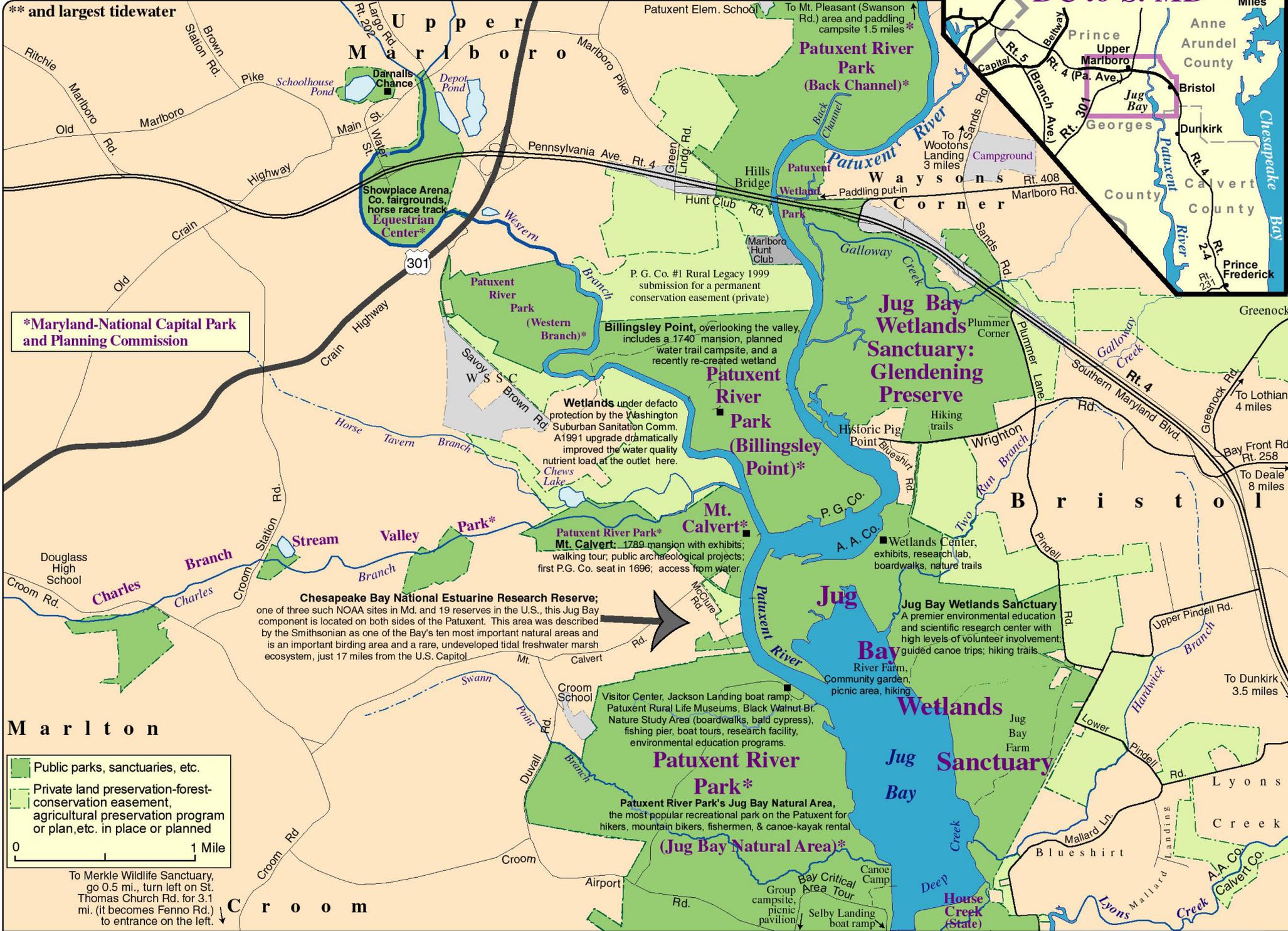
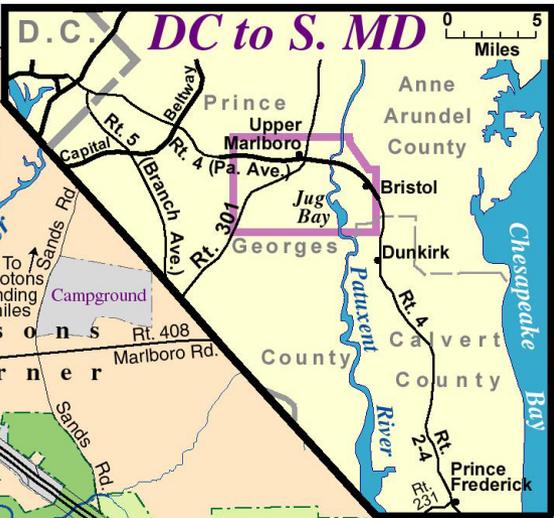


The 5th largest** public preserve/open space contiguous area within 30 miles of either DC or Balto.: 8,500 acres

** and largest tidewater



*Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; one of three such NOAA sites in Md. and 19 reserves in the U.S., this Jug Bay component is located on both sides of the Patuxent. This area was described by the Smithsonian as one of the Bay's ten most important natural areas and is an important birding area and a rare, undeveloped tidal freshwater marsh ecosystem, just 17 miles from the U.S. Capitol.

- Public parks, sanctuaries, etc.
- Private land preservation-forest-conservation easement, agricultural preservation program or plan, etc. in place or planned

To Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, go 0.5 mi., turn left on St. Thomas Church Rd. for 3.1 mi. (it becomes Fenno Rd.) to entrance on the left.

Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary and other State land extends southward from here, protecting 5.5 nearly continuous miles on the western shore plus 3 miles on the river's eastern shore. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Tour (cars, bikes, hikers) continues to the Mataponi Creek bridge and lookout tower, along the river shore and by huge flocks of geese to Merkle's Visitor Center and hiking trails. One trail follows 1733 ha-ha's, clearly visible old mound-ditch systems used to mark British and colonial boundaries. White Oak Landing is a new water trail campsite.