

# Multi-agency land deal preserves 41 acres in Western Sussex

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By Nick Ciolino



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Chesapeake Conservancy

A group of nonprofits and government agencies recently preserved a parcel of land on the south side of the Nanticoke River. Officials are naming it the Nanticoke Crossing Park.

The 41-acre property is a few miles west of Seaford. It includes shoreline, a mixed hardwood-pine forest and a large cleared area where there used to be a trailer park.

It was purchased by multiple different agencies including Sussex County, the Department of Defense and a few nonprofits like the Chesapeake Conservancy and Sussex County Land Trust for a little over \$1 million.

“All sorts of wonderful plants and flora and fauna in there. So it’s heaven for a conservationist, I guess, to see this park,” said Randy Larimore, chair of the board of the Chesapeake Conservancy. “And also to imagine that we’ve avoided what the owner was going to do. He was going to put a condominium there with a Tiki Bar and stuff like that and that would’ve been just a shame.”

Larimore says the Navy’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program paid the lion’s share of the cost. He says the DOD has contributed about \$17 million to preserve land along the Nanticoke River in recent years to preserve areas under test mission airspace. He adds about a third of the river is now preserved.

Larimore notes this latest parcel secures all four corners of the Woodland Ferry—one of the oldest operating ferries in the country.

“By protecting all four corners now, the view that people see while they are in Woodland or at the park will be the same as it was 100 years ago and will, obviously, always be the same,” he said.

The park also adds to a series of campgrounds the conservancy has been developing in the area between Seaford and the Chesapeake. Larimore says the conservancy is pursuing more conservation opportunities in the area, and is working to try to receive a national park designation.