



Agricultural Resources Existing Conditions Memorandum

July 2023

US 219, Section 050
Transportation Improvement Project
Meyersdale, PA to Old Salisbury Road, MD



Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	II
LIST OF FIGURES	II
APPENDICES	II
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose of Report.....	1
1.2 Project History.....	1
1.3 Study Area Location and Description	2
1.4 Project Purpose and Needs	2
1.5 Detailed Alternatives Description	2
1.5.1 No Build Alternative	3
1.5.2 Proposed Roadway Layout	3
1.5.3 Segment 1 DU-E	3
1.5.4 Segment 2 DU	5
1.5.5 Segment 2 E.....	5
1.5.6 Segment 3 DU-E	5
1.5.7 Segment 3 DU-E Shift	5
2.0 METHODOLOGY	6
2.1 Farmland Legislation Review	6
2.2 Data Collection Methodology	6
3.0 RESULTS	7
3.1 Farmland Soils	7
3.2 Active Farmland and Farm Operations	8
3.3 Preserved Farmland.....	12
3.4 Preferential Tax Assessment Lands.....	12
3.5 Protective Agricultural Zoning	13
3.6 Pennsylvania Productive Agricultural Land (PA Act 1979-100).....	13
3.7 Pennsylvania Prime Agricultural Land.....	13
3.7.1 Priority 1: Preserved farmland.....	14
3.7.2 Priority 2: Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs)	14
3.7.3 Priority 3: Farmland enrolled in preferential tax assessment programs	14
3.7.4 Priority 4: Farmland planned for agricultural use and subject to effective agricultural zoning	14

3.7.5 Priority 5: Farmland classified as unique farmland or capability class I, II, III, or IV land.....	15
4.0 CONCLUSION	15
5.0 REFERENCES	16
6.0 LIST OF PREPARERS	17
7.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	18

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1: Summary of FPPA Farmland Soils within LOD
- Table 2: Productive Agricultural Operations
- Table 3: Pennsylvania Prime Agricultural Land in the LOD

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Project Location Map
- Figure 2: Alternative Segments
- Figure 3: Productive Agricultural Land
- Figure 4: FPPA Soils
- Figure 5: ALPP Prime Agricultural Land

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Figures
- Appendix 2: September 13, 2021 Agricultural Resources Memo
- Appendix 3: Agricultural Survey Forms

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to document the existing agricultural resources within the project study area including:

- Productive Agricultural Land (PAL) pursuant to PA Act 1979-100
- Prime agricultural land pursuant to 4 Pa Code Chapter 7, §7.301 et seq., Agricultural Land Preservation Policy (ALPP)
- Farmland soils pursuant to the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), 7 USC §4201
- Land enrolled in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The agricultural investigations were conducted in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) *Publication 324 Agricultural Resources Evaluation Handbook* (PennDOT 2016). Although Maryland does not have a statewide farmland protection policy, federal FPPA applies. Maryland resources were evaluated for active agriculture, preserved farmland, land zoned for agriculture, and land in preferential tax assessments.

The mapping displaying the agricultural resources are found in **Appendix 1**.

1.2 Project History

The “*US 219, I-68 (Maryland) to Somerset, Pennsylvania Needs Analysis*”, prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) in 1999, identified two projects with independent utility and logical termini on US 219. These projects were: US 219, Section 019 (currently US 219, Section 050) (from I-68 in Maryland to the southern terminus of the Meyersdale Bypass in Pennsylvania) and US 219, Section 020 (from the northern terminus of the Meyersdale Bypass to Somerset, Pennsylvania).

Preliminary engineering and associated work towards a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US 219, Section 019, originally began in 2001 by PennDOT and the Maryland Department of Transportation/ Maryland State Highway Administration (MDOT/SHA) but was put on hold in 2007 due to funding constraints. Since that time, PennDOT has completed construction of US 219, Section 020, Meyersdale to Somerset, which opened to traffic in 2018.

The US 219, Section 020 project involved construction of a new 11-mile, four-lane, limited access roadway extending from the northern end of the Meyersdale Bypass of US 219 (a four-lane limited access roadway) to the southern end of the existing four-lane limited access US 219, south of Somerset.

The US 219 Section 050 project was re-started in 2014 as a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study. The study was completed in July 2016 and recommended two alternatives that could move forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process: Alternatives E and E-Shift. The PEL study also identified an independent, stand-alone breakout project within these two alternatives in Maryland: from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road. This 1.4-mile project was advanced, and construction was completed in 2021.

1.3 Study Area Location and Description

This project was re-started in 2020 and includes the proposed construction of an 8.0 mile (6 miles in Pennsylvania and 2 miles in Maryland) four-lane limited access facility on new alignment from the end of the Meyersdale Bypass in Somerset County, Pennsylvania to the newly constructed portion of US 219 in Garrett County, Maryland.

The study area extends approximately eight miles from the southern end of the Meyersdale Bypass in Somerset County, Pennsylvania south to US 40 in Garrett County, Maryland. The study area encompasses portions of Elk Lick and Summit Townships in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and the northeastern corner of Garrett County, Maryland. The Borough of Salisbury, Pennsylvania is also located within the central portion of the study area, as shown in **Figure 1** found in **Appendix 1**. The study area is mostly rural, with residential and small commercial facilities, as well as larger amounts of forested areas and farmland.

1.4 Project Purpose and Needs

The purpose of the US 219 Section 050 Meyersdale to Old Salisbury Road project is to complete Corridor N of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), to improve the system linkage in the region, provide safe and efficient access for motorists, and provide a transportation infrastructure to support economic development within the Appalachian region.

The project needs identified for this project are that existing US 219 does not provide efficient mobility for trucks and freight, there are numerous roadway and geometric deficiencies present along the existing US 219 alignment, and the existing roadway infrastructure is a limiting factor in economic development opportunities in the Appalachian Region.

1.5 Detailed Alternatives Description

Upon approval of the project purpose and need, the overall planning level study area was refined to the approximate Limits of Disturbance or LOD for the alternatives to be studied in detail (**Figure 2**). The alternatives under consideration are the following:

- No Build Alternative
- Alternative DU
- Alternative DU Shift
- Alternative E

- Alternative E Shift

For ease of describing the alternatives, they have been subdivided into Segments 1, 2 and 3. The alternatives are described in detail below:

1.5.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative involves taking no action, except routine maintenance, along US 219. The existing two-lane alignment of US 219 between Meyersdale, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland would remain. No new alignments or additional roadway would be constructed.

1.5.2 Proposed Roadway Layout

The typical section for each alternative provides a four-lane divided limited access highway with 12' wide travel lanes, 8' wide inside shoulders, and 10' wide outside shoulders. The width of the median between the inside edges of northbound and southbound travel lanes is 60'. In cut sections, where excavation will be required for construction, a proposed swale is located 15' outside the edge of the roadway shoulder. The backslope of the swale extends for 5' at a 4:1 slope, then continues at a 2:1 slope, until intersecting the existing ground. In fill sections, where fill must be placed for construction, a 10:1 slope extends from the outside roadway shoulder for 6', then continues at a 2:1 slope until intersecting existing ground.

1.5.3 Segment 1 DU-E

Segment 1 DU-E is a three-mile portion of proposed alternative, beginning at the north end of the study area, at the existing Meyersdale interchange. The segment includes portions of the existing US 219 roadway and the surrounding area, including along Mountain Road and Hunsrick Road. The segment continues to the south of Hunsrick Road, where it diverges from existing US 219 and crosses Clark Road. The segment then turns slightly west, avoiding the Pennsylvania State Gamelands 231. The segment then traverses along the bottom of Meadow Mountain. Stormwater management facilities have also been incorporated into the design.

Improvements to the existing US 219 roadway (Mason-Dixon Highway), Hunsrick Road Extension, Mountain Road, and Clark Road are proposed as part of the construction of Segment 1 DU-E. These improvements are intended to ensure that local traffic has continued access. The scope of these proposed improvements is outlined below.

Mason-Dixon Highway

The Mason-Dixon Highway (T-355) will be improved between Hunsrick Road and the US 219 Meyersdale Interchange in accordance with PennDOT's Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation (3R) design criteria, using a design speed transition from 55 MPH to 35 MPH. The improvement corridor is roughly 1.3-miles in length, starting at the south near Hunsrick Road and ending at the US 219 Meyersdale Interchange.

Prior to the opening of the Meyersdale Bypass, Mason-Dixon Highway carried US 219. After the Meyersdale Bypass opened, PennDOT transferred ownership and maintenance of Mason-Dixon Highway to Summit Township. Following completion of the new US 219 alternative, ownership of Mason-Dixon Highway is to be transferred back to PennDOT as part of re-routed traffic patterns in the area.

Hunsrick Road Extension

Improvements made to tie the new US 219 alternative into existing US 219 necessitates the removal of the existing Hunsrick Road Bridge (SR 2102). Due to geometric and intersection sight distance constraints at the intersection of Hunsrick Road (T-355) and Mason-Dixon Highway (T-355), it was determined not to replace the Hunsrick Road Bridge and terminate Hunsrick Road on the east side of US 219.

As a result of the Hunsrick Road Bridge removal, a new roadway will be constructed; the Hunsrick Road Extension. This new roadway will connect existing Hunsrick Road with Fike Hollow Road (T-363) and generally runs parallel to the new US 219 alternative along the eastern side. This new connector roadway will provide access from Hunsrick Road to US Business Route 219 (SR 2047) near the Meyersdale Interchange.

The proposed typical section for Hunsrick Road Extension includes 2- 10' travel lanes and 4' outside shoulders. The design speed is anticipated to be 25 miles per hour.

Mountain Road

Mountain Road (T-824) currently extends north from the intersection with Hunsrick Road to a cul-de-sac adjacent to existing US 219. With the associated improvements of the Hunsrick Road Extension, the northern end of Mountain Road will be connected to Hunsrick Road Extension and the existing cul-de-sac will be removed. The existing intersection of Mountain Road with Hunsrick Road will be maintained.

To avoid the steep grade (14%) on existing Mountain Road, a portion of Mountain Road is to be closed to traffic. Access to property along Mountain Road will be maintained and cul-de-sacs will be placed where the road will be closed. As noted above, the northern segment of Mountain Road will be accessible from the Hunsrick Road Extension while the southern segment of Mountain Road will be accessible from the existing intersection with Hunsrick Road.

Clark Road

Clark Road (T-353) extends west from Mountain Road (T-824) to existing US 219. Due to topographical and geometric constraints, providing a grade separated crossing of the new US 219 alternative was not practical. It was determined Clark Road should be bisected where it crosses the new alternative of US 219. A cul-de-sac will be placed at each end of the roadway where it intersects the US 219 right-

of-way. The eastern side of Clark Road will maintain access to US Business Route 219 near the Meyersdale Interchange via Mountain Road, Hunsrick Road Extension, and Fike Hollow Road.

1.5.4 Segment 2 DU

Segment 2 DU turns west from Segment 1 DU-E, towards existing US 219, and is sited between existing US 219 and Segment 2 E for about three miles. Segment 2 DU runs west across Piney Run Road and Piney Creek until it crosses Greenville Road, about 0.5 miles southeast of Salisbury Borough, and turns south. Segment 2 DU rejoins Segment 2 E at the Pennsylvania/Maryland border. From the Pennsylvania/Maryland border, Segment 2 DU and Segment 2 E angle further towards existing US 219. About 0.1 mile north of the Pennsylvania/Maryland border, there are preliminary plans for a PennDOT maintenance facility along Segment 2 DU, on the western side of the proposed US 219 alternative, with access to US 219 from the southbound lanes. Stormwater management facilities have also been incorporated into the design.

1.5.5 Segment 2 E

After separating from Segment 1 DU-E, Segment 2 E continues southwest for approximately one mile before spanning Piney Run Road. As Segment 2 E crosses Piney Creek and Greenville Road, it angles west towards existing US 219 and Segment 2 DU for 1.3 miles. Subsequently, Segment 2 E rejoins Segment 2 DU at the Pennsylvania/Maryland border. Segment 2 E and Segment 2 DU follow approximately the same path for approximately 0.8 miles, from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border until the beginning of Segment 3. Approximately 0.1 mile north of the Pennsylvania/Maryland border, there are preliminary plans for a PennDOT maintenance facility along Segment 2 E, along the eastern side of the proposed alternative, with access to US 219 from the northbound lanes. Stormwater management facilities have also been incorporated into the design.

1.5.6 Segment 3 DU-E

Segment 3 DU-E continues the proposed alternative south of the Pennsylvania/Maryland border and ties back into the newly constructed section of US 219, south of Old Salisbury Road. The Segment 3 DU-E alternative is located approximately 0.05 miles east of Old Salisbury Road.

1.5.7 Segment 3 DU-E Shift

Segment 3 DU-E Shift is angled southwest, similarly to Segment DU-E, and ties into the newly constructed section of US 219 at the same location. However, Segment 3 DU-E Shift is shifted eastward, farther from Old Salisbury Road, while avoiding impacts to the Little Meadows Historic District to the extent possible.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Farmland Legislation Review

The purpose of this report is to document existing agricultural resources within the approximate limits of disturbance (LOD) for the alternatives to be studied in detail.

Additional detailed agricultural information will be gathered as part of the future Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in pursuant to the following federal and state laws and policies:

- 7 U.S.C. §4201, Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981
- PA Act 1979-100, The Administrative Code of 1929
- PA Act 1981-43, Agricultural Security Law
- 4 Pa Code Chapter 7, §7.301 et seq., Agricultural Land Preservation Policy (ALPP); Executive Order No. 2003-2, March 20, 2003

Though Maryland does not have statewide farmland protection policies, they have a statewide farmland preservation program and a statewide preferential tax assessment program for farmland and farm properties.

Additionally, land enrolled in the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was investigated. However, according to the USDA, CRP and CREP data is not publicly available. The Somerset County, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland Farm Service Agencies were contacted in April 2023. The Farm Service Agencies indicated the CRP data could not be provided due to privacy concerns.

2.2 Data Collection Methodology

Data collection was completed in two phases: preliminary and detailed data collection. The preliminary data collection was based on a review of secondary source data, coordination with county officials, and limited field reconnaissance. The preliminary data collection was conducted for the land within the study area limits shown on **Figure 1**. A memorandum documenting the results of the preliminary data collection may be found in **Appendix 2**.

Data within the study area in Pennsylvania was obtained from the Somerset County Agricultural Land Preservation Board who was contacted to verify the presence of agricultural conservation easements and agricultural security areas. Agricultural resource and tax assessment information was obtained from the Somerset County Real Estate Search and Tax Calculator website.

The *Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Board 2022 Annual Report (MALPF 2022)* was reviewed to determine if there were any agricultural conservation easements within the Maryland portion of the study area. The Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation website was used to access tax assessment information within the Maryland study area.

The detailed data collection was focused on agricultural resources located within or abutting the approximate limits of disturbance (LOD) as shown on **Figure 2**.

The data collection resulted in the identification of the farmland operations located within or abutting the LOD. Initially aerial imagery was used to identify potential active farmland for the LOD area. Parcel data for Somerset County, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland were reviewed to identify owners of farmed parcels. In November 2022, surveys were sent to owners of the parcels to verify their use and to gather basic agricultural information (**Appendix 3**). Property owners who indicated that their land was in active agricultural use were contacted to conduct more detailed interviews.

Project team members conducted interviews in 2023. Interviews were conducted with several of the farmers to gather more details about their farming operations. A few of the landowners were not able to be reached to conduct an interview. In this case, the presence of agricultural land was based on aerial imagery and field reconnaissance. Agricultural operations are shown on **Figure 3**.

3.0 RESULTS

The agricultural resources investigated and documented within this memorandum include the following:

- FPPA Farmland Soils
- Active Farmland and Farm Operations
- Preserved Farmland
- Preferential Tax Assessment Lands
- Protective Agricultural Zoning
- Pennsylvania Productive Agricultural Land in accordance with PA Act 1979-100,
- Pennsylvania Prime Agricultural Land in accordance with 4 Pa Code Chapter 7, §7.301 et seq.

3.1 Farmland Soils

The Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) was enacted to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. Resources protected by the FPPA include prime and unique farmland soils and farmland soil of statewide or local importance, which are categorized by the USDA. These farmland soils are not required to be in active agricultural use to be protected under FPPA. As FPPA is a federal program, it applies to both Maryland and Pennsylvania.

FPPA soils in the study area are shown on **Figure 4**. Acreages of FPPA soils within the LOD are shown in **Table 1**. There are no Unique Farmland Soils or Soils of Local Importance in the LOD of the proposed alternatives.

Table 1.
Summary of FPPA Farmland Soils within LODs

	Prime Farmland Soils (acres)	Unique Farmland Soils (acres)	Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance (acres)	Farmland Soils of Local Importance (acres)	FPPA Soils Total (acres)
Pennsylvania	54.32	0.00	108.12	0.00	162.44
Maryland	0	0.00	75.48	0.00	75.48
Total	54.32	0.00	183.60	0.00	237.92

3.2 Active Farmland and Farm Operations

Owners and/or operators for active farmland within or abutting the LOD, were contacted to set up interviews regarding the agricultural use of their parcels. If the owners/operators were not available for an interview, the agricultural use was based on aerial imagery, data collected during the previous study, and the site reconnaissance. **Table 2** shows the owners and operators, the type of farm operation, and the acres within the LOD. Farm operations with active farmland adjacent to but not within the limits of the LOD are also listed in Table 2. The farm operations are shown in **Figure 3**. A summary of the individual farming operations can be found below.

1. Grube Operation

The information on the Grube Operation was obtained during an interview with Dennis Grube on May 25, 2023. Dennis Grube and Kathy Grube operate a lamb farm located on the Mason Dixon Highway (T-355) in Summit Township, PA. The operation consists of 47 acres, 32 acres of which are owned by Dennis Grube and Kathy Grube and 15 acres are leased. The leased land is used to grow hay to feed the lambs.

The farm’s primary commodity is lambs, which are sold for shows both locally and out-of-state. Dennis Grube estimates the farm produces between 70 and 80 lambs each year. The sheep are housed in the back barn on the property. The harvested hay, along with farm equipment, is stored in a hoop house on the property. According to Dennis Grube, the agricultural activities are a part-time enterprise and not the family’s only source of income.

2. Bittner Operation

The information on the Bittner Operation was obtained from an interview with Anthony Bittner on May 25, 2023. Anthony Bittner operates a 200 acre maple sugaring operation located outside the project area in Summit and Brothersvalley Townships, Somerset County, PA. As part of his operation, Anthony Bittner leases approximately 10 acres of land on the Mason Dixon Highway (T-355) from Dennis Grube and Kathy Grube. The leased land is in maple tree production. Maple sugar is collected from the trees and used in maple syrup production. In addition to the maple trees, the leased land contains a shall shed used to store a vacuum pump and tank. Anthony Bittner

transports the product from leased land to the base of operations via a tanker truck. According to Anthony Bittner, the maple sugar operation is a part-time enterprise and not the only source of income.

3. Stern Operation

The information on the Stern Operation was obtained from an interview with Brandon Stern on May 8, 2023. The Stern Operation is located on Mountain Road in Summit Township, PA. The operation is approximately 13 acres, all of which is owned by Brandon Stern. The property is used to train horses for competition and to grow hay to feed the horses. Agricultural buildings on the property include a barn and a few small outbuildings; the property additionally has a pasture with a horse training ring. Brandon Stern noted the horse training is a part time occupation.

4. Stutzman Operation

The information for this operation was obtained from an interview with James Stutzman in 2003, the 2016 Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study, and a field view in 2023. The owner was unavailable for an interview at the time of this study. The Stutzman's operate a farm that has been in production since 1755. In 2003, the 330 acre operation was primarily a dairy farm, and they also grew grains and hay for sale. Based upon a field view in 2023, the farm is intact and appears to be cropland with a few pastures with cows. Buildings on the property consist of two barns, a storage building, some small outbuildings, and a manure pit.

5. Yoder Operation

The information for this operation was obtained from an interview with Charles Clevenger (property owner) on February 2, 2023, and Allen Yoder (farm operator) on May 10, 2023. Allen Yoder leases 20 acres from Charles and Lois Clevenger on Winter Crest Lane, Elk Lick Township, PA. Allen Yoder harvests hay once a year from the property which is used to feed his animals (three horses, a pony, some rabbits). There are no agricultural buildings or equipment stored on the property. Allen Yoder is a part time farmer.

6. Mast Operation

The information on the Mast Operation was obtained from an interview with William Mast and Sylvia Mast on January 23, 2023. The Mast Operation, known as Piney Run Farm, is located on Piney Run Road in Elk Lick Township, PA. The operation is comprised of 489 acres, 306 of which are owned by William and Sylvia Mast and 183 acres are leased from surrounding property owners. Piney Run Farm has been in the Mast family since the 1940s. The Mast Operation includes cropland, woodland used for maple sugaring, and pasture. Field crops include hay, soybeans, wheat, and corn. The pasture and cropland are used to support the Mast's livestock business, which is transitioning from dairying to beef cattle as of early 2023. Agricultural related buildings include three cattle barns, and a series of other agricultural buildings. William Mast operates the farm full time.

7. Showalter Operation

The information on the Showalter Operation was obtained from an interview with Patricia Showalter on June 30, 2023. The Showalter Operation is located on Greenville Road in Elk Lick Township. The operation includes 14 acres which are owned by Michael Showalter and Patricia Showalter. They do not lease any land as part of their operation. The primary crop is hay that is sold locally. They also raise horses. The farm parcel includes a stable with four stalls and room for hay storage, two riding arenas, and a large pasture.

8. Deal/Miller Operation

The information on the Deal/Miller Operation was obtained from an interview with Myron Deal on January 23, 2023. Myron Deal and Jennifer Miller operate a farm on Greenville Road in Elk Lick Township. The farm has been in the family for over one hundred years and includes approximately 524 acres of land (355 are owned by Myron Deal and Jennifer Miller and 169 acres are leased). Myron Deal estimates that of the 524 acres of land, 262 are in agricultural production. The farm produces corn, soybeans, hay, small grains, beef cattle, and hogs.

In addition to two houses and a garage, the farm includes several barns containing livestock, hay, crops, and equipment. There is also a pond and garage on the property. Myron Deal operates the farm full time.

9. Markowitz Operation

The information on the Markowitz Operation was obtained from an interview with Sidney Markowitz on February 1, 2023. The Markowitz operation is 295 acres: 263 acres in Garrett County, MD and 32 acres in Somerset County, PA. All the land in the operation is owned by Sidney Markowitz and Carolyn Markowitz. The operation includes cultivated land and woodland. Approximately 88 acres are leased to a local farmer who grows hay. The local farmer provides hay for Sidney Markowitz's horses and removes the rest for his own use. Sidney Markowitz was unable to provide the name or contact information of the local farmer at the time of the interview.

The remainder of the property is enrolled in a certified tree farm program in which the Sidney Markowitz and Carolyn Markowitz are paid by the state and/or federal government for trees. Sidney Markowitz reports growing hardwood trees like maple, oak, cherry, red oak, and other varieties. Sidney Markowitz noted that he operates the farm on a full time basis.

10. Carey Operation

The information on the Carey Operation was obtained from an interview with Darren Carey on May 5, 2023. The Carey Operation encompasses over 1,000 acres in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Within the US Route 219 project area, Darren Carey leases 100 acres of crop land along Chestnut Ridge Road in Garrett County, MD from Linda Snyder and Charles Palmer. The property is used to produce corn and beans, which he contracts to be sold elsewhere. Darren Carey is a full-time farmer.

11. Garlitz Brothers Operation

The information on this operation was provided by the property owners, Richard McKenzie and Marsha McKenzie, in response to the farmland survey they received from the project team in November 2022. Twenty-one (21) acres of property owned by Richard and Marsha McKenzie, located along Chestnut Ridge Road in Garrett County, MD, is leased to the Garlitz Brothers Operation. Corn and hay are grown on the two cultivated parcels owned by Richard and Marsha McKenzie. The Garlitz Brothers also use a barn on the property to store equipment and crops. Access to the parcel is via Chestnut Ridge Road and US Route 219. The project team was unable to reach the Garlitz brothers to gather additional information.

12. Camp Operation

The information on this operation was provided by the property owners, Richard Yoder and Eileen Yoder during an interview conducted on January 24, 2023. The property is located on Old Salisbury Road in Garrett County, MD. Richard Yoder and Eileen Yoder lease 72 acres of land to the Bob Camp Operation. The primary crops grown on the property are corn, oats, and hay. There are no livestock or agricultural buildings on the property. Primary access to the property is from Old Salisbury Road. The project team was unable to reach Bob Camp to gather additional information.

13. Merrill Operation

The information on the Merrill Operation was obtained from an interview with Jesse Merrill on May 2, 2023. The Merrill Operation is a crop and livestock farm located on Chestnut Ridge Road in Garrett County, MD, outside of the project area and encompasses approximately 200 acres. Within the US Route 219 project area, the Merrill Operation leases 70 acres of cropland from John Hershberger and Sandra Hershberger located on National Pike township. Hay, corn, and soybeans are grown on the leased farmland. The crops are sold or used for the 50 head of beef cattle pastured at the operations' home base. Jesse Merrill is a part-time farmer. He uses a barn on the property to store equipment and crops.

Table 2.
Productive Agricultural Operations

Op. ID #	Operation	Owner	Operation Type	Active Farmland in LOD
1	Grube	Dennis & Kathy Grube	Livestock	0.36
2	Bittner	Dennis & Kathy Grube	Sugar Maple	1.28
3	Stern	Brandon M. Stern	Hay	5.07
4	Stutzman	James C. Stutzman et al	Crops/Livestock	0.31
5	Yoder	Charles E. & Lois I. Clevenger	Crops	0
6	Mast	Multiple properties including William & Sylvia Mast, Sandra Banker, and others	Crops/Livestock/ Sugar Maple	23.97
7	Showalter	Michael D. & Patricia Ann Showalter	Hay	1.17
8	Deal/Miller	Myron Deal & Jennifer Miller Jerry L. & Jayne K. Deal	Crops/Livestock/ Sugar Maple	8.97
9	Markowitz	Sidney S. & Carolyn S. Markowitz Revocable Trust	Crops	17.11
10	Carey	Maust-Snyder Linda Lif Int, Palmer Charles W Rem	Crops	0
11	Garlitz Brothers	Richard J. & Marsha McKenzie	Crops	5.47
12	Camp	Richard D. & Eileen R. Yoder	Crops	54.35
13	Merrill	John D. & Sandra S. Hershberger et al	Crops (not confirmed)	11.11

3.3 Preserved Farmland

Preserved farmland is defined as farmland restricted to agricultural use by deed restrictions or agricultural conservation easements. Coordination with Somerset County PA noted that there are no agricultural conservation easements or preserved farmland in the LOD. According to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, there are no preserved farms in the LOD (MALPF 2022).

3.4 Preferential Tax Assessment Lands

The Somerset County Real Estate Search and Tax Calculator on the Somerset County website and the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Real Property

Data Search on the Maryland.gov website were used to access tax assessment information. According to Somerset County data, each of the agricultural operations in the LOD have parcels enrolled in preferential tax assessment programs (Acts 319 and 515).

Based on Maryland state tax records, all the agricultural operations within the LOD have parcels enrolled in the State Agricultural Transfer Tax program (Maryland.gov 2023).

3.5 Protective Agricultural Zoning

A search of Somerset County, PA and Garrett County, Maryland zoning regulations indicated that none of the municipalities within the LOD have adopted municipal zoning ordinances. Therefore, there are no protective zoning regulations.

3.6 Pennsylvania Productive Agricultural Land (PA Act 1979-100)

According to PennDOT Publication 324, the *Agricultural Resources Evaluation Handbook*, Productive Agricultural Land (PAL) is defined as “any land used for production, for commercial purposes of livestock, and livestock products. Agricultural production includes the processing or retail marketing of such crops, livestock, or livestock products if more than 50 percent of such processed or merchandised products are produced by the farm operator. PennDOT policy also considers barns and other agricultural buildings, land lying fallow due to crop rotation, and subsistence farms where the farm operator has land in agricultural production for his own ‘subsistence’ use rather than primarily for commercial purposes, as PAL” (PennDOT 2016). The PAL within the limits of disturbance is shown in **Figure 3**. There are 50.22 acres of productive agricultural land within the LOD in Pennsylvania.

3.7 Pennsylvania Prime Agricultural Land

ALPP defines Prime Agricultural Land as “land currently in active agricultural use (not including the growing of timber) which has been devoted to active agricultural use for the preceding three years and falls into one of the five prioritized categories” (PennDOT 2016):

- Priority 1: Preserved farmland;
- Priority 2: Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs);
- Priority 3: Farmland enrolled in preferential tax assessments;
- Priority 4: Farmland planned for agricultural use and subject to effective agricultural zoning; and
- Priority 5: Farmland classified as unique farmland or capability classes I, II, III, or IV land.

Table 3 shows the acreage of Pennsylvania Prime Agricultural Land within the LOD and **Figure 4** shows the location of Prime Agricultural Land within the LOD.

Table 3.
Pennsylvania Prime Agricultural Land in the LOD

	Priority 1: Preserved Farmland (acres)	Priority 2: Agricultural Security Areas (acres)	Priority 3: Farmland Preferential Tax Assessment (acres)	Priority 4: Planned Agricultural Use or Zoning (acres)	Priority 5: Unique Farmland Soils or Soils of Capability Class I- IV (acres)
LOD	0	0	45.16	0	5.06

3.7.1 Priority 1: Preserved farmland

Preserved farmland consists of farmland that is restricted to agricultural use by agricultural easements or deed restrictions. Easements must be recorded at the appropriate county land records office. Easements may be owned by the Commonwealth or county under PA Act 43, or by qualified conservation organizations. Correspondence with the Somerset County Agricultural Preservation Board indicated none of the agricultural parcels within the LOD are in Agricultural Conservation Easements.

3.7.2 Priority 2: Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs)

Pennsylvania’s Agricultural Security Law (Act 43) “enables landowners to propose the creation of ASAs to municipal governments. An ASA must contain a minimum of 250 acres of viable agricultural land, which may be comprised of noncontiguous tracts that are at least 10 acres in size or a farm parcel less than 10 acres that has an anticipated yearly gross income from agricultural production of at least \$2,000.” (PennDOT 2016). Correspondence with the Somerset County Agricultural Preservation Board indicated none of the agricultural parcels within the LOD are in Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs).

3.7.3 Priority 3: Farmland enrolled in preferential tax assessment programs

Farmland enrolled in preferential tax assessments includes farmland enrolled in Act 319 of 1974 (agricultural use) or Act 515 of 1996 (farmland). The land is taxed based on its use value rather than its prevailing market value. The landowners must commit to maintaining the current land use for a certain amount of time in return for reduced taxes.

Preferential tax assessment information was obtained from the Somerset County Real Estate Search and Tax Calculator. There are 45.16 acres within the LOD that meet the definition of Priority 3 farmland.

3.7.4 Priority 4: Farmland planned for agricultural use and subject to effective agricultural zoning

This category includes farmland planned for agricultural use and subject to effective agricultural zoning. The farmland is designated for agricultural use in a comprehensive plan and adopted zoning ordinance. According to the Alleghenies Ahead Comprehensive Plan (adopted by Somerset County in 2018) and Somerset County

website, there are no zoning ordinances in Summit or Elk Lick Townships and there are no areas planned for agricultural use.

3.7.5 Priority 5: Farmland classified as unique farmland or capability class I, II, III, or IV land

Unique farmland soils and soil capability classes are mapped by the USDA and published in County Soil Surveys. According to the USDA, Capability Classes I, II, III, and IV are suitable for mechanized production of common field crops if properly managed and for production of pasture and woodland (USDA-NRCS 2022). There are 5.06 acres of Priority 5 farmland within the LOD.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to document the existing agricultural resources in the US 219, Section 050 Transportation Improvement Project study area. Agricultural resources including Productive Agricultural Land (PAL); prime agricultural land pursuant to 4 Pa Code Chapter 7, §7.301 et seq., Agricultural Land Preservation Policy (ALPP); and farmland soils pursuant to the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), 7 USC §4201 were identified within the LOD of the project.

Thirteen agricultural operations were identified within or abutting the LOD. Property owner and farm operators were contacted via mail, phone, and in-person interviews to collect detailed information about their agricultural operations. A few of the landowners were not able to be reached, and thus the presence of agricultural operations on those parcels is based on aerial imagery and field reconnaissance. As the detailed alternatives are developed and refined, impacts to the agricultural resources and the farming operations will be generated. Additional interviews with the farm operators may be required to identify potential minimization options. A detailed discussion of impacts will be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement developed for the project.

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6.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Katherine Farrow
Director of Environmental Services
Years' Experience: 34
Role: QAQC

Catherine Dress
Project Manager
Years' Experience: 24
Role: Technical Review

Gabrielle Vicari
Senior Historian
Years' Experience: 11
Role: Field Investigation / Report Preparation

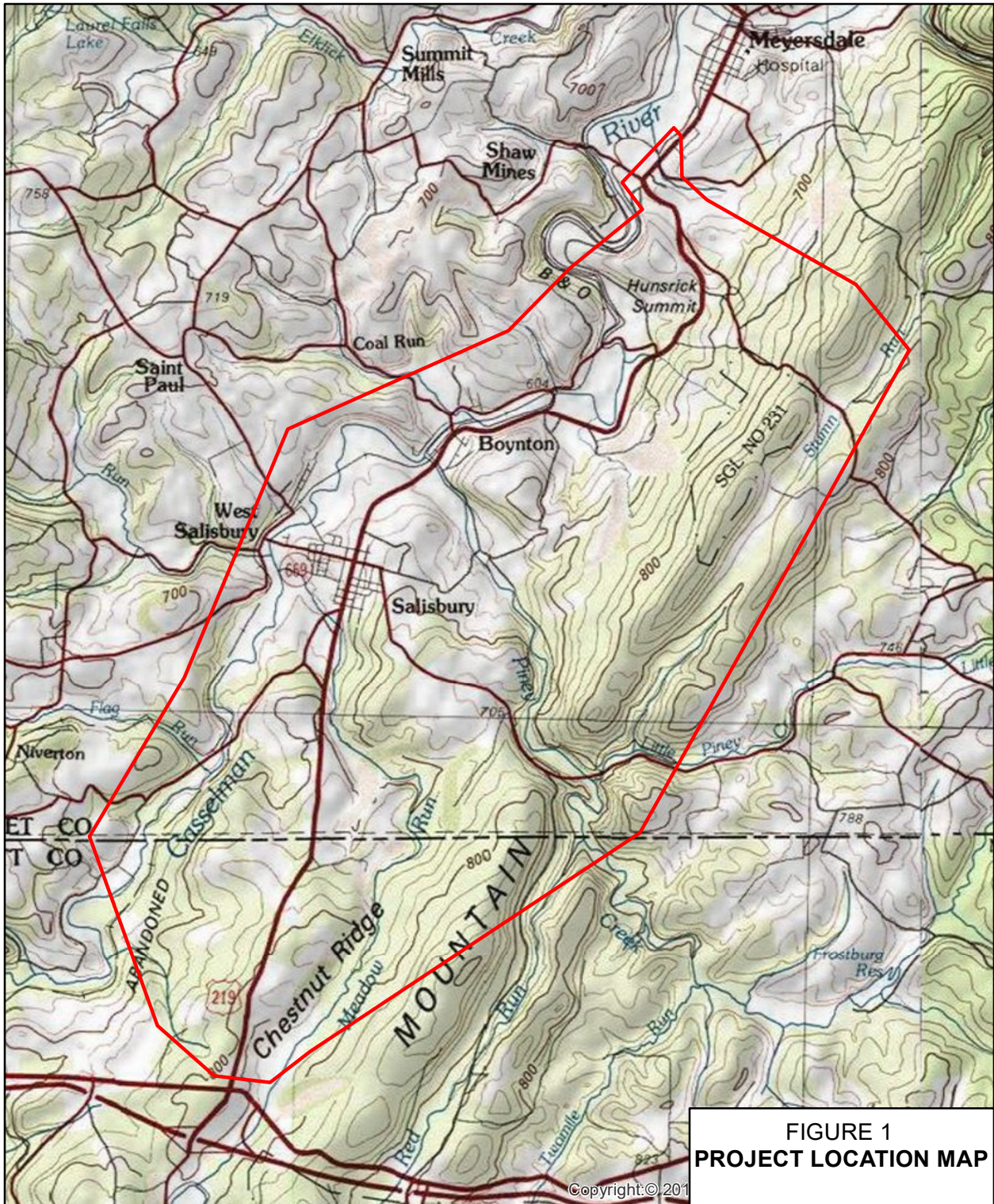
Courtney Papinchak
Environmental Scientist
Years' Experience: 10
Role: Field Investigation / Report Preparation

7.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALPP	Agricultural Land Preservation Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FSA	Farm Service Agency
LOD	Limit of Disturbance
MALPF	Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MSHA	Maryland State Highway Administration
PAL	Productive Agricultural Land
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkage
PennDOT	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Appendix 1

Figures



**FIGURE 1
PROJECT LOCATION MAP**

219 Meyersdale to
Old Salisbury Rd

**TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MDOT
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION

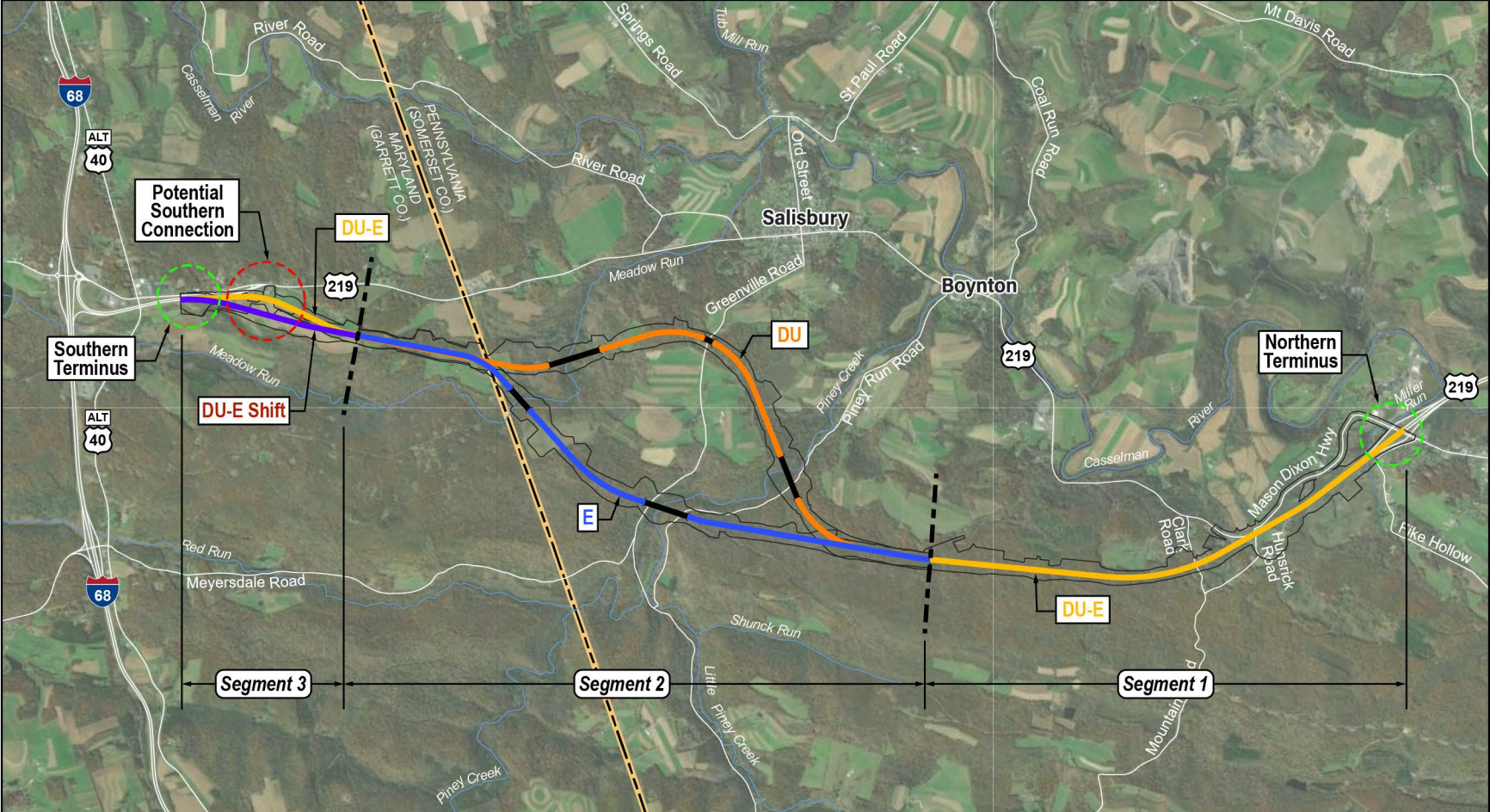
Date: 7/3/2023

LEGEND

Project Study Area

N

0 4,000 8,000 16,000 Feet



219 Meyersdale to Old Salisbury Rd
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

pennsylvania
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MDOT
 MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

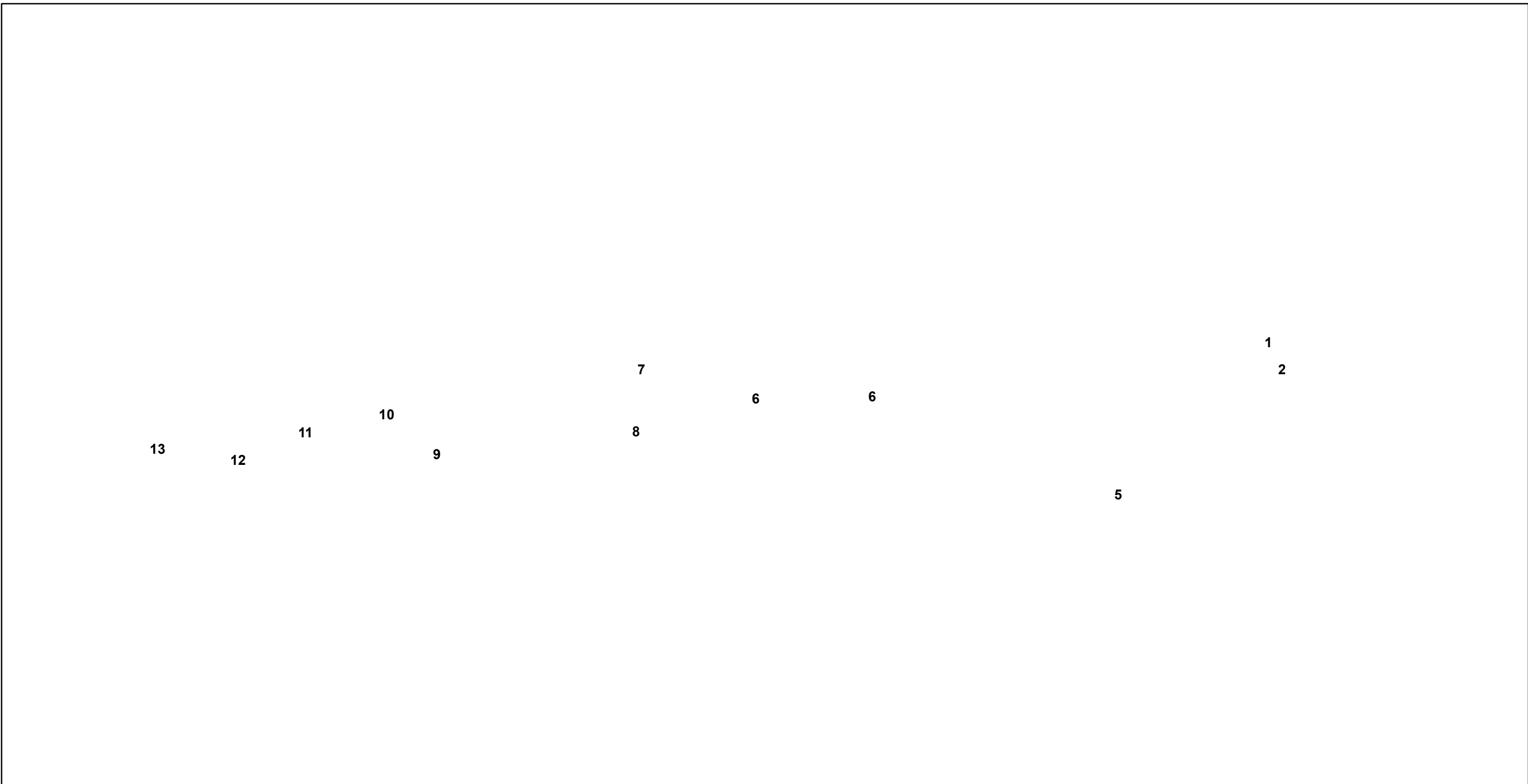
LEGEND


- Segment 1 - DU-E
- Segment 2 - E
- Segment 2 - DU
- Segment 3 - DU-E
- Segment 3 - DU-E Shift
- Segment Break
- Proposed Bridge
- Limit of Disturbance

FIGURE 2
ALIGNMENT SEGMENTS


Miles


0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2





















TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT


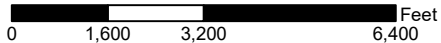





 Date: 7/3/2023

 Project Study Area  Limits of Disturbance  Productive Agricultural Land	Approximate Limits of Farm Operations  1-Grube  2-Bittner  3-Stern  4-Stutzman  5-Yoder  6-Mast  7-Showalter  8-Deal / Miller  9-Markowitz  10-Carey  11-Garlitz Bros  12-Camp  13-Merrill
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**FIGURE 3
PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND**













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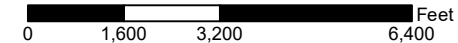


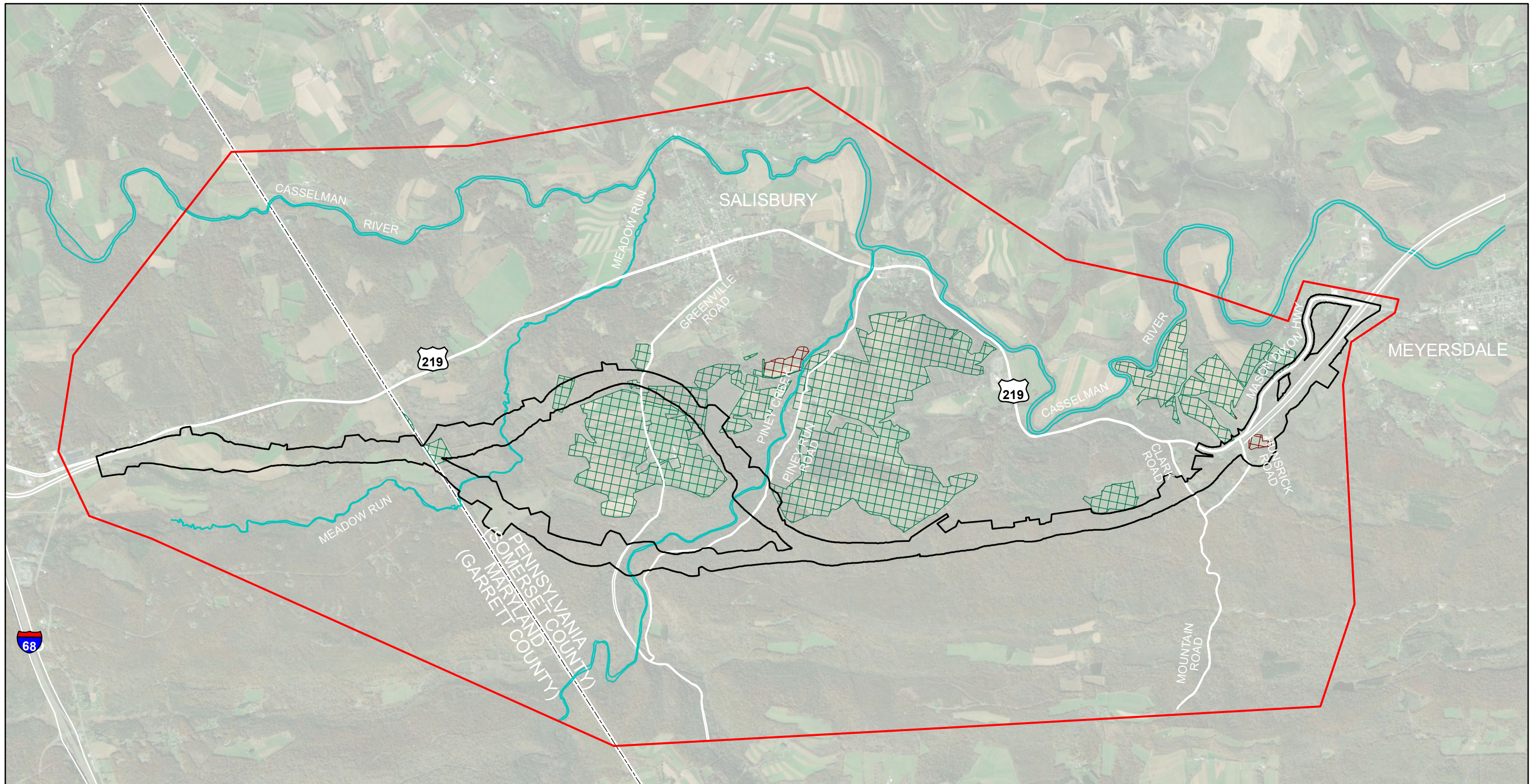



 Date: 7/3/2023

 Limits of Disturbance
 Project Study Area
FPPA Soils
 Prime Farmland Soils
 Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance


**FIGURE 4
FPPA SOILS**





TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT




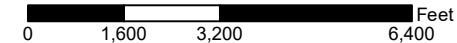


 Date: 7/3/2023

-  Project Study Area
-  Limits of Disturbance
-  ALPP Priority 3 Land
-  ALPP Priority 5 Land

FIGURE 5

ALPP PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND

Appendix 2
September 13, 2021 Agricultural Resources Memo

MEMORANDUM

To: File

From: Connor Sullivan

Date: September 13, 2021

Subject: US 219, Sec 050, Myersdale to Old Salisbury Road
Summit, Elk Lick, and Greenville Townships & Salisbury Borough, Somerset
County, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland
Lotus Project No. 2018_018
Agricultural Resources Memo

The following outlines the investigation of Agricultural Parcels within the project study area:

1. FPPA

FPPA Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance are present within the project study area. There is no urbanized area within the project study area, therefore all prime farmland soils are available for use. A GIS Shapefile depicting the Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance has been included.

- There are approximately 1,517.15 acres of prime farmland soils within the project study area.
- There are approximately 2,570.29 acres of soils of statewide importance within the project study area.

2. Acts 100/43 and ALPP (Pennsylvania)

Productive agricultural land (PAL), as defined by Act43/Act100, is any land used for production, for commercial purposes, of crops, livestock, and livestock products. PAL is present throughout the project study area. Based on a desktop review of aerial imagery, there is approximately 2,739.72 acres of active agricultural land is present within the project study area. Further investigation of these parcels will be required to confirm whether they constitute PAL.

As the project is a new highway, ALCAB involvement be required for the condemnation of any PAL require to complete this project, unless the land can be acquired amicably.

As per the ALPP (4 PA Code 7.301 et seq.), prime agricultural land includes land currently in active agricultural use that has been devoted to active agricultural use for the preceding three years (as determined from interviews, aerial photography, etc.) and falls into one of five categories (listed according to priority). A GIS file depicting all of the identified active agricultural parcels is included.

1. Preserved farmland (easements) – includes farmland restricted solely for agricultural use by a) an agricultural easement or b) deed restriction;
 - Based on a GIS shapefile provided by the Bureau of Farmland Preservation, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (November, 2020) indicates that there are 11 preserved farmland easements within Somerset County. There are no preserved farmland easements within the project study area. The GIS file is included.
 - I spoke with Susan Moon from the Somerset County Conservation District, who indicated that there are no agricultural easements within Elk Lick or Greenville Townships, or Salisbury Borough. There is one agricultural easement currently being initiated in Summit Township, located at 751 Old Cumberland Pike, Myersdale. As this location is north of the Myersdale Borough, it is assumed that the easement does not extend in to the project study area (approximately 6 miles away).
2. Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs);
 - Based on a list of Established ASAs in Pennsylvania, included in the 2016 Agricultural Security Area Handbook, there is one ASA in Summit Township, totaling 5,623 acres. This ASA is identified as the Pax-Terra Limited Partnership II. No ASAs are listed for Elk Lick or Greenville Township, or Salisbury Borough.
 - I spoke to Susan Moon from the Somerset County Conservation District, who confirmed there is one ASA in Summit Township and provided a map of the Pax-Terra ASA. The Pax-Terra ASA does not cross in to the project study area.
3. Farmland enrolled in preferential tax assessment programs (to encourage open space uses and discourage conversion to other uses) – this specifically refers to farmland enrolled in Act 319 of 1974, as amended (Clean and Green), or Act 515 of 1966, as amended;
 - Somerset County provided a paper list of parcels enrolled in Act 319 on September 10, 2021. Numerous parcels enrolled in the Clean and Green program and are being actively farmed. Based on the paper maps, a GIS file containing active agricultural parcels currently enrolled in Act 319 has been provided.
4. Farmland planned for agricultural use and subject to effective agricultural zoning –designated as such in a comprehensive plan and/or zoning ordinance adopted pursuant to Act 247 of 1968, as amended (the Municipalities Planning Code) that delineates an area of agriculturally valuable soils and existing farms; and
 - None of the municipalities within the project area have adopted municipal zoning ordinances.
5. Farmland classified as unique farmland or soil capability Class I, II, III and IV land – soil capability Classes are identified by the County Soil Survey and USDA-NRCS.

- There are approximately 5,538 acres of Soil Capability Class I-IV within the project study area.

Active agricultural land, totaling 2,739.72 acres, is present within the project study area. Further investigations will be required in order to determine if these parcels meet the criteria of prime, in addition to the criteria listed above. A GIS file of farmland soils of capability class I-IV, as well as all active agricultural parcels, is included.

3. Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation

Maryland Preserved Farmland was investigated by contacting the Siera Wigfield, Senior Planner for Garrett County Maryland and by accessing publicly available GIS data from Maryland's Open Data Portal.

Based on a review of the relevant GIS data layers, there are no Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owned properties or conservation easements located within the project study area. Additionally, the GIS files provided by Garrett County did not identify any Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) properties, Agricultural Land Preservation Districts, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) conservation easements or Rural Legacy Areas within the project study area. Both GIS files have been included.

CJS

Attachments:

cc:

mem_US 219 Myersdale_Farmlands

Appendix 3
Agricultural Survey Form

Please respond to the questions below to the best of your ability. Please return this sheet to the project team using the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Property Information

Property Owner Name:

Tax Parcel No.:

Parcel Address:

Mailing Address:

Telephone Number:

How long has the property been owned by the current owner?

Operations Information

Are you the current farm operator? If yes, full or part-time?

If you are not the farm operator, who is? Please provide contact information (mailing address, phone number, and/or email address).

Type of farm (crops, livestock, organic, etc.)

Types of livestock raised:

Type of crops grown on the farm:

How long have you farmed the property?

How many acres are farmed?

Do you rent/lease other lands to support the operation? If so, how much and where are the additional lands?

Please mark up the following on the provided map and return to the project team along with this questionnaire.

Describe access routes to farm parcels:

Where are your most productive fields:

List farm-related buildings and their purpose/where is base of operations:

Are equipment and/or produce stored on the property? If so, where is it stored?

Does the property participate in any of the following? If yes, please describe.

- Agricultural easements

- Agricultural security area
- Deed restriction

Are you currently required to travel on public roadways to move farm equipment? If yes, please name roadways.

Do cattle currently cross under a bridge or through a stream?

How does the product get to market?

Is there any additional information about your farm or farming operation that you would like the project team to be aware of?