

## CAPSULE SUMMARY

Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area

MIHP # CH-675

Vicinity of La Plata

Charles County, Maryland

WMA=1929

Public

Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area (WMA) comprises 1,334 acres along Mattawoman Creek in northwestern Charles County, Maryland. The Wildlife and Heritage Service manages the property to focus on wildlife enhancement activities and low intensity wildlife-related recreation, such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. The initial 754 acres was purchased in 1929 with funds generated from hunting licenses. Four buildings constructed prior to 1960 include a ca. 1900 farmhouse and tobacco barn, a ca. 1932 shed, and a garage constructed in 1950. A reconnaissance survey of the built resources was completed in January 2003. No recorded archeological sites were identified in the Maryland Historical Trust archeological site files on this property.

While conservation is an area of significance in Maryland during the twentieth century, the properties managed by Wildlife and Heritage Service generally are managed to minimize the effects of man on the landscape. This is the case for management at Myrtle Grove WMA where management has been focused on wildlife enhancement activities and low intensity wildlife-related recreation, including hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. Myrtle Grove WMA is not an example of a historic designed landscape that was consciously designed by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturalist, or a historic vernacular landscape that evolved through use by people whose activities or occupancy shaped the land. Documentation does not suggest that Myrtle Grove WMA is an historic site associated with significant events or patterns in the history of conservation in Maryland during the twentieth century or the site of important events; it was purchased as part of programmatic expansion of conservation efforts

throughout all counties in Maryland. The WMA is not associated with a particular ethnographic tradition. The primary designed features, the ponds and impoundments, are less than fifty years of age and do not possess the qualities of exceptional significance for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion Consideration G or the Maryland Register of Historic Properties.

The Myrtle Grove Farmhouse and the tobacco barn represent the former agricultural use of the property. These buildings are functional, utilitarian buildings with minimal architectural ornamentation that do not exhibit significance in their physical design or construction (Criterion C). The farmhouse has been continually rehabilitated over its lifetime so that the house exhibits little exterior integrity of historical materials, workmanship, or design associated with its early twentieth-century construction date. The integrity of setting for the house and the tobacco barn has been compromised by the reduction in the former agricultural acreage due to reforestation and the construction of two ponds installed during the 1960s. The house and barn no longer appear to possess sufficient integrity to illustrate early twentieth-century agricultural patterns in this area of Charles County under Criterion A. The farmhouse was not evaluated for significance under Criterion B.

The storage shed constructed ca. 1932 and the garage constructed in 1950 do not exhibit the qualities of architectural significance for their types, periods, or methods of construction; for high artistic value; or, for association with the work of a master (Criterion C).

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## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-675

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area  
 other

### 2. Location

street and number North of MD Rte 225  not for publication  
 city, town La Plata  vicinity  
 county Charles

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
 street and number 580 Taylor Avenue, E-3 telephone 410-260-8451  
 city, town Annapolis state MD zip code 21401

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County tax map and parcel:  
 city, town La Plata liber folio

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report
- Other

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:	
		Conservation	0
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>

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## 7. Description

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### SUMMARY

Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area (WMA) encompasses 1,334 acres along Mattawoman Creek in Charles County, Maryland (Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MdDNR) 2002). The property comprises forested bottomlands along the main branches and numerous tributaries of Mattawoman Creek that traverse this area. The bottomlands range between approximately 20 to 40 feet above mean sea level, whereas the terrain south of the creek rises to approximately 170 feet above mean sea level. Manmade farm ponds, impoundments, and natural wetlands are sited along the northern boundary of the WMA within the floodplain of the Mattawoman Creek. The southern section is primarily wooded. Former agricultural land has been allowed to reforest. Several small dispersed fields are kept clear of trees to grow food for wildlife. The northern boundary of the WMA is defined by the Indian Head White Plains Railroad (CH-290), which was constructed in 1919. This railroad line is owned by the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head.

Initial land acquisition for Myrtle Grove WMA began in 1929 when the 754-acre Myrtle Grove Farm was sold to the State of Maryland as the result of a forfeiture on a mortgage. Walter J. Mitchell acted as attorney for the mortgagee and was not associated with the property, although it is called the former Mitchell property Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MdDNR) files. No chain-of-title research was undertaken during this investigation. During the 1970s, approximately 76 acres were added to the WMA. During the 1990s, approximately 502 acres were acquired. The last purchase, completed in 2002, was the former Chaney farmstead comprising approximately 313 acres located in the southeast corner of the WMA (MdDNR Acquisition Listing 2002). The 2002 property boundaries were determined following discussions with MdDNR personnel at Resource Planning and Myrtle Grove WMA (Estevez 2002).

Four buildings located at Myrtle Grove WMA were constructed prior to 1960. The farmhouse and tobacco barn were constructed ca. 1900 and appeared on a 1911 USGS Indian Head quadrangle map (USGS 1911). These two buildings transferred to the state as part of the original purchase. The storage shed was constructed ca. 1932 by a tenant who farmed the property during the 1930s. MdDNR constructed the garage in 1950. Post-1960 buildings and structures, which were not evaluated as part of this investigation, include a pump house (1968) and two pole buildings (1999). The buildings are located at the end of a long compacted dirt road leading north from MD Route 255. The buildings currently provide housing and serve as the primary work and office space for the Wildlife & Heritage Service, Southern Region comprising Prince George's, Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert Counties.

Recent parcels added to the WMA have transferred with few buildings. The former Trimac property acquired in 1995 contained a decayed house and barn. The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) determined that the two buildings on the former Trimac property were not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or in the Maryland Register of Historic Places (MHT 1998). The buildings were approved for demolition and removed. No recorded archeological sites on the property are documented in the MHT archeological site files.

### DESCRIPTIONS

The former Myrtle Grove Farmhouse (DMI 001) is a wood-frame, two-story, four-bay by one-bay dwelling that occupies a T-shaped ground plan. The building appeared on a 1911 USGS map. The overall massing of the building and construction materials support a ca. 1900 construction date. The house rests on concrete-block foundation. The exterior walls are clad in asbestos shingles. The gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. The building has a central brick chimney and a gable-end chimney on the rear wing. The chimneys were rebuilt in 1951 and during the 1980s (Board of Natural Resources 1951; MdDMI 2002). The windows are one-over-one-light, wood-sash units that were installed in 1988. The front elevation features two doorways that contain wood doors installed in 1988-1989 (MdDNR DMI 2002). The front elevation is sheltered by a full-width, shed roof porch. The porch roof is supported by 4"x 4" posts. A one-story, wood-frame addition is appended to the rear elevation of the

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rear wing. The house is in good condition and is currently used for employee housing (MdDNR Detailed Maintenance Inventory (DMI) 2002). However, the house exhibits little exterior integrity of materials, workmanship, or design associated with an early twentieth-century construction date.

The former tobacco barn (DMI 004) was constructed ca. 1900 (USGS 1911). A barn was reported on the property when acquired by MdDNR. The barn form, massing, and construction materials support an early twentieth-century construction date. The one-story, three-bay, wood-frame barn is located north of the farmhouse. The barn features a gable roof main block with a full-width, shed roof addition on the south elevation. Each section of the building rests on stone piers. The exterior cladding is primarily vertical board siding with some sections of board and batten siding on the north elevation. Two-board sections of siding along the north elevation exhibited exterior hinges. The roofs are sheathed in corrugated metal. An exterior concrete block chimney is attached to the south elevation. The main entry is through two open bays on the south elevation. A pair of double wood doors is located on the north elevation. Two windows in the south elevation are one-over-one-light, wood-sash units. The barn is in fair condition. Water penetration has contributed to substantial deterioration of the building's sills. Damage is most extensive at the corners.

The house and the barn were associated with the agricultural activity on the property prior to the establishment of the WMA. From between 1930 and 1950, approximately 50 acres were farmed by a tenant of the Game Department. Currently, the house and barn are sited in a cleared area surrounded by trees. Overgrown fields are visible through treelines, but most of the former agricultural acreage is currently incorporated into two ponds installed during the 1960s. The integrity of setting for the former agricultural buildings has been compromised.

The Garage (DMI 003) is located south of the farmhouse. The wood-frame building was constructed in 1950 (Board of Natural Resources 1951). The one-story, single-car garage has a concrete-block foundation and dirt floor. The exterior is clad in horizontal wood siding. The front gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. The eave has exposed rafter ends. Paired wood swing doors are located on the north elevation. A shed roof carport is appended to the east elevation. The wood-frame carport is open on the front and rear elevations. The east wall is clad with vertical wood boards. The garage is in fair condition. Splash back is evidenced by peeling paint at the bottom of the walls; wood deterioration was observed in these locations.

The former storage shed (DMI 005) was constructed ca. 1932 (Board of Natural Resources 1932). The one-story, wood-frame building rests on stone and concrete block piers and features a wood floor. The walls are clad with vertical wood boards and metal sheeting. The gable roof is sheathed in corrugated metal. The building is in fair condition. Water penetration has contributed to substantial deterioration of the building's sills. Damage is most extensive at the corners.

A pump house was constructed in 1968 and two metal pole barns erected in 1999. The pump house (DMI 002) is located the southwest of the house. The small, one-story, concrete-block building rests on a concrete floor. The building terminates in a gable roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. The main entry is located on the east elevation and has a single, wood door. The pump house is in fair condition. Splash back has contributed to paint failure on the lower walls. The two pole barns are supported by wood posts on a dirt floor and have metal roofs.

Myrtle Grove WMA Resource Table

MHP/Site #	DMI #	MHT NAME	MdDNR/ Other Names	County	Quad	Town	Property Category	Property Sub- Category	Property ID	Date of Resource	Condition	Resource Count		Notes	MHT Concurrence
CH-290		Indian Head- White Plains Railroad (US RR, Govt. RR)		Charles	Indian Head,, LaPlata, Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Transportation	Rail-Related	railroad	1919				Section forms north boundary of WMA, MdDNR DOES NOT OWN RR.	
	1		Former Myrtle Grove Farmhouse	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Domestic	Single Dwelling	residence-in kind	ca. 1900	Good	building-1		1911 USGS quad map	
	003		Garage	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Domestic	Secondary Structure	garage	1950	Fair	building-1			
	006		Pole Building 1	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring			storage	1999	Good				
	007		Pole Building 2	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring			storage	1999	Good				
	002		Pump House	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Domestic	Secondary Structure	pump house	1968	Fair				
	004		Storage Barn/Shop	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Agriculture/ Subsistence	Processing	tobacco barn	ca. 1910	Fair	building-1			
	005		Storage Shed	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Agriculture/ Subsistence	Storage	storage	ca. 1932	Fair	building-1			
CH-675		Myrtle Grove WMA-Trimac Property	Former Trimac Property	Charles	Port Tobacco	Mason's Spring	Agriculture/ Subsistence	Processing	farmstead	no date	Dem'd	site-1			

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## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates 1929

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area (WMA) comprises 1,334 acres along Mattawoman Creek in northwestern Charles County, Maryland. Wildlife management areas are administered by the Wildlife and Heritage Service, a separate entity from the State Forest and Park Service, which administers the state parks in Maryland. The Wildlife and Heritage Service management objectives focus on wildlife enhancement activities and low intensity wildlife-related recreation, such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. Generally, intensive development of WMAs is restricted. No public recreation or support buildings or structures, paved trails, or planned picnic areas are constructed on WMAs. Typical wildlife enhancement activities include the maintenance of annual feed plots and perennial shrubs to enhance wildlife subsistence and habitat and management of impoundments and ponds.

The purpose of this Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form is to evaluate Myrtle Grove WMA as a potential historic district and to assess each built resource owned by the Maryland Department of Natural Resource (MdDNR) constructed prior to 1960 applying the National Register Criteria for evaluation 36 CFR 60.4 [a-d]) and applicable Criteria Considerations and the criteria for the Maryland Register of Historic Properties (Annotated Code of Maryland Article 83B, Title 5).

Myrtle Grove WMA was established in 1929 when a former farm containing 754 acres, a farmhouse, and a tobacco barn was purchased with funds generated from hunting licenses. A tenant added a storage shed ca. 1932 and the Game Department constructed a garage in 1950. All other buildings and structures on the property are post 1960 and were not surveyed or evaluated as part of this investigation. RCG&A completed a reconnaissance survey of the pre-1960 built resources in January 2003.

The former agricultural history of the property is represented by the Myrtle Grove Farmhouse and the tobacco barn. These buildings are functional, utilitarian buildings with minimal architectural ornamentation that do not exhibit significance in their physical design or construction (Criterion C). The farmhouse has been continually rehabilitated so that it exhibits little exterior integrity of historical materials, workmanship, or design associated with its early twentieth-century construction date. The house and barn no longer appear to possess sufficient integrity to illustrate early twentieth-century agricultural patterns in this area of Charles County under Criterion A. The farmhouse was not evaluated for significance under Criterion B.

The storage shed constructed ca. 1932 and the garage constructed in 1950 do not exhibit the qualities of architectural significance for their types, periods, or methods of construction; for high artistic value; or, for association with the work of a master (Criterion C).

As a wildlife management area, the landscape within the boundaries of Myrtle Grove WMA does not meet the definition of a

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landscapes recognized for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Birnbaum 1995). Myrtle Grove WMA not an example of a historic designed landscape that was consciously designed by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturalist, or a historic vernacular landscape that evolved through use by people whose activities or occupancy shaped the land. Documentation does not suggest that Myrtle Grove WMA is an historic site associated with significant events or patterns in the history of conservation in Maryland during the twentieth century or the site of important events; it was purchased as part of programmatic expansion of conservation efforts throughout all counties in Maryland.

### RESOURCE HISTORY

Prior to acquisition by the State of Maryland, the area now contained within Myrtle Grove WMA was used for agriculture, timbering, and gravel extraction. From the seventeenth century until the mid-twentieth century, tobacco culture was the backbone of Charles County's economy. The typical pattern for landholding during the seventeenth century was freeholders farming on small farms. Early patents issued in the vicinity of Myrtle Grove WMA included Cornwallis Neck to Thomas Cornwallis in 1654 and Grimes Ditch, now Mount Aventine (CH-75), to Luke Gardiner in 1673 (Hardy 2002; Davis et al. 1995). During the eighteenth century, a more stratified society began to develop in Charles County. Families formed networks, and successful families accumulated sufficient wealth, generally measured in land and slaves, to found economic dynasties. A socially and politically dominant gentry class emerged. Examples of such prominent families who maintained land holdings near Myrtle Grove WMA were the Mason family associated with Araby (CH-11), and the Chapman family associated with Mount Aventine (CH-75). During the first half of the nineteenth century, these large landholdings were subdivided through inheritance or sale to non-family members.

After the Civil War and the emancipation of slaves in Maryland, large slaveholders in Charles County lost their primary source of labor and experienced a decrease of real property value. Some landowners were forced to subdivide and sell property to raise cash. Following the Civil War, the loss of slave labor temporarily devastated tobacco production until a system of sharecropping and tenant farming was established (Wesler et al. 1981:128). Under tenant farming, a landholder established tenants on a certain amount of acres. The tenant was allowed to construct housing and to manage the acreage in exchange for paying a portion of the crop to the owner.

From the close of the Civil War to the early twentieth century, Charles County experienced minimal economic or population growth. From 1870 to 1930, the population fluctuated between 15,000 and 18,500. Although some African-Americans moved into the cities following emancipation, it was not unusual for freed slaves to remain on territory familiar to them from the time of slavery. The number of African-Americans in Charles County remained steady at between 7,000 and 10,000 between 1870 and 1930.

Between 1860 and 1930, the censuses documented two trends in Charles County. The first trend was an overall decrease in agricultural land in the county. The second trend was the increase in number of farms, but a decrease in average farm size. In 1880, 83 per cent of the county's land was in agriculture. This was the highest percentage of agricultural land between 1860 and 1930. By 1930, 69 per cent of Charles County was in agriculture. Throughout this period, the number of farms increased, but the average farm size decreased. In 1860, 506 farms were reported in Charles County; the average farm comprised approximately 361 acres. By 1930, 1,507 farms with an average size of 136 acres were reported in the census (Wesler et al. 1981:130-136).

The primary crop in Charles County throughout this period was tobacco. In 1860, the last census before the Civil War, over 4.9 million pounds of tobacco were grown in the county. That amount was surpassed only in 1880 and 1900, when over 5 million pounds of tobacco were grown. Although more pounds of tobacco were grown during the last decades of the nineteenth century, the price of tobacco remained depressed. In 1910 and 1920, over 3 million pound of tobacco were raised. In 1930, over 4.2

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million pounds of tobacco were raised and the price of tobacco increased to make tobacco growing profitable (Wesler et al. 1981; Bowie 1947). Between 1900 and 1930, Charles County's tobacco output represented between 19 and 22 per cent of tobacco grown in the state of Maryland.

Between 1900 and 1930, agricultural diversification in Charles County remained minimal. The recorded value of slaughtered animals, dairy products, and orchard products remained under \$100,000 throughout this period. The value of poultry spiked at over \$115,000 in 1920, but dropped to below \$63,000 in 1930. The decrease in agricultural production was off-set by a rise in value of timber. In the 1930 census, the value of forest products in Charles County was reported as over \$154,000 (Wesler et al. 1981:134-136). In 1945, Maryland Board of Natural Resources estimated that 65 per cent of Charles County was forested, with an additional 5 to 10 per cent in marsh (Board of Natural Resources 1948:212).

In the 1925 U.S. Agricultural Census for Maryland, Charles County was reported with 1,791 farms. The number of white farmers was 1,092 and the number of black farmers was 699. The number of white farm owners was reported as 810, while the number of black farm owners was 389. The level of tenancy was reported as 30 per cent, with the number of white tenants numbering 249 and the number of black tenants numbering 288. Of the total number of owners, 21.3 per cent reported mortgage debt (U.S. Census Bureau 1926).

The chain-of-title for Myrtle Grove Farm was not compiled as part of this investigation. A 1911 USGS Indian Head quadrangle map depicted a house and barn on the Myrtle Grove property in the approximate location of the current house. The simple form and massing of the house, as well as the construction materials, support a construction date of ca. 1900. The name suggests that the property was used for agriculture until its purchase by the State of Maryland in 1929. The property was sold to the state as the result of a foreclosure on a mortgage. Washington, D.C., attorney William J. Mitchell handled the sale for the mortgagee. The previous owner was not named in the deed that transferred the property to the State of Maryland. Although the property is identified in the MdDNR files as the former Mitchell property, Myrtle Grove Farm had no association with Mitchell. The house and the tobacco barn transferred with the property to the state of Maryland.

During the 1930s, the Game Department leased approximately 50 acres, the house, and the barn to tenants. Twenty-five acres were planted in tobacco and twenty-five acres in corn. By 1950, tenant farming ceased on the property and the property was used solely for wildlife management activities. A tenant added the storage shed ca. 1932 and the Game Department constructed the garage in 1950.

The 754-acre Myrtle Grove Farm was purchased in 1929 as part of a program goal to establish game refuges to support the natural propagation of game in each county in Maryland. Maryland's system of wildlife management areas grew out of efforts to maintain stable populations of game birds and animals. These efforts began during the late nineteenth century when it became clear that game wildlife populations were threatened. During the 1890s, counties passed game laws to regulate hunting. In 1896, the State of Maryland enacted its first statewide game law. This law created the position of State Game Warden, whose primary responsibility was to enforce the multiple county game laws. During the 1918 legislative session, the State of Maryland enacted the State Hunters License System, which superseded the 53 licensing and county laws that regulated hunting practices. Maryland was one of the last states to pass statewide hunting legislation (Conservation Commission 1918).

The 1918 State Hunters License System revitalized Maryland's State Game Department. Funds raised from the sale of hunting licenses financed the Game Department, ensured enforcement of conservation laws related to game and fish, and provided a permanent funding source to support game and wildlife programs. Funds in excess of operating costs were divided among the Maryland counties to purchase quail, pheasant, rabbits and other game birds to restock lands. In addition, funds were spent to feed and to protect Maryland's game supply (Conservation Commission 1918).

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The overall structure of the Game Department was established during 1918. The State of Maryland was divided into eight districts. A deputy game warden administered each district under the direction of the State Game Warden (Conservation Commission 1918). This system of districts is the organizational framework for the current Wildlife and Heritage Service, the successor to the Game Department.

The acquisition of land to establish a game bird breeding farm to restock hunting areas was a priority. The first land purchase was the 290-acre former Dolfield Estate, now known as Gwynnbrook WMA, in Baltimore County, Maryland (Conservation Commission 1919). Four game bird breeding farms eventually were created. The game bird breeding program was phased out in the late 1960s.

During the 1920s, the Game Department increased the number of game refuges. Game refuges were places where game could "propagate naturally and unmolested by hunters, can find feed and cover during the winter months and at the same time provide brood stock for the future" (Conservation Department 1924). One of the department's goals was to expand the game refuge system to all Maryland counties. The program included refuges established through land purchases and leases (Conservation Department 1923). In 1928, the Game Department opened the state's first public hunting lands, which were located in western Maryland (Conservation Department 1928).

The 1924 annual report for the department contained the first reference to planting food crops to feed game. The Game Department seeded approximately 15 acres in buckwheat and soybeans. The crops were not harvested, but left in the fields to feed and to provide cover for game during the winter months (Conservation Department 1924). This practice of wildlife management grew more widespread during the 1920s and became the primary practice for managing wildlife throughout the twentieth century. The Game Department also encouraged private farmers to plant wildlife food and leave suitable areas for cover to alleviate the loss of wildlife habitat from intensive agricultural practices (Conservation Department 1925-1929).

The Game Department owned approximately 4,986 acres by 1929. These holdings included 1,341 acres divided among four game bird breeding farms. An additional 33,473 acres of private land were leased for game refuges. The Myrtle Grove property, the first game refuge in Charles County, was purchased by the Game Department in that year (Conservation Department 1929).

In 1931, the Myrtle Grove WMA was described as containing a large area of valuable timber, 25 acres in tobacco, 25 acres in corn, and the farmhouse and barn that were describe as in "very dilapidated condition." Activities completed by the Game Department between 1929 and 1931 included planting one acre in buckwheat and four acres in rye to support game (Conservation Department 1931). In 1932, March snowstorms damaged 15 to 25 acres of pine trees on the property. The tenants had 15 acres planted in rye, 25 acres in wheat, and two acres of strips seeded in buckwheat for game. The dwelling house required interior papering and painting. The tenants requested permission to build a barn to store crops (Conservation Department 1932). This building currently is used for storage.

During the 1940s, the Department of Game and Inland Fish expanded wildlife restoration programs using funds generated from the 1937 Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, known as the Pittman-Robertson Act (Public Law 415, 75th Congress). This program shared expenses between federal and state governments; the federal government contributed 75 per cent and the state contributed 25 per cent of funding. The funds were restricted to wildlife restoration projects and to support the natural perpetuation of wildlife resources (Conservation Department 1939; Board of Natural Resources 1948). Beginning in 1946, the State of Maryland used a portion of the state's Pittman-Robertson funds to support efforts to maintain habitat through the Maryland Cooperative Farm-Game Program. This program was designed to restore and to develop wildlife habitat by providing permanent natural food and cover areas and seed to stock refuges in cooperation with farmers, 4-H groups, Izaak Walton leagues, soil

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conservation districts, the Maryland Department of State Forests and Parks, and other local groups (Board of Natural Resources 1948). The Myrtle Grove State Game Refuge was the operating base to support the program in Charles County and Maryland Region III, comprising Prince George's, Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert counties. By 1948, 15 leased refuges, totaling 256 acres, were delineated in Charles County. These refuges were planted with berry-bearing bushes and fruit-bearing trees, and seeded with grains and grasses. These patches were left standing in winter to furnish cover, food and natural habitat for game (State Game Warden 1943; Board of Natural Resources 1948).

In 1950, Myrtle Grove was placed under "soil, forest, and wildlife management practices and...provided considerable amount of annual wildlife seed and shrub species for the habitat improvement program in Charles County and other Counties of Region III" (Board of Natural Resources 1950). Forty acres of open land were planted in field borders, hedges, and food strips. Food strip plantings comprised grain and grasses to support game. In 1952, 425 pounds of grain and 200 pounds of lespedeza seed were planted at Myrtle Grove WMA (Board of Natural Resources 1952).

By 1960, the Department of Game and Inland Fish began a program to construct ponds to provide year-round water sources for wildlife and to create fishing holes. Drawings dated 1960 depicted earthen dykes and spillways to be constructed in the northwest corner of the original property (MdDNR drawings files). In 1961, a three-acre shallow pond to support waterfowl was completed and an eight-acre pond was begun. Plans called for 134 acres of shallow ponds to support waterfowl at Myrtle Grove (Board of Natural Resources 1961). By 30 June 1962, the construction of an 81-acre impoundment at Myrtle Grove was 98 per cent complete (Board of Natural Resources 1962). During the late 1960s, a 23-acre pond for waterfowl and fishing was constructed on the property (MdDNR drawings files-fishing pier 1968; USGS 1966, photo-revised 1978 Port Tobacco Quad map). The practice the building ponds and impoundments was effectively eliminated during the 1980s and 1990s because of the enactment of environment regulations affecting water resources and wetland areas. Management practices during the 1950s and 1960s also included the installation of nest boxes for squirrels and wood ducks throughout the property.

In 1975, Myrtle Grove WMA was expanded through the purchase of approximately 76 acres. An additional 75 acres were transferred from Mattawoman Natural Environment Area to Myrtle Grove WMA in 1993 (MdDNR 1994:1). The final land acquisitions occurred in 1996 and 2002, when approximately 815 acres were added to the WMA (MdDNR Acquisition List 2002).

During the last half of the twentieth century, the number of acres managed by the Wildlife and Heritage Service, the successor department to the Game Department and Department of Game and Inland Fish, has increased substantially. From 4,986 acres in 1929, the Department of Game and Inland Fish owned approximately 25,677 acres by 1950. This acreage included four fish hatcheries (46 acres), three game farms (202 acres), twelve refuges (5,215 acres), and eight public shooting lands (20,210 acres). In 2002, the Wildlife and Heritage Service managed more than 100,600 acres of state-owned land distributed through all counties in Maryland. Of this acreage, 1,716 acres in Charles County were classified as wildlife management areas (MdDNR 2002).

Since its initial establishment, Myrtle Grove WMA has operated to support wildlife and habitat. From its establishment in 1929 until the 1950s, the Myrtle Grove property was classified as a game refuge (Board of Natural Resources 1950). The refuge was gradually opened for hunting. By 1963, Myrtle Grove WMA opened 276 acres for hunting and maintained 478 acres as a game refuge (Board of Natural Resources 1963). As private acreage for hunting has decreased, additional public lands were opened. By 1994, Myrtle Grove WMA, with the exception of a safe zone around the house, was open for hunting (MdDNR 1994).

Currently, Myrtle Grove WMA, the oldest state-managed wildlife area in Charles County and southern Maryland, is managed for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. The property's ponds and impoundments support wood ducks and other waterfowl. The mature riparian forest in the bottomlands of Mattawoman Creek is managed as a "greentree" reservoir, which is flooded during fall and winter to support migrating and wintering waterfowl. The expansion of the WMA since 1975 was supported, in part, by

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No CH-675

Name Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

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increasing concern to protect streams and wetlands statewide and Mattawoman Creek in particular. Recent management activities include planting warm season grasses and conducting controlled burns to maintain open areas. Myrtle Grove WMA also has an eight-station firearm shooting range and a three-station archery range. Other uses include horseback riding and hiking. In 1994, an estimated 30,000 people visited Myrtle Grove WMA (MdDNR 1994:3).

### EVALUATION

The purpose of this Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form is to evaluate Myrtle Grove WMA as a potential historic district and to assess each MdDNR-owned built resource constructed prior to 1960 applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR Part 60.4[a-d]) and applicable Criteria Considerations and the criteria for the Maryland Register of Historic Properties (Annotated Code of Maryland Article 83B, Title 5). The design and physical characteristics of Myrtle Grove WMA were analyzed for their potential significance within the appropriate historic context in the areas of agriculture and conservation in periods of Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930) and Modern (1930-present).

Myrtle Grove WMA was established in 1929 with the first purchase of 754 acres. The WMA remained the same size until 1975. Between 1975 and 2002, the WMA expanded to include 1,334 acres. The original 754 acres has four buildings constructed prior to 1960. These buildings are the former Myrtle Grove Farmhouse (ca. 1900), former tobacco barn (ca. 1900), the storage shed (ca. 1932), and the garage (1950). No archeological sites have been recorded on the property in the MHT archeological site files.

The former agricultural history of the property is represented by the Myrtle Grove Farmhouse and the tobacco barn, the only two resources located on the property that were constructed prior to the establishment of the WMA. These buildings are functional, utilitarian buildings with minimal architectural ornamentation that do not exhibit significance in their physical design or construction (Criterion C). The farmhouse has been continually rehabilitated over its lifetime so that the house exhibits little exterior integrity of historical materials, workmanship, or design associated with its early twentieth-century construction date. The integrity of setting for the house and the tobacco barn has been compromised by the reduction in the former agricultural acreage due to reforestation and the construction of two ponds installed during the 1960s. The house and barn no longer appear to possess sufficient integrity to illustrate early twentieth-century agricultural patterns in this area of Charles County under Criterion A. The farmhouse was not evaluated for significance under Criterion B.

The storage shed constructed ca. 1932 and the garage constructed in 1950 do not exhibit the qualities of architectural significance for their types, periods, or methods of construction; for high artistic value; or, for association with the work of a master (Criterion C).

As a wildlife management area, Myrtle Grove has been managed to enhance its natural characteristics. Until the late 1950s, the only management practice implemented on the property was planting a small proportion of the acreage to wildlife food plots. The bottomlands along Mattawoman Creek and timber resources on the property were allowed to grow into a mature riparian forest. Since 1960, the natural wetlands along the Mattawoman Creek were enhanced through the installation of ponds and impoundments. The ponds and impoundments were examples of human design introduced into the landscape. These manmade features are less than fifty years of age and reflect a relatively widespread management practice that ended by the 1990s. Current environmental regulations severely restrict the construction of ponds and impoundments. Active yearly management at Myrtle Grove WMA continues to be planting annual food crops and perennial shrubs to enhance wildlife food and habitat. These practices leave minimal imprint on the overall landscape.

While conservation is an area of significance in Maryland during the twentieth century, the properties managed by Wildlife and Heritage Service generally are managed to minimize the effects of man on the landscape. This is the case for management at Myrtle

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No CH-675

Name Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 6

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Grove WMA where management has been focused on wildlife enhancement activities and low intensity wildlife-related recreation, including hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. The hand of man is minimized so that the landscape within the boundaries of Myrtle Grove WMA does not meet the definitions of the four types of landscapes that are recognized for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Birnbaum 1995). Myrtle Grove WMA not an example of a historic designed landscape that was consciously designed by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturalist, or a historic vernacular landscape that evolved through use by people whose activities or occupancy shaped the land. Documentation does not suggest that Myrtle Grove WMA is an historic site associated with significant events or patterns in the history of conservation in Maryland during the twentieth century or the site of important events; it was purchased as part of programmatic expansion of conservation efforts throughout all counties in Maryland. The WMA is not associated with a particular ethnographic tradition. The primary designed features, the ponds and impoundments, are less than fifty years of age and do not possess the qualities of exceptional significance for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion Consideration G or the Maryland Register of Historic Properties.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. CH-675

See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 1,334  
Acreage of historical setting 1,334  
Quadrangle name Port Tobacco Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the survey area comprises all property owned by Maryland Department of Natural Resources within the boundaries of Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area as of January 2003.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	K. Grandine, B. Clevon, A. Levinthal, Historians		
organization	R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.	date	5/21/03
street and number	241 E. Fourth Street, Suite 100	telephone	301-694-0428
city or town	Frederick	state MD	zip code 21701

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-675

Name Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

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United State Bureau of Census

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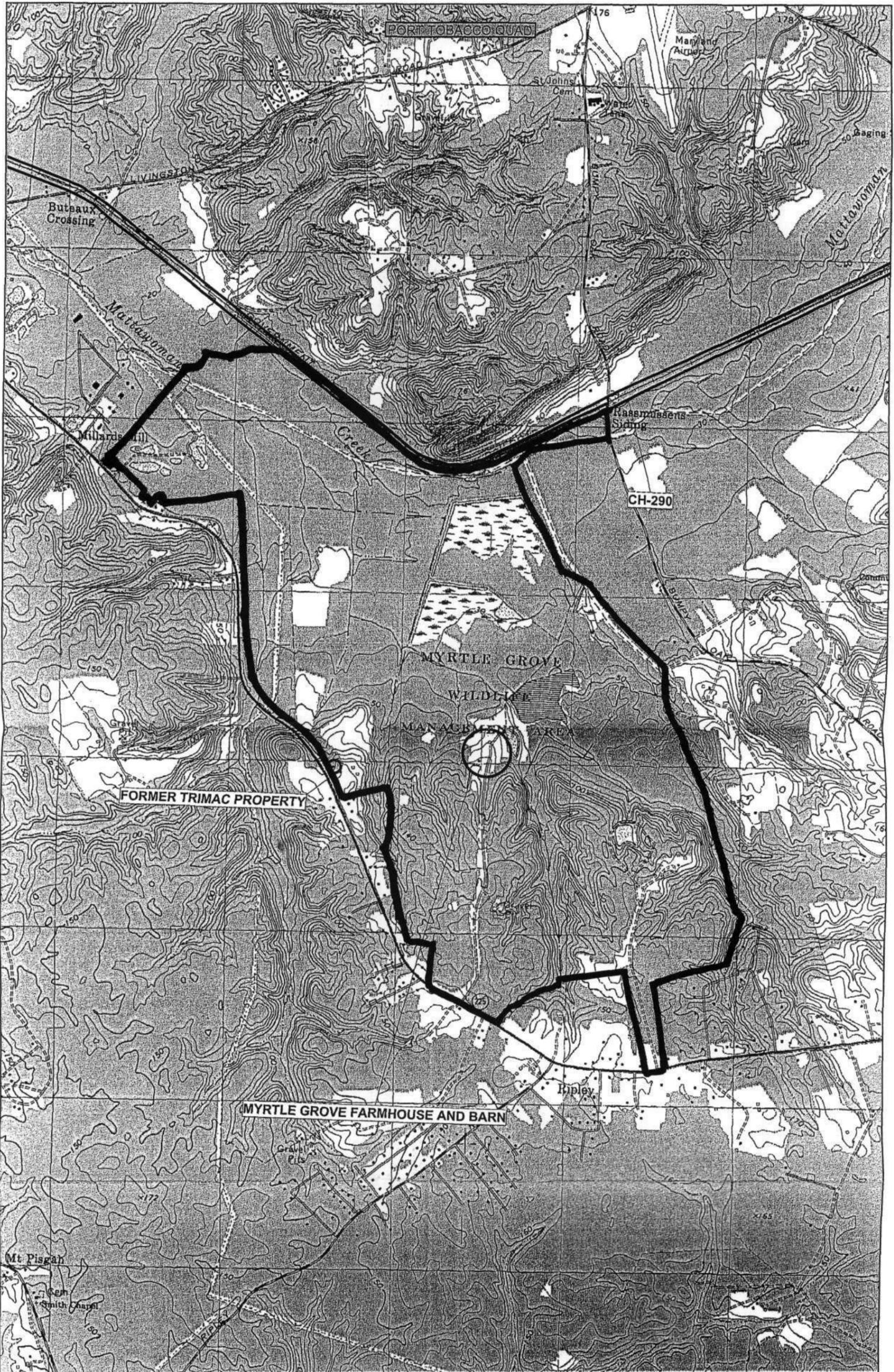
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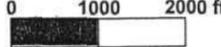
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CH-675  
 Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area  
 La Plata vicinity  
 Charles County  
 Port Tobacco USGS quadrangle



<p>  MYRTLE GROVE STRUCTURES   MYRTLE GROVE WMA         </p>	<p>               1:24000         </p>	<p> <b>MYRTLE GROVE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA</b>  <i>Historical Structures</i>            DATE: MAY 7, 2003      PREPARED BY: JPH   <b>R. Christopher Goodwin &amp; Associates, Inc.</b>            241 East Fourth Street, Suite 100      Frederick, MD 21701         </p>
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# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of

information is the same for each photograph:

### Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-675 The following

Myrtle Grove WMA, Charles County, Maryland  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number Photo log Page 1

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The following information is the same for each photograph:

1. MIHP # CH-675
2. Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area
3. Charles County, Maryland
4. R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.
5. January 2003
6. MD SHPO

Photo #

1. Myrtle Grove WMA lake, view looking east.
2. Myrtle Grove WMA field and forest, view looking west.
3. Former Myrtle Grove Farmhouse, view looking southeast.
4. Garage, view looking southwest.
5. Former Tobacco Barn, view looking north.
6. Former Shed, view looking west.
7. Pump house, view looking southwest.



CH-675

Myrtle Grove WMA

Charles Co, MD

RCGA

Jan 2003

MD SHPO

Myrtle Grove Lake, looking east

1 of 7



CH-675

Myrtle Grove WMA  
Charles Co, MD

RC&A

Jan 2003

MD SHPO

Field and forest looking West

2 of 7



CH-675  
Myrtle Grove WMA  
Charles Co, MD  
RCGA

Jan 2003

MD SHPO  
Farmhouse looking SE  
3 of 7



CH-676<sup>+</sup>  
Myrtle Grove WMA  
Charles CO, MD  
RCG-A

Jan 2003

MD SHPO  
Barn looking N

4 of 7



CH-675  
Myrtle Grove WMA  
Charles Co, MD  
RCGA  
Jan 2003  
MD SHAs  
Garage looking SW  
5 of 7



CH-675  
Myrtle Grove WMA  
Charles Co, MD  
RCGA  
Jan 2003  
MD SHPO  
Shed looking West  
6 of 7



CH-675  
Myrtle Grove WMA  
Charles Co. MD

RCGA

Jan 2003

MD SHPO

Pumphouse, looking SW

7 of 7

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area (Trimac Property)  
MD 225 west of LaPlata /Indian Head Lane -La Plata Road (Tax Map #21, Parcel 76)  
Charles County Survey Number: CH-675

Project: Request to Raze Agency: MD Dept. Of Natural Resources

Site visit by MHT Staff: XX no \_\_\_ yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility not recommended XX

Criteria: \_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D Considerations: \_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D \_\_\_E \_\_\_F \_\_\_G \_\_\_None: \_\_\_\_\_

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The property owned by DNR at Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area and known as the "Trimac Property," consisting of a house and barn, has been severely compromised by decay, and is overgrown by years of vegetation. Little, if any, historic fabric remains. Photographs submitted detail the deterioration. The property is ineligible for the Maryland or National Registers based on its condition. There are no known historical associations or reasons to believe that archeological or historical information may be gleaned from the structures or site. The Maryland Department Of Natural Resources proposes to demolish the structures as inherently dangerous. DCHD/MHT concurs.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: MHT Files

Prepared by: Wanda Cole MD Dept. Of Natural Resources

Lou Ann J. Broad, Preservation Officer Jan. 8, 1998

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

NR program concurrence: X yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ not applicable

Peter A. Kuntz  
Reviewer, NR program

1/12/98  
Date

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
- Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
- Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
- Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
- Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
- Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
- Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
- Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
- Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- Unknown Period (  prehistoric  historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence
- Settlement
- Political
- Demographic
- Religion
- Technology
- Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- Government/Law
- Military
- Religion
- Social/Educational/Cultural
- Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Domestic Dwelling & Barn

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

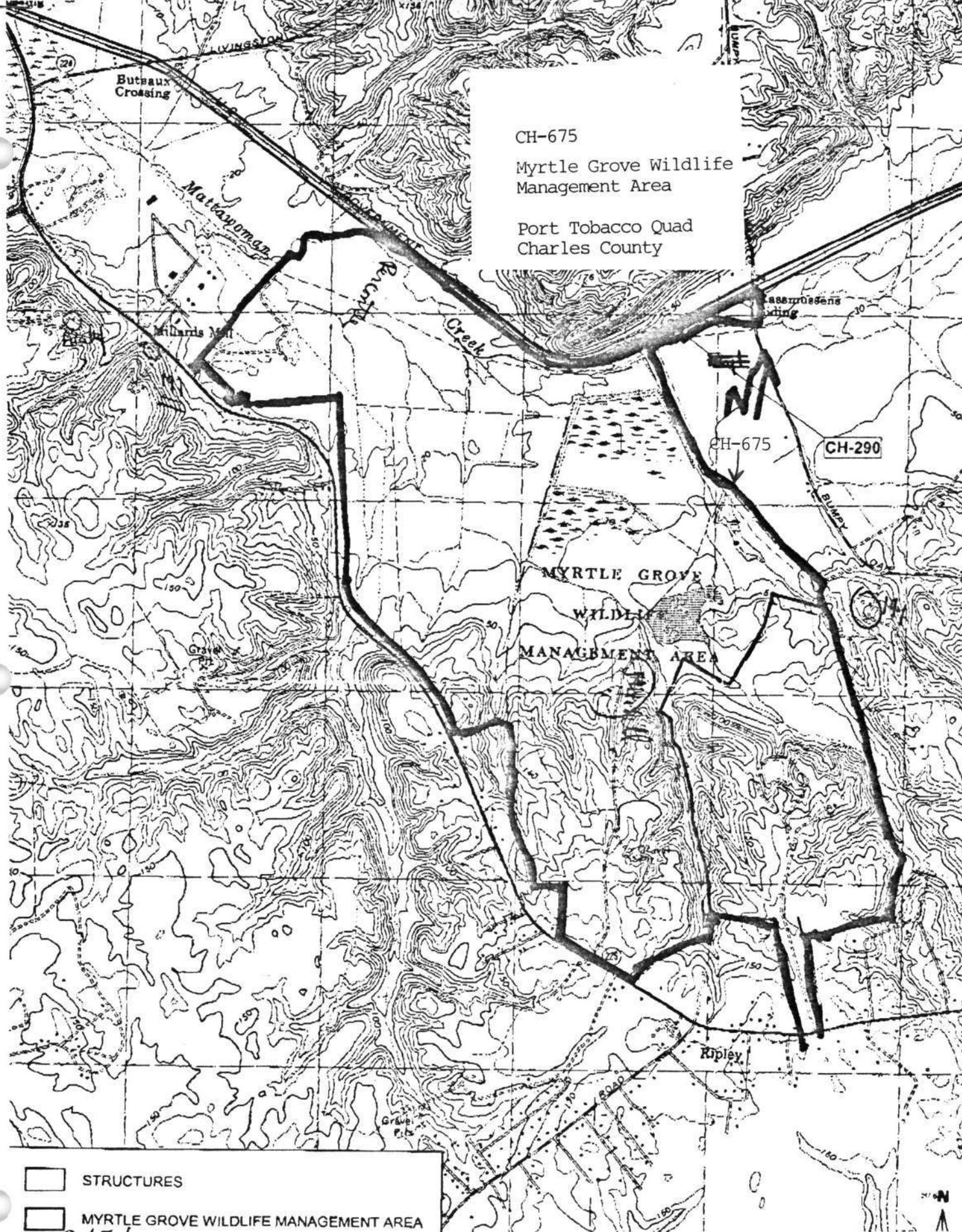
Known Design Source: Unknown

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CH-675

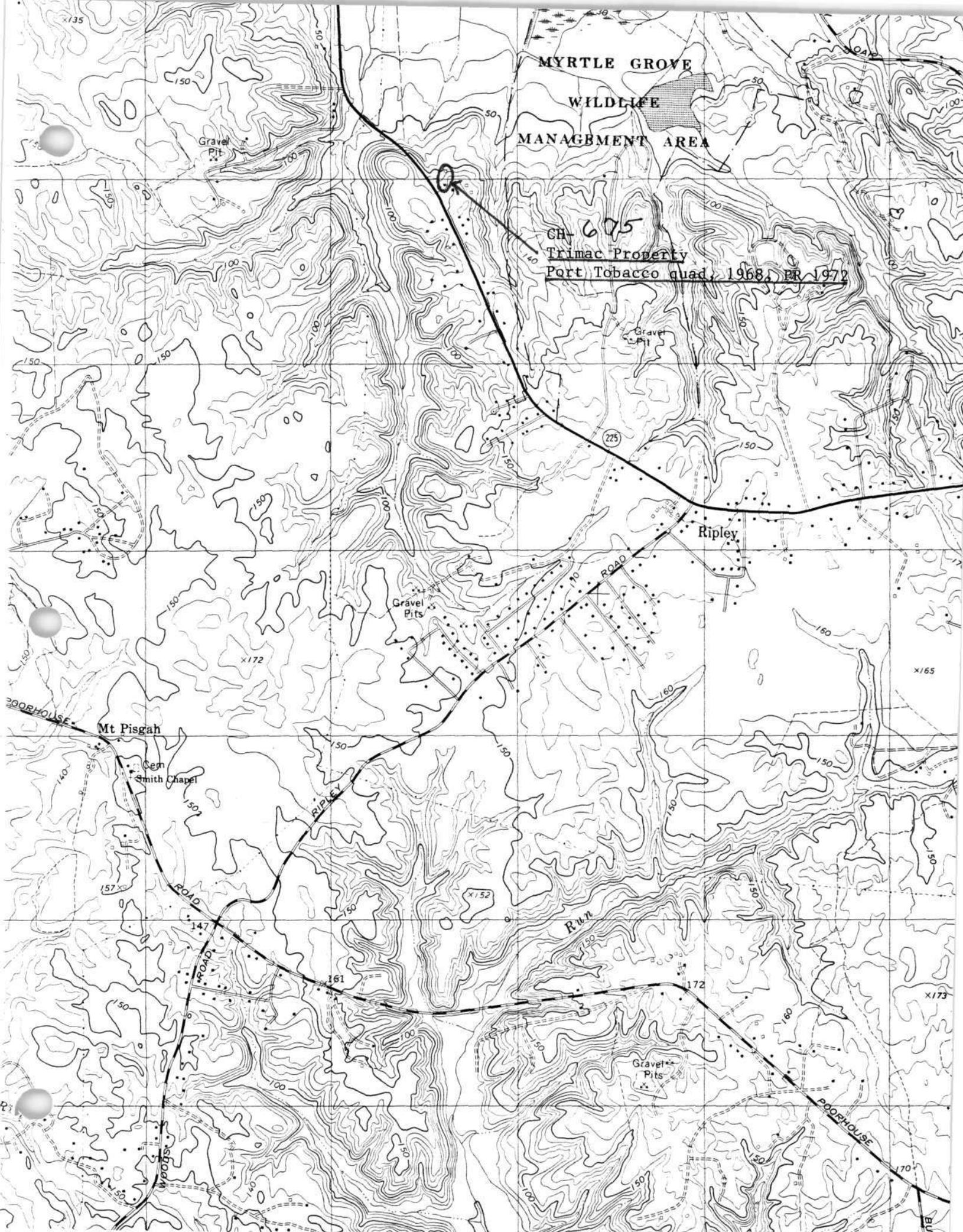
Myrtle Grove Wildlife  
Management Area

Port Tobacco Quad  
Charles County



MYRTLE GROVE  
WILDLIFE  
MANAGEMENT AREA

CH 675  
Trimac Property  
Port Tobacco quad, 1968, PR 1972



#1



book

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CH-675

96-GRP-040

Trimal Property House

Myrtle Grove WMA

Jan ~~July~~, 1996

book



CH-675

96-GRP-040

Myrtle Grove WMA

Trinac Property House

PRINT 31 POINT 2555235 10 JUL 96

SEATTLE FILMWORKS CALL 1-800-FILMWORKS

July 2, 1996

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CH-675

96-GRP-040

Myrtle Grove WMA  
Trimac Property House

PRINT 32 ROLL 73555236 10JUL96

SEATTLE FILMWORKS CALL 1-800-FILMWORKS

July 2, 1996

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CH-675

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96-GRP-040

Trimac Property House

Myrtle Grove WMA

PRINT 34 BOLL 7355236 10 JUL 96

July 2, 1996

SEATTLE FILMWORKS OUT 1800-FILMWORKS

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2-1

CH-675

96-GRP-040

Myrtle Grove WMA

Trimac Property Barn

Jan ~~July~~, 1996