

Background Information for proposed Nanticoke and Blackbird-Millington SRA additions

Nanticoke

Much of the Nanticoke watershed is still undeveloped and large stands of intact forested wetlands exist along the river. The watershed harbors more rare plants than any other landscape on the Delmarva Peninsula, including pitcher plants, box huckleberry, spreading pogonia orchid, wild lupine, reindeer moss, Parker's pipewort, seaside alder and reversed bladderwort. The Delmarva fox squirrel is one of the rare animals that makes its home here. Rare amphibians include the carpenter frog and the eastern tiger salamander. And, the forests and shallow marshes of the Nanticoke River provide important habitat for numerous birds, including bald eagles and Peregrine falcons. Many species of neotropical songbirds, including warblers such as the American redstart, rely on the watershed's forests during their annual migrations and nesting.

Rare plants

- 150 occurrences of 71 species of rare grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees

Rare animals

- 57 occurrences of 77 species of rare invertebrates and vertebrates

Key wildlife habitats

- 350 occurrences of 13 key wildlife habitats covering 8,292 acres
(these figures are for the Nanticoke Conservation Area as defined by TNC)

Blackbird-Millington

The Blackbird-Millington Corridor is a landscape of forests, farm fields, streams and tidal marshes that spans the Delmarva Peninsula from the Delaware Bay to the Cypress Branch headwaters of the Chester River in Maryland. South of Middletown and north of Smyrna, the Corridor is home to a wonderful diversity of plants, animals and rare ecological systems. This area is recognized by The Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations as a regional conservation priority based on three factors:

1. There is a concentration of important natural communities: Mixed Hardwood Coastal Matrix Forest, Tidal Wetlands and Waters, Coastal Plain Pond Complexes (the largest concentration on the Delmarva Peninsula), and Riparian Corridors.
2. Private landowners have a history of balanced stewardship in the Corridor: the Corridor has retained much of its natural heritage and unique physical features through careful stewardship by farming families and woodlot owners and far-sighted public investment.
3. There is a solid foundation for conservation: approximately 10,000 acres in the Corridor are owned and managed by public agencies for a variety of conservation purposes. Another 10,000 acres are owned and managed privately for conservation or agricultural preservation purposes, either by conservation organizations or individual landowners.

Rare plants

- 197 occurrences of 71 species of rare grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees

Rare animals

- 44 occurrences of 20 species of rare invertebrates and vertebrates

Key wildlife habitats

- 1038 occurrences of 13 key wildlife habitats covering 7,149 acres
(these figures are for the Blackbird-Millington Conservation Corridor as defined by TNC)