

# Holly Beach Farm Site: *Observations and Considerations from the Interagency Transportation Assistance Group (TAG)*

## FINAL REPORT



Images Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, April 2023

*Prepared by the U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe National  
Transportation Systems Center for the National Park Service*

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The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), one of 18 principal departments of the Maryland State Government, is responsible for leading Maryland toward a resilient future by using data, partnerships, and an innovative spirit to improve ecological, social, and economic outcomes for all Marylanders. DNR's mission is to preserve, promote, and interpret the legacy of natural resource conservation in Maryland for the public's benefit. The DNR's work is inspired by nature and rooted in science to improve and grow stewardship for Maryland's natural resources.



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Through Chesapeake Gateways, the NPS Chesapeake Gateways Office inspires and helps people discover, experience, and connect with the natural and cultural heritage and recreational opportunities of the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers, landscapes, and communities across its watershed. NPS Chesapeake Gateways works with people and partners to conserve and steward special places important to communities, visitors, and the nation, for this and future generations. Support through this program is typically in the form of collaborative partnerships, technical assistance, and grants. NPS Chesapeake Gateways provides technical assistance through staff expertise to aid the managers and partners of Chesapeake places and programmatic partners in conserving, restoring, interpreting, and providing access to cultural, natural, and recreational resources within the watershed.



The U.S. DOT Volpe Center was established within U.S. DOT in 1970 to bring technical capability and a future-oriented outlook to pressing national transportation issues. The DOT Volpe Center provides technical expertise and develops solutions to complex transportation challenges in support of U.S. DOT, other Federal, State, and local agencies, non-profit organizations, private entities, and others. NPS Chesapeake Gateways funds an interagency agreement with the DOT Volpe Center to bring transportation and access expertise and technical assistance to aid Chesapeake places and partners.

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## Introduction

### *Project Purpose*

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Volpe Center facilitated this Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) project as part of its technical assistance to the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways office (NPS Chesapeake Gateways). The TAG was conducted in response to a request received for technical assistance from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), who at the time, held the deed and managed the approximately 300-acre Holly Beach Farm site<sup>1</sup> located in Anne Arundel County, near Annapolis, Maryland. Since then, CBF has transferred its portion of the Holly Beach Farm site to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR).

The purpose of this TAG project was to evaluate existing and potential water- and land-based access and circulation constraints and opportunities at the Holly Beach Farm site, located in Anne Arundel County, adjacent to Route 50 and the Bay Bridge. The focus of the evaluation was to consider access being primarily water-based with limited land-based access and associated parking (up to 20 spaces) for visitors with accessibility and other needs. The evaluation considers many factors, most important being avoiding adverse impacts of crowding, traffic, or neighborhood disruption. This report is intended to be a useful reference for MD DNR as the new stewards of the site.

The Holly Beach Farm site has always been considered by NPS to be a public park and Chesapeake Gateways site because in 2001, the State of Maryland received nearly \$2.5 million from NPS Chesapeake Gateways and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the purchase, conservation, and public use of the Holly Beach Farm site. Notably, this represented one of the first and largest Federal investments from NPS Chesapeake Gateways in any one location across the watershed.

This TAG report is intended only as a rapid assessment with general observations and potential actions or alternatives for the MD DNR to consider related to transportation and access to and within the Holly Beach Farm site. This TAG report does not represent nor indicate a commitment for any additional financial nor technical assistance from NPS Chesapeake Gateways or DOT Volpe Center. However, the MD DNR may apply and competitively compete under various annual NPS grants and technical assistance and other Federal grants offerings, as applicable, in the future.

While the issuance of this TAG report concludes the technical assistance from the NPS Chesapeake Gateways and DOT Volpe Center, NPS Chesapeake Gateways remains committed to collaborating with MD DNR to meet the original Federal funding intention for Holly Beach Farm to serve as a signature Chesapeake Gateways site.

### *Project Approach*

The Volpe Center facilitated this rapid TAG assessment, which included:

- Review of previous and concurrent documented authorities, requirements, and limitations, as well as studies and planning documents;
- Field investigations on April 13–14, 2023; and
- Documentation of challenges and opportunities related to transportation access and site circulation.

This TAG report documents the observations, conditions, challenges, and opportunities arising from the TAG team's analysis. It includes a list of potential actions that could benefit the Holly Beach Farm site and packages some of these actions into potential alternatives for strategically improving water- and land-based access. These

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<sup>1</sup> The current approximately 300-acre Holly Beach Farm site is a portion of the original 3,000-acre Holly Beach Farm estate and is referred to herein as the "Holly Beach Farm site".

alternatives balance issues of historic and cultural resource preservation, natural resource preservation and environmental protection, parcel and road ownership, visitor experience and safety, and maintenance logistics.

## Background and Conditions

### *Current Ownership, Management Direction, and Visitor Use*

Due to its special coastal landscape and significant cultural and historic features, the Holly Beach Farm site was saved from development by a consortium of Federal, State, local, and non-profit partners in 2001 with the title transferred to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) in 2002, a non-profit organization focused on preserving the Chesapeake Bay. In 2024 during the development of this report, CBF then transferred the site to MD DNR.

The transfer of the Holly Beach Farm site to the MD DNR presents an opportunity for the State of Maryland to restart the park and resource master planning required under the Land and Water Conservation Fund to set a path for the future for the Holly Beach Farm site, continuing to protect its fragile natural and cultural resources while allowing public access for the quiet recreational experiences the site affords. Holly Beach Farm is an important location for public access given that only about 2% of the Chesapeake Bay's shoreline is publicly accessible.

### *Existing Site Conditions and Constraints*

The Holly Beach Farm site comprises approximately 300 acres of saltwater beach shorelines and freshwater ponds, Chesapeake marshes and coves, coastal woodlands, and wide Bay views on a peninsula along the banks of Meredith Creek, Whitehall Creek and Whitehall Bay, Goose Pond, and Moss Pond (**Error! Reference source not found.**). A 9.17-acre freshwater pond is located at the southern end of the property known as Hackett Point. Holly Beach Farm Road, the main existing mostly paved (some gravel) vehicular accessway and the neighborhood community's shared driveway, runs north-south down the peninsula; several other internal mowed farm roads run throughout the property, most of which also serve as residential driveways to the various properties on-site. The peninsula is split into multiple parcels - west of Holly Beach Farm Road (and portions of the road) is mostly privately owned residential lots, while east of Holly Beach Farm Road up to Oceanic Drive (except for parcel 67 adjacent to Moss Pond, privately owned residential lot; See **Error! Reference source not found.**). East of Oceanic Drive, a portion of the property is privately owned by Northrop Grumman, a multinational aerospace and defense technology company, while the Maryland Transportation Authority and the State of Maryland own the remaining property.

General considerations and constraints for the Holly Beach Farm site include:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Agreement;
- Chesapeake Bay Gateways Agreement;
- Conservation Easement restrictions;
- Neighborhood context and proximity to Sandy Point State Park;
- Historic and cultural resource protection;
- Natural resources and habitat protection;
- Shoreline erosion; and
- High groundwater.

These considerations and constraints are described in more detail below.

#### ***Land and Water Conservation Fund Agreement***

The State of Maryland accepted \$992,000 in Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds for the Holly Beach Farm site which was documented in a 2000 LWCF grant agreement between Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service. The agreement documents the State's responsibilities for the property to be open to



the public following the scope and intent of the agreement and following LWCF guidelines. The State is to follow the administrative procedures and requirements for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) federal assistance as detailed in the LWCF manual. The LWCF manual provides the parameters and requirements for the State to engage in the administrative, financial management and stewardship responsibilities of the Holly Beach Farm site under the LWCF State Assistance Program. It is the responsibility of the State, as primary grant recipient, to comply with these requirements and all terms and conditions of the grant agreement. The State's responsibility cannot be delegated nor transferred.

### ***Chesapeake Gateways Agreement***

In addition to the LWCF grant, the State of Maryland accepted a \$1,496,000 NPS Chesapeake Gateways grant for the Holly Beach Farm site in 2001. These funds were documented in a 2001 general agreement between Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service that holds the State responsible in perpetuity for the public use, education, and enjoyment of the property. The agreement identifies that the State of Maryland is to follow the steps and procedures of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the property and that the property is to be held and managed in the public trust in perpetuity. It is the responsibility of the State, as primary grant recipient, to comply with these requirements and all terms and conditions of the grant agreement. The State's responsibility cannot be delegated nor transferred.

### ***Conservation Easement Restrictions***

As discussed earlier in this report, the Holly Beach Farm site operates under a restrictive conservation easement which aims to preserve the site's historic and cultural resources as well as its natural resources, all which attribute to the property's distinctiveness, most notably described as an "ecological jewel." The purpose of the Conservation Easement is to "preserve and protect the environment of the Property and to maintain permanently the open-space values of the Property and the dominant scenic, cultural, rural, woodland and wetland character of those portions of the Property, and to manage the Property for use in connection with environmental education, environmental demonstration projects, and other uses associated with land and water conservation."<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the State of Maryland did not submit the easement language in 2000-2001 for prior review by the National Park Service which resulted in the easement not fully reflecting the intent and requirements of the Federal funding. This is being addressed through the transfer of the property back to MD DNR.

### ***Property Transfer of Holly Beach Farm Site from CBF to MD DNR***

In October 2023, CBF issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFI) seeking a new steward with a proven ability to manage conserved lands in a way that honors the intent of the original funders and continues conservation efforts while respecting the sensitivity of the property's neighbors. In December 2023, CBF published a [press release](#) announcing its choice for MD DNR to be the next steward of the Holly Beach Farm site, pending approval of the Maryland Board of Public Works. In March 2024, the Maryland Board of Public Works approved the CBF's donation of the Holly Beach Farm site to the MD DNR.<sup>3</sup> Closing was then completed over several months. MD DNR took possession in a no-fee transfer of the nearly 300 waterfront acres, making the agency responsible for future protection, restoration, and access of the Holly Beach Farm site, which the Department will maintain as a Natural Resources Management Area. The property will be managed by the Maryland Park Service with shared resources and vision from the Department's wildlife and Bay resilience experts, all with an eye toward conservation and limited, nature-based recreation. It is anticipated that the long-term plan for the property will be developed in a public process with input from neighboring landowners and other interested groups and individuals.

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<sup>2</sup> Deed of Conservation Easement, p. 2-3, dated April 26, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> MD DNR. Maryland Accepts Donation of Holly Beach Farm – A Unique Chesapeake Bay Property in Anne Arundel County. (March 13, 2024).

### ***Neighborhood Context and Proximity to Sandy Point State Park***

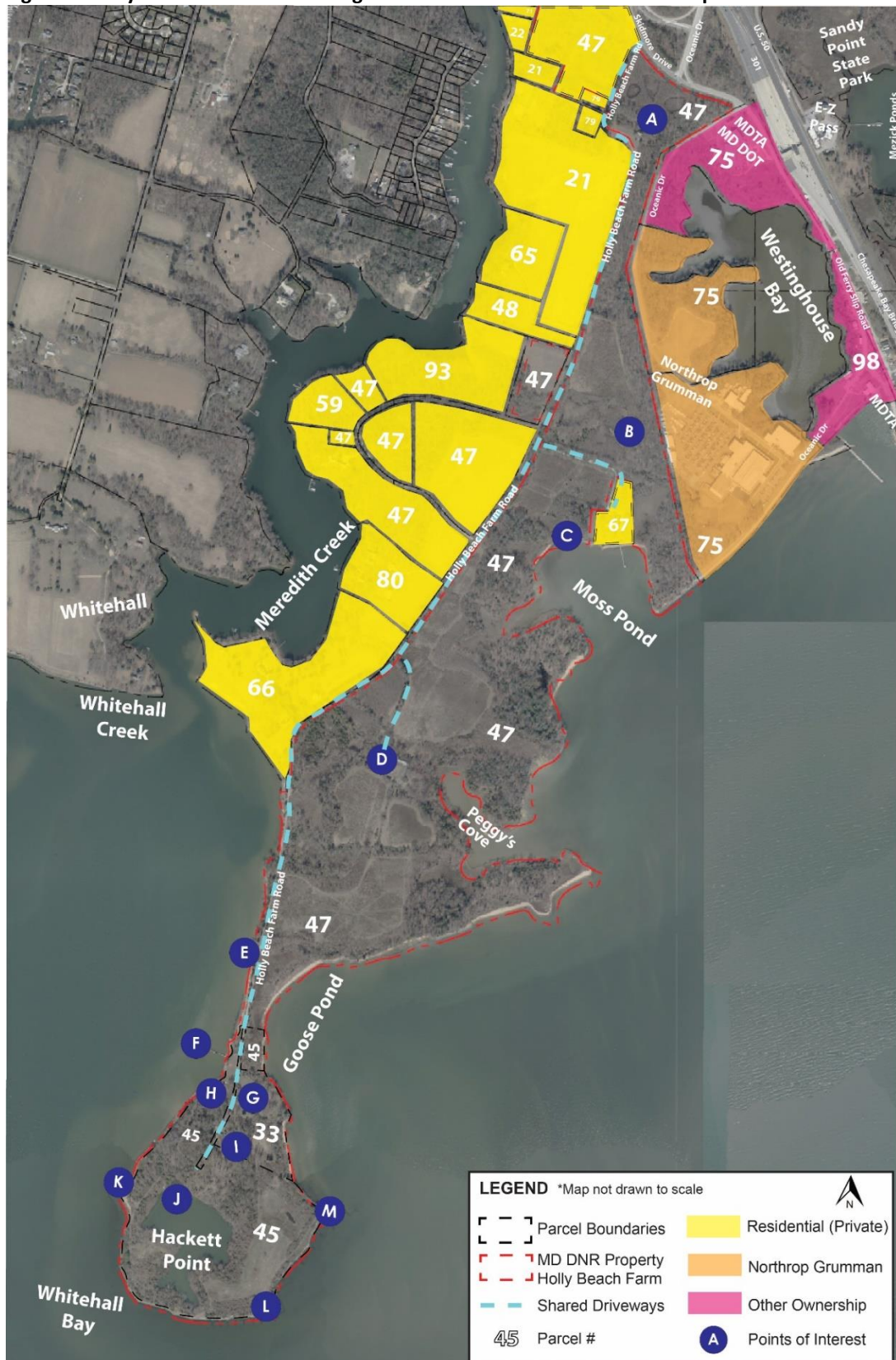
The previous steward of the site, CBF, worked hard over the years to build trust and positive relationships with the neighboring community, as there have been concerns that increased public access could cause traffic, noise, and other adverse impacts to the surrounding community. Some community members have expressed trepidation about the Holly Beach Farm site becoming “another Sandy Point State Park” despite continued reassurances to the contrary by the Holly Beach Farm site stewards since the site’s preservation in 2001.<sup>4</sup>

Sandy Point State Park (once part of the Holly Beach Farm site) is located north of the Holly Beach Farm site across Route 50. This Park is heavily visited on weekends during peak season (Memorial Day to Labor Day), causing traffic congestion on and surrounding Route 50. The traffic congestion caused by visitors to Sandy Point State Park exacerbates traffic congestion at the Bay Bridge, resulting in adverse impacts and spillover in the neighborhoods surrounding the Holly Beach Farm site as well as the Holly Beach Farm site itself. Anecdotally, the overflow onto the Holly Beach Farm site during these high visitation events is by both vehicles (up to approximately 20 vehicles) and boat traffic (up to approximately ten (10) boats). Since this visitation is prohibited, CBF was required to provide management and enforcement resources. On particularly busy weekends (approximately 16 days per summer), CBF would hire outside security for a four-hour window to help with traffic management at the site.

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<sup>4</sup> “Susan O’Brien, a spokeswoman for the Department of Natural Resources said that although the Holly Beach Farm property is yards from the popular state park, there are no intentions, if the Conservation Fund acquires the property, for a similar, parklike development. ‘We want to pretty much preserve it as is,’ she said, ‘enhancing it for additional opportunities for waterfowl, for eagles’ nests.’” (“[Group Wants to Preserve Farm Near Sandy Point](#)”, the Baltimore Sun, Stephanie Hanes July 28, 2000).

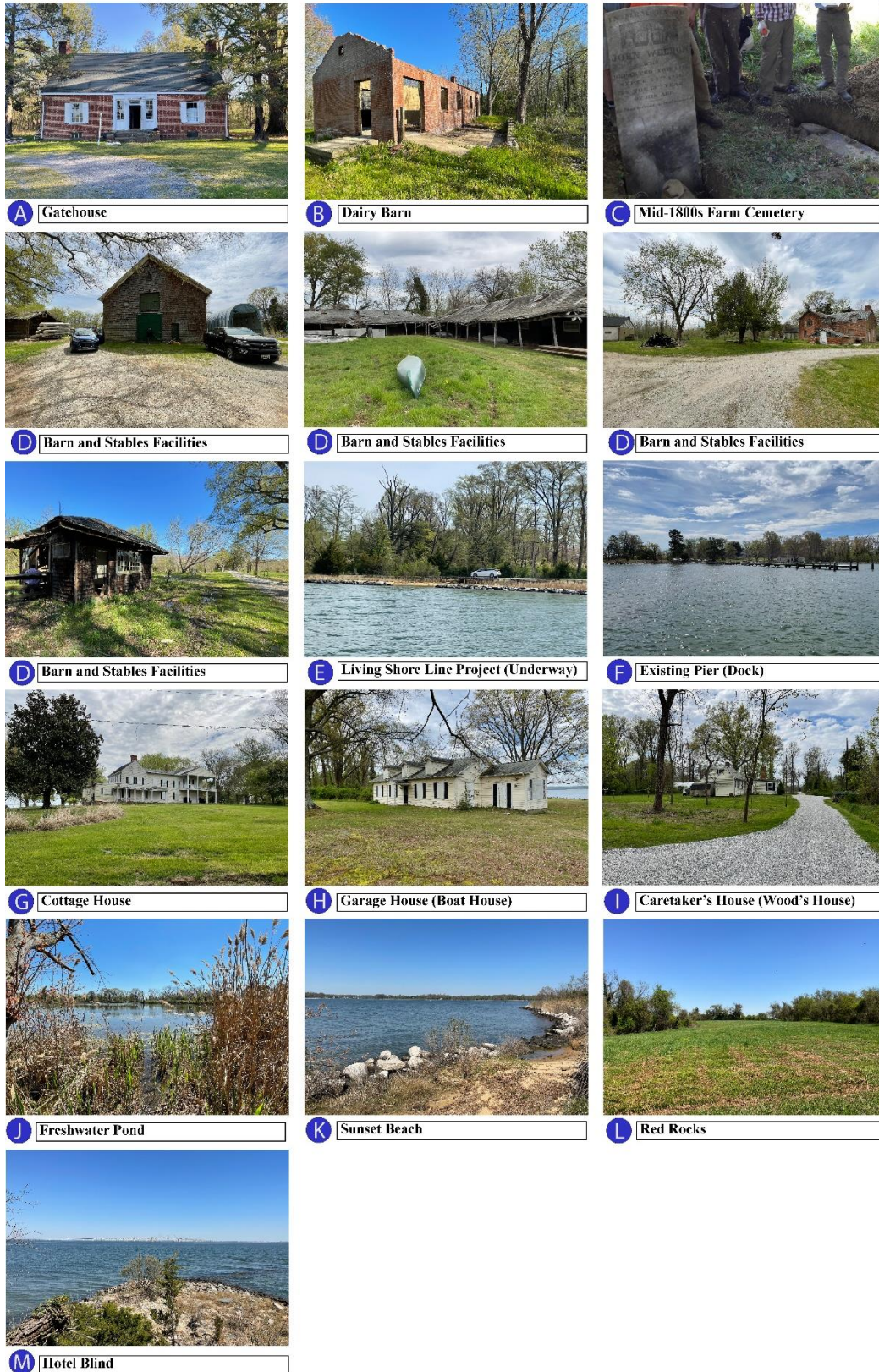
Figure 1. Holly Beach Farm Site Existing Conditions and Points of Interest Map



Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023



**Figure 2. Holly Beach Farm Site Points of Interest Images**



Note: Photos 4 – 7 are structures at the Barn and Stables Facilities (labeled Point of Interest D).

Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, April 2023.

## ***Historic and Cultural Resource Protection***

The Holly Beach Farm site has historically been maintained as horse stables, agricultural crop fields, pasture, and forest. The Holly Beach Farm site is included on Medusa, Maryland's Cultural Resource Information System as part of the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (Architectural Inventory). The site is historically significant and includes (or is adjacent to) several historic sites that are directly related to the area prior to the construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, as well as other cultural and archaeological resources including the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Pier at Whitehall Creek (ferry terminal location), the 17<sup>th</sup> Century brick kiln site (original brick to build the City of Annapolis), a mid-1800's historic cemetery, prehistoric Indian archeological sites, shoreline archeological sites, a historic thoroughbred horse farm (Revell Downs), and various 19<sup>th</sup> Century building archeological sites. A 1970s survey of the shoreline around the Holly Beach Farm site indicated that there are several inventoried archeological sites within the property: 18AN416, a prehistoric shell midden with some historical artifacts, and 18AN417, prehistoric (Early and Middle Woodland periods); 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1990s, AJ Luckenbach, Anne Arundel County Archeologist at the time, identified sites 18AN821 (prehistoric shell midden), 18AN822 (unknown period site with shell), 18AN823 (prehistoric), and 18AN824 (unknown period site with shell), while Bruce Thompson, an archeologist with the Maryland Historical Trust at the time, reported site 18AN904 (late 19<sup>th</sup> century domestic site with well).<sup>5</sup> However, these have not been explored and there is still currently unknown archaeological sensitivity across the property related to the historic cemetery, foundations, and structures.

During the April 2023 site visit to the Holly Beach Farm site, the TAG team observed several historic and cultural structures and sites, such as a mid-1800's historic cemetery, a gatehouse, a dairy barn, the barns and stables (stable house, main barn, tractor barn, two-structure maintenance facility, and a shed) associated with Revell Downs, and several out-buildings to include a Cottage House, Garage House (Boat House), and a Caretakers House (the Wood's House), all of which are proximate to an existing pier, that need further investigation to protect and preserve. For example, CBF staff noted that cemetery stones have been washed into the bay in previous years and had to be excavated and relocated further inland; the place markers are now at risk of eroding again. In addition, the team observed other structures that though in a state of disrepair, still have structural integrity that could be salvaged but will require significant restoration. Another example is the Boat House near the existing pier; though the building may not necessarily be of a practical use currently because of flooding and erosion, the footprint should be saved, as the Deed of Conservation Easement contains language related to footprint area limitations, specifically for existing structures. Funding is needed to restore the historic structures, but there is a need to balance historic listings and designations of these structures and sites with the ability for future site improvements. Documentation of these historic structures is needed to determine their significance and for architectural documentation prior to any removal or restoration. Some of the privately-owned existing structures developed on the property also continue to hold historic significance but are not identified as historic resources to be conserved and are not included within the parameters of the site considered in this report.<sup>6</sup>

## ***Natural Resources and Habitat Protection***

In addition to the historical and cultural resources, the natural resources at the Holly Beach Farm site are significant, contributing to its status as an ecological jewel, and to the property being limited to compatible agricultural uses under the Deed of Conservation Easement. The site contains agricultural crop fields, pastures, forests, wooded and emergent wetlands, ponds, vegetation, and residential lawns, as well as secondary gravel/dirt road spurs that could act as a trail system to access the site. The Holly Beach Farm site contains exquisite and fragile ecosystems with many different habitats, making it an ideal place for many species to call home. The Holly Beach Farm site is designated as a "[Resource Conservation Area \(RCA\)](#)" within [Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Critical](#)

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<sup>5</sup> A letter dated March 1, 2000, from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development stated that the significance of these sites had not been evaluated at that time. The letter was included the July 2000 Phase I: Environmental Site Assessment for Holly Beach Farm Road prepared for The Conservation Fund by Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> These structures include the Lobrot Manor (Main House – Farmstead), a grand five-part Georgian mansion completed in 1908 as part of a 3,000-acre estate and summer home for Sylvester Lobrot, Sr., and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Weedon Farmhouse (the Weedon Farmhouse is listed on the MD Inventory of Historic Properties).



[Area](#),<sup>7</sup> which requires local governments to address agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture uses through interagency coordination and the use of Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans for farms, Timber Harvest and Forest Management Plans for forestry uses, and Water-Dependent Facilities regulations for fisheries and aquaculture.<sup>8</sup>

The previous site steward, CBF, managed ongoing inventory and restoration of natural resources and habitat, and noted challenges related to invasive species and other natural resource concerns at the site (*e.g.*, invasive species and vines are strangling specimen trees). In 2022, CBF hired Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc. to complete a natural resources report, “Holly Beach Farm Natural Resources Report” published December 2022 for the purpose of characterizing existing natural resources at the Holly Beach Farm site. The report documents and describes existing environmental conditions on the property that can be used to help guide the management of natural resources.

Further, the Holly Beach Farm site is identified as a Sensitive Species Project Review Area. The combination of site’s habitats, to include its freshwater pond, vernal pool, large contiguous natural upland forest, meadow, and marsh, make the site an ideal home to several sensitive species. The site’s wetland, shoreline, and forest interior habitats serve as a resting ground for migratory birds (*e.g.*, songbirds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway), support an active Great Blue Heron rookery and a bald eagle nesting site, and attract other birds such as colonial water birds and an abundance of waterfowl.

### ***Shoreline Erosion***

The site contains about five miles of shoreline to include natural shoreline, bulkheads, groins, riprap, revetments, and a living shoreline on the west side of the property between parcels 45 and 66 (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Shoreline erosion, which is being exacerbated by climate change and sea level rise, continues to be a growing concern as much of the site is at a low elevation. Much of the bulkhead at Hacketts Point is over 21 years old (apart from a small section at the southernmost point, which was repaired in early 2023). This bulkhead / old seawall, and a few feet of land, are all that separates part of the large freshwater pond from the Bay’s saltwater. Historically, land that once existed further out in the Bay has already been engulfed by the Bay. The Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration funded the Holly Beach Conservation Living Shoreline to help protect the property and create nearly two acres of new Tidal Wetland Habitat.<sup>9</sup>

### ***High Groundwater***

The Holly Beach Farm site experiences high ground water, which can lead to problems for the structures (*e.g.*, potential for wet or damp basements and crawl spaces) and the resources (*e.g.*, potential for soil / ground to become oversaturated). Water and wastewater services (septic) are currently not in use at the site. There is less concern with providing drinking water as there is the potential to drill a new well; however, the installation of a septic system is more challenging given the high groundwater causing insufficient conditions for a proper septic system absorption system (*i.e.*, leaching field) in most locations.

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<sup>7</sup> “RCAs make up approximately 80% of the Critical Area and are characterized by natural environments or areas where resource-utilization activities are taking place. Resource-utilization activities include agriculture, forestry, fisheries activities, and aquaculture, which are considered “protective” land uses. ... Within the RCA, the retention and increase of forested areas is extremely important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Coastal Bays, and all of their tributaries,” [Development in the Critical Area \(maryland.gov\)](#), accessed April 28, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> “The site is managed under an existing Anne Arundel Soil Conservation District Farm Plan, which has recently been updated to allow for various improvements and upgrades. Improvements are congruent with the conservation easement and include improvements to roads and trail network, non-native invasive plant management, management of early seral forest stands, creation of pollinator meadows, reconstruction of vernal pools, tidal shoreline restoration and erosion control, re-decking of existing piers and other farm wide enhancements,” (page 3, “Holly Beach Farm Natural Resources Report”, Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc., December 2022).

<sup>9</sup> “Living shorelines are the result of applying erosion control measures that include a suite of techniques which can be used to minimize coastal erosion and maintain coastal process. ... These techniques are used to protect, restore, enhance or create natural shoreline habitat,” [Frequently Asked Questions Living Shorelines \(maryland.gov\)](#), accessed April 28, 2023.

## *Existing Water-Based Access*

There is one existing private wooden dock located on the Whitehall Bay side of the property, located near the cottage. During the time this TAG was drafted, the dock was used by CBF when bringing students by boat for educational programs, as well as by the property caretaker. The property does not currently have official water access for use by the public.

The existing dock is a fixed pier that is approximately 306 feet long and five feet wide. The dock has no railings or cleats for mooring. There is shallow water depth along the extents of the dock (approximately two-foot draft at the outermost point). The dock currently gets washed over ten (10) to twelve (12) times per year under certain wave conditions at high tide. A project is in the planning stages to rehabilitate the dock, which will include raising the dock nine inches, as well as replacing stringers, hardware, and deck boards on the dock. In addition, there are remnants of other existing docks (e.g., pilings) and duck blinds along the coastline of the property, as well as a sunken barge.

The south-facing and Chesapeake Bay sides of the property are subject to high fetch, and consistently experience rougher waters and higher waves. The Whitehall Bay side of the property is more sheltered. Erosion is impacting the stability of the property's shoreline and has the potential to directly impact natural resources and roads on the property, most immediately the freshwater pond at Hackett Point and the end of the driveway near the entrance gate to Hackett Point, as well as on the eastern edge of the property along the "lollipop point" at Goose Pond. A living shoreline has been added to the Meredith Creek side of the driveway. Additional coastline stabilization, through erosion control and shoring up the south-facing shoreline, is necessary to protect the shorelines against erosion to ensure the conservation, preservation, and resiliency of the property.

## *Existing Land-Based Access*

Existing land-based access to the Holly Beach Farm site is limited to Holly Beach Farm Road, which is a single, narrow, 1.5-mile shared paved and gravel driveway which runs down the peninsula and is bisected by a handful of secondary gravel/dirt road spurs, some of which serve as residential driveways. There is moderate traffic for the low-density setting, with regular use of the road by residents, delivery drivers, and contractors. Vehicles often must slow down and pull onto the grass to let larger vehicles and trucks pass in the other direction on the driveway. There is shared use of Holly Beach Farm Road before it enters the Holly Beach Farm site (at Parcel 45 on Figure 1), with the site steward (currently MD DNR) owning approximately 40%-45% (non-continuously). The previous site steward, CBF, performed management and maintenance of the shared driveway, and costs are proportionally split among CBF and the residents based on property value. Permanent road signage is minimal, only identifying "Dead End", "No Trespassing", and that no parking is allowed when you first turn onto the road. At times, portions of Holly Beach Farm Road can become flooded and experience drainage issues, particularly on the southern half of the peninsula where the road runs extremely close to the shoreline on the western edge of the property.

Holly Beach Farm Road is accessed by Skidmore Drive, a road which runs parallel to Route 50 that can be accessed via Route 50 and Whitehall Road or via Oceanic Drive, a road which runs through Route 50 north into Sandy Point State Park or south into the northeastern corner of the Holly Beach Farm peninsula. Route 50 is an often heavily congested highway that extends to Washington, D.C., about 30 miles away, to the west and to the coast via the Bay Bridge, which is approximately two miles to the east.

On the Holly Beach Farm site, there are four driveways managed by the site steward:

- Single-lane paved/gravel driveway (Holly Beach Farm Road) from the front gate to just past the Caretaker's house at the southern end of the property with a 60-foot road right-of-way;
- Single-lane gravel driveway to the Weedon Farmhouse, for which the site steward owns the road up to the gate at the Farmhouse and the private property owners maintain the driveway;
- Single-lane dirt driveway to the barn and stable complex; and



- Single circular driveway for the old Horse Farm Office building near the front gate (the Gatehouse).

The driveways are generally in good condition. There is no permanent road signage after the site's entrance gate, which identifies "Private Property" and "No Trespassing".

There are no formal parking areas on the property; however, four (4) areas on the property are used for informal parking with capacity for up to approximately 20 vehicles total. The first area is located at the Gatehouse and has capacity for three (3) to five (5) cars. One area is located adjacent to the barns and stables and has capacity for about five (5) cars. The other two areas are located at the existing dock and Cottage House and have capacity for up to five (5) vehicles each. The informal parking areas are comprised of dirt and grassy areas.

There is an existing trail network utilizing historic farm roads that traverse the site and perimeter. It is not clear that these existing trails meet a specific planned purpose for public access on the site, and they may not currently meet standards for public accessibility and ecological sensitivity. The trails provide access to the shoreline at multiple locations. The on-site trail network does not connect to off-site regional trails. Though there are a few markings for the trails posted to trees in some places from past surveys, the trail network itself is mostly unmarked and currently unmapped. At times, portions of both the trail network and the roads can become flooded and experience drainage issues. The roads are not suitable for smaller, lower-to-the-ground vehicles or vehicles without four-wheel drive.

## *Historical Ownership and Uses*

Historical ownership and uses of the site are important to consider in the evaluation of current transportation needs. For example, from a historical, cultural, and natural resource preservation perspective, it is beneficial to use historic road traces to the maximum extent possible for the creation of any future paths. Further, the purpose statements included in some of the Federal funding agreements to acquire the property identified that funding was awarded in relation to the site's historical significance, e.g., "acquisition of scenic easements and scenic/historic sites," (USDOT TEA-21), and "preservation of historic transportation resources," (NPS LWCF).

Though there is a rich history associated with the Holly Beach Farm site, including that it was once a Native American site prior to English settlement on the Broadneck Peninsula in the mid-1600s, it is most well-known as a thoroughbred horse farm (Revell Downs) with pastures, wooded areas, wetlands, a freshwater pond, and beautiful historic buildings, and historically it has been maintained as such. Anne Arundel County documentation identifies that local descendent communities include descendants of the Holly Beach Farm site.

In the early 1900s, Sylvester Labrot, Sr., an industrialist magnate from Louisiana who owned the New Orleans-based Atlantic Cresosote Company and was active in horseracing circles, purchased the 3,000-acre property, which originally included Sandy Point State Park. In 1907, Sylvester Labrot, Sr., built a grand five-part Georgian-style mansion (the Labrot Manor) designed by architect Douglas H. Thomas, Jr. at the estate to be a summer home for the Labrot family. The Labrot Manor grounds were landscaped with expansive lawns and gardens down to the Bayshore. In 1930, William H. Labrot, Sylvester Labrot, Sr.'s son and a politician, took over ownership of the property, which he named Holly Beach Farm, and created one of Maryland's most successful horse breeding farms. In the mid-1940s, William Labrot sold 685 acres of his farm to the State of Maryland to build the first bayside park located near Annapolis, Baltimore, and Washington D.C., Sandy Point State Park. Other portions of the property were sold off to private owners through the years, while the property continued to be maintained as residential with horse stables and dairy facilities, agricultural crop fields, pasture, and forest. The Labrot family sold the Manor in 1994 and six years later the property was being considered for development, which is when the State of Maryland and its partners stepped in to acquire the land and transferred ownership in 2002 to CBF as discussed earlier in this report.

From 2002 until early 2024, CBF served as the steward of the property, providing water quality protection, waterfowl habitat, and environmental education programs. CBF did not have the resources to fully realize the original vision of the Holly Beach Farm site from when it was transferred in 2002; therefore, many historic

buildings and structures have gone into disrepair and much of the site's natural environment was overtaken by invasive species. As such, in October 2022, CBF's Board of Trustees made the decision to seek a new steward for the property. In December 2023, CBF announced its intent to transfer the property to the MD DNR. In April 2024, the MD DNR officially took over as the site's new steward.

Throughout 2022 - 2023, CBF received a donation to conduct an environmental study performed by Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc., "Holly Beach Farm Natural Resources Report," produced in December 2022 for CBF. The report characterizes natural resources at the Holly Beach Farm site, and documents and describes recommended strategic invasive species management on the Holly Beach Farm site. The Holly Beach Farm Conservancy has also funded implementation of the recommendations from the study, which included expansive invasive species management. It is unknown if the State has reviewed and approved the recommended resource management objectives. These management activities have allowed for better access to locations across the site and to the Bay from the site as well as the creation of an extensive trail network; however, it is unclear whether the management activities might have had unintended impacts on archaeological or cultural resources since an inventory of these resources has not yet been undertaken.

### ***Relevant and Concurrent Planning Activities***

There are ongoing local, regional, and State planning efforts that are relevant to the challenges and opportunities identified in this study, including:

- Proposed new Chesapeake Bay Crossing near existing Bay Bridge
- Broadneck Peninsula Trail Project
- Maryland Green Infrastructure Resilience Program
- Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA) Proposal
- Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Service Feasibility Study

#### ***Proposed new Chesapeake Bay Crossing near existing Bay Bridge***

The State of Maryland is in the planning stages of developing a new Chesapeake Bay crossing to augment the existing two crossings between Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties. In addition to other benefits, the new Chesapeake Bay crossing project, which is almost directly adjacent to, and within one mile of, the Holly Beach Farm site, intends to alleviate traffic congestion on Route 50. The project may also provide better access and connectivity for other transportation modes, such as mass transit, bicycles, and pedestrian travel. Project planning and compliance activities are anticipated to extend into 2026 with design and construction to follow. The historic Holly Beach Farm site is within the Study Area for the Bay Crossing Project and impacts to the site from the proposed project will be assessed.

#### ***Broadneck Peninsula Trail Project***

The Broadneck Peninsula Trail is a proposed multi-use trail under construction in Anne Arundel County. When complete, the trail will ultimately provide a bicycling connection between Sandy Point State Park and Annapolis, with further connections via the Baltimore and Annapolis (B&A) trail. The trail is planned for the north side of US Route 50; a connection to the Holly Beach Farm site is not currently planned.

#### ***Maryland Green Infrastructure Resilience Program***

The Maryland Green Infrastructure Resilience program provides funding to help local governments perform the evaluations needed to understand their stormwater and riparian flooding risks and plan to effectively address them. CBF has applied for and received grants under this program for the Holly Beach Conservation Living Shoreline Project (Project) via the Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration. The project is within the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund "High" priority funding area. The project is explicitly designed to fulfill Maryland's Chesapeake Bay water quality goals while restoring local shorelines and increasing their resilience to climate impacts while developing a marque Living

Shoreline to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Coastline stabilization at this site will benefit the State's cultural and historical resource protection goals, such as by preserving sensitive archaeological resources, including the potential shell middens located along the eroding coastline, and could have additional benefits to the Holly Beach Farm site.

To date, living shorelines have been designed and installed along Whitehall Creek adjacent to the entrance gate on the west side of the property between parcels 45 and 66 (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Prior to MD DNR accepting the Holly Beach Farm site, CBF was working with state and local partners to seek additional funding to design and install living shorelines parallel to the existing living shorelines along Goose Pond on the east side of the property across the narrow causeway to further protect the entrance road from erosion.

### ***CNRA Proposal***

On May 15, 2024, the National Parks Subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (ENR) held a hearing on the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act (CNRA) (S. 2620) which was introduced by Senator Chris Van Hollen. In July 2023, Rep. John Sarbanes (D–MD) introduced bipartisan companion legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 5045). The current CNRA proposal includes a proposed park boundary map identifying four locations that the National Park Service (NPS) would be permitted to acquire from willing sellers or as donation or instead to partner on the management of the sites. The four proposed sites include: the Whitehall property owned by the Brandywine Foundation (directly across Meredith Creek from the Holly Beach Farm site), the William Burtis House and Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse owned by the City of Annapolis, and the portion of North Beach at Fort Monroe owned by the US Army. The public has expressed both interest and concern about the prospect of including Holly Beach Farm and other sites in the proposed CNRA. As drafted, the CNRA would utilize a collection of partnerships with states, localities, and private entities with the intent of highlighting the diverse landscape and national significance of the Chesapeake Bay. The congressional leaders of the proposal indicate a CNRA designation would deliver more federal resources to the Chesapeake region, celebrate its diverse cultural and economic history, conserve the Bay's environment, and foster public access to this national treasure while also spurring economic growth. This proposal is still pending review by congress at the time of this report.

### ***Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Service Feasibility Study***

At the time of this report, the Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Conference & Visitors Bureau Inc., doing business as Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, was in the process of performing a Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study. The Chesapeake Bay has served as a transportation and trade highway and byway for as long as records can be documented. Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bay was plied by steamships and boats connecting various cities and towns on it. A ferry system previously connected communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. Ferries were the only access to either side of the Bay in Maryland until construction of the Bay Bridge, which shifted the main form of access to vehicular transportation. It is the goal of the feasibility study to explore the feasibility and economic impact of a new passenger ferry system to key destinations in the Chesapeake Bay region. The initiative is not envisioned as a replacement for vehicular travel, but rather as a complimentary way of travel or means for regional exploration. The [findings of the Chesapeake Bay Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study](#) were released in August 2024, creating renewed interest in developing new ferry services in the area.

## **Transportation Issues and Challenges**

As part of the TAG, a core team composed of staff from the Volpe Center, NPS Chesapeake Gateways, and CBF visited the Holly Beach Farm site and discussed CBF's experiences and insights with the site. The team identified the following key access challenges at the site. The subsequent Transportation Opportunities and Next Steps sections intend to consider and address these key challenges to the extent possible.

### ***Water-Based Access Challenges***

- **Coastline stabilization:** Sections of the property's five miles of coastline are experiencing erosion at a high rate, creating unstable shorelines and adding sediment to Meredith Creek and the Chesapeake Bay. On

the south end of the property, there is a seawall as well as riprap. The seawall is functional, and some sections have been recently replaced, but has additional maintenance needs. Coastline stabilization, through erosion control and completing the deferred maintenance, is necessary to protect the shorelines against erosion to ensure the conservation, preservation, and resiliency of the property.

- **Lack of dock infrastructure for ferry service:** Current dock infrastructure at the site is not suitable for a public ferry service; however, there are opportunities to rehabilitate or build new dock infrastructure at the site for this opportunity.
- **Lack of water access opportunities for kayaks and other non-motorized watercraft:** There are not currently any formalized water access opportunities for public kayaks or other non-motorized watercraft.
- **Lack of accessible trail access from the shoreline to key locations on-site:** The site maintains a network of farm roads that offer scenic, recreational, and access to shoreline locations for water access opportunities. However, there are currently not any accessible trails for public access between the property shoreline and key locations on-site.

### *Land-Based Access Challenges*

- **Traffic congestion:** Route 50, which is a required route to access Holly Beach Farm Road and the Holly Beach Farm site by land, can be heavily congested due to traffic backed up from the Bay Bridge, and exacerbated by dense local traffic on the Broadneck Peninsula.
- **Entrance road:** The current shared driveway providing access to the Holly Beach Farm site, Holly Beach Farm Road, and the secondary driveways on the site are very narrow, often requiring vehicles to pull onto the road shoulder to let larger vehicles and trucks pass. There are several dirt roads (former farm roads) at the site, but these are mostly accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles and several roads experience flooding/drainage issues. Holly Beach Farm Road and the Holly Beach Farm site are protected through conservation easements, limiting improvements that may be made.<sup>10</sup>
- **Parking:** Parking is limited at the property and the creation of any new parking areas would need to be balanced with preserving the historic, cultural, and natural resources on-site.
- **Trails:** There are no pedestrian or bicycle trails that connect to the Holly Beach Farm site. The farm road network on the Holly Beach Farm site traverses the site and perimeter, allows access to the shoreline in multiple locations, and is a scenic and recreational asset. However, several of the farm roads experience flooding/drainage issues, are only accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles, ticks and chiggers are present in high numbers, and there is not any current signage or wayfinding.

## **Observations and Considerations**

Based on its rapid transportation assessment including field investigations and stakeholder discussions, the Holly Beach Farm site TAG provides the following observations and considerations, which are described in more detail in the sections that follow:

- General:
  - **Neighborhood Character:** Expanding public access to the Holly Beach Farm site should be done in a way that protects the character of the neighboring community, including avoiding exacerbating traffic concerns and disruption to neighborhood residents.

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<sup>10</sup> Deed of Conservation Easement, Article II. Prohibited and Restricted Activities, Section G (1) details the type of building uses and the parameters (square footage, stories, etc.); Article II.G.(2) states "reasonable means of access to all permitted uses, buildings, facilities and structures, including, without limitation, parking areas, driveways, ramps, and walkways," (pgs. 5-6).



- Context Sensitive Visitor Experience: The Holly Beach Farm site offers a counterpoint experience to neighboring Sandy Point State Park as a quiet, tranquil, minimally disturbed nature preserve and cultural landscape representative of an authentic Chesapeake experience.
- Equitable Access: More equitable public access is needed to tell the story of the beauty, fragility, and national importance of the Chesapeake Bay for the purpose of inspiring stewardship, learning, and enjoyment of the Bay as a whole.
- Water-based Access: Water-based access should be considered as the primary method of public access to support the general considerations described above.
  - Visitor Group and Vessel Size: Visitor group size will need to be established and limited to preserve and protect the on-site natural, historical, and cultural resources. The vessel should then be sized to accommodate the selected visitor group capacities as well as available water depth at the chosen dock location.
  - Ferry Dock Locations: Though the Holly Beach Farm site currently lacks dock infrastructure for a public ferry service, there are opportunities to rehabilitate or build new dock infrastructure for public water-based access on the western side of the Holly Beach Farm site.
  - Ferry Dock Specifications: Ferry dock specifications such as dock length, dredging needs, and additional dock infrastructure improvements will need to accommodate available water depth at the chosen dock location among other factors.
  - Non-Motorized Craft Access: Non-motorized craft access via kayaks and paddleboards could be provided at several protected bays, beaches, and coves on the Chesapeake Bay side of the Holly Beach Farm site.
- Land-based Access: Limited land-based access should be considered as a secondary method of public access.
  - Land-based Access Options: There are several options for providing limited land-based access to the Holly Beach Farm site while minimizing traffic impacts along the existing shared driveway (Holly Beach Farm Road).
  - Parking Improvements: On-site public parking should be limited to deter land-based access to the Holly Beach Farm site and associated traffic impacts.

## *General*

### ***Neighborhood Character***

Currently, the only land-based method of accessing the Holly Beach Farm site is by Holly Beach Farm Road, a narrow, rural, paved, shared driveway, that runs north-south along the western edge of the property. It's primarily used by residents, contractors, and delivery vehicles. The site's steward has shared ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the road with the neighbors. As already mentioned, there are concerns that increased public access could cause traffic, noise, and other adverse impacts to the surrounding community, as is already being experienced on weekends and holidays during the summer months due to visitor spill-over from Sandy Point State Park. To avoid adverse impacts to the neighborhood character and setting, limiting land-based access to the Holly Beach Farm site should be considered.

### ***Context Sensitive Visitor Experience***

Holly Beach Farm is a complementary, alternative experience to neighboring Sandy Point, as an ecological preserve with managed public access to protect its fragile natural, cultural, and historic resources. The Holly Beach Farm site is identified as both a Resource Conservation Area within Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, as well as a Sensitive Species Project Review Area, and it's limited to compatible agricultural uses under the Deed of Conservation Easement. There are also important historic and cultural resources on the site that have not been adequately investigated. Before expanding visitor experiences at the site, these resources should be sufficiently inventoried and considered. The way that visitors access and experience the site should consider the site's fragile environment.

### ***Equitable Access***

The previous site steward, CBF was providing strategic visitor access to the Holly Beach Farm site through the Foundation's programming and strategic partnerships. These opportunities have inspired stewardship, learning, and enjoyment of the Chesapeake Bay for thousands of individuals that have had the special privilege of accessing the site. Despite this tremendous value, there has not yet been a pathway for equitable public access to visit and experience the site as was originally envisioned when the site was acquired in 2001.

Across the watershed, physical access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries is very limited, with real consequences for quality of life, local economies, and long-term conservation. Increasing public access to local waterways for fishing, swimming, boating, and other activities fosters a shared sense of responsibility and increased stewardship that supports watershed restoration goals.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is rapidly urbanizing. More than eleven million people live in metropolitan areas, but few have the chance to interact with the region's waters, forests, and open lands. Despite this trend—or perhaps because of it—residents increasingly seek opportunities to connect with the outdoors. Multiple studies continue to document this high public demand for public access points, and meeting this demand will foster a feeling of shared responsibility for the region's resources among its residents.

Public access to the Holly Beach Farm site would enable local communities and visitors to encounter a notable historic Chesapeake landscape and buildings and provide the chance to learn specific stories and information pertaining to the Chesapeake themes to which the site relates. The public would find interpretive materials, exhibits or programs telling these stories and placing them in broader context, including noting other related or nearby public access sites. The caretakers of the Holly Beach Farm site would provide direct, physical public access to their resources and welcoming orientation materials to facilitate that use. Many sites have on-going conservation and restoration missions and programs and at times provide opportunities for people to engage in stewardship activities.

Providing public access to the Holly Beach Farm site will demonstrate a long-term commitment to sharing the property's significant natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources with the visiting public.

### ***Water-Based Access***

Providing strategic water-based public access to the site as the primary form of access would align well with the general observations and considerations described in the section above.

### ***Visitor Group and Vessel Size***

The visitor group size will need to be established and limited to preserve and protect the site's natural, cultural, and historic resources. Smaller visitor group sizes will allow for a more intimate visitor experience, offering a vastly different experience from that of the developed beach at Sandy Point State Park. From 2002 – 2024, CBF was bringing students over to the site via a 42-foot, 35-passenger vessel. A more detailed analysis is needed to identify

the appropriate future visitor group capacity to provide context-sensitive visitor experiences and limit adverse impacts to the site's resources.

The vessel selection will also have to be balanced with the available water depth at the chosen dock location. Shallow draft ferry vessels will be required as the available water depth at the dock locations considered below is only approximately four feet deep at 350 feet offshore. If deeper draft vessels are used, any dock will have to be extended further offshore into deeper water, or the vessel will run the risk of running aground.

### ***On-Site Ferry Dock Locations***

As described earlier in the Water-Based Access Challenges section, a major challenge to providing strategic water-based public access is that the site currently lacks dock infrastructure for a public ferry service. However, there are opportunities to rehabilitate or build new dock infrastructure at the site. [Error! Reference source not found.](#) The TAG investigated siting options for a future public ferry dock at the Holly Beach Farm site. In general, the TAG observed that the western (Whitehall Bay) side of the property would be preferred, since it is more sheltered than the southern or eastern sides. The following three locations, provided on Figure 3, are considerations for siting a future ferry dock:

1. The existing private dock location (Site #3 on Figure 3).
2. At the historical dock location between the existing dock and Sunset Beach where pilings remain in the water. This location is well aligned with the historic access and use of the site (Site #4 on Figure 3).
3. Adjacent to the entrance gate and living shoreline. This location is more sheltered than the other two locations, but the proximity to neighboring properties may be less desired (Site #2 on Figure 3).

### ***Ferry Dock Specifications***

As with the vessel size, the dock length will also have to be balanced with the available water depth at the chosen dock location. Dredging may also be required to increase available water depth. Additional dock improvements should also be considered, including installing a floating dock platform that matches the vessel freeboard for improved accessibility, and installing railings along both sides of any public-use dock for user safety.

### ***Ferry Route Options***

There is not currently a public passenger ferry system that accesses Holly Beach Farm. However, there are partner organizations that could be interested in providing this service. In addition, as described earlier in the Relevant and Concurrent Planning Activities section, Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County recently released the findings of a feasibility study exploring the feasibility and economic impact of a new passenger ferry system to key destinations in the Chesapeake Bay region. Though the feasibility study did not investigate the Holly Beach Farm site specifically, future ferry services in the area could present an opportunity for a public ferry service to the Holly Beach Farm site.

The TAG presents some observations and considerations for a potential ferry route and service to Holly Beach Farm. Currently, the water surrounding the existing dock location contains wooden dock and duck blind remnants and there is a sunken barge in the surrounding area. The dock remnants would need to be removed and the barge area would need to be cleaned up to ensure safe ferry service. Shoreline conditions on the bay side are high fetch and choppy than the Meredith Creek side, where the area is more sheltered, and conditions are calmer. As per discussions with CBF, wave conditions vary, resulting in choppy water conditions at various times throughout any given day. The more open water on the east side of the Holly Beach Farm site is much more susceptible to wind, waves, and rougher conditions. As such, there is an advantage to coming west of the Holly Beach Farm site. Given this, Meredith Creek is likely the closest and safest option for service or there is also an advantage to coming west of the Holly Beach Farm site from Annapolis due to typical wave conditions.

Table 1 summarizes potential routes for a ferry service to the Holly Beach Farm site and associated origin locations and estimated travel times. These should be considered as example options that were discussed during the field investigations and stakeholder discussions. These options have not been discussed directly with the respective owners or operators. There may also be other opportunities to partner with existing tour operators in the area to use their docking locations and vessels.

**Table 1. Holly Beach Farm Potential Passenger Ferry Route Options**

| Option No. | Location  | Site Owner  | Estimated Trip Time  | Access Location  |
|------------|---|---|--|--|
| 1          | Dock on Meredith Creek serving the Arthur Sherwood Education Center                     | Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) (2002 – 2024)<br>State of Maryland – Department of Natural Resources (Since April 2024) | 15 minutes   | Within the Arthus Sherwood Education Center located at 1750 Colbert Road, Annapolis, MD 21409 via a 1/8-mile-long shared driveway.<br><br>*The site owner has an easement in perpetuity for this access. |
| 2          | Sandy Point State Park Marina   | State of Maryland - Department of Natural Resources   | 25-30 minutes  | Within Sandy Point State Park located at 1100 East College Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21409.   |
| 3          | Annapolis City Dock   | City of Annapolis   | 25-30 minutes  | Within Annapolis's Downtown City Center located at 410 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403.   |
| 4          | Kent Island / Matapeake Park, located in Matapeake Clubhouse and Beach (across the Bay) | Queen Anne's County (operates site), Maryland – Department of Parks and Recreation (owns site)                          | 35-40 minutes<br>*could be subject to rougher wave conditions when crossing the Chesapeake Bay | Within Matapeake State Park located at 1112 Romancoke Road, Stevensville, MD 21666.  |

Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023.

### ***Non-Motorized Craft Access***

While on site, the TAG team also investigated options for non-motorized craft access areas. There are several protected bays, beaches, and coves on the Chesapeake Bay side of the property that could be used for non-motorized craft access. Goose Pond, Moss Pond, and Peggy's Cove all have shallow, sheltered areas that could be well-suited to non-motorized craft access.

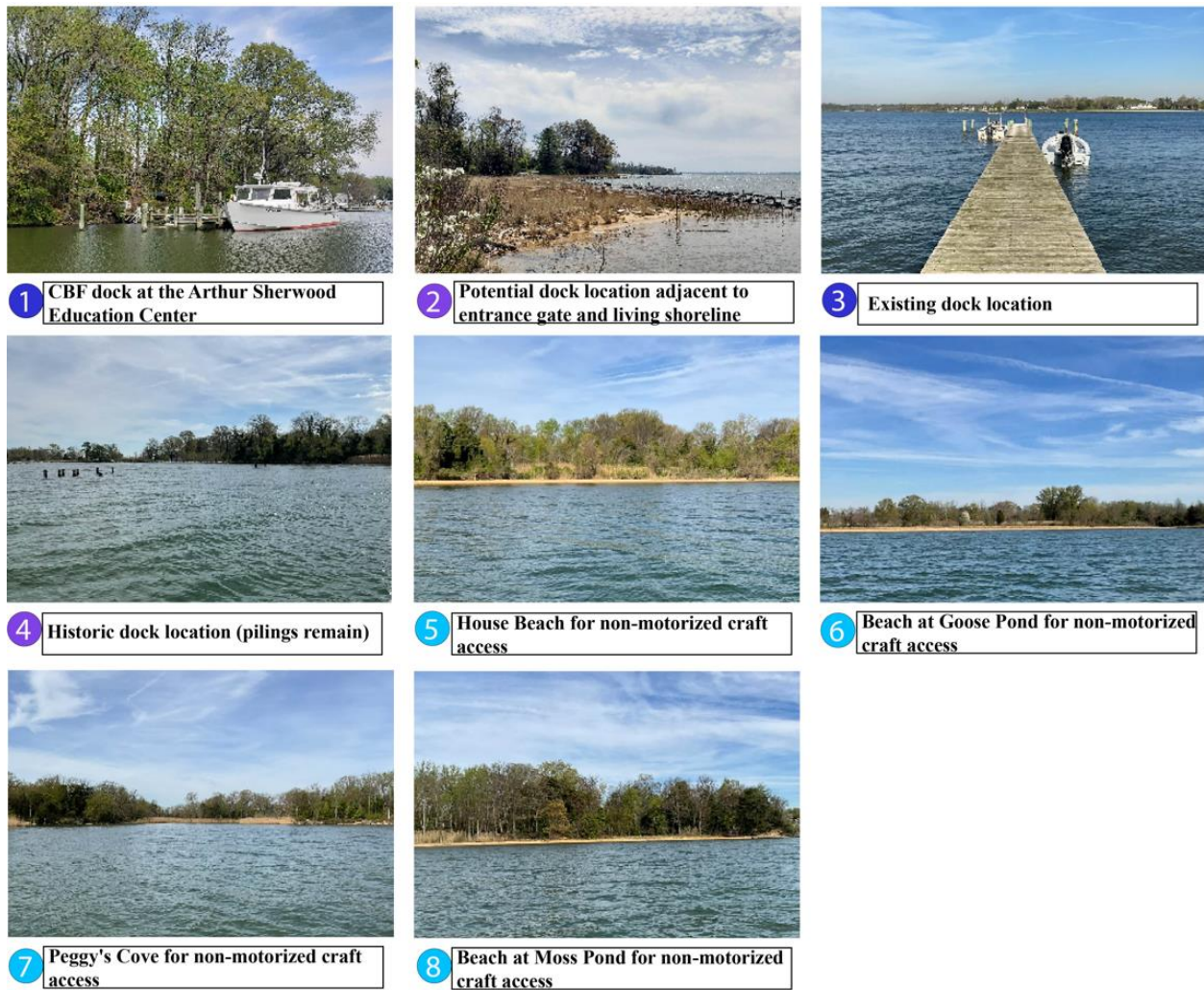


**Figure 3. Holly Beach Farm Site Water-Based Access Priority Improvement Locations**



Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023.

**Figure 4. Holly Beach Farm Site Water-Based Access Images**



Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, April 2023.

## ***Land-Based Access***

Although water-based access should be considered as the primary method, some limited land-based access accommodations are needed, such as for visitors with accessibility needs. As public access to the site is strategically considered, minimal improvements to parking, road access, and wayfinding for visitors are anticipated.

### ***Land-based Access Options***

The TAG team identified several options for providing limited land-based access to the Holly Beach Farm site for personal vehicles, bicycles/pedestrians, and/or a small tram. As mentioned earlier, land-based access should be limited, especially for personal vehicles. There may be opportunities to provide bicycle and pedestrian access, particularly if access may be provided via a separated path, avoiding traffic impacts. In addition, the Broadneck Peninsula Trail project will provide a regional trail network connection to Sandy Point State Park, less than a mile from the entrance to Holly Beach Farm Road. Visitor access using a small tram system was discussed during the TAG field investigations and stakeholder discussions as well. The system would need to be further investigated; however, a small tram could provide accessible visitor access and limit the number of personal vehicles if run as a mandatory shuttle service. The options below should be considered as example options that were discussed during

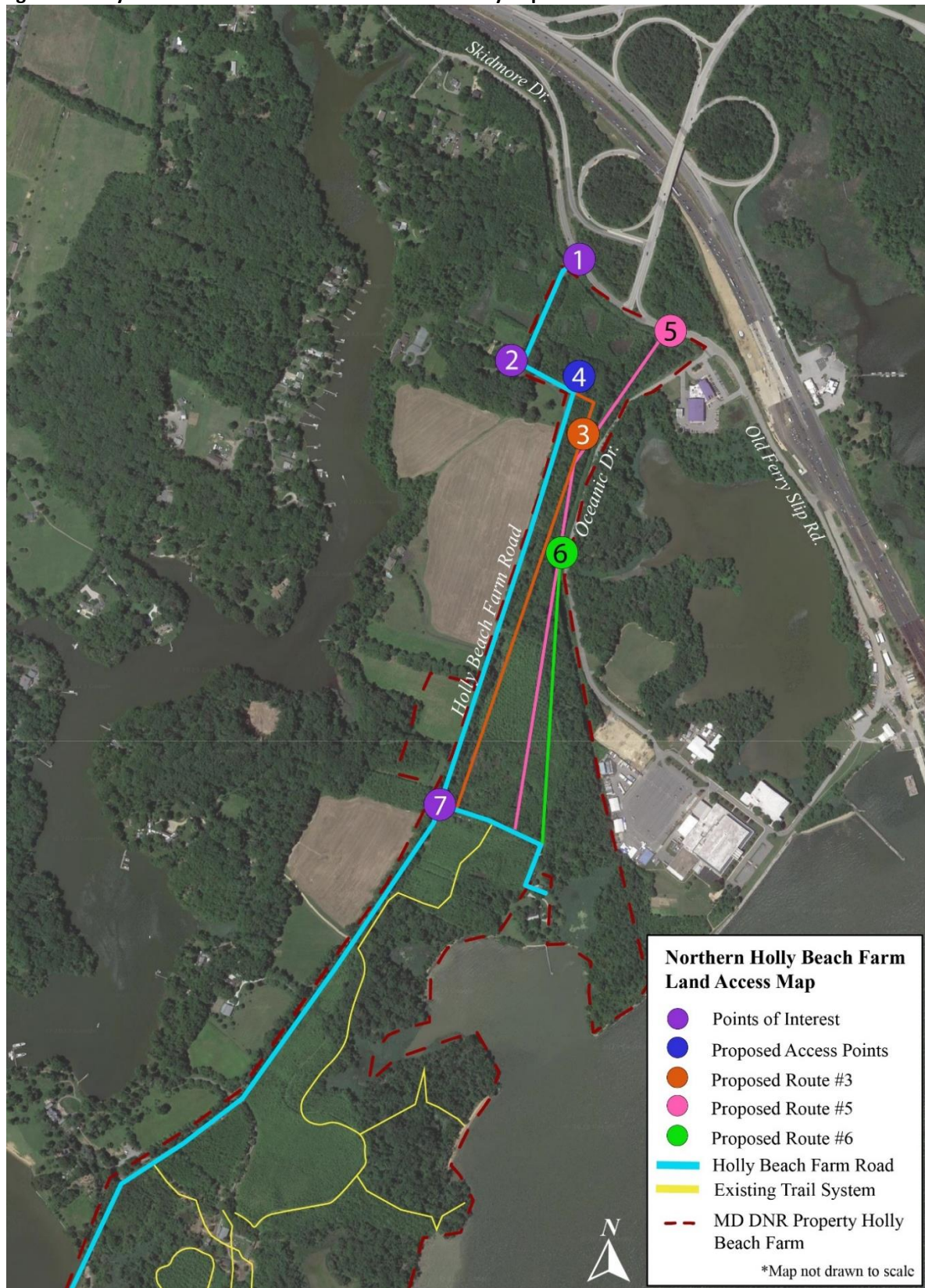


the TAG field investigations and stakeholder discussions. These options have not been discussed directly with the respective roadway owners or other potential partners and stakeholders.

The options, which are not mutually exclusive, include:

1. **Land-based Access Option 1 (existing conditions):** Access would continue to be from Skidmore Drive onto the existing shared driveway (Holly Beach Farm Road) and entrance at the Holly Beach Farm site (Sites #1 and #2 following HBF Road on Figure 5).
2. **Land-based Access Option 2 (parallel path):** Access would continue to be from Skidmore Drive onto Holly Beach Farm Road; however, visitors would then access a new permeable separated shared-use path approximate to the gate house which would parallel Holly Beach Farm Road for access to the Holly Beach Farm site. The shared-use path would be separated from Holly Beach Farm Road using a vegetated screen. The shared-use path could be designed to accommodate personal vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and small trams or it could be limited to a selection of these modes. Modes not accommodated by the shared-use path would use the existing access via Holly Beach Farm Road (Proposed Route #3 and Site #4 on Figure 5).
3. **Land-based Access Option 3 (Skidmore Drive access):** A new permeable separated shared use path would be developed from either Skidmore Drive or Old Ferry Slip Road, parallel to Holly Beach Farm Road, for visitors to access the Holly Beach Farm site directly. The shared-use path would be separated from Holly Beach Farm Road using a vegetated screen. The shared-use path could be designed to accommodate personal vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and small trams or it could be limited to a selection of these modes. Modes not accommodated by the shared-use path would use the existing access via Holly Beach Farm Road (Proposed Route #5 on Figure 5).
4. **Land-based Access Option 4 (Oceanic Drive access):** A new permeable separated shared use path would be developed from Oceanic Drive. This option would require an agreement with the owner of Oceanic Drive, which is a privately-owned road. The shared-use path would be separated from Holly Beach Farm Road using a vegetated screen. The shared-use path could be designed to accommodate personal vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and small trams or it could be limited to a selection of these modes. Modes not accommodated by the shared-use path would use the existing access via Holly Beach Farm Road (Proposed Route #6 on Figure 5).

Figure 5. Holly Beach Farm Site Land-Based Access Priority Improvement Locations – Northern Section



Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023.



**Figure 6. Holly Beach Farm Site Land-Based Access Images – Northern Section**



Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023.

Options 2 – 4 above would require crossing at the access road for the Weedon Farmhouse, which is a private residence (Site #7 on Figure 5). These options would also require formalization of a selection of the existing trail network to a shared-use path for visitors to access the site and on-site amenities. Figure 7 provides a map of the existing trail network. Since the access road for the Weedon Farmhouse and much of the existing trail network experience flooding/drainage issues at times, the shared use path improvements would need to incorporate ecologically sensitive drainage improvements. These improvements could serve as an educational opportunity for environmental sustainability.

In addition, the current network of historic farm roads and trails is mostly unmapped and unsigned. After a resource protection review of the existing trails, MD DNR may want to investigate adding trail maps and trail markers to ensure visitors using the trails stay on designated paths and avoid areas of archeological concern.



Figure 7. Holly Beach Farm Site Land-Based Access Priority Improvement Locations – Southern Section



Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023.

**Figure 8. Holly Beach Farm Site Land-Based Access Images – Southern Section**



**8** Existing Informal Parking – Barn and Stables (Parking Option 1)



**9** Existing Informal Parking – Existing Dock (Parking Option 2)



**10** Existing Informal Parking – Cottage House (Parking Option 3)

Source: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 2023.

### ***Parking Opportunities***

On-site parking could be limited to up to approximately 15 total parking spaces, which would have minimal traffic impacts on Holly Beach Farm Road. The parking areas could be formalized using permeable surfaces and would include accessible spaces for visitors with accessibility needs. There is potential to formalize existing disturbed and informal parking areas located on the Holly Beach Farm site as follows. Note that the below options are not mutually exclusive.

1. **Parking Option 1:** There is an existing informal parking area at the Barn and Stables (Site #8 on Figure 7) that could be formalized to provide approximately five (5) parking spaces. This parking location is interior to the Holly Beach Farm site providing good access via the existing trail network to other site amenities and water access locations.
2. **Parking Option 2:** There is an existing informal parking area at the Existing Dock (Site #9 on Figure 7; Site #3 on Figure 3) that could be formalized to provide approximately five (5) parking spaces. This parking location is also interior to the Holly Beach Farm site providing good access via the existing trail network to other site amenities and water access locations. Formalizing this area would also centralize land-based and water-based visitors, since water-based visitors may access the site at the existing dock location.
3. **Parking Option 3:** There is an existing informal parking area at the Cottage House (Site #10 on Figure 7) that could be formalized to provide approximately five (5) parking spaces. This parking location is also interior to the Holly Beach Farm site providing good access via the existing trail network to other site amenities and water access locations. Being adjacent to the Cottage House, which is at the top of a hill, also allows more accessibility for visitors experiencing the Cottage House location.

### **Next Steps and Overarching Needs**

Expanding public access at the Holly Beach Farm site requires additional resources and master planning. Of paramount importance at the site is the development of a master plan encompassing resource management objectives and visitor experience objectives. This access study provides a preliminary assessment of opportunities and constraints related to enhancing water-based and land-based access to the site. Yet without the benefit of a site master plan, appropriate decisions about access infrastructure and enhancements cannot be made in context of appropriate, consensus site management objectives. A comprehensive master plan for the site should be developed by the State as required by the agreements with the NPS that addresses the current state of the site and the necessary improvements or opportunities to enhance access and use of the site. Such planning will necessitate community, partner, and stakeholder engagement.

In the short term, improvements can be made to the historical and cultural resources as well as the environmental and ecological resources (e.g., shoreline erosion mitigation to control further damage to the cemetery, continuing

to pursue projects such as the Living Shoreline and removing invasive species). Further studies are needed for evaluation of structures, archaeology, and the wetlands and coastline stabilization.

### **Cultural Resources and Heritage Documentation**

Before providing infrastructure improvements that may be needed to expand public access and use of the site, documentation of the site and any historical and cultural resources is needed. One available opportunity would be to partner with the NPS Heritage Documentation Program to identify and define any eligible historic and cultural resources on the property. The Heritage Documentation Program administers the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), the Federal Government's oldest preservation program, as well as the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS). Documentation produced through the programs constitutes the nation's largest archive of historic architectural, engineering, and landscape documentation. Areas for assessment would include any sites with existing structures, such as the barn and stables facilities or the cottage house, or otherwise identified as potential parking, improved trails, docks, and other watercraft access.

### ***Phase 1 Archeological Survey***

Before providing infrastructure improvements that may be needed to expand public access and use of the site, a Phase 1 archeological survey is needed in partnership with the County to identify and define any archeological sites on the property. Areas for assessment would include any sites identified as potential parking, improved trails, docks, and other watercraft access.

### ***Coastline Stabilization***

Erosion is impacting the stability of the property's shoreline and has the potential to directly impact natural resources and the main driveway on the property. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation previously worked with partners to install a living shoreline on the Whitehall Bay side of the property near the entrance gate. Priority locations for additional stabilization of the property shoreline are along the south face of Hackett Point to ensure protection of the Fresh Water Pond, as well as on the Chesapeake Bay side of the property near the entrance gate to ensure the resiliency of the main driveway.

### ***Local Community and Public Engagement***

Purposeful local community and public engagement and consultation is needed in all future studies and planning. Community and public engagement provide the opportunity for meaningful communication between MD DNR and the community and allows for the community's ideas and concerns to be identified and incorporated into decisions that ultimately affect them. Partnership engagement could also be beneficial for future planning, specifically as it relates to the land-based alternatives, as an agreement with Northrop Grumman would need to be made for use of Oceanic Drive. MD DNR could also consider the use of the Sandy Point State Park parking area.