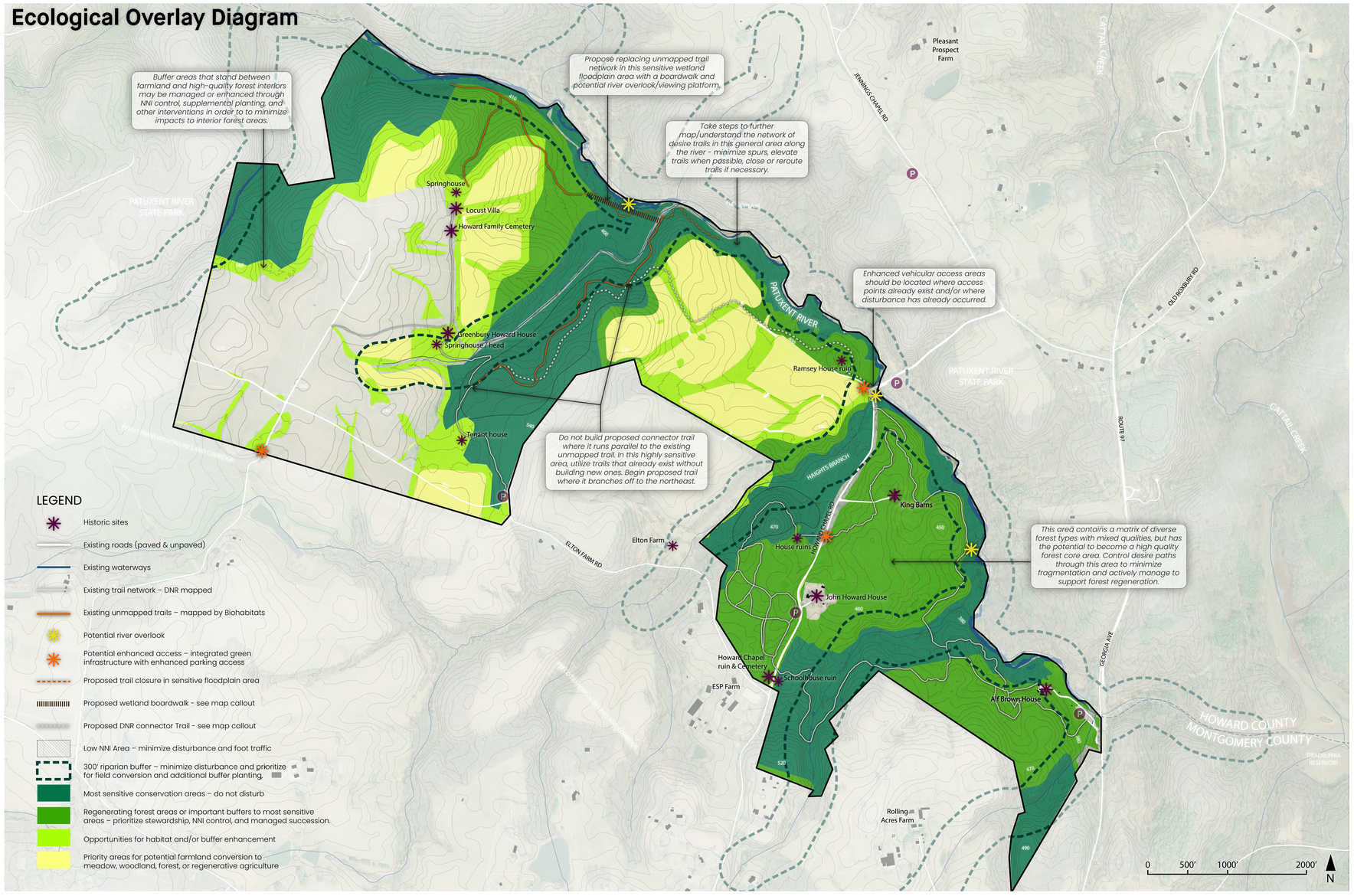
Freedman's State Park | Landscape and Ecosystems

October 2026

Ecological Overlay Diagram



Landscape Character



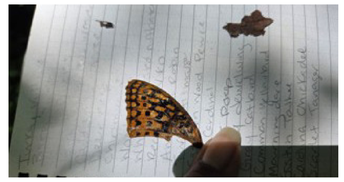




Wildlife Observations



Catbird Egg



Aphrodite Fritillary Butterfly Wing

Birds

- Turkey Vulture *(Cathartes aura)*
- Barn Swallow *(Hirundo rustica)*
- Mallard Duck *(Anas platyrhynchos)*
- Blue Jay *(Cyanocitta cristata)*
- Wood Thrush *(Hylocichla mustelina)*
- White Breasted Nuthatch *(Sitta carolinensis)*
- Red Eyed Vireo *(Vireo olivaceus)*
- American Robin *(Turdus migratorius)*
- Tufted Titmouse *(Baeolophus bicolor)*
- Eastern Wood Pewee *(Contopus virens)*
- Northern Cardinal *(Cardinalis cardinalis)*

Birds (cont.)

- Gray Catbird *(Dumetella carolinensis)*
- Common Yellowthroat *(Geothlypis trichas)*
- Mourning Dove *(Zenaida macroura)*
- Eastern Towhee *(Pipilo erythrophthalmus)*
- Carolina Chickadee *(Poecile carolinensis)*
- Scarlet Tanager *(Piranga olivacea)*
- Acadian Flycatcher *(Empidonax virescens)*

Insects and Arachnids

- Long Jawed Orb Weaver *(Tetragnathidae sp.)*
- Caddisfly Larva *(Trichoptera sp.)*

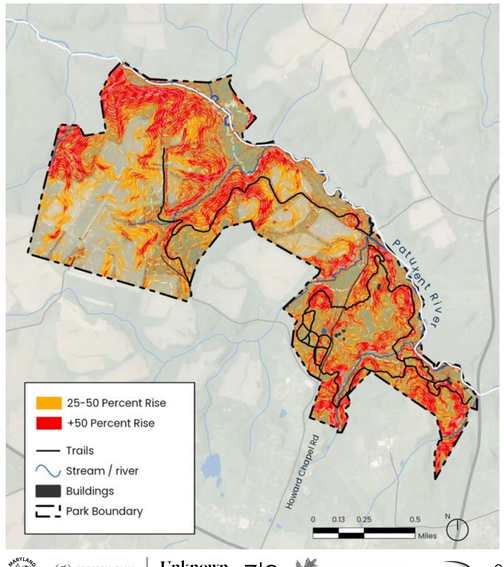
Insects and Arachnids (cont.)

- Ebony Jewelwing *(Calopteryx maculata)*
- Aphrodite Fritillary Butterfly *(Speyeria aphrodite)*
- Red Spotted Purple Butterfly *(Limenitis arthemis astyanax)*
- Eastern Tiger Swallowtail *(Papilio glaucus)*
- Common Buckeye Butterfly *(Junonia coenia)*

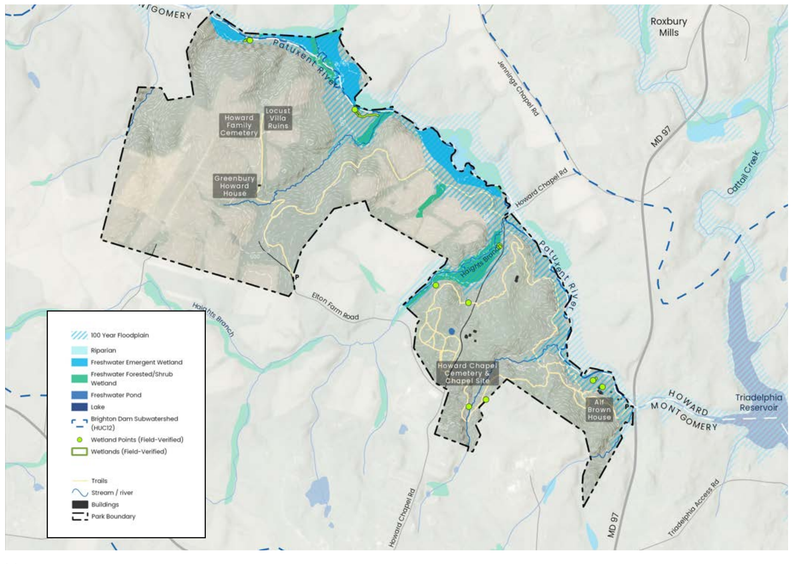
Mammals

- Chipmunk *(Tamias striatus)*
- White tailed deer *(Odocoileus virginianus)*
- Horse *(Equus caballus)*

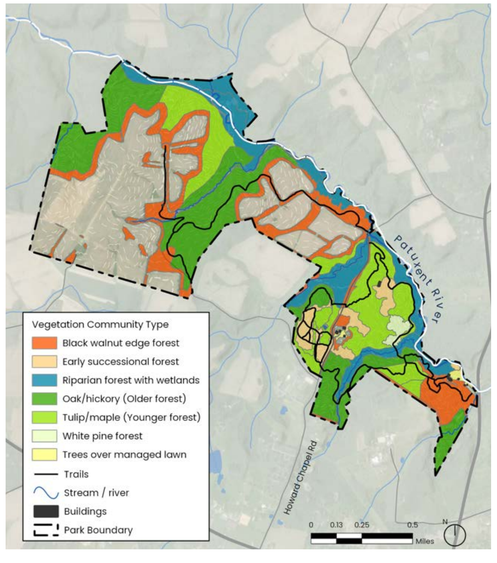
Slope Analysis



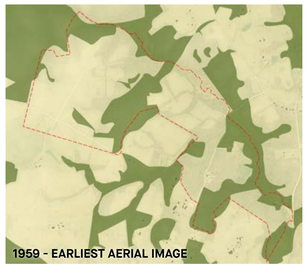
Hydrology



Plant Communities



Site Evolution


1959 - EARLIEST AERIAL IMAGE


1977 - EARLY PHASES OF THE PARK

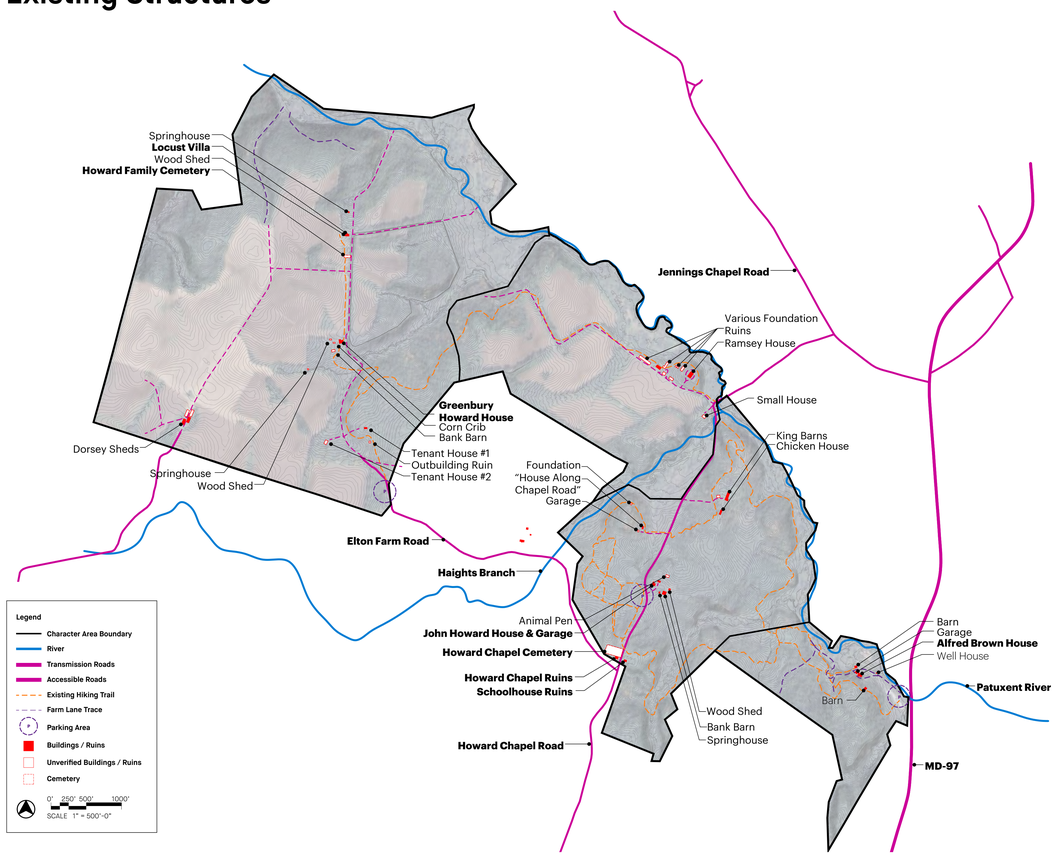

2026 - THE PARK TODAY

Maryland DNR | Preservation Maryland | Unknown Studio | Z|S | Biohabitats | WRA | Care–ful Ground

Freedman's State Park | Structures and Preservation

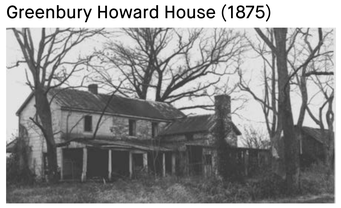
October 2026

Existing Structures

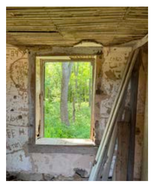


Gaither Forest Character Area

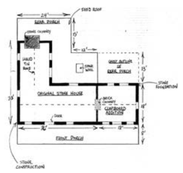
Greenbury Howard House (1875)



Northeast elevation, 1974 (MIHP)



East chamber, 2023



Property survey (MIHP)



Exterior wall reconstruction, October 2026

The Greenbury Howard House is a 2-1/2 story stone L-house with a frame extension and a stone/frame rear L, that was built in four parts.

Restoration is underway to rebuild exterior walls, reconstruct roofing, and provide new windows and doors to match the mid-19th century period of significance.

Enoch George Howard's youngest son, Greenbury Howard, lived in this house in the latter part of the 19th century.

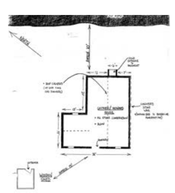
Locust Villa (1790)



West elevation, 1970 (Maryland Historic Trust Archives)



Interior view, 1974 (MIHP)



Property Survey (MIHP)



West elevation, 2025 (MIHP)

The Howard family moved into Locust Villa after Enoch George Howard purchased the late Gaither family farm. After the purchase, it was then referred to as the Home Mansion

Locust Villa, built in 1790, was a modest yet typical Gaither-built house, two stories in height with a three-bay main facade.

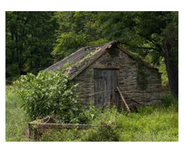
Today, the roof and all timber structural elements have completely collapsed, and large portions of the fieldstone masonry have crumbled.

John Howard House Character Area

John Howard House (1880)



South elevation, 2026



Springhouse, 2025 (MIHP)

The John Howard House was built in the 1870's by Enoch George Howard for his eldest son John Henry. In 1996, the Department of Natural Resources took over restoration of the house and significant outbuildings.

King Barns (early 1900's)



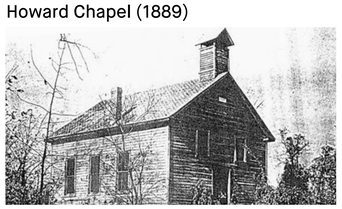
Primary barn, northwest elevation, 2025 (MIHP)



King Barns landscape, 2026

Sarah Howard King, the daughter of John Henry Howard, constructed the "King Barns" in the early 20th century. It consisted of three barns, two of which have collapsed, leaving the northernmost barn intact, but in very poor condition.

Howard Chapel (1889)



Southeast elevation, before 1970 (Montgomery Preservation)



Foundation ruins, 2023

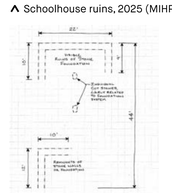
Enoch George Howard funded the construction of Howard Chapel and Howard Chapel Cemetery in 1889.

The Chapel was destroyed by fire in 1979, and in its current state is a ruin with only the fieldstone foundation and chimney fragments in place.

School House (1879)



Schoolhouse ruins, 2025 (MIHP)



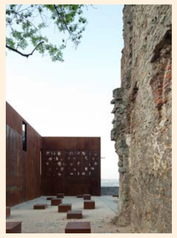
Property survey, 2025

The small school was erected in 1879 by Enoch George Howard for the children of the community. The ruins are marked by the depression of the cellar pit.

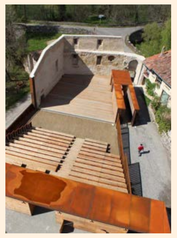
The schoolhouse was originally a one-story, twenty-two by twenty-four-foot wood structure with a shingle roof and one door.

Preservation Techniques





(Left) Cornish Ruins, Hudson Highland State Park, NY; (right) Szatamary Palace, Hungary





(Left) Toulouse Open-Air Theatre, France; (right) House in Paderne, Spain



Fort Montgomery State Park, NY

Preservation

Stabilize & leave as found

Historic ruins can be stabilized and interpreted while retaining their authenticity and sense of place. Preservation is not about rebuilding, but about protecting existing historic resources, slowing deterioration, and enabling visitors to meaningfully engage with the site's history.

Rehabilitation

Include contemporary additions

The introduction of contemporary architecture can extend the life of historic structures while respecting their original character. Rehabilitation can breathe new life into historic places by balancing preservation with modern function, creating meaningful public experiences while maintaining the integrity and legibility of the historic resource.



A TGG House, Belgium



Greenbury Howard House

Restoration

Removal & repair

Historic structures can be carefully repaired and returned to a meaningful period of significance while retaining their authentic character. Restoration can reveal and reinforce the historic character of Freedman's State Park through careful repair, selective removal of later alterations, and attention to authentic materials and craftsmanship.

Reconstruction

Rebuild & replicate

Lost or severely deteriorated structures can be re-created to communicate the form, scale, and character of a significant historic place. Reconstruction can provide a powerful interpretive tool, particularly where important structures have been lost but sufficient historical documentation remains.



Wick House, Morristown National Historical Park, NJ





(Left) Fort Frederick, Washington County, MD; (right) Rock Run Mill, Hartford County, MD



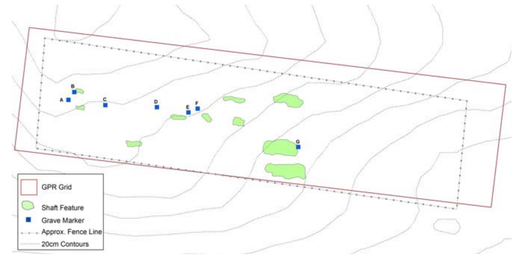


(Left) Lockkeeper's House, Washington DC; (right) Muhlenberg Brigade Huts, Valley Forge, PA

Maryland Historical Trust | Preservation Maryland | Unknown Studio | Z|S | Biohabitats | WRA | Care–ful Ground

Howard Family Cemetery







GRAVE LOCATIONS

Maryland Historical Trust, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey data, as of 2021

A. Enoch George Howard, born in Montgomery Co., Md Oct 11, 1814, died January 14, 1895

B. Harriett E., beloved wife of George Howard, born June 12, 1818, died Dec. 22. 1882

C. E.G.

D. No information present

E. W. H. Jr.

F. Greenbury W. Jr., born Oct. 18, 1883, died Mar. 10, 1915

Herbert R. Howard, born July 11, 1892, died May 15, 1943

G.

George S. Howard, 1876-1961

Laura E. Howard, 1880-1969

Hattie H. Brown, 1873-1965

Howard Chapel Cemetery



Howard Chapel Cemetery, looking Southwest, 2026



L-R: Harriet A, George E. Howard II, Lucy. (MIHP)

HOWARD CHAPEL CEMETERY

William H. Nettles, Husband of Bettie Nettles; Died October 14, 1918

Malinda J., Wife of Daniel W. Green; 1847-1924

George Howard (ancestor of Enoch George Howard) Born 1872; Died 8, 1901 - Age 29 years

Harriet A., Wife of John H. Howard (August 25, 1839 - May 6, 1923) February 9, 1843; Died July 31, 1917

Christeen Howard Vonce, December 11, 1874; Died October 9, 1931

Lucy, Wife of Evan Gaither, Died June 17, 1912 - Age 89 years, 10 months and 7 days

John B. Howard, January 19, 1885; Died May 12, 1920

Fannie Fisher, October 30, 1942 - Age 53

Mildred Simpson, Daughter of Martha Whitney; July 1912 - Age 22 Years

Robert Simpson, January 19, 1902 - Age 55 years

Arthur H. Ishwood, March 1, 1862; Died October 27, 1915

Waymon Ishwood, Son of Arthur and Anna Ishwood, September 6, 1890 - January 7, 19--

Alfred Brown House & Mill Site Character Area



North elevation with additions, 2025 (CLR)



North elevation, 1972 (CLR)



Garage/Nature Center, 2025 (CLR)



Garage, 1996 (MIHP)

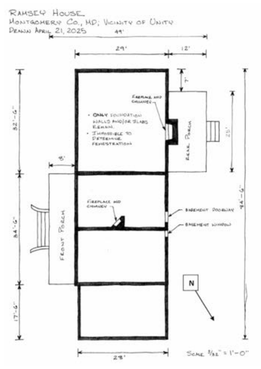
The Alfred Brown House is a 2-1/2-story primary residence was built in four phases, with the original stonework structure being built by 1865.

A two-bay western half was added at a later date, transforming the structure from three-bays to five-bays.

The third phase of construction occurred in the 1940s, and includes the gable-roofed framed west wing.

The fourth phase of construction was implemented in the 1950s, adding a concrete block kitchen at the western end and a detached, concrete block, three-car garage (now a Nature Center).

Ramsey Farm Character Area



Main Ramsey house, 2025 (MIHP)



(Left) Porch foundation wall; (right) West foundation door, 2025 (MIHP)

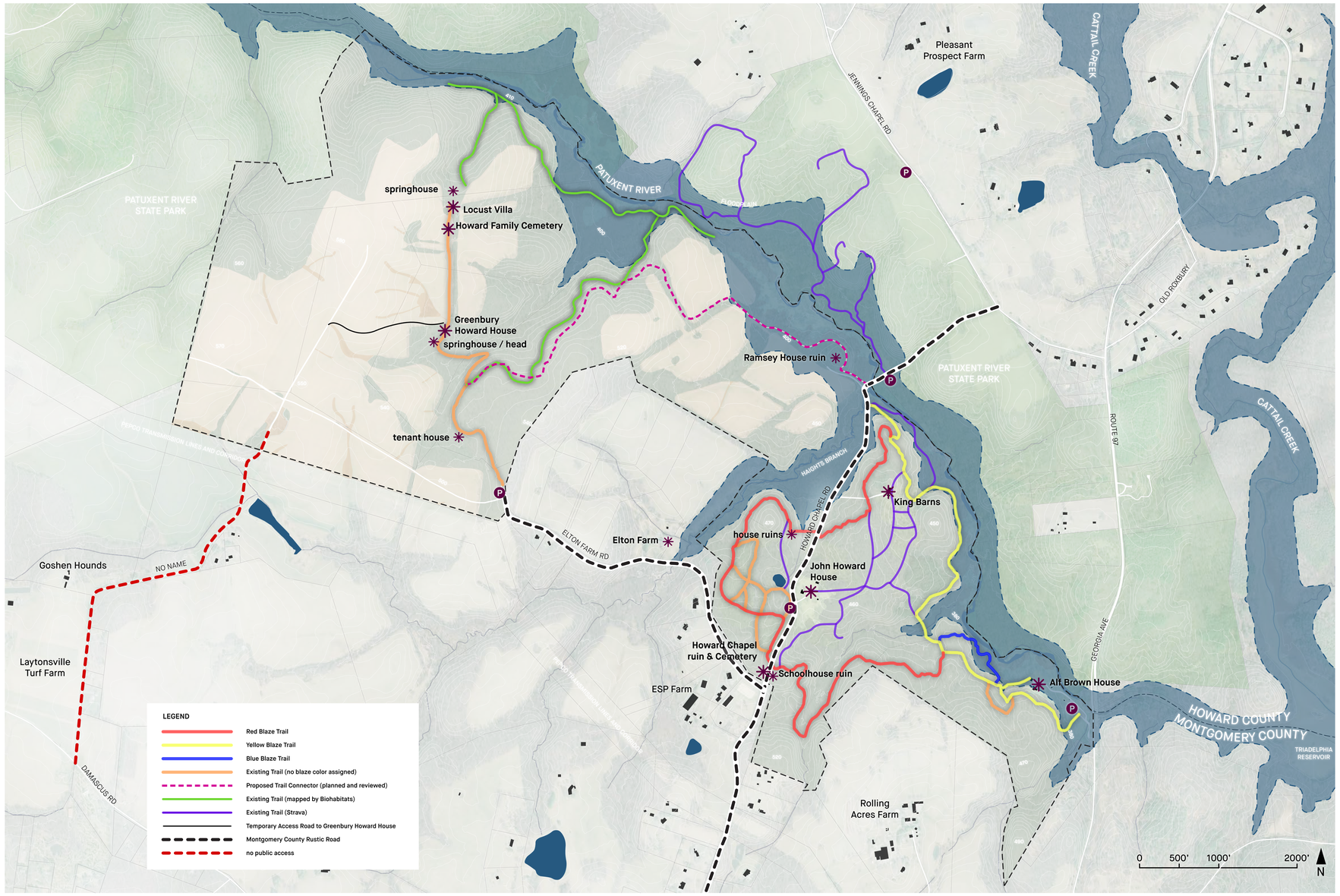
Outbuilding foundation piers, 2025 (CLR)

The Ramsey Farm Character Area encompasses the former 1800's farm known as "Rich and Level".

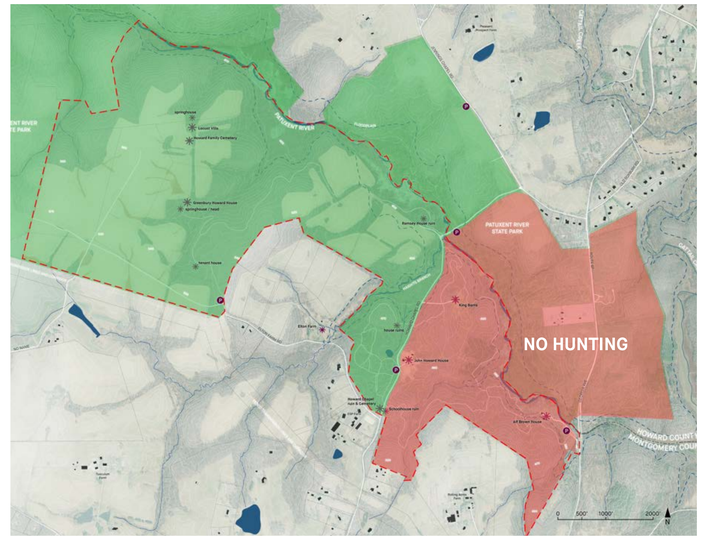
Prior to being abandoned, the farmstead included a main house and several outbuildings. Due to dense overgrowth, only two buildings are visible today.

Freedman's State Park | Access and Circulation

October 2026

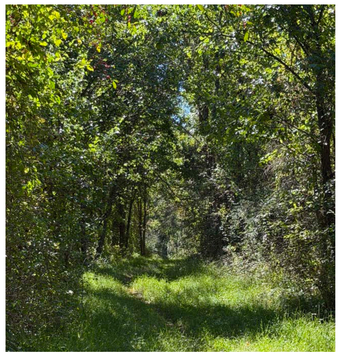


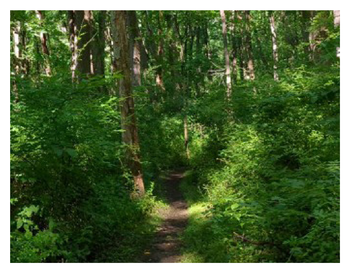
Current Hunting Access



Existing Trails





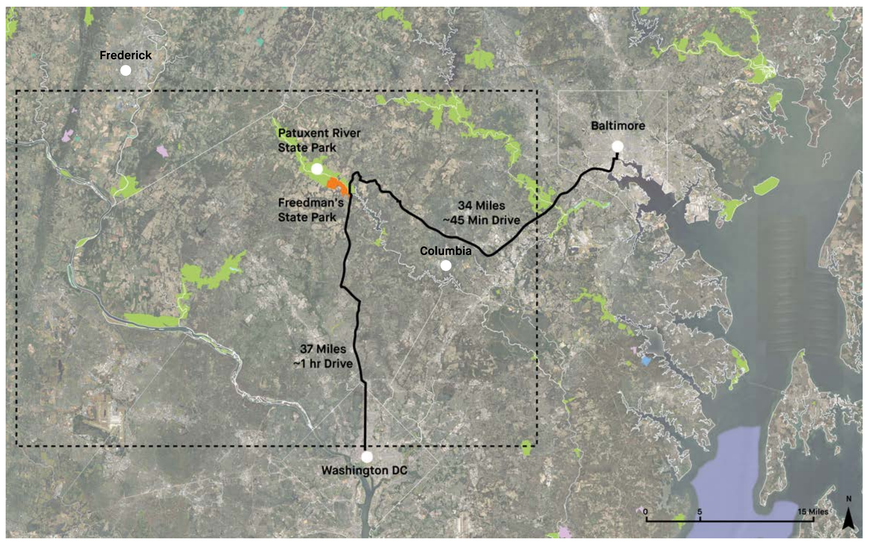


^ DNR Mapped Trail



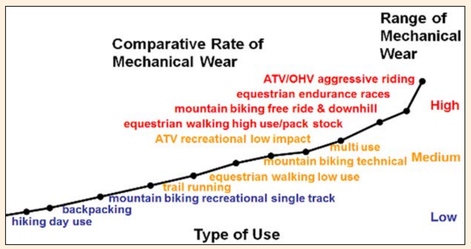
^ (Top) Historic farm road; (bottom) Unmapped trail

Regional Reach



PRESERVATION MARYLAND | Unknown Studio | ZIS | Biohabitats | WRA | Care–ful Ground

Trail Typologies



Source: California State Parks Trails Handbook

Type 1: Park Road

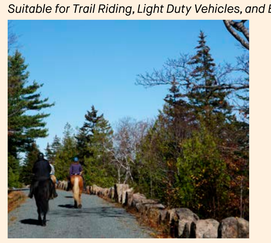
Suitable for Public Vehicles





Type 2: Carriage Road

Suitable for Trail Riding, Light Duty Vehicles, and Bicycles





Type 3: Inclusive Trail

Suitable for Pedestrians and Mobility Devices

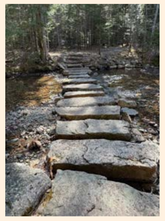




Type 4: Lifted for Sensitive Resources

Suitable for Pedestrians







Type 5: Farm Track

Suitable for Farm Vehicles and Equestrian



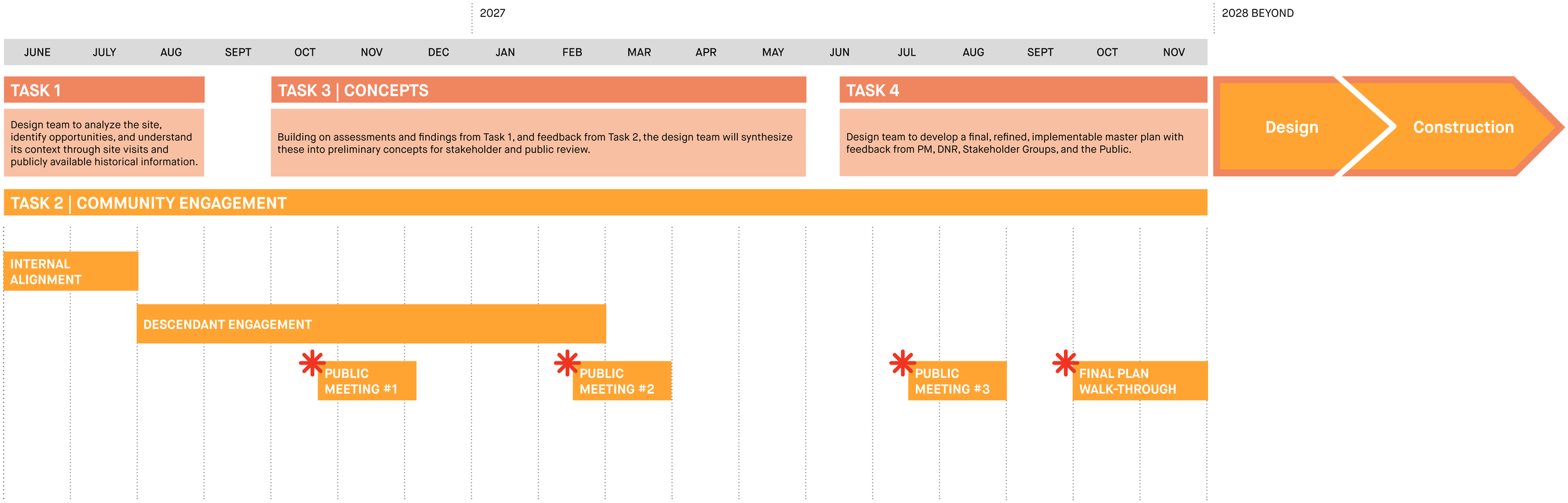


Freedman's State Park | Project Schedule

October 2026

What is a Master Plan?

A master plan is a long-term roadmap that guides how a place will steward its physical campus over time. It outlines land uses, areas of conservation and preservation, infrastructure, circulation (roads, trails, parking), workplace programs (office space and back of house), recreational amenities and destinations, and a step-by-step phasing plan to guide implementation of projects.



How can I participate?
Sign up to Preservation Maryland's newsletter for announcements for future public meetings and workshops via:
www.preservationmaryland.org

How can I stay updated on the project?
You'll also find periodic updates on the project via the Freedman's State Park project webpage hosted on the Preservation Maryland website.

Questions or Comments?
Please reach out to: **Gregg Bortz** at Maryland DNR
Email: Gregg.bortz1@maryland.gov

Preservation Maryland Newsletter

Freedman's State Park Webpage

Preservation Maryland | Unknown Studio | ZIS | Biohabitats | WRA | Care-ful Ground

Freedman's State Park | Histories & Legacies

October 2026

Howard-Holland Family

Freedman's State Park encompasses more than 1,000 acres once owned and cultivated by the Howard-Holland family. Enoch George Howard, born into slavery in 1814, purchased his freedom at 37, followed by his wife Harriet two years later and their four eldest children seven years after that.

The Howard-Holland family later purchased the land and home from the family who had enslaved Harriet. By Enoch's death, the property had more than doubled in size and included a chapel serving as both a place of worship and a school for the local Black community.

A respected figure, Enoch left a legacy carried on by his accomplished descendants. Many historical, funerary, agricultural, and archaeological sites today reflect the Howard-Holland family's stewardship and ownership.





(Left) Enoch George Howard; (right) Harriet Howard [1]



The Howard-Holland Family at the John Howard House, 1900 [2]





(Left) Greenbury Howard; (right) Rebecca Howard [3]



Enoch George Howard & Family [4]



Greenbury & Rebecca Howard with Family [5]

Property Evolution

The site as it is experienced today has undergone a very interesting history in terms of land ownership and parcel structure. Enoch George Howard's story is remarkable for many reasons: he was able to purchase his own freedom (in addition to his family's); he was then able to acquire land over multiple decades to create a thriving livelihood in farming; and last but certainly not least, the aggregation of these parcels enabled him to create the foundation for the community of African Americans who settled in this region following the Civil War.

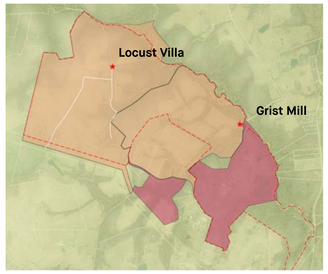
The 15th century notion of private property was imported with English colonization of this region in the 17th century, when the Second Lord Baltimore (Cecil Calvert) was granted ownership of the colony. (Interestingly, Cecil Calvert never stepped foot in the colony that he "owned").

Moving forward to the 18th and 19th centuries, we see the beginning of parcelization of this landscape, with several slave-holding families, including the Gaithers and Griffiths, acquiring large land-holdings for their homes and agricultural uses.

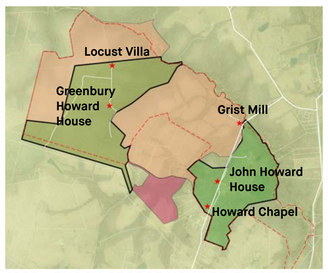
The remarkable story of Howard begins with his purchase of his own freedom in 1851, and the subsequent purchase of approximately 290 acres in the northwest of what is now Freedman's State Park. His eventual purchase of more property led to the establishment of the Howard Chapel community in the east of the site. DNR acquired the property from the Howard family and others in the 1960s for the creation of Patuxent River State Park.



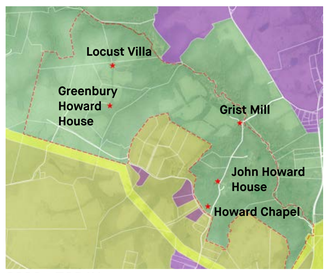
1632 - LORD BALTIMORE



1823 - GRIFFITH DEED



1869 - ENOCH GEORGE HOWARD EXPANSION



2026 - TODAY

Historic Context

Sites of Cultural Relevance

Freedman's State Park represents one of many significant African American cultural sites within the broader historical landscape of Montgomery County. The Howard-Holland Family's story provides a tangible connection to the history of Black community-building, land ownership, and self-determination during and beyond the period of emancipation.

Throughout the county, historic sites and physical remnants of African American life reflect the enduring relationships between family, land, and community. Through the efforts of dedicated organizations and community groups to document, interpret, and preserve these places, this history continues to be recognized and its legacy carried forward.



Button Farms Living History Center, Germantown, MD



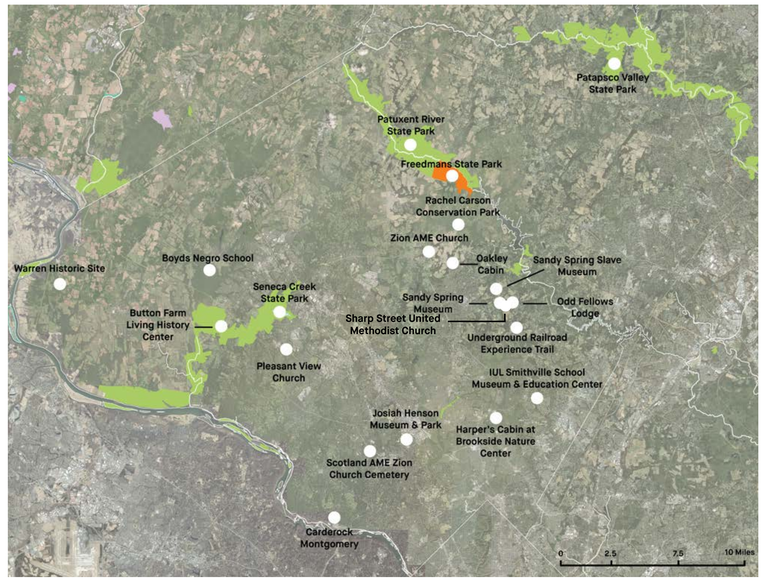
Sandy Spring Slave Museum, Sandy Spring, MD



Underground Railroad Experience Trail, Sandy Spring, MD



Josiah Henson Museum & Park, North Bethesda, MD



The Legacy

The legacy of the Howard-Holland Family extends across generations, reflecting broader stories of freedom, resilience, and community that echo throughout Montgomery County and the country. Today, Preservation Maryland, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Maryland's irreplaceable heritage, is working in partnership with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a Master Plan for the future of Freedman's State Park. Established through the Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022, the park is intended to "educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans, both before and after the abolition of slavery."

To inform this effort, DNR has engaged key stakeholders, including descendants of the Howard-Holland Family, historians, and cultural leaders, to deepen understanding of the site's history, significance, and enduring legacy. This work is complemented by a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), Historic Structures Report (HSR), and archaeological investigations, which together provide a foundation for understanding the site's physical and cultural history. These collective voices, stories, and understandings of the land will inform planning, guiding a vision for Freedman's State Park that honors the Howard-Holland Family's legacy while fostering continued connections to community and place.



Houston Murphy, a Howard Family descendant, placing sea glass on Greenbury Howard's headstone [6]



Greenbury Howard's burial stone with commemorative sea glass. [7]



(Left and right) Family Day, August 12th, 2021 [8]





Freedman's State Park dedication hike, 2026 [9]



Andrea and Herold Blackford of the Washington Revel's Jubilee Voices dressed as Harriet and Enoch Howard at the Freedman's State Park dedication ceremony. [10]



Descendant Pastor Thomary Murphy and Maryland Park Service Director Angela Crenshaw at the Freedman's State Park dedication ceremony. [11]



Howard Family Reunion, July 23rd, 2024 [12]

Endnotes:

1. Portrait of Enoch George Howard & Harriet Howard [Photograph], (n.d.). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
2. Howard family in front of the John Howard House [Photograph], (1900). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
3. Portrait of Greenbury Howard & Rebecca Howard [Photograph], (n.d.). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
4. Enoch George Howard and family [Photograph], (n.d.). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
5. Greenbury and Rebecca Howard with family [Photograph], (n.d.). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
6. Houston Murphy at the Freedman's State Park dedication ceremony [Photograph], (2026, May 15). Photo by Christine Condon/Maryland Matters.
7. Greenbury Howard's headstone [Photograph], (2026, May 15). Photo by Christine Condon/Maryland Matters.
8. Family Day [Photograph], (2021, August 21). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
9. Freedman's State Park dedication hike [Photograph], (2026). Provided by Preservation Maryland.
10. Andrea and Herold Blackford at the Freedman's State Park dedication ceremony [Photograph], (n.d.). Image by Leah Millis for the Banner.
11. Descendant Pastor Thomary Murphy and Maryland Park Service Director Angela Crenshaw [Photograph], (n.d.). Image by Leah Millis for the Banner.
12. Howard Family Reunion [Photograph], (2024, July 23). On behalf of Preservation Maryland.

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