

Please check before you cut or clear!

We live on a peninsula next to one of the most productive estuaries in the world – the Chesapeake Bay. However, the Bay is being impacted by nutrient and sediment overload and we all need to be good stewards of where we live.

Calvert County has adopted environmental regulations, including the State Critical Area regulations and State Forest Conservation Regulations. These regulations are intended to protect valued water resources.

What is the Critical Area? It is all land within 1,000 feet of the mean high tide line of tidal water or tidal wetlands.

Why regulate in the Critical Area? Lands closest to the Bay potentially have the most significant impact on the Bay.

What is the Critical Area Buffer? The first 100 feet from mean high tide is known as the Critical Area Buffer. The Buffer may be extended for adjacent steep slopes and other sensitive areas.

Why regulate in the Critical Area Buffer? A naturally vegetated or forested Buffer filters out much of the harmful sediments, nutrients and toxic runoff.

What is regulated in the Critical Area?

- Tree removal or clearing of underbrush or other vegetation;
- construction of any house, addition, shed, deck, pool, pier, bulkhead, sidewalk, driveway, or other structure through which water cannot pass;
- grading or contouring of the land;
- farming and/or timber harvesting; and
- subdivision of property.

What is the Forest Conservation Act? It is a State requirement to retain or plant trees as development occurs. Development is broadly defined as any material change in the land such as clearing trees or other vegetation.

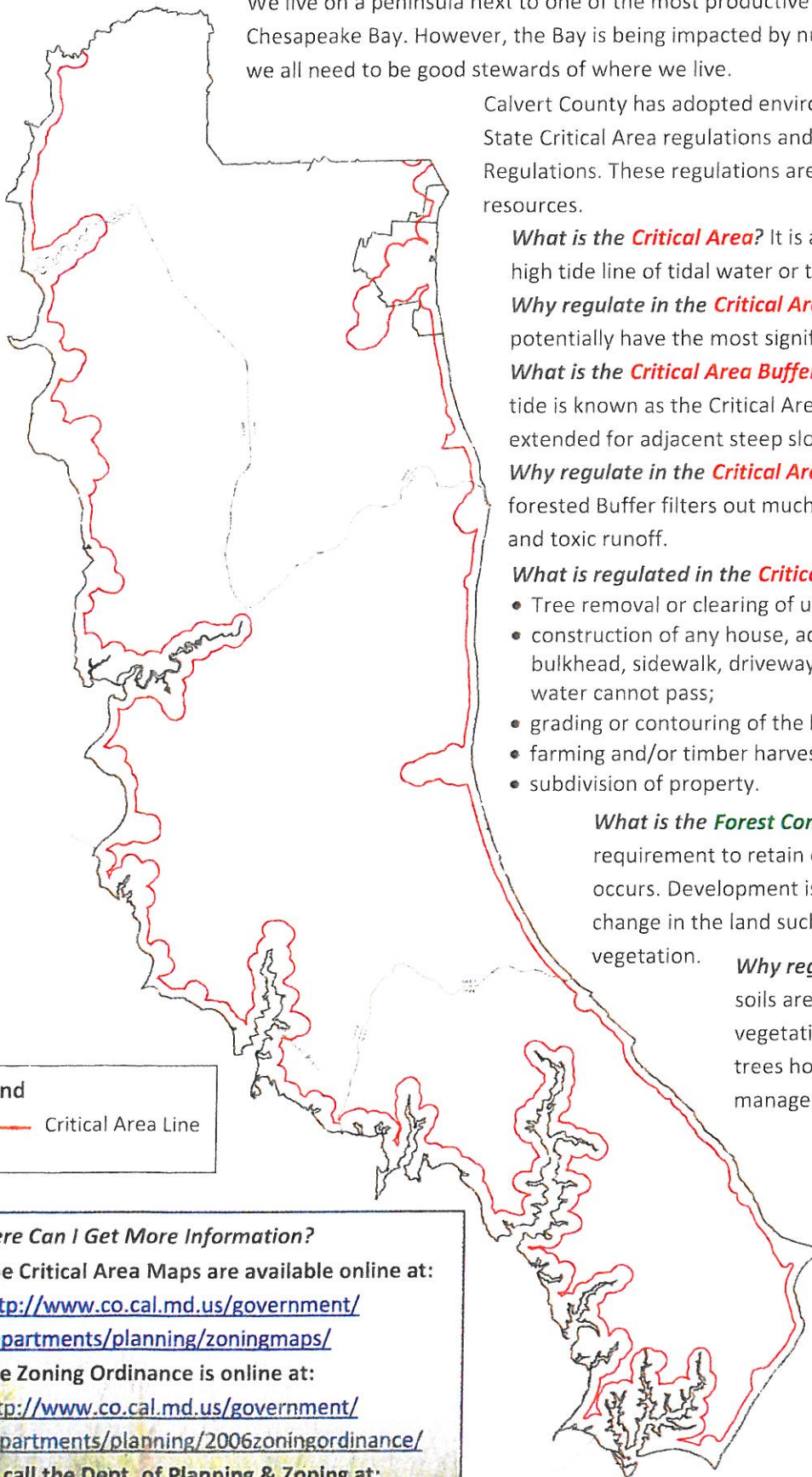
Why regulate clearing of trees? Most County soils are highly erodible and clearing vegetation usually results in erosion. Also, trees hold soil, provide for storm water management, and reduce pollutants.

What can I do without permits?

Whether your property is within the **Critical Area** or contains **Forest Conservation Areas**, the following activities are allowed without permits:

- Maintain yards that are cut at least yearly.
- Plow and cultivate existing fields and gardens.
- Plant trees and shrubs.

Failure to comply may result in fines or you may be required to replant trees and vegetation, so please contact the Dept. of Planning & Zoning before you cut or clear.



Legend

— Critical Area Line

Where Can I Get More Information?

- The Critical Area Maps are available online at: <http://www.co.cal.md.us/government/departments/planning/zoningmaps/>
- The Zoning Ordinance is online at: <http://www.co.cal.md.us/government/departments/planning/2006zoningordinance/>
- Or call the Dept. of Planning & Zoning at: (410) 535-1600 ext. 2356