

7. Mineral Resources

The primary mineral resources extracted for human use in Allegany County are coal, sandstone, and limestone. Coal bearing formations are concentrated in the Georges Creek Basin in the western part of the county. Mineral resources present in Cumberland occur primarily in association with Shriver Ridge, Haystack Mountain, and Wills Mountain. All three of these landforms contain sandstone deposits of varying quality. Limestone formations occur between Shriver Ridge and Wills Mountain in the Valley Road area and extend across Wills Creek to the West Side.

There are no current mining operations within the City of Cumberland. The limestone deposits in the Valley Road area and on the West Side have been quarried in the past. Outside of the City limits, there is an active sandstone mining operation on the northwest slope of Wills Mountain. This operation does not currently affect views of Wills Mountain from Cumberland.

There is historic evidence that drilling for natural gas was unsuccessfully conducted in the Narrows at one time. However, the lithology of this area indicates that it is unlikely to be a potential source of natural gas.

- Issues:*
- Mineral extraction is not a use compatible with Cumberland's position as a regional urban center. Less developed areas of Allegany County have ample deposits to meet regional needs for mineral resources. Moreover, the mineral resources in Cumberland occur in association with landforms (Shriver Ridge, Haystack Mountain, and Wills Mountain) that are important to the City's visual setting. Mineral extraction is not currently a permitted use in any zoning district within Cumberland.
 - It is possible that mining on the northwest side of Wills Mountain could affect views of the mountain from Cumberland over the long term, depending upon the extent of future extraction and its potential to undermine slopes along the ridgetop.

Goals, Objectives, and Actions (Mineral Resources)

Goal 6

Minimize the adverse visual impact of mineral resource extraction within the City of Cumberland.

Objective 6.1

Ensure minimum disruption to Cumberland's development patterns and natural setting from mineral resource extraction.

Action 6.1.1

Prohibit mining extraction within the limits of the City of Cumberland.

Action 6.1.2

Coordinate with Allegany County and the Maryland Office of Surface Mining to ensure that sandstone extraction on the northwest side of Wills Mountain is conducted so as not to adversely affect views of the mountain from Cumberland.