

You Can Help

A Community Treasure

Citizens need to join together and work with state and local governments to preserve and protect our streams. You can help:

- Learn about water pollution problems in your community;
- Encourage your neighbors to value Catoctin Creek as you do;
- Set an example as a good steward of our stream resources and help with projects such as stream cleanups, riparian tree plantings, and stream monitoring; and
- Join a local citizen watershed group.

For information on local citizen groups, go to:

www.LoudounWildlife.org and
www.LoudounWatershedWatch.org

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"Waste is not grandeur". William Mason



Boy Scout 2004 stream cleanup

Trees and more Trees

- What shades the waters and cools the stream?
- What provides food for little aquatic creatures?
- What soaks up the rainwater and filters out pollutants?
- What holds the bank soil to prevent erosion, and slows the flood waters?

The answers are trees, trees, and more trees. Wide, natural riparian buffers along Catoctin Creek preserve its scenic beauty, protect its water quality for aquatic life, and provide wildlife corridors.

*"If eyes were made for seeing,
then beauty is its own excuse for being". Emerson*



Natural tree buffer along South Fork Catoctin Creek



A scenic river – Finding and preserving the beauty

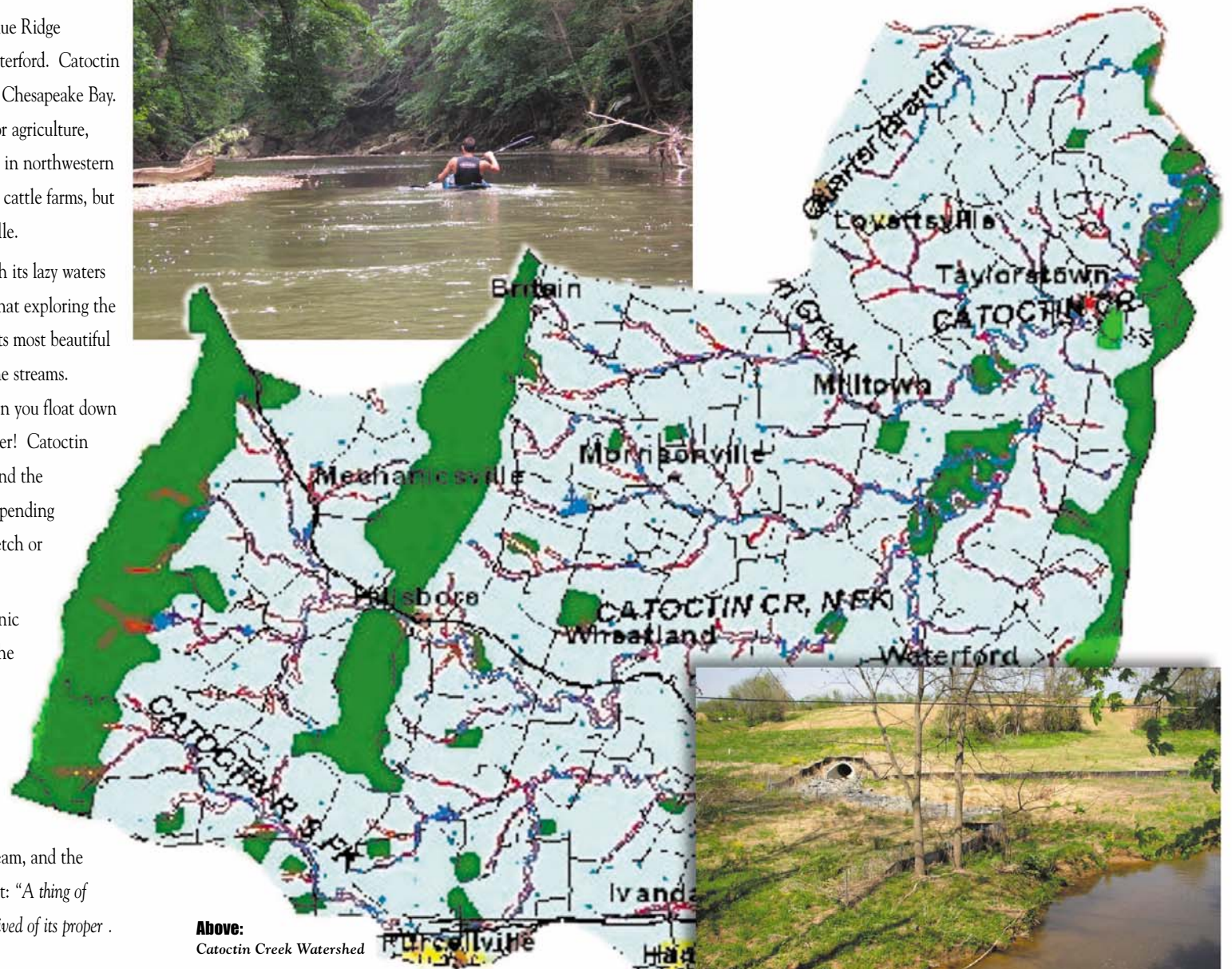
One quality everyone can appreciate about Catoctin Creek is its scenic beauty. There are many places to look. The North and South Forks of Catoctin Creek begin on the slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains and join north of the historic town of Waterford. Catoctin Creek then flows to the Potomac River and onto the Chesapeake Bay. Most land in the Catoctin Creek watershed is used for agriculture, forested lots, or homes. Drive through the watershed in northwestern Loudoun County and you will not only see horse and cattle farms, but also the picturesque towns of Hillsboro and Purcellville.

When you see Catoctin Creek on a summer's day with its lazy waters flowing down to the Potomac River, you may think that exploring the watershed would be fun. It is, but you may not find its most beautiful spots easily. There are few roads that give access to the streams. Catoctin Creek's most scenic stretches are found when you float down the stream in a canoe or kayak. Wear your life preserver! Catoctin Creek has twists and turns, fast runs through riffles, and the occasional giant log that add to its scenic beauty. Depending upon water flow, you may need to wade a shallow stretch or manoeuvre over a fallen tree.

The one quality that makes Catoctin Creek most scenic are the forested buffers along the stream. However, the beauty begins to fade when these buffers are clear for pasture and when livestock are given access to the water. Treeless buffers lead to increased stream flows that cause flooding, erode the streambanks, and fill the stream with sediments. What was once scenic, ceases to be enjoyable. The canoer finds another stream, and the bird watcher looks elsewhere. The poets have said that: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" (John Keats); unless it is "deprived of its proper . . . adjuncts" (John Ruskin).



Left: Kayaking on the mainstem of Catoctin Creek



Above: Catoctin Creek Watershed

Right: South Fork Catoctin Creek in Purcellville.

