

Chapter 3: Environment – Updated 11/5/2019

In Culpeper County, the resources we use for our growing needs are plentiful but not unlimited. The degree to which we can meet these demands depends on the ability of our environment to support them. As the County evolves, preservation and conservation of our natural resources through responsible planning will be necessary

GOAL 1: PRESERVE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE COUNTY'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND PROTECT ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS FROM DEVELOPMENT.

1. Encourage preservation of forested lands and waterways that provide long-term environmental benefits to water quality, recreation, tourism, general aesthetics, and which reduces air and noise pollution.
2. Encourage the development of educational programs in the school systems to teach conservation, wise use of resources, and environmental awareness and stewardship.
3. Strongly encourage land use applications to consider having information concerning water quantity and quality, prime farm and forest land, urban and agricultural best management practices (BMPs) and storm water management.
4. Continue to monitor new existing and future mineral extraction sites. Future mineral extraction projects should consider the following: Adequate space, buffers, access roads to and from site, ways to minimize any negative impact to surrounding properties and their uses.

GOAL 2: PROTECT PRIME SOILS AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS

1. Maintain the rural character of Culpeper County.
2. Limit non-agricultural development on lands identified as prime farmland (Map 3.2) per the USDA.
3. Identify prime farmland and promote public policies designed for its preservation and general conservation.
4. Consider impact such as stormwater run-off, use of groundwater, etc. of proposed new development to adjacent, actively farmed properties.

GOAL 3: PROTECT THE QUALITY, QUANTITY AND INTEGRITY OF SURFACE AND SUBSURFACE WATER SUPPLY.

1. Maintain water needs and supplies; locate water supply sources; and assess future needs and supplies. Encourage that tests indicate clearly adequate groundwater resources as growth occurs in rural areas through ground water testing and hydro-geologic studies. Coordinate efforts with the Town of Culpeper where applicable.

2. Consistent with federal and Virginia law, maintain a public policy regarding water quality. This should include drinking water, effluent discharge, as well as underground water sources for agriculture, residential, commercial and industrial development.
3. Maintain the Watershed Management Plan and Chapter 8C (Watershed Management District) to protect and enhance the water quality conditions and provide proper protection of the Lake Pelham and Mountain Run Watershed.
4. Provide technical assistance to farmers and property owners through the SWCD to implement the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost Share Program and other strategies to minimize impacts from fertilizers, pesticides, soil erosion and other related pollutants.
5. Prevent local pollution through the installation of appropriate containment measures for storage tanks; the establishment of recycling programs for used oil; sponsoring household and farm hazardous waste cleanup days; and implementing public educational programs.

GOAL 4: ADOPT AND AMEND RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES AS NEW TECHNOLOGY EMERGES.

1. Adopt new zoning ordinances and county-wide policies as needed to regulate renewable energy infrastructure such as solar, wind, and geothermal facilities
2. Stay informed of emerging renewable energy technologies and federal regulations and policies that regarding utility scale renewable energy and how it could possible affect Culpeper County.

Development Constraints

The Development Constraints Map (Map 3.1) identifies both areas that are restricted from building and those with building limitations. This is a generalized map that approximates those areas with development constraints and is not intended to be site specific or all-inclusive. Site-specific information should be provided for any development project that encounters areas with building restrictions. The Development Constraints Map also shows the approximate limits of the 100-year floodplain.

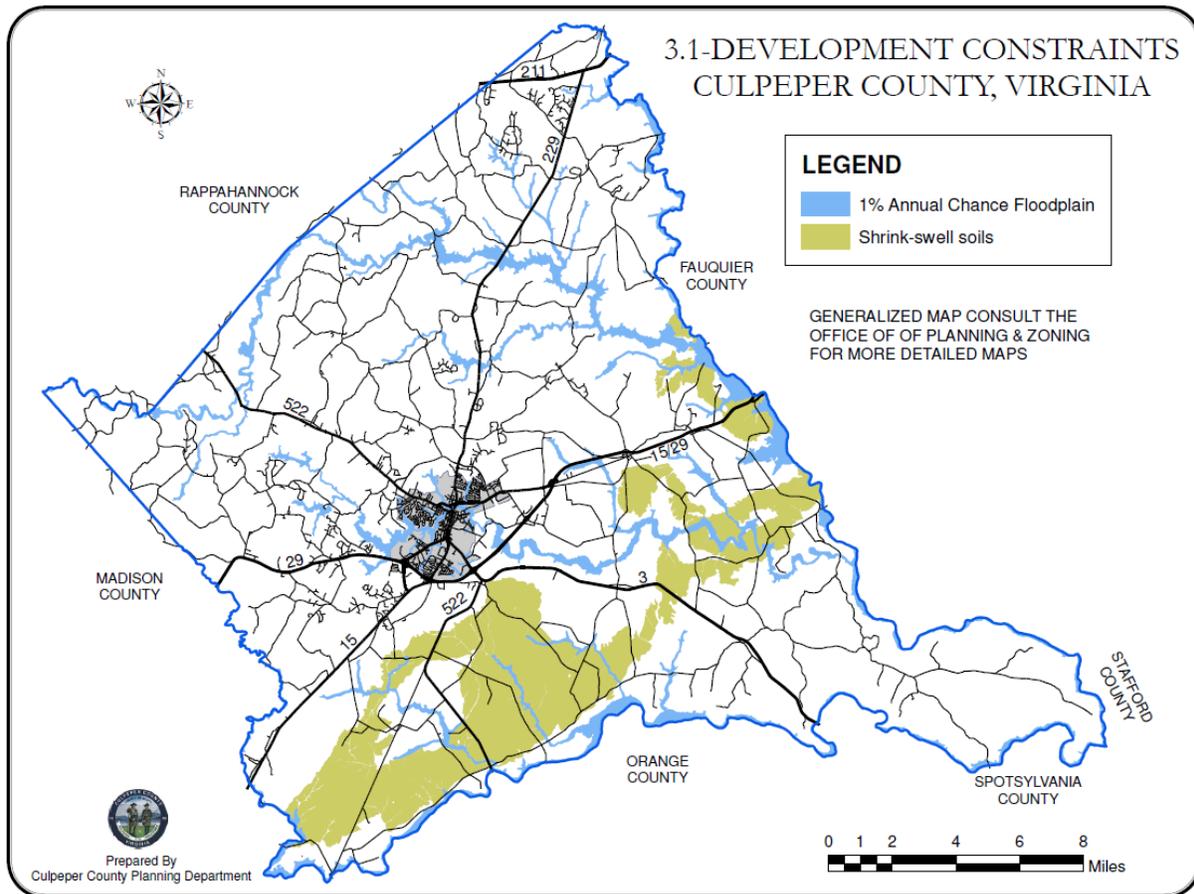
Floodplain

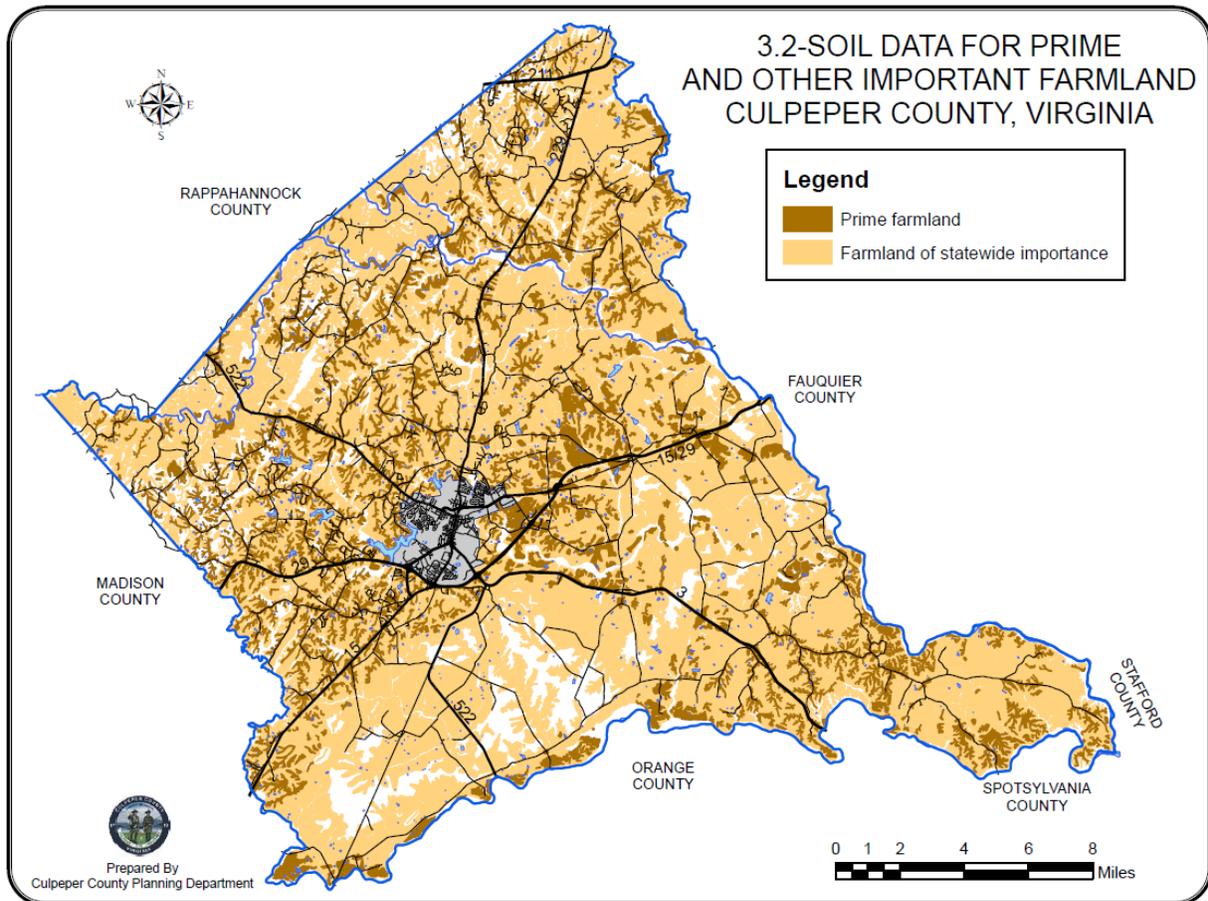
The County of Culpeper lies wholly within the Rappahannock River basin. The County is drained by three major tributaries; the Hazel River, Mountain Run, and the Rapidan River. The County is located in the non-tidal portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Approximately 2,075 acres of Culpeper County is covered by lakes, rivers and streams.

Land uses in the flood prone areas are subject to the provisions contained in the County's Floodplain Overlay District section of the County Zoning Ordinance. The County's Floodplain Overlay District

(Chapter 8A of the Zoning Ordinance) outlines permitted uses, special uses, and other regulations concerning development and structures within the special flood hazard areas or 1% annual chance floodplain areas as identified by FEMA. Culpeper County is also a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that allows for the issuance of flood insurance and disaster assistance in relevant areas.

In general, any development in the floodplain is highly discouraged and currently all structures are prohibited in the 1% annual chance floodplain areas.





For definitions and general information of Prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance please visit:
https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcseprd1338623.html

Alternate/Renewable Energy

Culpeper County acknowledges the use of alternate and renewable energy sources where appropriate Countywide. As these energy sources become more common, it may be necessary to implement appropriate regulations which address changing technology.

Appendix (Resource Material and Other Valuable Planning Tools and Information)

Maps

Agricultural/Forestal Districts and Conservation Easements →

Flood Hazards →

Mineral Extraction, Soils, and Topography →

Watershed Management District and Forest Coverage →

Additional references for Environment

Article 8E – Agricultural and Forestal Districts →

Article 8C – Watershed Management District (WMD) →

Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District →

Culpeper County Board of Supervisors Solar Policy →

2016 Master Water and Sewer Plan →

FEMA Flood Map Service Center →

Utility Scale Solar Facility Development Policy →