

The Road

LESS TRAVELED

A lush green forest scene with a path leading through the trees. The path is on the left side, and the trees are dense and vibrant green. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Explore the Rhyme and Reason of the Agricultural Reserve

"You can't get there from here" is the lament, and yet, it's just down a country road, meandering through 93,000 acres, buffering D.C.'s suburban sprawl. There, the hush of land is interrupted—only—by pollinators droning amid a canopy of trees, water rushing, farm equipment whirring and voices conversing, all above a distillation of history that lies—still—all around. This poetry in motion has been going on for 30 years in Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve, ever since Dr. Royce Hanson thought to protect the county's agricultural heritage and nurture a landscape of meditation and renewal.

By PAMELA SCHIPPER
Photography by WALTER P. CALAHAN



Calleva Outdoor Adventure

Good Neighbors

POOLE'S GENERAL STORE

This is the oldest general store in continuous operation in the county, and its wide front porch has long been the scene of neighborly conversation. It was built by Frederick Allnutt in 1901 and run by the family until 1965, when the store was sold to Raymond Poole and became known as Poole's General Store.

Agriculture's Future

ROCKLANDS FARM

Newly opened in February of this year, Rocklands Farm is the dream of friends Greg Glenn, Shawn Eubank and Nick Wilson who want to restore the intimacy once enjoyed between producer and consumer. They urge people to "get to know your farmer" and visit with them on the historic property that includes four springs, a native garden near the river, organically grown vegetables, fresh eggs from free-range hens, pick-your-own berries, grazing Black Angus cattle and an updated barn perfect for hosting weddings and other events. It's all presided over by a



Poole's General Store

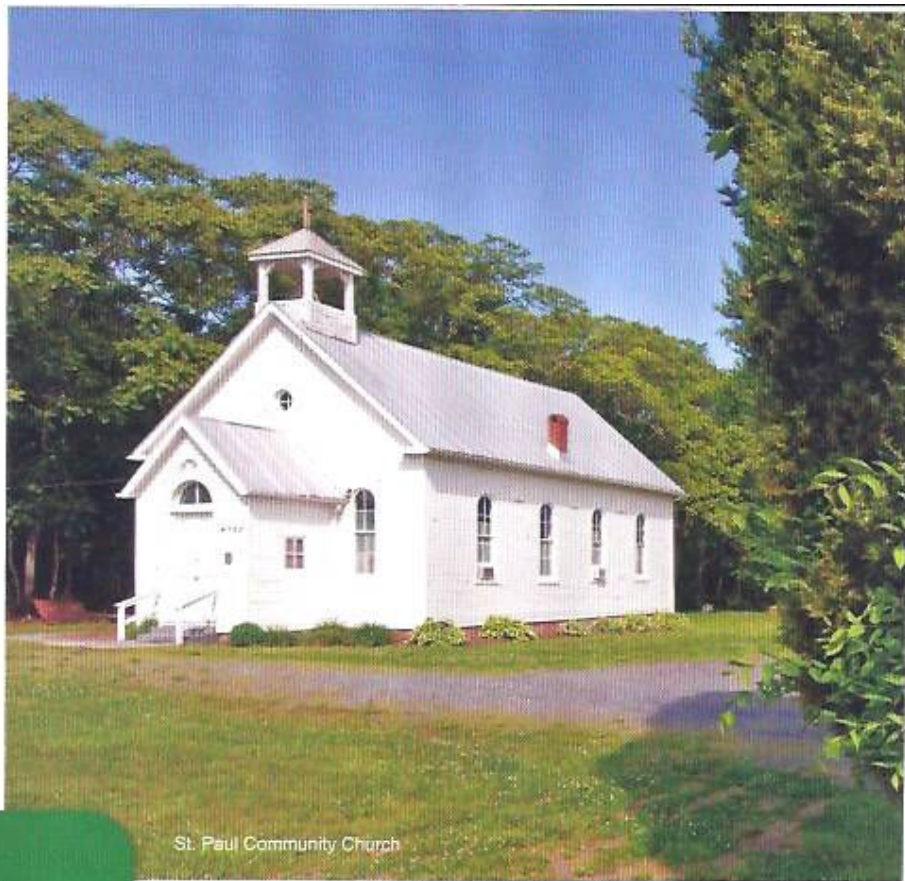
The Rhyme, or how farmland preservation jibes with benefit for county residents

circa-1870 Italianate house made from Seneca Creek sandstone. www.rocklandsfarmmd.com

Youth

CALLEVA OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Created 16 years ago from the combined vision of three brothers, Alex, Nick and Matt Markoff, Calleva is committed to outdoor education and fun in its many forms—rock climbing, hiking, kayaking, rafting, sailing, biking, horseback riding and organic farming—year-round and especially through the summer. During the school year, their programs bring children to the Calleva Farm in Dickerson from as far afield as Washington, D.C., and their "Growing Green" organic farming summer camp



St. Paul Community Church

- Promotes clean air and water
- Preserves wildlife habitats that support endangered pollinators
- Contributes tax money to the area while using proportionately fewer dollars for infrastructure than the county's more populated areas
- Distinguishes the county for having the highest percentage of farmland under agricultural land preservation easements in the nation

was such a success last year, they have expanded the program and plan to sell produce at a farmers market in the town of Poolesville. www.calleva.org

History

SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM

Built in 1865, the Seneca Schoolhouse was a true community effort. Upton Darby, whose house still stands next to Poole's General Store, contributed two acres of land, stone and wood for the one-room building. Neighbors gave cash, skills and labor, and seasoned oak for the woodstove. The school's students were drawn from area farms and the barges along the C&O Canal.

Today, the Seneca Schoolhouse Museum hosts



Seneca Schoolhouse Museum

students from all over the county, offering them a trip back in time to the late 19th century. The museum is part of Poolesville's Historic Medley District, which also includes The John Poole House and The Poolesville Museum. www.senecaschoolhouse.com

Community

SUGARLAND FOREST

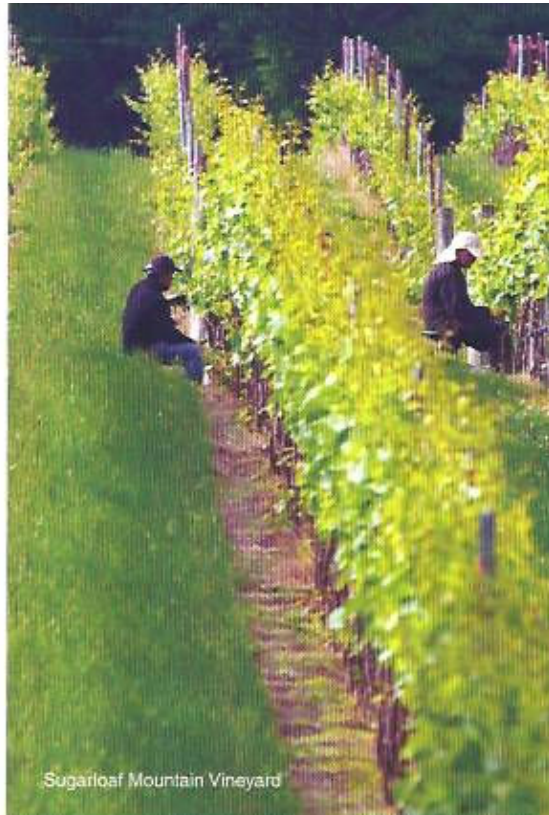
One of 17 freed slave communities in the area, Sugarland Forest is today home to the Sugarland Ethno History Project created by local historian Gwen Reese. The project's home is the St. Paul Community Church, and its goal is to preserve the history of this remarkable community. The town was established in the late 1800s by freed slaves who purchased the

land from the Pleasant family, and grew to include a church, school, post office and store. For many years, Sugarland Forest operated as an autonomous African American township.

www.sugarlandethnohistoryproject.org



Poplar Springs Animal Sanctuary



Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard

Refuge POPLAR SPRINGS ANIMAL SANCTUARY

Down a mile-long drive and around a bend live more than 200 farm animals, fortunate souls who were saved from hardship, abuse, neglect and abandonment. After rescuing the animals, Terry Cummings and her husband Dave Hoerauf rehabilitate them and give them permanent sanctuary on the 430-acre farm. Sanctuary residents include more than 44 pigs who make their home in a newly renovated barn. www.animalsanctuary.org

Artistry LANGSTAFF FARM

The shepherdess tending her flock at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain in Dickerson is Lee Langstaff. For the second time, her prize-winning sheep took first place for fleece at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival. Her 65 sheep live in a circa-1895 barn that was beautifully renovated by Dean Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald's Heavy Timber Construction.

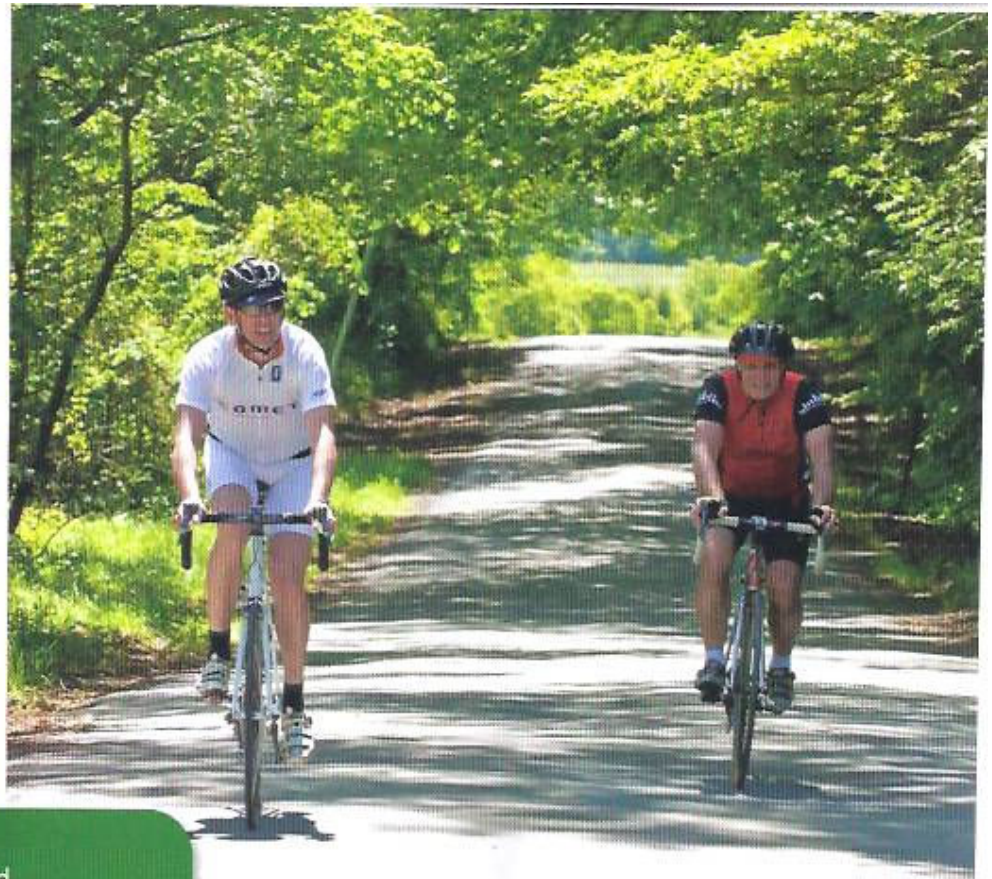
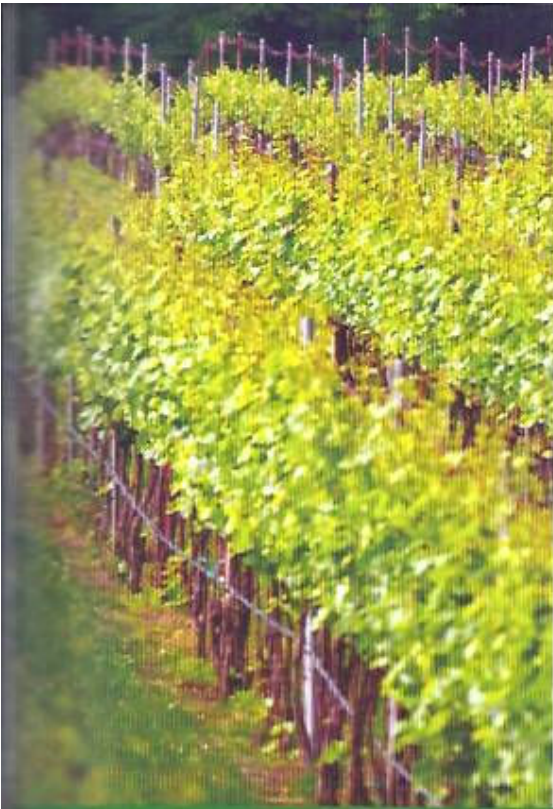


Langstaff Farm

The Reason, or why you should visit the Agricultural Reserve

Stewardship SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN VINEYARD

Co-owner Jim McKenna is proud of his vineyard, which produces award-winning, Bordeaux-style wines sold at such prestigious venues as the Kennedy Center. The vineyard was born from his family's commitment to tradition and the land. In 2002, the four children of Dan and Polly O'Donoghue broke ground on the vineyard, thus preserving the 92-acre farm that had been in their family since 1962. This summer, Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard hosts a new Saturday farmers market and is planning its first-ever music festival. www.smvwinery.com



- Local farm-to-table and pick-your-own food
- Recreation that includes biking, fishing, horseback riding, water sports, rock climbing, hiking and horseback riding
- Outdoor education and summer camps
- History sites that reveal the county's important past
- Scenic vistas and rural roads

Summer Treat CIVIL WAR DRIVING TOUR

Heritage Montgomery, a nonprofit that fosters heritage tourism throughout Montgomery County and works to preserve local historical landmarks, debuts a new driving tour this month: "Life in the War Zone, A Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the Civil War." Look for this iPod tour, full of first-person narratives of war-torn Montgomery County, at www.heritagemontgomery.org, or contact the organization for a DVD. The tour is offered in English, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese.



Resources

For more information on the Agricultural Reserve's history, ongoing preservation efforts and tourist attractions, contact

The Montgomery Countryside Alliance, Executive Director Caroline Taylor at 301-461-9831 or caroline@mocoalliance.org (www.mocoalliance.org)

Heritage Montgomery, Executive Director Peggy Erickson at 301-515-0753 or director@heritagemontgomery.org (www.heritagemontgomery.org)

The Sandy Spring Museum, Executive Director Sharon Holt at 301-774-0022 or sholt@sandyspringmuseum.org (www.sandyspringmuseum.org)