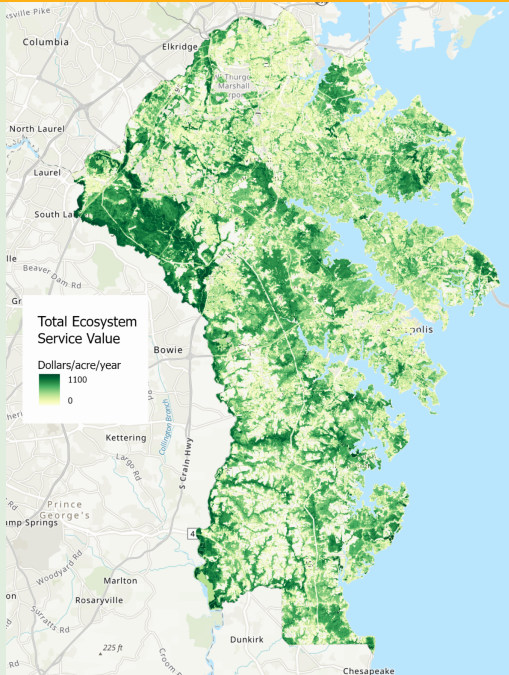




Growth Action Network

of Anne Arundel County, Inc.

P.O. Box 748 • Arnold, MD 21012



**This season
let us give
thanks for
Nature's
Services**

November 25, 2020

Thanksgiving is an appropriate time to acknowledge the value of Nature's gifts

We seldom pause to think about all of the things that our forests, wetlands, parks and open fields provide to us as gifts - free of charge yet so important to our quality of life. They purify our water, prevent flooding and runoff, moderate the climate, provide habitat for wildlife, and offer spiritual fulfillment. Often described as ecosystem services, the economic value of these benefits that support our health and well-being has received extensive study over the past several years. These studies are helpful in bringing perspective to the impact of human actions on the environment and should help inform our decisions on land use and the environment.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has extensively analyzed the value of ecosystem services throughout the state with emphasis on forests and wetlands. [Several GIS maps and reports](#) are available that describe these services throughout the state. Ecosystem contributions such as air pollution removal, carbon sequestration, ground water recharge, flood prevention, storm water mitigation, nitrogen removal, wildlife habitat, and recreation are recognized and addressed. The DNR data suggests that the total value of these services in Anne Arundel County is more than \$500 million/year. Statewide, this number is approximately \$8 billion/year.

We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the DNR estimate of **the annual value of ecosystem services in AACo is comparable to about one-third of the County's**

annual budget. Yet nowhere on our tax bill do we find a line item for ecosystem services. *Nature gives us this as a gift. She only asks that we appreciate it and care for it.*

Meet Our Member: Magothy River Association

The Magothy River Association (MRA) is a Maryland non-profit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the water quality, plants, and wildlife of the Magothy River and its watershed. Founded in 1946, the MRA represents about 30 communities and over 300 individuals within the Magothy River Watershed.

The MRA designs and executes projects that restore and protect the welfare of the river and its watershed, including the following:

- Litigation to preserve our watershed
- Water quality monitoring
- Oyster reef restoration
- Magothy River Watertrail, with associated videos of creeks and hidden gems
- Living History video project
- Monitoring of submerged aquatic vegetation
- Construction site monitoring
- Educational outreach
- Beachwood Park activities
- Volunteer diver program

The MRA is deeply concerned about the impact of development on our watershed. We have pursued litigation as well as outreach to Anne Arundel County officials to stop or limit development, especially in areas that are already heavily developed. We are particularly concerned about stormwater runoff into our waters and the resulting contamination and dead zones. MRA has recently produced a new video titled ["Environmental Impact of Development"](#).

In light of the work being done on Plan 2040, it is important that the MRA work with other county environmental groups to voice mutual concerns and make a difference.

Contact: Paul Spadaro, President president@magothyriver.org

Coming meetings and events

- Dec 7, 6 pm – County Council meeting (virtual)
 - Dec 16, 10 am – GAN Board meeting (virtual)
 - Dec 21, 6 pm – County Council meeting (virtual)
-

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