



DELAWARE AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

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Delaware Department of Agriculture

Citizens Advisory Committee

Center for the Inland Bays

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AGRICULTURE

DELAWARE'S #1 INDUSTRY

- 525,000 acres of farmland, Delaware's 2,300 family farms produce a wide variety of agricultural products. These include corn, soybeans, wheat, poultry, fruits, and vegetables.

Economic Impact

- Food and agriculture industries provide 65,000 jobs (1 in 8 from Delaware's workforce) and \$8.9 billion in economic activity to the state, including \$1.5 billion in direct sales.
- In 2022, Delaware's community-run farmers markets set a sales record of over \$3.7 million.



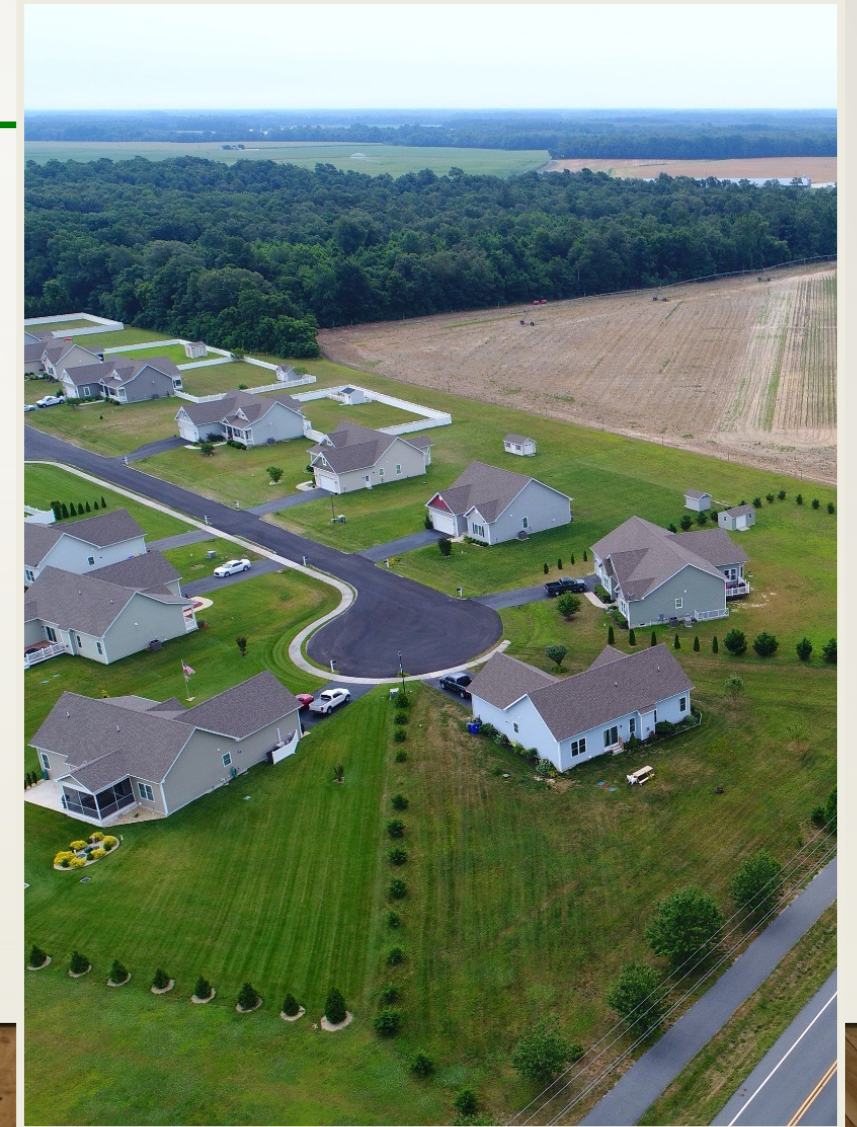
FARMING AND FARMLAND IS UNDER THREAT

Every Acre Counts

- Americans are paving over agricultural land at a rapid pace
- From 2001–2016, America lost or compromised 2,000 acres of farmland and ranchland every day

| Farmland Lost to Development (2001-2016)** | | |
|--|----|------|
| 1 | NJ | 8.7% |
| 2 | NC | 6.7% |
| 3 | CT | 6.4% |
| 4 | DE | 5.8% |

**American Farmland Trust “Farmland Under Threat: State of the States” (2020)



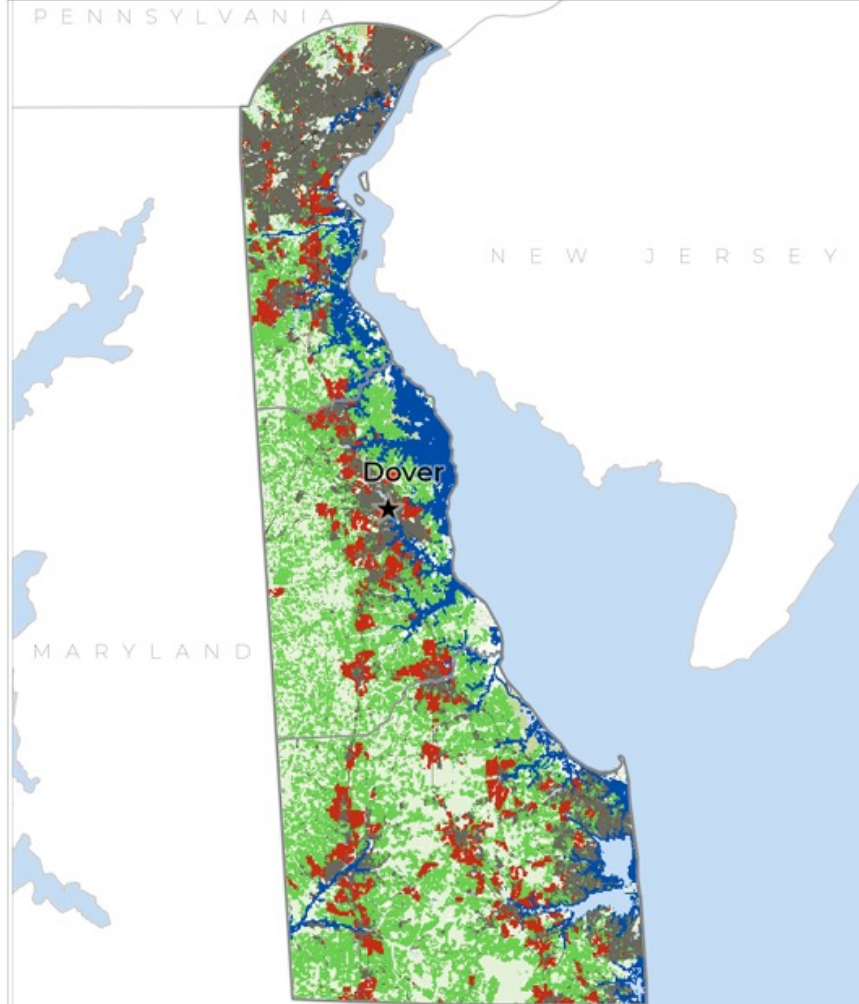


2040 Future Scenarios Delaware

farmlandinfo.org/publications/farms-under-threat-2040/

Farms Under Threat 2040: Choosing an Abundant Future mapped three scenarios of development between 2016 and 2040. If recent trends continue, **65,100 acres** of Delaware's farmland will be paved over, fragmented, or converted to uses that jeopardize agriculture. **That's 13%**. Delawareans can slash conversion, save farmland, and safeguard the future of agriculture and the environment by choosing compact development.

PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL LAND CONVERSION 2016-2040



On recent trends, from 2016 to 2040:

Delawareans will pave over, fragment, or compromise

65,100 acres of farmland.

That's the equivalent of losing

300 farms,
\$182 million
in farm output, and
900 jobs
based on county averages.¹

89% of the conversion will occur on Delaware's Nationally Significant land.²

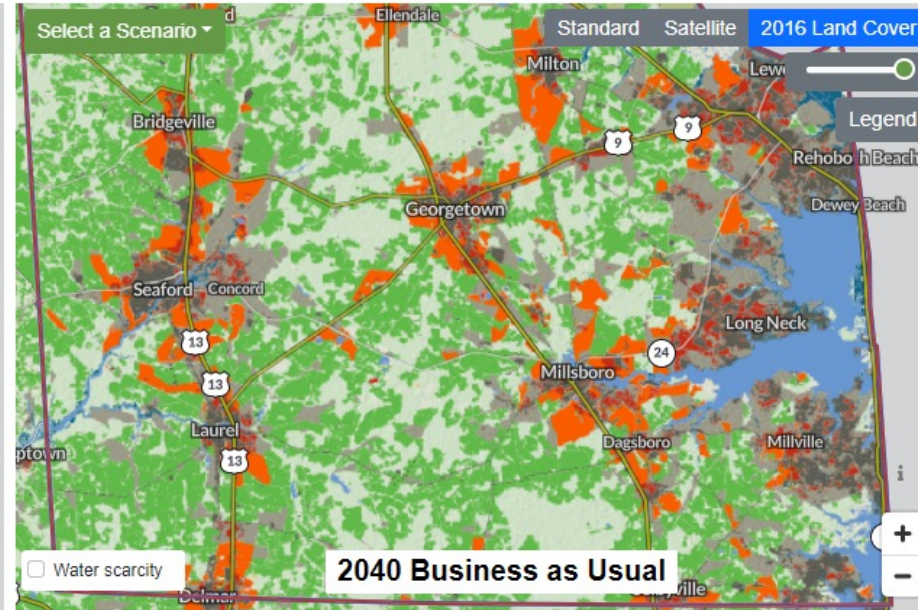
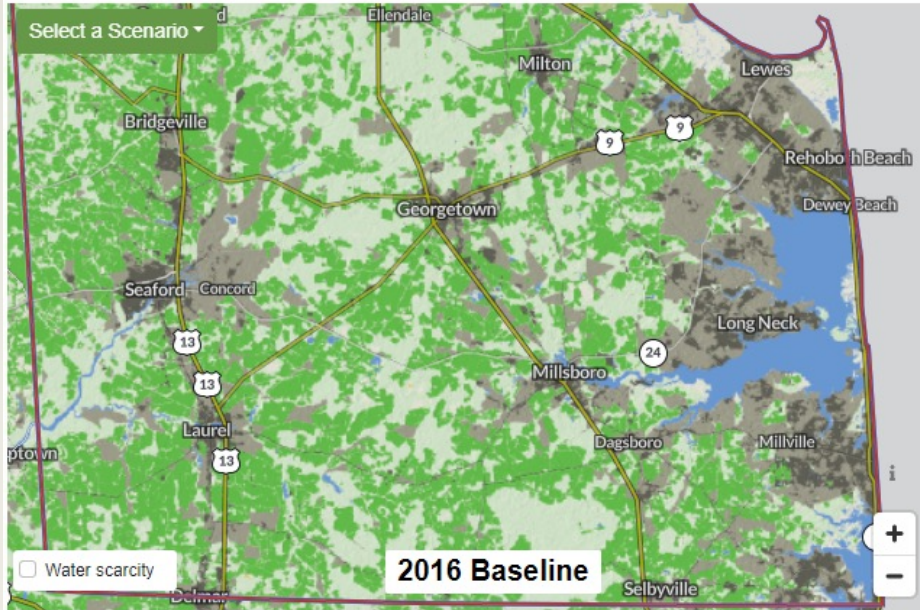
Hardest-hit counties:

LDR PAVES THE WAY FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural land that was in LDR areas in 2016 is

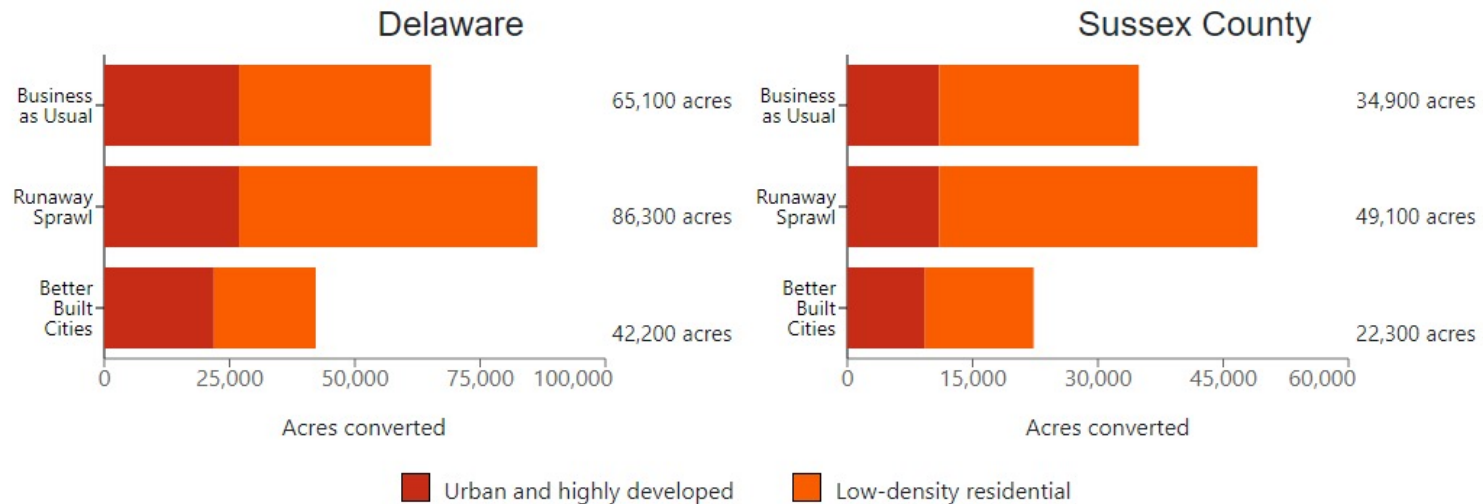
8 TIMES MORE LIKELY

to be converted to UHD by 2040, compared to other agricultural land.



[Download Report for Delaware](#)

Projected Conversion of Farmland¹ from 2016-2040





DELAWARE'S FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

- Established in 1991
 - 3 Del Code, Chapter 9 – Agricultural Lands Preservation Act
- First funded in 1995
- Governed by Aglands Preservation Foundation
 - Board members are appointed by Governor
- Seeks to preserve enough agricultural land to sustain our agricultural industry
 - Unofficial goal – 50% of Delaware farmland



HOW FARMLAND PRESERVATION WORKS

Entirely voluntary, two step process:

1. Landowners enroll their farm into a **10-year Preservation District agreement**.
2. After enrolling, landowners can apply to sell their farm's development rights, known as a **preservation easement**, keeping the farm preserved for perpetuity.

Easements are selected through an **annual bid process**

- Interested farms are appraised
- Owners submit offers based on their appraisal
- Offers are ranked by discount
- Farms are selected with available funds each year
- Selected farms are surveyed and go to settlement and pay for the easement
- Restrictions become permanent



2023 FARMLAND PRESERVATION EASEMENTS

2023 Outreach Campaign - \$20 million

- Kicked-off the campaign at the Delaware State Fair
- Held workshops with UD Extension
- Direct mailings to landowners
- Social media outreach and a TV spot

Currently appraising 360 farms (35,000 acres), including 104 new farms that applied during 2022.



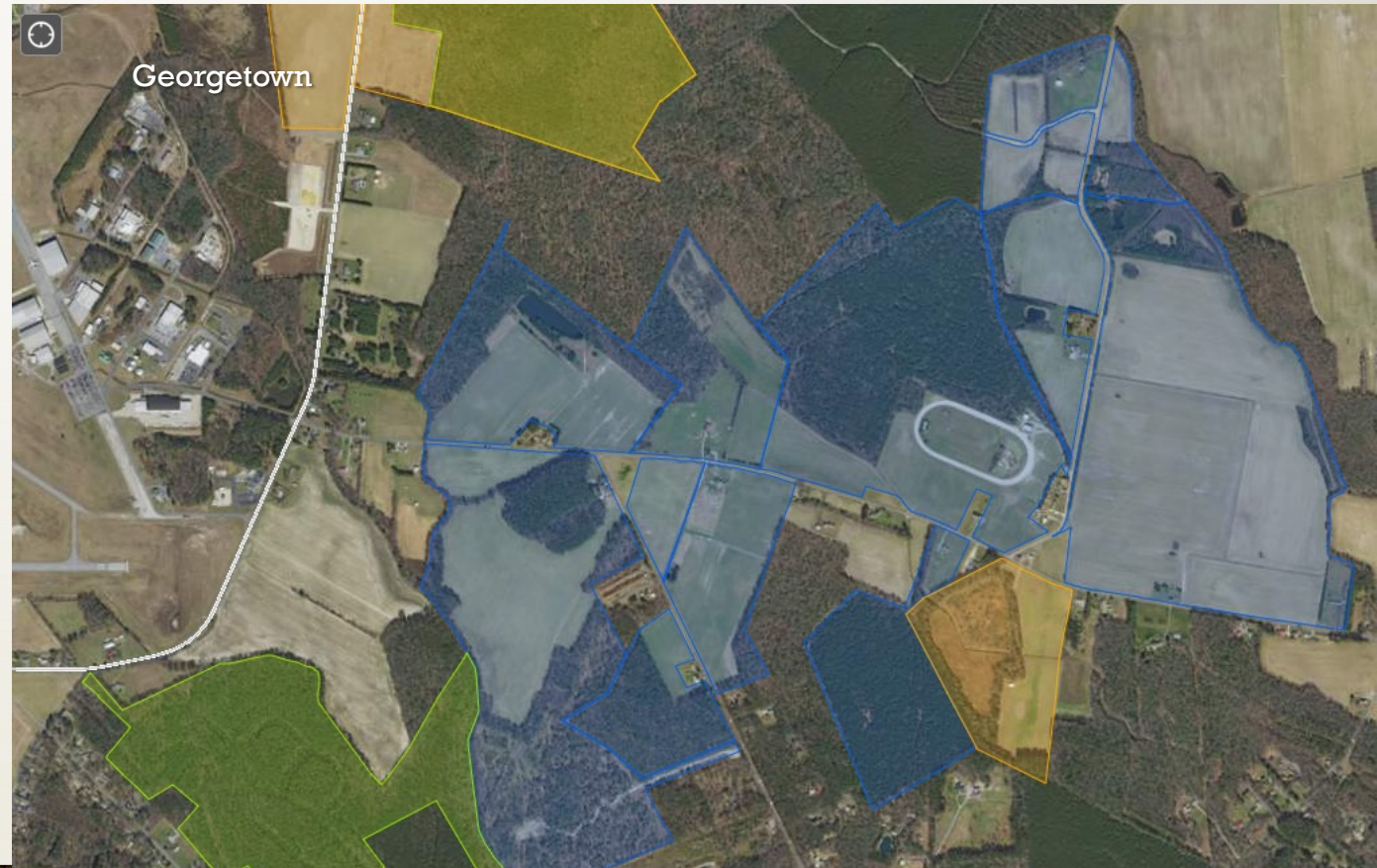
There has never been a better time to preserve your farm with **\$20 Million** allocated for farmland preservation in this fiscal year's budget.

District enrollment deadline to be eligible: **October 31, 2022.**

Find out more at <https://de.gov/aglands>

WHAT IS AN AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT?

1. A preservation easement is a recorded document that reserves certain rights to the buyer
2. Preserved farmland remains privately-owned, but must remain in agricultural use
3. Farming restriction is tied to the land and is in effect through sales, inheritance, subdivision, and more
4. Our easement allows limited residential use and no commercial use (except for certain farm-related activities)





FARMLAND PRESERVATION FUNDING

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Total Easement Costs: | \$265.0 million |
| State funds: | \$181.0 million |
| Federal funds: | \$ 64.0 million |
| County funds: | \$ 17.0 million |
| Other funding: | \$ 3.0 million |
| Total Landowner Discount: | \$367.0 million |

STATEWIDE PRESERVATION EASEMENTS

DE.gov/agdashboard

27% of Delaware
farmland



Easement Selection List

Click to view farm details.
Expand the hidden panel on
the left to filter by round,
program, county, legislative
district, or watershed. The
current round is the default.

3C Farms, LLC

Cost: \$149,984.22 - 46
Acres



Program: Agricultural
Lands Preservation
Funding: State, FRPP
S-08-11-182A

A & D Daisey Farms, LLC

Cost: \$388,626.18 - 48
Acres



Program: Agricultural
Lands Preservation
Funding: State, ACEP,
SC
S-19-09-183D

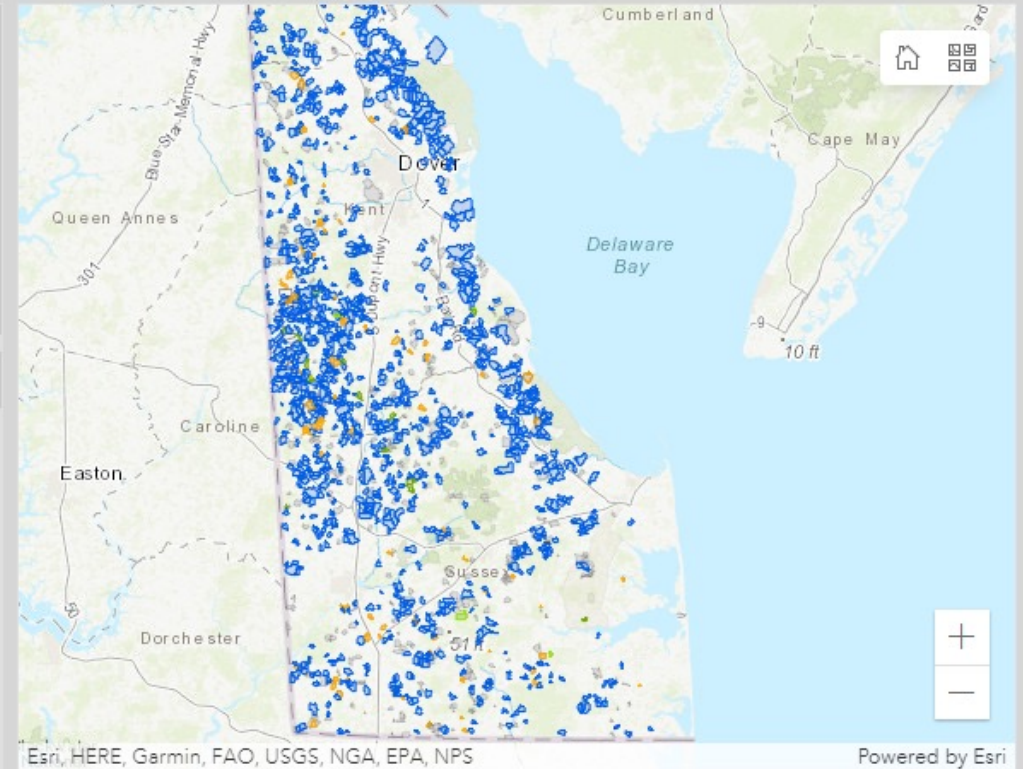
Aaron and Heather Melvin

Cost: \$46,103.16 - 40
Acres



Program: Agricultural
Lands Preservation
Funding: State, KC
K-13-11-008H-2

Alastair & Dana Lyn Probert



Farm Details

Farms

1,179

Estimated Payment

\$265,609,960

Cropland Acres

92,261

Forested Acres

40,843

Total Preserved Acres

148,124



EASEMENTS WITHIN THE INLAND BAYS WATERSHED

DE.gov/agdashboard

Easement Selection List

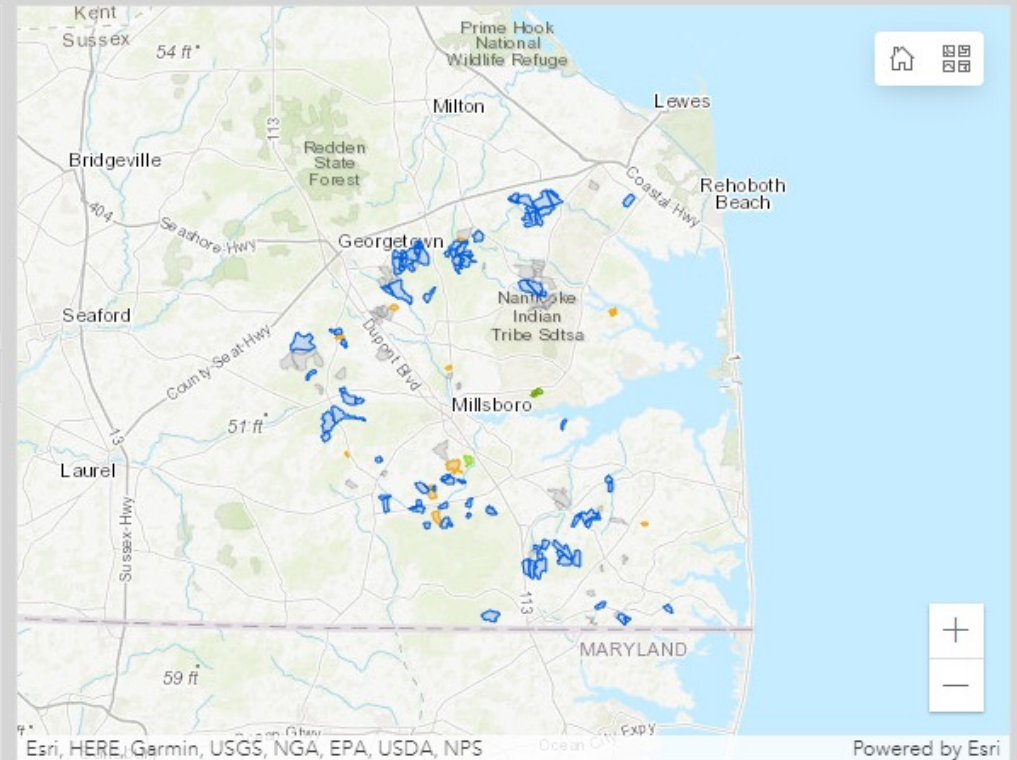
Click to view farm details. Expand the hidden panel on the left to filter by round, program, county, legislative district, or watershed. The current round is the default.

A & D Daisey Farms, LLC
Cost: \$388,626.18 - 48 Acres
Program: Agricultural Lands Preservation
Funding: State, ACEP, SC
S-19-09-183D

Alastair & Dana Lyn Probert
Cost: \$92,164.33 - 25 Acres
Program: Agricultural Lands Preservation
Funding: State
S-14-02-065S

Alden and Marilyn Hopkins
Cost: \$1,187,264.49 - 369 Acres
Program: Agricultural Lands Preservation
Funding: State
S-95-07-042

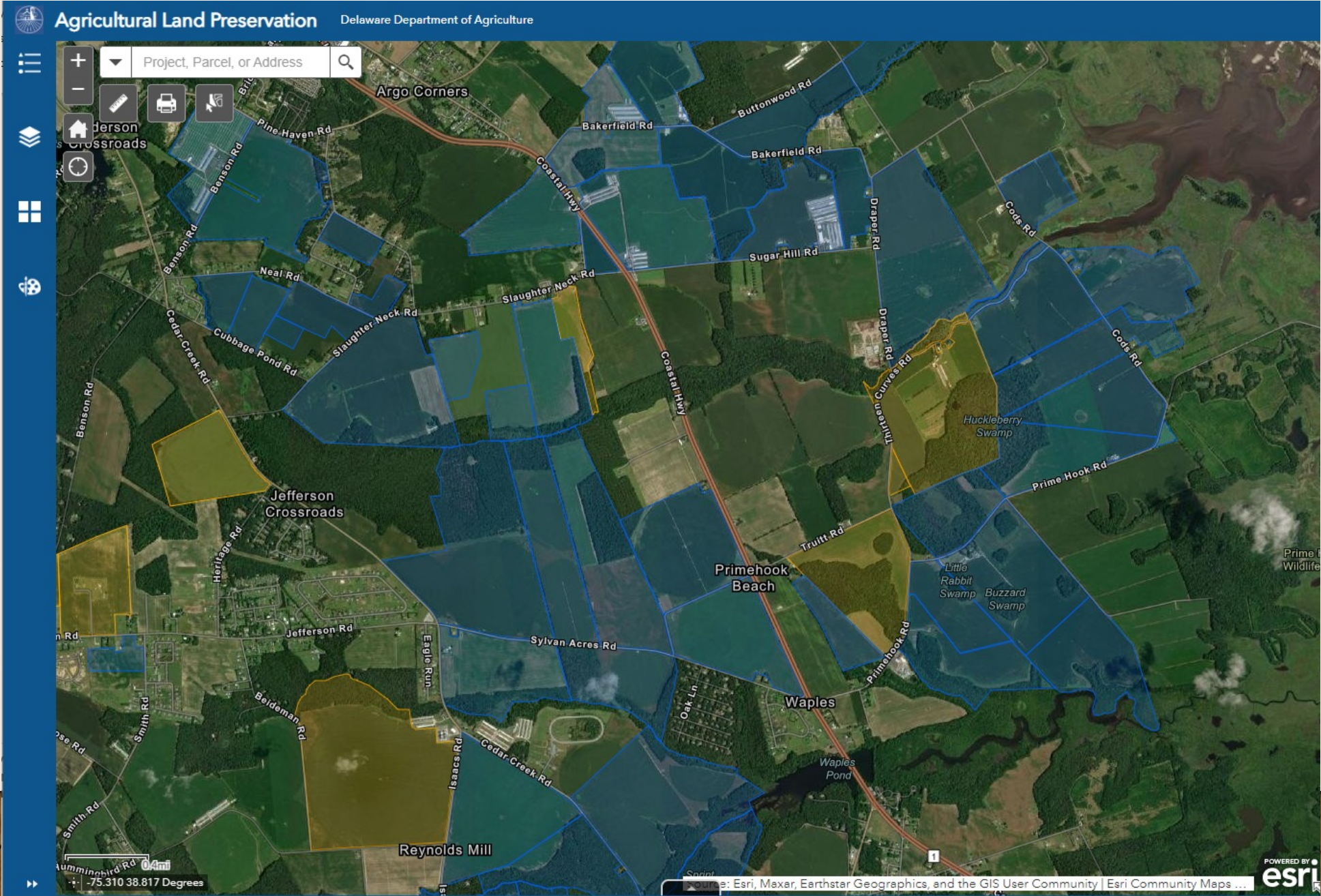
ANDREW Z. & MEG H.



Farm Details

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Farms | | Estimated Payment |
| 71 | | \$18,452,986 |
| Cropland Acres | Forested Acres | Total Preserved Acres |
| 4,590 | 2,694 | 7,361 |

ACHIEVING LANDSCAPE-SCALE LAND PROTECTION





FARMLAND CAN DO MUCH MORE THAN FEED US

With good stewardship, farmland can -

- Sequester carbon in the soil through cover crops, conservation tillage, and other climate-smart farm practices
- Protect water quality through cover crops, buffers, conservation practices and nutrient management, and modern pest management
- Provide habitat for wildlife and native species
 - 40,000 acres of preserved Delaware farms are forested

American Farmland Trust survey found that -

- Owners of preserved land were 2-3 times more likely to implement additional conservation practices.
- They cited the “preserved status of land” as a motivating factor for conservation practice adoption.



FARMLAND PRESERVATION

A STRATEGY FOR CARBON MITIGATION

- Developed land creates 50-70 times more greenhouse gas emissions than farmland, regardless of what is grown, making farmland preservation itself an effective carbon mitigation strategy and one that provides ***permanent benefits***.*
- In New York and California studies, ***low-density residential development*** was linked to the highest greenhouse gas emissions
- Agriculture easements ensure land remains available for further conservation and carbon sequestration strategies

*American Farmland Trust “Greener Fields: California Communities Combating Climate Change” (2018)





YOUNG FARMER LOAN PROGRAM

Agriculture needs to transfer land to a new generation of farmers

- The average age of a farmer is 58 and 1/3 are over 65 *
- Farmland values, operating costs, technical knowledge required, and risks make it difficult to get started in farming

The Young Farmer Loan Program

- Helps young farmers purchase farmland with a 30-year, no-interest loan for about ½ of the land value
- 37 young farmers have received nearly \$8.42 M in loans
 - Currently have three new young farmer loans working towards settlement
- Farms are placed in permanent preservation easement
- 2,969 acres of land permanently preserved through Young Farmer Loan Program

*USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service



QUESTIONS?

