritize and focus on Snow Hill and the adjacent wooded conservation area. Snow Hill was

a Free Black Community that thrived in Port Deposit from the 1840's to 1900—a legacy that must be properly preserved and interpreted. The Town of Port Deposit believes that the DNR is best positioned to lead, recognize, and honor the historical significance of Snow Hill. Through its resources, expertise, and commitment to preserving the state's diverse history, Maryland can ensure that the legacy of Snow Hill is appropriately celebrated. The State and DNR's involvement would help elevate Snow Hill's role in Maryland's cultural and historical narrative, ensuring that its contributions to our collective heritage are acknowledged and preserved for future generations.

### **Opportunity to Expand Historical Scope**

There is an opportunity for DNR to broaden the historical scope of the park at Snow Hill. The park could also include the larger historical narrative of Port Deposit, particularly its role in the Underground Railroad and its significance to our region. Additionally, the history of Freeman Hall, a segregated school for African American students within our town limits, that operated until the mid-1960's, should also be integrated into the park's storytelling. By doing so, DNR would preserve these important historical elements and enhance their educational and cultural significance, ensuring that the struggles and achievements of African American communities in Port Deposit and Maryland are appropriately recognized and honored.

### **Encouragement of Future Collaboration**

This downsizing of the park enables the DNR to concentrate and focus its efforts and resources more effectively on preserving and enhancing the Snow Hill site and conservation area. At the same time, it fosters collaboration with the Town of Port Deposit and the Bainbridge Development Corporation to fully realize the site's potential. This collaborative approach incorporates the site into broader plans for historic restoration, heritage tourism, and recreational development, all of which are included in the town's concept plan for the Tome School campus.

The Town of Port Deposit is IN FAVOR of Senate Bill 477 and remains committed to partnering with the Department of Natural Resources in preserving the conservation area and Snow Hill site and expanding the African American history narrative. We recognize DNR's expertise and resources as vital to achieving these goals. Through this collaboration, we are confident that Snow Hill's history and its significance to our community will be preserved and honored. Senate Bill 477 strengthens these efforts by ensuring the park remains an integral part of our town's identity in a more streamlined and focused capacity.

We respectfully urge your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 477 and appreciate your time and attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

*Town of Port Deposit*



## **TOWN OF PORT DEPOSIT HISTORIC TOME SCHOOL AND SNOW HILL SITES DRAFT CONCEPT RESTORATION PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

On the granite bluff above South Main Street in Port Deposit is the former Tome School for Boys commissioned by Jacob Tome and built between 1898 to 1900. The Tome School campus was included with a larger 1200-acre site known as the Bainbridge United States Naval Training Center that operated from 1942 to 1976. Adjacent to this property along Route 222 on the south end of town, is the archeological site of Snow Hill, a free African American community that flourished from 1860 to 1900.

The Tome School campus, Snow Hill Archaeological Site, and Bainbridge Naval Training Center are deeply significant and vital to the history and culture of Port Deposit. The Town recognizes the importance of preserving and interpreting the rich historical and archaeological heritage of these sites. By providing public access, the community will benefit from enhanced educational opportunities, a deeper appreciation of local history, and the assurance that these invaluable cultural resources are protected and celebrated for future generations.

The Town of Port Deposit has proactively accomplished significant progress toward the phased-in renovations of the natural beauty, cultural, and historical heritage of these historic sites. The Town has pursued and implemented initiatives aligned with the following plans:

- Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Plan for recreational trails and heritage tourism;
- Sustainable Community Plan;
- Comprehensive Plan;
- Master Waterfront Plan for Marina Park improvements and Main Street connections;
- Hopkins Quarry Park Master Plan; and
- Concept Restoration Plan for Tome School Campus and Snow Hill Site
- Maryland Historical Trust Easement

Our alliance with the Bainbridge Development Corporation, Maryland Historical Trust, and other cultural and educational organizations enables the Town to build on these achievements and pursue the historic restoration of this property through grant programs and diverse collaboration with recreational and cultural organizations. Our united vision for this property will benefit Maryland, Cecil County, and the Town, by expanding historic, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

Another important partner is the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Area and Greenway (LSHG), which encompasses the towns of Port Deposit, Perryville, and Havre de Grace. This regional initiative seeks to enhance connectivity, cultural recognition, and environmental conservation through trails, waterways, and historic preservation. LSHG is working towards designation as a National Chesapeake Gateway Community, which would provide global recognition and strengthen links between our communities and the broader Chesapeake Bay region.



## **TOME SCHOOL CAMPUS**

The Tome School for Boys campus is a nationally recognized historic site, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 and protected through Maryland Historical Trust Easement for its architectural significance. Located within the Town of Port Deposit Sustainable Community boundary, the site features remarkable granite structures in various states of decay, with some buildings lost to fire. Given its rich history and cultural importance, a thoughtful and sustainable design approach to restore and reuse remaining structures is essential to preserve and revitalize the campus. Additionally, vital to the significance of this site will be the restoration of the Frederick Law Olmsted Italian Garden in the center of the campus and providing a proper Veteran's Memorial for the Bainbridge Naval Training Center.

### **Design Objectives**

#### **Preservation & Restoration**

- Designate zoning on the site as Open Space.
- Stabilize and restore salvageable historic structures to retain their architectural integrity.
- Conduct structural assessments to determine the feasibility of rehabilitating key buildings.
- Use historically accurate materials and techniques to maintain authenticity.

#### **Adaptive Reuse & Community Integration**

- Transform preserved buildings into community assets such as museums (Bainbridge Museum and Paw Paw Museum, Port Deposit), cultural centers, or educational facilities.
- Incorporate cultural assets, artist spaces, and event venues.
- Develop interpretive spaces highlighting the history of the Tome School, Port Deposit, and its architectural significance.

#### **Public Access & Recreational Enhancements**

- Restore the Frederick Law Olmsted Italian Garden.
- Establish a Veteran's Memorial to recognize the Bainbridge Naval Training Center and include engraved bricks recognizing Veterans from all branches of service.
- Establish a network of walking trails and scenic overlooks that connect the campus to the Susquehanna River waterfront and surrounding historical sites.
- Create outdoor gathering spaces, such as an amphitheater or public plaza, for events and educational programs.
- Incorporate sustainable landscaping with native plantings to enhance environmental resilience.

#### **Historic Interpretation & Educational Opportunities**

- Develop an interpretive center with exhibits detailing the history of the Tome School, Snow Hill, Freeman Hall, waterfront, and other history, including Bainbridge Museum and its impact on the community.
- Partner with BDC, PD Heritage Corporation, MHT, LSHG, CCU, local VFW's and American Legions, local schools, universities, and other organizations to create educational programming and research opportunities.
- Utilize digital technology, such as augmented reality (AR) tours, to bring the site's history to life.

#### **Sustainability & Smart Growth**

- Implement green infrastructure, including stormwater management systems, to protect the site's natural environment.
- Encourage energy-efficient rehabilitation practices to reduce the carbon footprint of restored buildings.
- Promote eco-friendly transportation options, such as walking trails and bike paths.

## **Conclusion**

Revitalizing the Tome School for Boys campus presents a unique opportunity to blend historic preservation with sustainable development, ensuring the site remains an enduring cultural and educational landmark. By integrating thoughtful design strategies, the campus can serve as a dynamic community resource, honoring its legacy while fostering new cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities for Port Deposit and beyond.

## **SNOW HILL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE**

The Snow Hill Archaeological Site is a significant historical landmark in Port Deposit, Maryland, representing a free African American community that thrived between 1840's to 1900. This site offers an invaluable opportunity to uncover, document, and celebrate the rich heritage of African American resilience, culture, and contributions to the region. The town will partner Maryland Historical Trust, Bainbridge Development Corporation, and other cultural and educational organizations for comprehensive research and design and to properly define, preserve, and interpret this historically significant site. Since MHT has an easement on the property, they will take the lead on the historic restoration.

## **Research & Site Assessment**

To ensure an informed and responsible approach to the site's development, extensive research and archaeological investigations must be conducted:

- Define Site Boundaries and designate zoning on the site as Open Space.
- Conduct historical research using maps, land records, and archival documents to establish the original extent of the community.
- Use ground-penetrating radar (GPR) and other archaeological survey methods to locate and define structural foundations, roadways, and other key features.

## **Inventory of Historic Structures & Artifacts**

- Research to add additional historical African American history pertaining to the Underground Railroad and Freeman Hall, a segregated school located within town limits that operated until the mid-1960's.
- Identify, document, and preserve remaining foundations, buildings, and significant cultural artifacts.
- Establish a cataloging system for artifacts uncovered during excavations.
- Partner with MHT, universities, and historical organizations to conduct detailed field studies.

## **Community Outreach & Oral Histories**

- Engage with local descendants and historians to collect oral histories, family records, and photographs.
- Organize public meetings and workshops to involve the community in the preservation process.
- Develop a digital archive of collected stories, images, and historical documents.

## **Design Concept & Site Development**

Following the completion of research and assessment, a thoughtful site design will be developed, focusing on historic preservation, accessibility, and public engagement.

## **Restoration & Interpretation**

- Preserve and stabilize remaining structures, ensuring historical accuracy in any restoration efforts.
- Install interpretive signage and interactive exhibits to highlight the community's history, daily life, and contributions.
- Design historical displays, artifacts, and multimedia presentations.

## **Public Access & Educational Experiences**

- Establish walking trails with historical markers detailing the significance of key areas.
- Design guided and self-guided tour programs using augmented reality (AR) or mobile applications to enhance visitor experiences.
- Create an outdoor classroom or cultural pavilion for school field trips, lectures, and community gatherings.

## **Memorial & Cultural Recognition**

- Develop a heritage memorial to honor the legacy of Snow Hill's African American residents.
- Incorporate artwork, sculptures, or storytelling installations that reflect the community's experiences and impact.
- Organize annual heritage events, reenactments, or cultural festivals to celebrate and educate the public about Snow Hill's history.

## **Sustainability & Site Preservation**

- Implement eco-friendly site management practices to protect the archaeological integrity of the land.
- Create walkways, native plant landscaping, and erosion control measures to ensure site longevity.
- Partner with historical preservation organizations to secure funding and grants for long-term conservation efforts.

## **Conclusion**

The Snow Hill Archaeological Site represents a powerful story of freedom, resilience, and community. Through careful research, preservation, and thoughtful design, the site can serve as an enduring educational and cultural resource, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation for African American heritage in Port Deposit and beyond. By engaging the public and ensuring responsible site stewardship, Snow Hill's legacy will be preserved and celebrated for future generations.

## **ENHANCING GROWTH AND CONNECTIVITY IN PORT DEPOSIT**

The Town of Port Deposit is experiencing unprecedented growth, driven by potential annexation proposals for residential development that could add 400 to 450 new homes within town limits. Additionally, Cecil County has approved a concept plan for Granite Cliffs, which will introduce 525 new homes just outside the town.

At the same time, successful economic growth on a portion of the Bainbridge property is transforming the town's economic landscape. With two commercial buildings and two building pad sites completed in Phase I, and concept approval for Phase II, the town's financial outlook has improved, allowing greater financial resources to support the historic restoration of the Tome School Campus and Snow Hill Archeological Site, as well as other key recreational and cultural projects for this site and throughout town.

The Town of Port Deposit has the advantage of greater autonomy in approving and managing projects, agreements, memorandum of understanding, etc. tailored to meet community, historical, economic and recreational needs.

**Downtown improvement projects include:**

- MHT grant, \$30,000 to restore the historic Tome Steps and re-establish the pedestrian connection from South Main Street to the Tome School Campus and Snow Hill;
- MDOT Main Street Storm Drain Improvements and Streetscape Project - \$11,000,000 for new storm drains and culverts on Main Street to reduce flooding, repair and restore existing historic granite sidewalks, repair or replace existing concrete sidewalks, improve ADA compliance, increase public sidewalk space, improve pedestrian safety and access to Main Street, and use traffic control measures at pedestrian crossings to reduce speeding on Main Street.
- Marina Park SHA TAP Grant, \$750,000 for park improvements to include, a new boat launch, establishing new soft landing access for human-powered boats and living shoreline, reducing vehicle and pedestrian circulation conflicts between boating, playground, fishing, and waterfront promenade, repair/restore concrete bulkhead for fishing, install driveway and parking for Visitor Center, etc.
- Hopkins Quarry Park Master Plan, \$50,000 from ARPA funds to develop a phased-in master adventure park on 67 acres off North Main Street. This property was once a granite quarry. The plan includes a rock climbing wall, zip line, giant slide, bicycle pump track, hiking trail, multi-use court area, picnic area, pavilion and playgrounds, and connections via hiking and bike trails from Marina Park and Tome School on S. Main Street to Hopkins Quarry along the waterfront, Main Street and the granite bluff.

**SUMMARY**

The Town of Port Deposit is dedicated to preserving and celebrating its rich historical legacy by recognizing the cultural significance of the Tome School Campus, Snow Hill, and the Bainbridge Naval Training Center. These landmarks are integral to connecting with the historic downtown waterfront and the broader community. Our vision is to restore these historic sites as dynamic spaces for learning, culture, community engagement, and recreation, ensuring they remain valuable assets.

To achieve this, we are committed to building strategic partnerships that support preservation and adaptive reuse. The feasibility of this initiative is reinforced by successful collaborations with established organizations that share our vision, i.e. Bainbridge Development Corporation, Maryland Historical Trust, Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, Port Deposit Heritage Corporation, etc. By working together, the town can create a sustainable framework that enhances public access, education, and cultural vitality while restoring and preserving our history and "our story" to share with future generations.

**PDHC Testimony 02072025 - In Favor SB477.pdf**

Uploaded by: William Baron

Position: FAV



# Port Deposit Heritage Corporation

99 N. Main St., Port Deposit, MD 21904

February 7, 2025

## PAW PAW MUSEUM CIRCA 1821

Open  
May ~ October  
2nd and 4th Sunday  
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98 North Main Street  
Historic Port Deposit

Contact us at  
PawPawMuseum@gmail.com

Mailing Address  
PO Box 101  
Port Deposit, MD 21904

### OFFICERS

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*President*

William Baron  
*Vice-President*

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*Secretary-Treasurer*

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Judy Leonard  
George Maldeis

### *Vice-President Emeritus*

Rev. George Hipkins

Chair Feldman & Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

## RE: Support for Senate Bill 477

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Port Deposit Heritage Corporation (PDHC), I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 477, which ensures that the Port of Deposit State Historical Park can move forward with a focused, well-resourced approach to historic preservation.

For years, PDHC has been at the forefront of historic preservation in Port Deposit, successfully rescuing and restoring abandoned historic buildings that are now thriving assets in our community. Our work has proven that local stewardship is the key to successful preservation and adaptive reuse.

## Commitment to Preserving Black History in Port Deposit

We are particularly excited about partnering with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to connect and expand the narratives of Port Deposit's Black history—from the Snow Hill Archaeological Site to the Underground Railroad connections in town, to Freeman Hall, the segregated Black primary school that served our community until the mid-20th century.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to weave these stories together into a comprehensive historical and cultural experience. We look forward to working with DNR, historians, and local stakeholders to ensure that the legacy of Port Deposit's Black community is fully honored and preserved.

## Our Continued Commitment to Preservation

PDHC has a long track record of working with the town on historic preservation and adaptive reuse in Port Deposit. Our successes include:

- Rescuing and restoring abandoned historic buildings that now serve the community.
- Collaborating with local and state partners to secure funding and expertise for restoration efforts.

With SB-477, we are eager to continue this tradition by supporting the Town of Port Deposit in its efforts to stabilize and repurpose the Tome School campus. The Town has already demonstrated its commitment to historic preservation, and we stand ready to collaborate in ensuring that this landmark remains a community treasure.

This legislation allows the State and the Town to each play to their strengths:

- DNR can focus on Snow Hill and its incredible archaeological significance.
- The Town, with partners like PDHC, can restore and interpret the Tome School campus with available funding.
- Together, we can create an integrated historic, cultural, and educational experience that enriches Maryland's heritage.

For these reasons, the Port Deposit Heritage Corporation strongly supports SB-477 and urges a favorable report from this committee. We look forward to working with DNR, the Town of Port Deposit, and other community partners to ensure that our rich and diverse history is preserved for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or opportunities for collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Baron', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Baron  
Vice President, Port Deposit Heritage Corporation

## **SB 477**

Uploaded by: Betty Johnson

Position: UNF



**Date: February 8, 2025**

**Education, Energy, and The Environment:**

**Brian Feldman, Chair**

**Re: SB 477**

**Sponsored by: Cecil County Senators**

**Position: OPPOSE**

**Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and The Environment Committee**

**I am Betty Johnson a resident of Cecil County, MD, who has attended some of the Advisory Committee meetings , and reviewed the Department of Natural Resources Report to the Legislature on the Port of Deposit Historical Park , I am opposed to extending the time period for the property to be released to the Department of Natural Resources as well as reducing the acreage by 90 percent. Passage of this bill will only prolong the time for the park to be established. From the report, there already has been an extension to the project. I recommend moving forward and any obstacles that DNR encounters along the way, I am certain they will be resolved timely.**

**Reducing the size by 90 percent is a drastic reduction. If that happens the original plan for a Historical Park will also be diminished and compromised.**

**I strongly oppose SB477 and urge the committee to vote against passing this bill out of the Education, Energy, and The Environment Committee.**

**Sincerely,**

**Betty Johnson, A Constituent**

# **HornbergerSB477.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kevin Hornberger

Position: UNF

KEVIN B. HORNBERGER  
Legislative District 35B  
Cecil County

DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

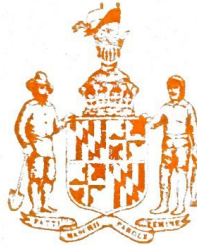
Subcommittees

Education

Local Revenues

Joint Committee on Gaming Oversight

Chair, Cecil County House Delegation



*The Maryland House of Delegates*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

*Annapolis Office*  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 325  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3284 · 301-858-3284  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3284  
Fax 410-841-3609 · 301-858-3609  
Kevin.Hornberger@house.state.md.us

*District Office*  
64 S. Main Street  
Port Deposit, Maryland 21904  
410-378-2718

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

I am writing you today in strong opposition of SB477, Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Size and Scope Sponsored by the Cecil County Senators and set for a hearing date in your committee of February 11th. As written, the bill significantly decreases the acreage of the Port of Deposit State Park and further delays the land transfer from the Bainbridge Development Corporation to the Department of Natural Resources.

Serving as a task force member spanning both administrations and assisting the original authoring of the Great Maryland Outdoors Act SB541 of 2022 it is my, along with the Advisory Committee, belief that SB477 would take historically significant Chesapeake Bay Critical zone property and designate it for private development. Removal of the Tome School property opens the historic bluff and accompanying Frederick Law Olmsted Garden to private development. As a riparian buffer for a town, hampered by frequent flooding and a breeding ground for the endangered map turtle, we believe the appropriate custodian for this property is the DNR. The General Assembly concurred, voting on two separate occasions 2022 & 2024 for the park's creation. The complex and profound history of this property will serve as an inspirational light for future generations. What better custodian than our DNR? This property is primed for greatness.

The proposed 90% acreage reduction removes publicly accessible recreational open space from our local communities.

For over 25 years this remarkable state-owned property has sat idle and inaccessible by the public. Over the interim we worked diligently along with various stakeholders to come up with solutions of how best to transfer this iconic property. **Unfortunately, this bill does not represent the spirit of that report or the desires of the diverse workgroup.**

Amending SB477 to reflect recommendations gleaned from the final report (Attachment 1) and additional funding is an option worth consideration. I have attached the final report issued by the DNR for your review along with a map (Attachment 2) outlining the parcel and its adjacency to the Susquehanna River. Thank you for your careful consideration of this bill, along with so many other pieces of legislation. Should you have any questions my cell phone number is listed below.

Kevin Hornberger

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KH", written over a horizontal line.

Chair, Cecil County Delegation

443-309-6771

**NR § 5-1012(g)(4) - DNR - Port of Deposit State Hi**

Uploaded by: Kevin Hornberger

Position: UNF

**Appendix 1. Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Advisory Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Mayor Wayne Tome, Jr	Mayor and Town Council, Port Deposit
Delegate Hornberger	Cecil County Delegation (House of Delegates)
Delegate Teresa Reilly	Cecil County Delegation (House of Delegates)
Senator Jason Gallion	Cecil County Delegation (Senate)
Danielle Hornberger	County Executive of Cecil County
Jackie Gregory	Cecil County Council
Betty Johnson	Cecil County Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Paula Newton	Historical Society of Cecil County
Clyde Van Dyke	Cecil County Parks and Recreation
Toni Sprenkle	Bainbridge Development Corporation
Julie Schablitsky	Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration

<b>Nonvoting Ex Officio Members:</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Secretary Josh Kurtz	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Anderson	Maryland Department of Commerce
Serena McIlwain	Maryland Department of Environment
Chuck Boyd	Maryland Department of Planning
Elizabeth Hughes	Maryland Historical Trust
Brigitte Carty	Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway
Amy Sexton	Cecil County Public Schools
Morgan Miller	Cecil County Public Library
Dr. Mary Way Bolt	Cecil College

**NR § 5-1012(g)(4) - DNR - Port of Deposit State Hi**

Uploaded by: Kevin Hornberger

Position: UNF

## Appendix 2. Preliminary Estimated Budget

Number	Item	Description	Cost
1	<b>Planning</b>		
	Develop Master Plan	Planning Consultant	\$ 250,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 250,000.00</b>
2	<b>Staffing</b>		
	Park Rangers, Administration, Maintenance, and Historians		\$ 550,000.00
	Uniforms (Dress and Work)		\$ 20,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 570,000.00</b>
3	<b>Vehicles</b>		
	Trucks	Electric crew cab 1/2 ton (1) and 3/4 ton (3)	\$ 300,000.00
	Heavy Trucks	Diesel dump truck	\$ 100,000.00
	Vans	Electric 12 passenger (1) and 7 passenger (1)	\$ 100,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 500,000.00</b>
4	<b>Demolition, Deconstruction and Stabilization on Tome School Property</b>		
	Demolition of cottages		\$ 271,000.00
	Deconstruction of 4 structures		\$ 1,315,000.00
	Stabilization and reuse of 3 structures		\$ 21,220,000.00
	Design Services (20% for historic buildings)		\$ 4,561,200.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 27,367,200.00</b>
5	<b>Survey and Research for Snow Hill Archaeological Site</b>		
	Archaeological Survey		\$ 300,000.00
	Research		\$ 250,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 550,000.00</b>
5	<b>Wooded Conservation Area</b>		
	Remediation	\$106,000 per acre	\$ 6,890,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 6,890,000.00</b>
6	<b>Fencing to Secure the Area</b>		
	Fence		\$ 30,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 30,000.00</b>
7	<b>Access Road</b>		
	Access Road		\$ 2,768,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 2,768,000.00</b>
8	<b>Utilities</b>		
	Water, sewer, electric		\$ 8,000,000.00
	Internet		\$ 100,000.00
	EV Charging facilities		\$ 100,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,200,000.00</b>

9	<b>Facility Development and Infrastructure</b>		
	Design Services	Architecture/Engineer for Park Facilities	\$ 300,000.00
	Roads and Parking	Construct/Improve roads and Parking	\$ 2,000,000.00
	Maintenance Facility	Construct Pole Barn, Sheds, Fencing	\$ 300,000.00
	Administration Building	Construct an Administration Building	\$ 500,000.00
	Visitor Center	Construct a Visitor Center	\$ 5,000,000.00
	Directional and Entry Signage	Entrance signs, waysides, trail signes	\$ 20,000.00
	Trail Design	Design a trail system that connects to the Town	\$ 20,000.00
	Trail Construction	Construct a trail system that connects to the Town	\$ 100,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 8,240,000.00</b>
10	<b>Equipment and Tools</b>		
	Tools	Table saws, planer, router, hand tools, etc	\$ 15,000.00
	Grounds Equipment	Mowers, saws, chippers, blowers, plows, etc	\$ 350,000.00
	Miscellaneous	Hoes, rakes, trimmers, etc	\$ 150,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 515,000.00</b>
11	<b>Radios, Communications, and Office Supplies</b>		
	Computers and cell phones	Computers (5), phones (4), printer/scanner	\$ 15,000.00
	Office Furniture	Desks, Filing Cabinets, Shelves, Safe	\$ 15,000.00
	Office Supplies	Pens, paper, staplers, printer ink, etc	\$ 10,000.00
	Radios	Motorola APX (8)	\$ 30,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 70,000.00</b>
12	<b>Programming</b>		
	Signage, Maps, Fliers, Publications	Signage, maps, promotional materials for partners	\$ 70,000.00
	Interpretive Waysides	Develop content, produce panels, install panels	\$ 30,000.00
	Supporting References	Books, resource materios relevant to the site	\$ 3,000.00
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 103,000.00</b>
13	<b>Grand Total</b>		
		<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 56,053,200.00</b>



**NR § 5-1012(g)(4) - DNR - Port of Deposit State Hi**

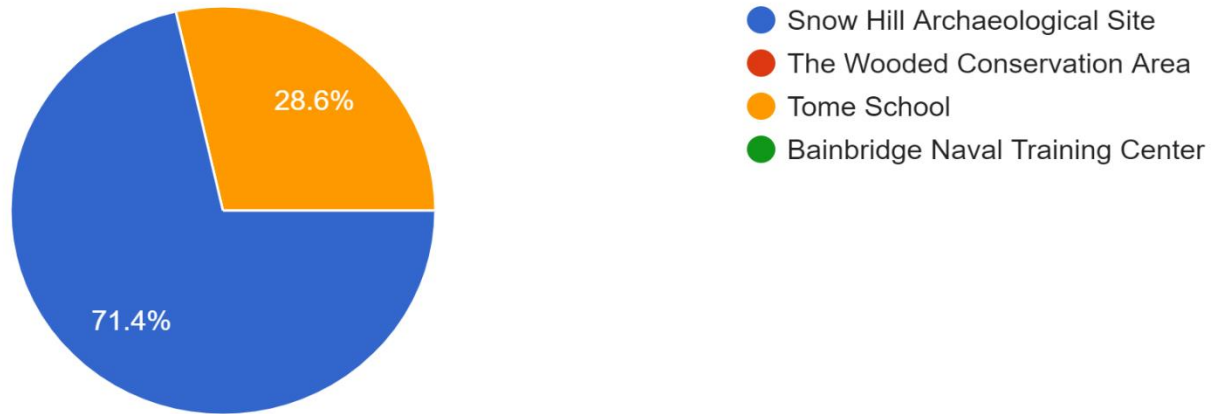
Uploaded by: Kevin Hornberger

Position: UNF

### Appendix 3. State Advisory Committee Survey Responses

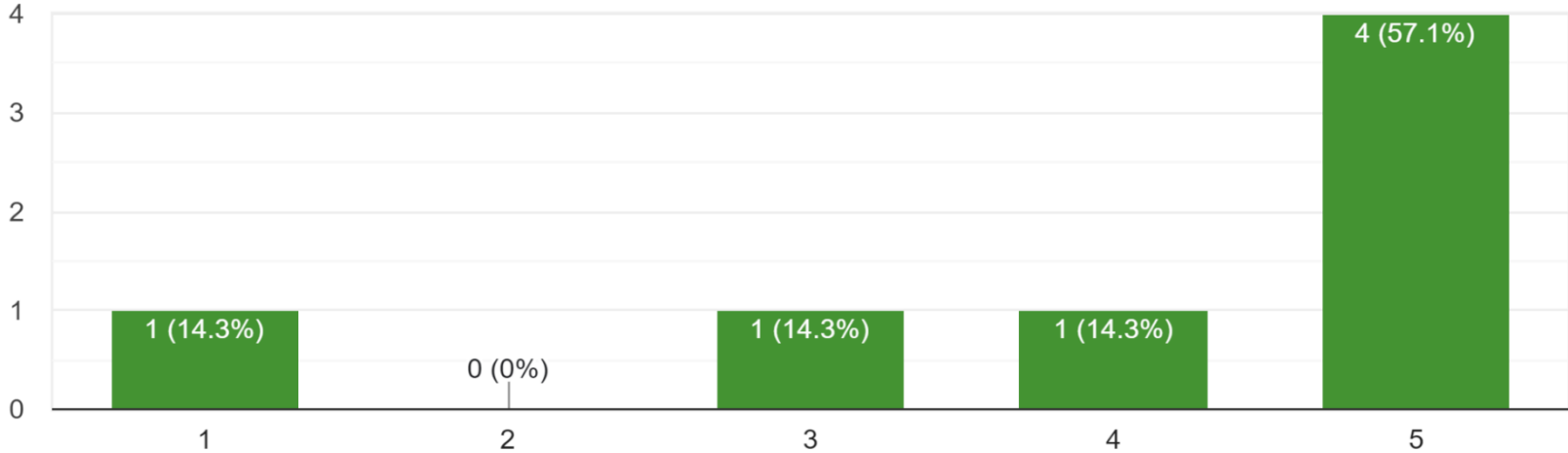
In your opinion, what is the most important aspect of Port Deposit State Historical Park?

7 responses



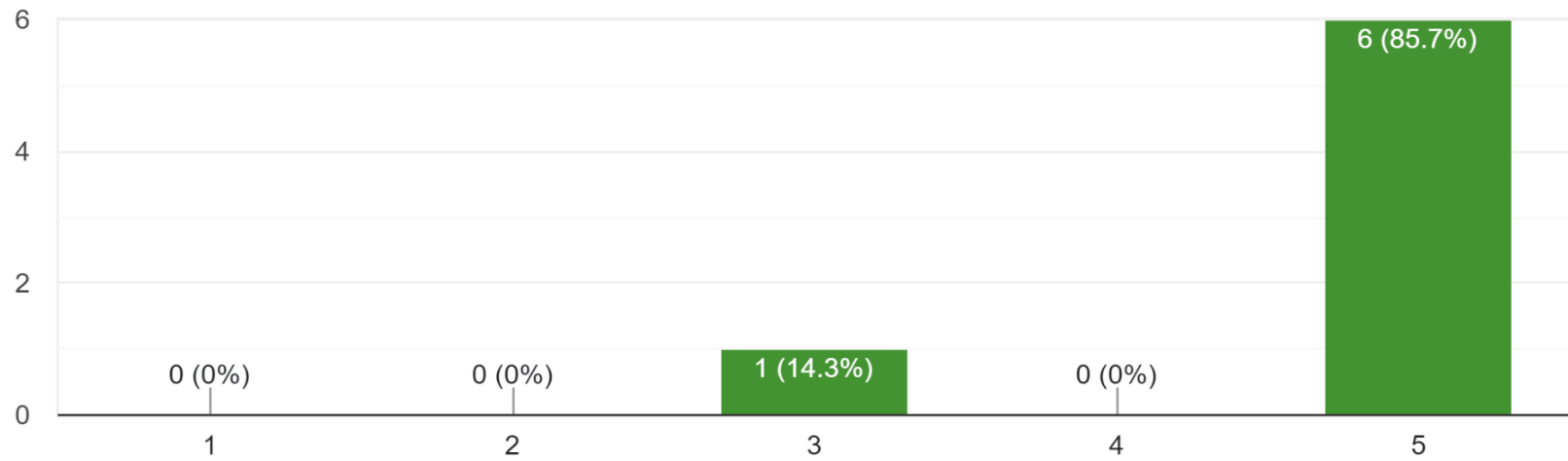
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important hiking trails are to you and your organization.

7 responses



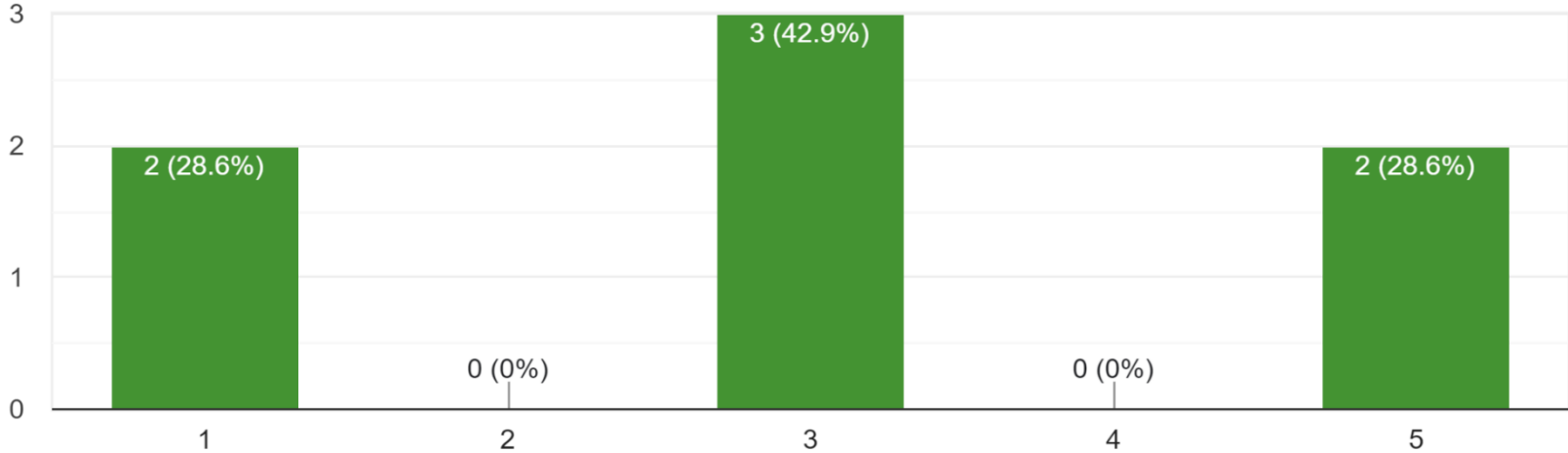
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important historical interpretation of this site is to you and your organization.

7 responses



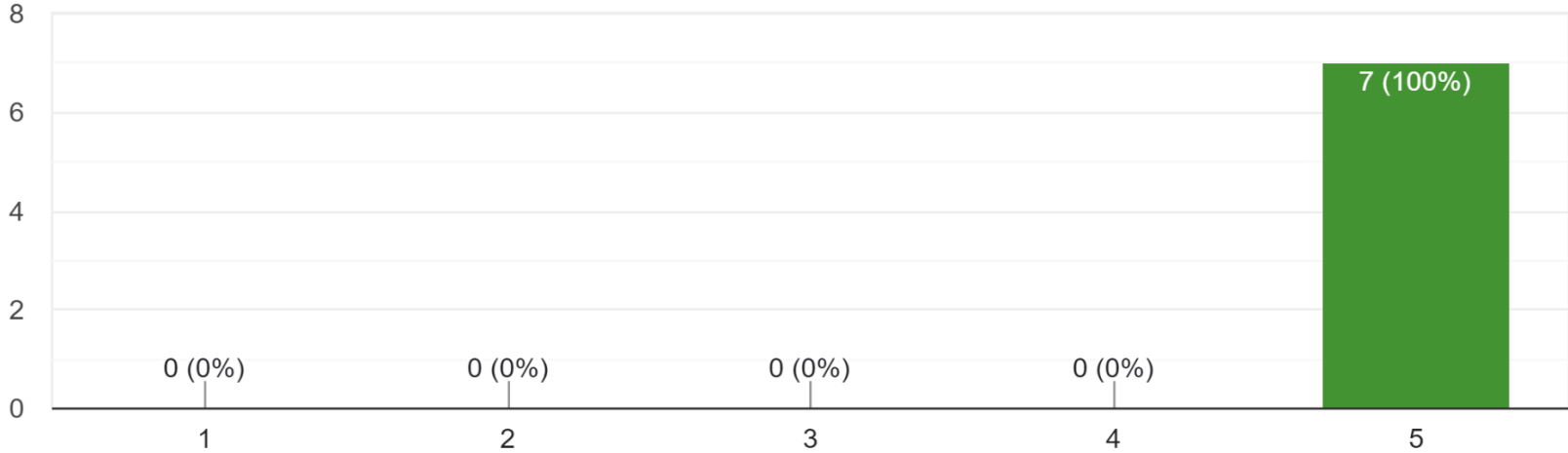
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important picnic areas are to you and your organization?

7 responses



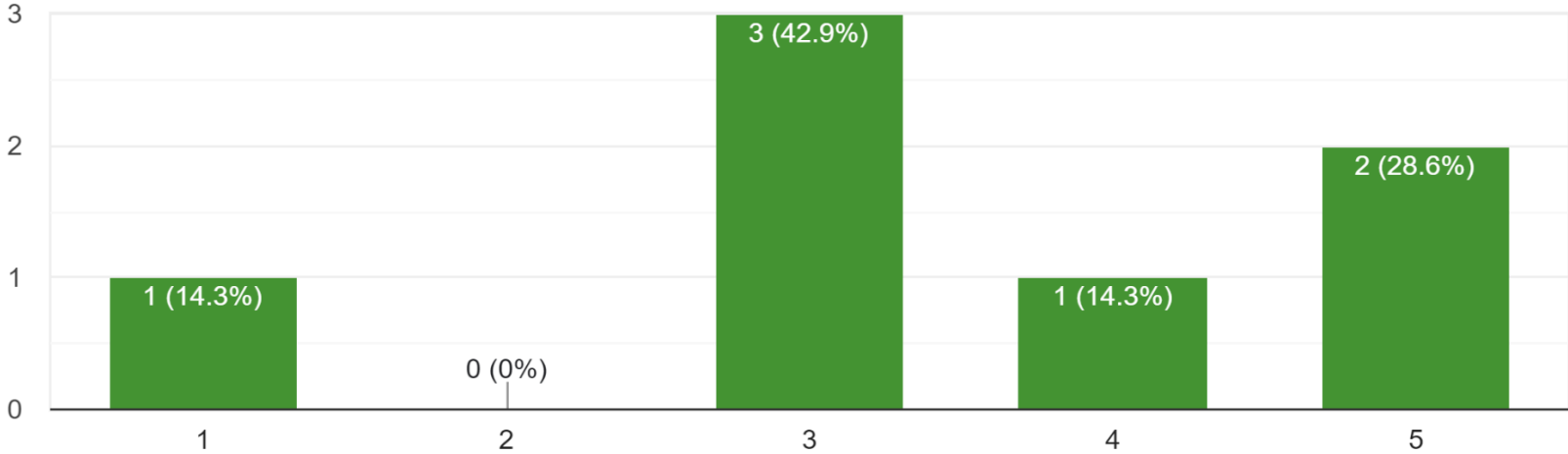
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important sharing the African-American history of Snow Hill Archaeological site is to you and your organization?

7 responses



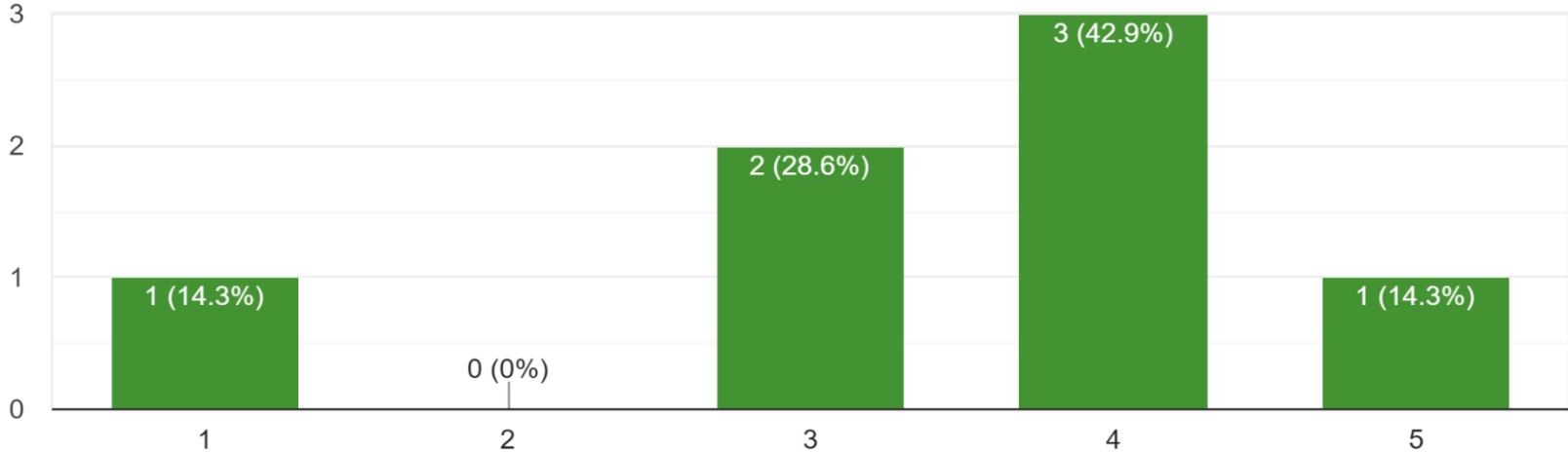
On a scale of 1 to 5, please select how important creating special event spaces (recreation, weddings, photography, etc) is to you and your organization.

7 responses



# How satisfied were you with the report to the legislature for Port of Deposit State Historical Park?

7 responses





**NR § 5-1012(g)(4) - DNR - Port of Deposit State Hi**

Uploaded by: Kevin Hornberger

Position: UNF



# **Port of Deposit State Historical Park Report to the Legislature**

**Port of Deposit State Historical Park  
Report to the Legislature per Natural Resources § 5-1012(g)(4) from SB 517, Ch. 602,  
2023**

Submitted on November 4, 2024  
By the Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**For further information concerning this document contact:**

Department of Natural Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
1-877-620-8367  
TTY: 410-260-8835  
TTY Toll Free: 800-681-8978  
Email: [CustomerService.DNR@Maryland.gov](mailto:CustomerService.DNR@Maryland.gov)  
Website: <http://dnr.maryland.gov>

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# Port of Deposit State Historical Park Report to the Legislature

## Background

The Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022 (Senate Bill 541/Chapter 39) mandates that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) shall “establish the Port of Deposit State Historical Park as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.” The Act goes on to require that the “Port of Deposit State Historical Park shall consist of a portion of the Bainbridge Naval Training Center Site, measuring not less than 120 acres and not more than 150 acres...including: the historic Tome School, Snow Hill Archaeological Site, and the Adjacent Wooded Conservation Area.” Each of these sections is highlighted in this report.

The Act, as originally enacted, required Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) to transfer the park property to DNR by June 1, 2023, and required DNR to submit a report to the General Assembly by January 1, 2023. In 2022 DNR submitted its report on the Port of Deposit State Historical Park to the General Assembly. Thereafter, SB517 of 2023 modified the date of the property transfer to provide that BDC transfer the property to DNR by June 1, 2025, and to provide that DNR submit a report to the General Assembly by September 1, 2024.

This report is a progress update and will address efforts by DNR, its partners, and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, to create the Port of Deposit State Historical Park, as well as remaining challenges and items that must be addressed.

The Great Maryland Outdoors Act directed DNR to establish a Stakeholder Advisory Committee to advise the Department on the scope and management of the “Port of Deposit State Historical Park.” For a complete list of members see Appendix 1. Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Advisory Committee. DNR greatly appreciated the input of all of our project partners, advisory committee members, and non-voting members and looks forward to continuing the efforts to create Port of Deposit State Historical Park after the report is submitted.



**Figure 1. Historic buildings from the Tome School**



The Advisory Committee reconvened on November 20, 2023. New members were introduced and members received an overview of changes made in the most recent legislation. Notably, the modified deadlines and the authorization of funding for an archaeological survey and soil study of the Snow Hill Archaeological Site. BDC provided a presentation of site history and recent activities. Staff from DNR's Land Acquisitions and Planning (LAP) unit questioned whether certain structures that had been damaged and faced deconstruction could be demolished, stabilized, or repurposed before being transferred to DNR.

The Advisory Committee met on site at the Tome School on January 24, 2024 and conducted a tour of the Tome School site. Additional insights were gained and questions were raised following the tour of the property.

The Advisory Committee met at the Town of Port Deposit's Town Hall on May 14, 2024. Committee members received updates on the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway's Projects and discussed the importance of National Trails for expanded access and funding opportunities. Representatives from the Town of Port Deposit updated members on the strategic objectives of the Town with an emphasis on cultural and recreational development. Representatives from DNR and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) addressed a partnership agreement to conduct a new shovel test pit survey at the Snow Hill Archaeological Site. Lastly, members discussed the obstacles to a recreational usage of the property as a Park, with respect to the United States Navy's (USN) property transfer to BDC for commercial development. BDC shared that USN would likely want to be released from all environmental responsibility, but that USN would also likely request additional data and want a risk assessment to be completed before revisiting the issue of liability.

The Advisory Committee met again on August 21, 2024 and was joined for the first time by a representative from the Cecil County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who expressed concern about moving forward without the involvement of the local African-American community. DNR welcomed the chapter and is working closely with them and the community to arrange a tour of the site. DNR updated members on partnership agreements which had been drafted for the archaeological survey and soil study at the Snow Hill Archaeological Site to be conducted by MDOT, and for a property boundary line survey to be conducted by Bohler engineering, through BDC, on DNR's behalf, to address boundary line issues.

Figure 2., below shows the acreages and the associated properties in a color-coded map.

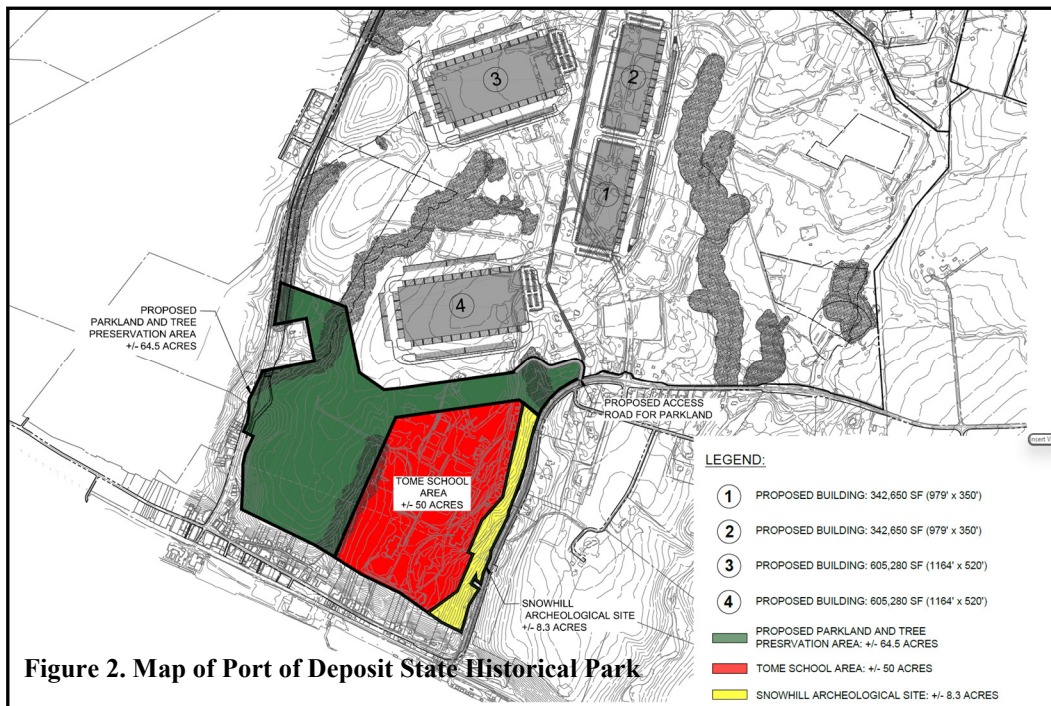


Figure 2. Map of Port of Deposit State Historical Park

## Historic Tome School

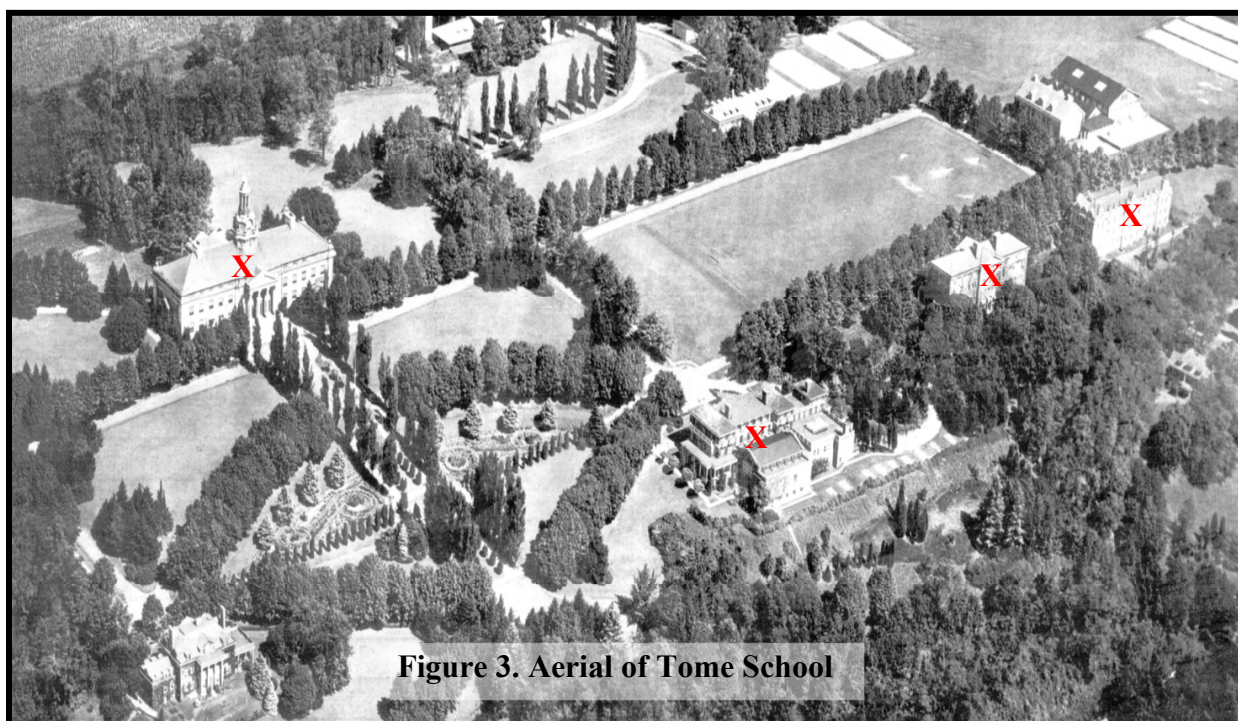
### *Background*

The historic Tome School for Boys was founded by Jacob Tome in 1894 as a nonsectarian college preparatory school for affluent boys. Between 1898 and 1902 a series of granite buildings were constructed on the bluffs above the Town of Port Deposit, overlooking the Susquehanna River, to serve as the school campus. Architects William Boring and Edward Lippincott Tilton designed the structures in the Beaux-Arts style. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., served as consulting landscape architect for siting of the buildings on the property while Charles W. Leavitt, a prominent New York landscape architect, was chosen as landscape architect for the campus. Leavitt worked with architects Boring and Tilton to design the grounds. Later, the property served as the site of the Naval Academy Preparatory School from 1943-1974. The Tome School for Boys Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 for its significance in national architectural, educational, and military history covering the period 1900-1974.

Memorial Hall (shown on the cover of this report) is known as the school's centerpiece and the façade is meant to show the gravitas of the educational facility that was the Jacob Tome Institute. This building held administrative offices, an assembly hall, the library, classrooms, and physics, chemistry and biology laboratories. Also part of the campus were the Headmaster's House, Tome Inn, Harrison Hall, a gymnasium and dormitories. Figure 1., shows the current state of buildings on the property.

Many of the buildings are in various states of disrepair and some have been damaged by arson, as seen in Figure 3. Aerial of Tome School, all of the buildings with red "X" have suffered fire damage, BDC provided the image. Structures include:

- Memorial Hall: Fire in September 2014, used for classrooms, offices, library and auditorium, 53,900 square feet
- Madison Hall: Used as a dormitory with 37 bedrooms, storage, laundry and utility rooms, 11,522 square feet
- Monroe Hall: Used as a gymnasium with a large entrance hall, swimming pool, lockers, bedrooms, 20,900 square feet
- Tome Inn: Fire in May 2020, used for dormitory and guest suites, 36,060 square feet
- Jackson House (condemned): Used as a dormitory, 63 bedrooms, lobby or lounge, storage or trunk rooms, 16,485 square feet
- Headmaster's House: Originally used as a faculty residence, 10,018 square feet



**Figure 3. Aerial of Tome School**

- Harrison Hall: Fire in June 2020, originally used as a dormitory, 77 bedrooms, 20,298 square feet

Positive preservation work on the Headmaster’s House was recently conducted by BDC which expended fund on repairing the roof, removing graffiti, mothballing buildings, and sealing the building.

*Update*

Throughout 2023 and 2024, DNR has continued to conduct site visits and assessment to determine the best path forward. Unfortunately, given the dilapidated and unsafe state of the majority of the buildings and their continued deterioration, it appears that many of them will need to be demolished. Since some of the structures were built using Port Deposit granite, deconstruction was suggested as a means to preserve the history and resources of Tome School. Certain structures are salvageable and can be used to interpret the history of the Tome School and Bainbridge Naval Academy. At the January 24, 2024 meeting the following demolition and deconstruction costs were shared by BDC from IMARK Builders:

- Demolition of cottages: \$271,000
- Deconstruction of 4 structures: \$1,315,000
- Stabilization and reuse of 3 structures: \$21,220,000
- Total: \$22,806,000

DNR requested that BDC get an updated quote for demolition, deconstruction, and stabilization. The updated quote came in well below the previous quote and did not include stormwater management and architectural engineering costs. The April 23, 2024 quote from Paul Risk Construction was \$1,194,198.00.

Given that these structures within the Tome School are all on the National Register of Historic Places, a decision could yet be made to restore all historic structures, but the associated costs would be significantly greater than what is proposed. Alternatively, financial costs could be reduced by deconstructing additional structures and stabilizing and reusing fewer structures, but at the “cost” of diminished historic value.

It is recommended that a full assessment of the remaining buildings be conducted in coordination with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), and updated estimates be obtained thereafter for demolition, deconstruction and/or stabilization, once DNR takes the property on June 1, 2025. Priority would be placed on the Headmaster’s House, the façade of Memorial Hall, and maintaining the historic landscaping and viewshed of the Tome School.

Snow Hill Archaeological Site

*Background*

The Snow Hill Archeological Site was the location of a free Black community which was established in the Port Deposit area by the mid-1800s and it is widely recognized as the first Free Black community in the area. The remains of several structures and other items were identified at the site by MHT archaeologists during a 1982 cultural resource survey. At one point it had a number of residential lots and an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. Free Black merchants and laborers established this community on leased land and worked in and around the Town of Port Deposit. Snow Hill site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.



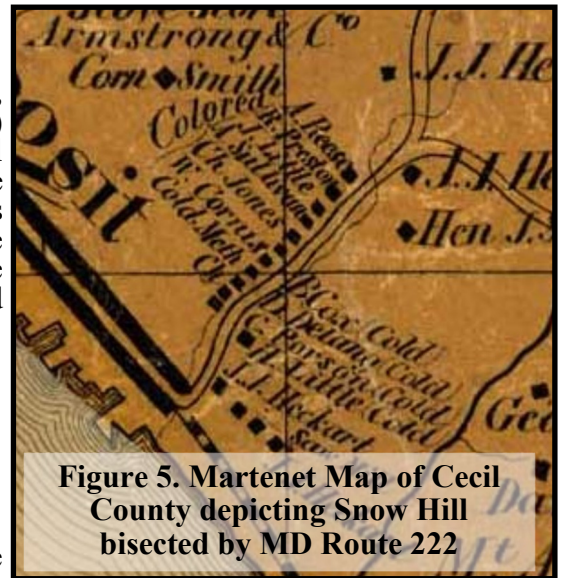
Figure 4. Items found at Snow Hill Archaeological Site

## Update

On June 18, 2024, Dr. Julie Schablitsky (Head Archaeologist, MDOT), Aaron Levinthal (consultant archaeologist with MDOT) and DNR staff did a site visit. Dr. Schablitsky and Mr. Levinthal located the site of Snow Hill based upon the approximate location from the 1982 survey. They found a stone foundation as well as a horseshoe and glass bottles at this remarkable site, see Figure 4. This preliminary survey suggests, however, that the outer limits of the Snow Hill community may actually extend beyond the boundary as identified in the 1982 survey.

Next steps for this important archaeological site include DNR working with SHA and the Town of Port Deposit to conduct archaeology so this site can be properly interpreted.

It should be noted that the legislation only requires half of the site to be part of the State Historical Park, because the other half is on the opposite side of Maryland Route 222 (Bainbridge Road), see Figure 5., showing the Martenet Map of Cecil County, zoomed into Snow Hill.



**Figure 5. Martenet Map of Cecil County depicting Snow Hill bisected by MD Route 222**

The site will be interpreted as a whole and the complete history of this important location will be shared. The map shows the surnames of the inhabitants including Reese, Preston, Little, Sullivan, Jones, Cornish, Cox, Delaney, Parson, Little and Heckert. It also shows the location of the Methodist Church and the Saw Mill. It should be noted that the abbreviation “cold” stand for “colored”. The term “colored” is both archaic and offensive. However, it was used in these historic documents to refer to individuals who are African-American or Black. We do not condone its use and it does not align with our values and practices. A significant portion of this effort will include engaging with the descendant community of Snow Hill.

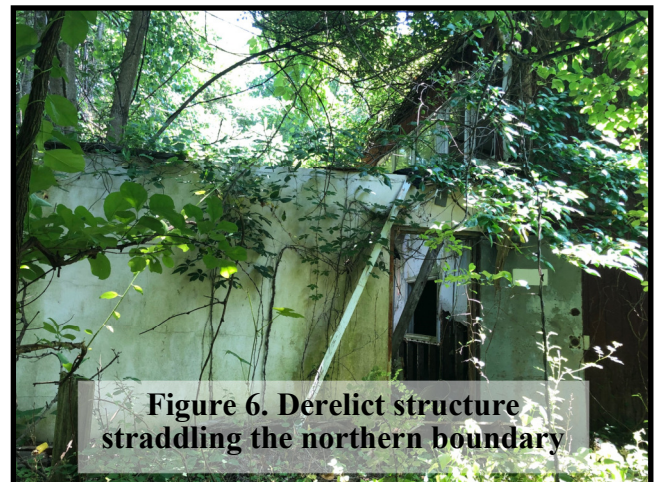
## Wooded Conservation Area

### *Background*

At approximately 64.5 acres, the wooded conservation area is the largest parcel of land and is located between the Tome School parcel and Maryland Route 276 (Jacob Tome Memorial Highway). The parcel has significant elevation, is rocky, has debris piles and includes the northern border of the park.

### *Update*

The Department’s LAP Real Property Asset Management team walked and flagged the proposed northern boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park, which includes a substantial portion of the wooded conservation area. A few days later, on June 17, 2024, staff from MPS and LAP completed a physical inspection of the site, which included a walk along a portion of the proposed northern boundary and portions of the wooded conservation area. Of note, the proposed northern boundary goes through a building (perhaps an old maintenance complex), a raised access road, a significant debris pile, an athletic field, and a wetland. Figure 7. Map of the Northern Boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park, the actual attachment shows comments from the surveyor. The Department is working with BDC to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will provide for a complete ALTA Survey of the property, which will identify all structures, utilities, tunnel locations and other potential matters that will need to be addressed. The proposed northern boundary line will need to be defined before the survey can be finalized. The completed ALTA survey (which will include a metes and bounds description of the property) is required in order to



**Figure 6. Derelict structure straddling the northern boundary**



accurately depict and describe the property to be conveyed to the Department, and must be completed prior to the transfer as it is included in and is a part of the Deed from BDC to the Department.

LAP will procure title to examine conditions and other matters that might be placed on the property, limiting potential uses. It is estimated that due diligence, including title work and survey will cost up to \$100,000 in Program Open Space Stateside funds.

Next steps in this process include working with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on remediation efforts with a Voluntary Cleanup Plan. According to Bainbridge Development Corporation remediation of this area will cost \$106,000 per acre for a total of \$6,890,000. The Department may need to develop a MOU with MDE, or perhaps BDC to obtain various environmental studies and/or reports, as well as to take action to remediate any unacceptable matters. Any remediation should occur while BDC retains ownership of the property, and before the transfer to the Department.

### Staffing

MPS would like Port of Deposit State Historical Park to be a fully staffed park with both permanent and seasonal (10-month contract) staff to supplement the workforce during busy seasons. The recommended staffing level is below:

- Park Manager (State Park Ranger Manager I)
- Assistant Manager (Park Service Supervisor)
- Ranger Lead (State Park Ranger Lead)
- Maintenance Supervisor (Park Maintenance Program Supervisor)
- Park Technician Lead (Park Technician Lead)
- Park Technician (Park Technician II)
- Administrative Assistant (Administrative Specialist III)
- Historian (Natural Resources Planner III)



**Department Staff surveying Memorial Hall on June 17, 2024**

### Patrolling the Property

The Law Enforcement unit of the Department is the Maryland Natural Resources Police. Once the property is taken by the Department, they will be charged with patrolling and securing the area. BDC currently has a security system in place that uses motion sensors and a public address system.

### Securing the Property

The Tome School and adjacent wooded area contain a multitude of structures and environs that are both physically and environmentally hazardous. The structure located straddling the northern boundary line in the wooded area appears it may contain asbestos or lead, see Figure 6. The Tome School campus contains a system of underground tunnels that were used for a central heating system, which has a number of uncovered hazardous above ground openings. Many buildings which are in a deteriorated condition and at risk of collapse, are open and unsecured. There is presently a chain link fence of varying heights around at least some of the property. In places the fence is compromised completely, or partially, allowing uncontrolled access to the site.

DNR recommends securing the entire perimeter of the property by repairing or replacing the existing fence, as well as installation of new signage. Furthermore, all buildings on site must be reassessed and secured, with signage.



**Department Staff conducting a site visit of the property**



Figure 7. Map of the Northern Boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park

### Property Access and Boundary

On the June 17, 2024 site visit it was apparent that the northern boundary cuts off DNR’s access to the future State Historical Park property by not providing an entrance road. The northern boundary goes along an old fire/access road (Benson Road) off of Maryland Route 222 that is steep, narrow and unfinished. This is clear in Figure 7. Map of the Northern Boundary of Port of Deposit State Historical Park.

For Port of Deposit State Historical Park to be viable there must be an entrance road for visitors, staff, services and emergency personnel. The DNR proposes that the northern boundary be changed to include Bainbridge Road, the associated paved parking lots, Kidd Road, Tome Road and down to the Tome School Property. Since we would need access to Bainbridge Road and the associated paved parking lots, we would need at least a 20-foot buffer around those areas. The paved parking lots on Bainbridge Road would make an ideal location for an administrative building, visitor center, parking lot, interpretive signage and a trailhead. BDC estimates that an access road (which does not include a new entrance off of Maryland Route 222) would cost \$2,768,000. If required to use the road presently proposed by BDC, the engineering and construction costs would be significantly higher.

Furthermore, the northwestern proposed property boundary contains a small in-holding around a piece of infrastructure along Maryland Route 276. As a result, the property line is jutting out and irregular, which would create greater difficulty for property management.

Since the current access does not allow for adequate build out of the future park, DNR will work with BDC and SHA to create a more effective road system to allow ingress and egress to the park.

## Utilities

Currently, the site does not have potable water, reliable electricity, sewer or internet. Artesian Water provides water to the Town of Port Deposit. According to Bainbridge Development Corporation water, sewer and electricity would cost approximately \$8,000,000.

## Legal Concerns

As previously identified in the 2022 DNR Report and as discussed during Advisory Committee meetings, the initial transfer of property from USN to BDC for commercial development did not contemplate or authorize the creation of a park. Because there is no requirement that the USN agree to further remediation to a recreational standard, it is likely that USN will wish to be released from any liability associated with a recreational land use that may require additional cleanup. DNR's Assistant Attorney General are unable to advise granting any such release until additional environmental assessments and information have been obtained from MDE.

As BDC continues to develop the property, this could present legal issues. Further development would present challenges to managing a historical and recreational area in the same space as industrial areas. Current publicly announced tenants may require permits and right of ways with DNR. DNR Leadership will work with BDC to plan for and overcome these challenges.

## Preliminary Budget

A complete and detailed budget for establishing and promoting Port of Deposit State Historical Park will not be possible until a park master plan is developed. The cost of roads, utilities, and related infrastructure are difficult to project until a conceptual design is completed. However, a preliminary estimated budget associated with the development and operation of this park is provided in Appendix 2., for a total of 56,053,200.00

## Stakeholder Advisory Committee Survey

DNR sent the Stakeholder Advisory Committee a survey on September 17, 2024. The goal of the survey was to gauge the Committee's interest in different features being considered for inclusion in the State Historical Park and their overall opinion of the report. The survey was open for over a month and received seven total responses. The responses are included in Appendix 3. Survey of the Advisory Committee. A summary of the response follow:

- Question #1, Snow Hill is the most important feature.
- Question #2, hiking trails are most important.
- Question #3, historical interpretation is most important.
- Question #4, picnic areas are somewhat important.
- Question #5, sharing African-American history is most important.
- Question #6, special event spaces are somewhat important.
- Question #7, most people were satisfied with the Report to the Legislature.
- Question #8, we received some very interesting and detailed feedback in this write-in portion, which is available upon request.



**Inside Memorial Hall**

## Conclusion

Port of Deposit State Historical Park is full of potential and in time will be home to historical resources that interpret Tome School, Snow Hill Archaeological Site, and the former Naval Training Center, hiking trails, picnic areas and a scenic vistas. Eventually, the Port of Deposit State Historical Park will be a beautiful new addition to Maryland's State parks and a boon to the local community. DNR proposes a phased approach to this endeavor, beginning with the legally necessary, followed by the operationally obtainable.

The first hurdle to be cleared is negotiating a property boundary line with BDC which will provide a suitable road access to support a park. The second hurdle will be obtaining the environmental and legal assurances necessary to support future investments. The first opportunity will be the interpretation of the Snow Hill area, followed by infrastructure improvements, and restoration of buildings at the Tome School.

The goal of DNR and MPS is for all of its properties to be clean, safe, operable and user-friendly. By working with our project partners DNR can fulfill that goal, but more due diligence is needed to adequately determine the type and level of public access that will be possible during these different phases. DNR is scheduled to take ownership of the property by June 1, 2025 but the ultimate success of the Park relies upon a secure funding source to support the restoration, stabilization, staffing, remediation, signage, construction, and everything else that is necessary before the park can safely open. DNR would like to acknowledge current budget constraints and state that there are limited State resources for the capital and operational costs outlined in this report. Funding these efforts would require the State to divert funds from other priorities and needs.



**Department of Natural Resources Staff at Memorial Hall on June 17, 2024**

**SB477\_MDSierraClub\_UNF\_11Feb2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: MARIE LAPORTE

Position: UNF



P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee: Education, Energy and Environment**

**Testimony on: SB477 Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Size and Scope**

**Position: Oppose**

**Hearing Date: February 11, 2025**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes SB477 Port of Deposit State Historical Park – Size and Scope. This bill would make a significant (84%-90%) reduction in the size and scope of the park that was approved just a few years ago and would unnecessarily delay the transfer of the land to the Department of Natural Resources.

The Park was established with the enactment of the Maryland parks bill – the Great Maryland Outdoors Act (Senate Bill 541) in 2022. The Maryland Sierra Club was a strong proponent of that bill through testimony and community advocacy. This legislation would also take the historic waterfront Tome School out of the Port Deposit State Historical Park.

The Park has considerable potential for recreation and as a historic site.<sup>1</sup> It is the site of an antebellum free African American community, Snow Hill. It also includes a garden designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, who designed New York’s Central Park and are preeminent figures in American landscape architecture. In addition, it is a nesting site for Northern Map Turtles (see exhibit A), which are listed as endangered in Maryland.<sup>2</sup> There are only about 250–300 adult Map Turtles between the Pennsylvania state line and the mouth of the Susquehanna River.<sup>3</sup> Towson University incorporates the study of these turtles into its academic programs and uses the upper level of the restored Tome Gas House for research. With such a small total population, successful reproduction of the turtles is critical. It would be a huge loss to the state if this endangered species were harmed.

Due to the environmental and historical importance of the site, as well as its recreation potential, we urge maintaining the intent of the Parks bill in preserving the waterfront site as part of the Port of Deposit Park as originally envisioned.

We urge an unfavorable report on SB477.

Marie LaPorte  
Natural Places Committee  
marielaporte@verizon.net

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

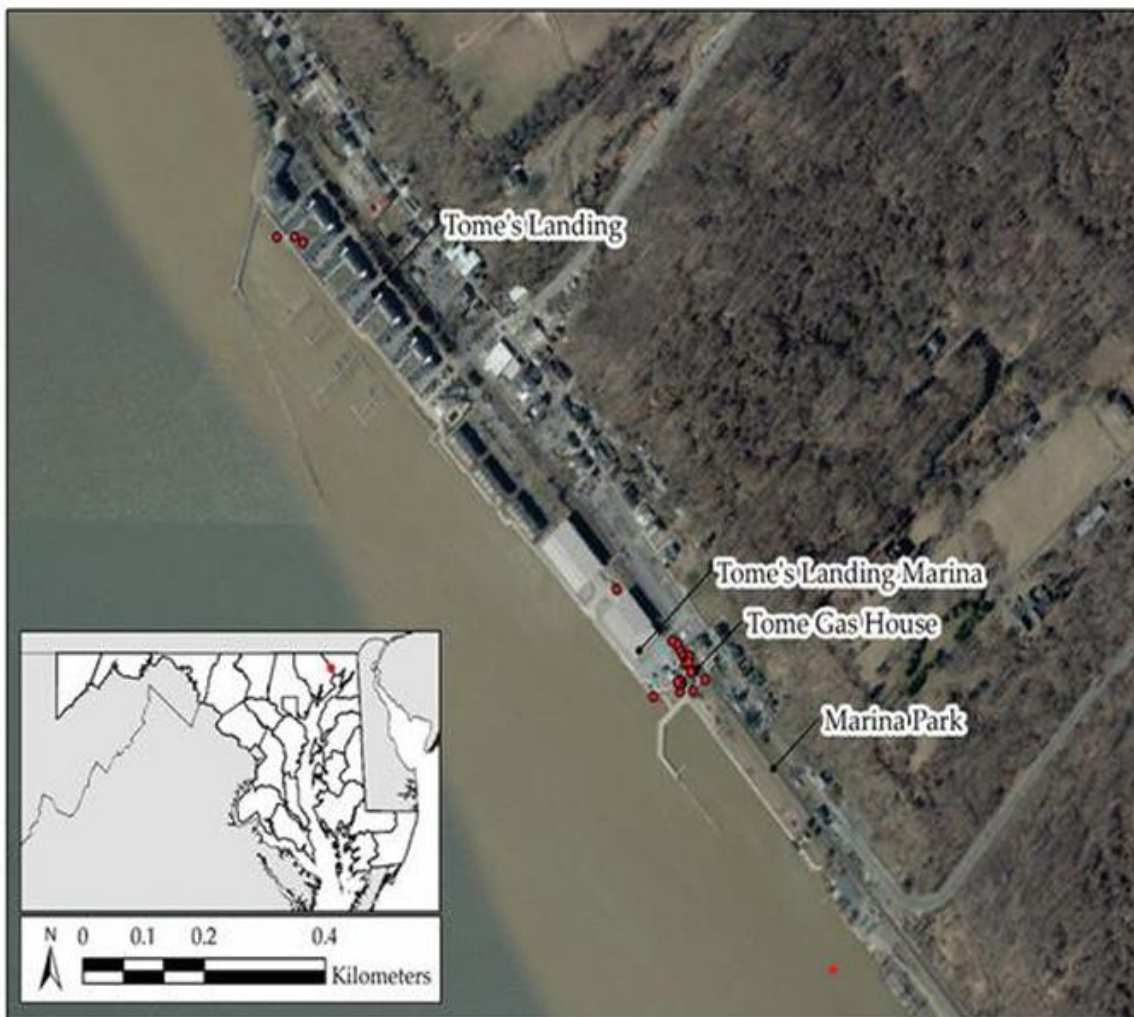
Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cecildaily.com/news/del-hornberger-explains-port-of-deposit-state-park/article\\_1f13a0be-7174-5d1f864c-8c08ed6147db.html](https://www.cecildaily.com/news/del-hornberger-explains-port-of-deposit-state-park/article_1f13a0be-7174-5d1f864c-8c08ed6147db.html)

<sup>2</sup> Maryland State Highway Administration (2016). Research Report: Effectiveness of Nest Site Restoration for the Northern Map Turtle.

<sup>3</sup> Durkin, B.P.; Richards-Dimitrie, T.M.; Anderson, K.P.; Howell, H.J.; Seigel, R.A. High Conservation Value of an Urban Population of a State-Endangered Turtle. *Diversity* 2022, 14, 354. <https://doi.org/10.3390/d14050354>

**Exhibit A**



[Aerial view of Port Deposit, MD. Red dots show active nesting areas.](#)

**SB0477\_DNR\_LOI\_EEE\_2-11-25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Wilson

Position: INFO





Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

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February 11, 2025

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill – 477 – First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Size and Scope**

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION**

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The proposed legislation would have significant impacts on the Department of Natural Resources.

It is unclear in the bill's language precisely which areas would convey to the state to comprise the new partnership park. The Snow Hill Archeological Site comprises ~8.3 acres of the 12-19 total acres as described in the bill. Considerations will need to be made for operational efficacy including having the additional acreage contiguous to the Snow Hill site; establishing a feasible point of access; if the park parcel will have contiguous boundaries; if parcel size and topography will severely limit capacity to develop roads, parking, accessibility, and areas for visitor services; and whether the park's direct adjacency to a developed industrial site may negatively impact the visitor experience. Partners should give consideration to whether the goals for the proposed 12-19 acre property are to preserve and protect it as an archeological site (whereby public use may be limited), or develop for recreation and interpretation as a historical resource (whereby public use may be expanded).

The proposed reduction in total acreage to be transferred to the state and the associated omission of the Tome School site will decrease the state's anticipated expenditures. Site remediation and razing of derelict structures to provide safe public access to that portion of the property accounts for a significant portion of the budget requested in the December 2024 report prepared for the legislature. The anticipated expenditures associated with the development of the Port of Deposit State Historical Park were detailed in the fiscal note previously submitted. The estimated budget assumes the development of a complete state park providing full visitor amenities as originally proposed, but within the modified acreage eliminating the remediation of the Tome School site and accounting for the one-year delay in transferring the property.

Regardless of proposed revisions to the property boundaries and total acreage, the proposed extension of the deadline for property transfer would give all parties additional time to work through the details of establishing the new state historical park, particularly with regard to planning and archeological efforts, staffing, and budgetary considerations.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)  
[emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov](mailto:emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov) ♦ 410-260-8426 (office) ♦ 443-223-1176 (cell)

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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The Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022 mandated that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) shall “establish the Port of Deposit State Historical Park as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.” The Act went on to require that the “Port of Deposit State Historical Park shall consist of a portion of the Bainbridge Naval Training Center Site, measuring not less than 120 acres and not more than 150 acres...including: the historic Tome School, Snow Hill Archaeological Site, and the Adjacent Wooded Conservation Area.”

In coordination with identified stakeholders, DNR prepared a report for the legislature in December 2024 to outline opportunities, challenges, and next steps toward the establishment of the Port of Deposit State Historical Park. The final report may be found [here](#).

## **BILL EXPLANATION**

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This bill aims to reduce the acreage of Port of Deposit State Historical Park (PDSHP) from the 120-150 acres identified in the original legislation to 12-19 acres, eliminate the Tome School site from the partnership park entirely, and extend the deadline for property transfer from June 1, 2025, to June 1, 2026.