

SECTION III

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT

Application of the criteria adopted herein for additional park areas in the Baltimore region automatically limits the choice to water front areas of the Bay and its tributaries and to the several stream valleys of the region. With respect to the tidewater areas, little opportunity for extensive park development at reasonable cost remains. Most of the shore front is already occupied by industry, by private residential or summer cottage development, or by privately owned beach resorts open to the public. This leaves the stream valleys as the primary choice.

Within easy access of the Baltimore area, the principal stream valleys possessing some, at least, of the characteristics desired in a natural park are the Little, Middle and Main Patuxent rivers in Howard County, Seneca Creek in upper Montgomery County, the Monocacy in Frederick and Carroll Counties, Deer Creek in Harford County, and the Gunpowder rivers in Baltimore and Harford Counties.

The main branch of the Patuxent River is already largely occupied by the two reservoirs of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. The short stretch between the reservoirs, and a small area above the upper reservoir are already under consideration by the State Department of Forests and Parks as an addition to the State park system. This area, while possessing many attractive features, is limited in extent, however, compared with the total acreage needed for the region, and, in addition, is also required to serve the population in the Washington area.

The Middle and Little Patuxent river valleys, while possessing some rather scenic stretches, are both limited in extent, and in the amount of more rugged wilderness-type areas desired. Much of the area is in farm land, and suitability of these areas for park purposes would therefore be limited. Similarly, Seneca Creek flows mostly

through farming country, and suitable park areas of the type here being sought are limited. Furthermore, some portions of this valley are already being assembled by the State Department of Forests and Parks, as a State park to serve the thickly populated Montgomery County area. The Department reports that this need for parks in the Washington Suburban area is further demonstrated by the heavy attendance of Washington area residents at the Patapsco State Park.

The Monocacy River flows almost entirely through gently rolling farm country. There is a serious watershed soil erosion problem to be dealt with. The stream itself is generally of a placid nature, with few rocky or rugged banks, and is in many places muddy. While quite lovely, nevertheless, and desirable in the absence of other suitable sites, this river valley does not provide in sufficient degree the features being sought in this study for a natural park. Also, both the Monocacy, and Seneca Creek have the drawback of being at a somewhat greater distance from the center of the Baltimore area than other choices.

Deer Creek possesses some quite attractive stretches of rugged natural beauty, but there is already a park on this stream, and the other sections of the valley which would be most suitable for a stream valley park are again limited in extent, in size of stream, and in some of the other features which are being sought. Elimination of the stream valleys discussed above leaves the Gunpowder and Little Gunpowder valleys as the remaining choices for a regional park. These stream valleys possess, in far greater measure than the others, those features which add up to a splendid natural park of extensive proportions, and have the added advantage of being closer to the center of Baltimore than any other stream. While, therefore, some of the other stream valleys of the area should ultimately also be included in a regional system of parks, the Gunpowder river areas must on all counts be given preference in selecting the next addition to this system.