

The Fall Zone

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In the Fall 2023 issue of *Marilandica* we began to explore the geography of Maryland with an overview of the state's **five physiographic provinces**—distinguished primarily by geology, and **six ecoregions**—characterized mostly by plant communities. The salt marshes of the Southeastern Plains and Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain ecoregions were featured. In this issue, we explore the dramatic transition between the Piedmont's hard metamorphic rocks and the unconsolidated sands and clays of the Coastal Plain, known as the Fall Zone (Means 2010), represented by the red line in Figure 1. Rod Simmons gives an overview of the highly diverse acidic forest communities that straddle the Fall Zone in a 100-mile stretch between Baltimore MD and Frederick VA (see p. 7). These rich forests are under threat



"Erigenia Ravine" near Glymont at Chapman State Park. Photo by R.H. Simmons.

from proposed high-speed rail and other projects and need to be protected.

We'll continue to dig into Maryland's fascinating geography and botanically distinct ecoregions in upcoming issues of *Marilandica*. Digital issues of the newsletter are available from the MNPS website (mdFlora.org).

REFERENCE

Means, J. 2010. *Roadside Geology of Maryland, Delaware and Washington, D.C.* Mountain Press Publishing Co., Missoula MT. 346 pp.

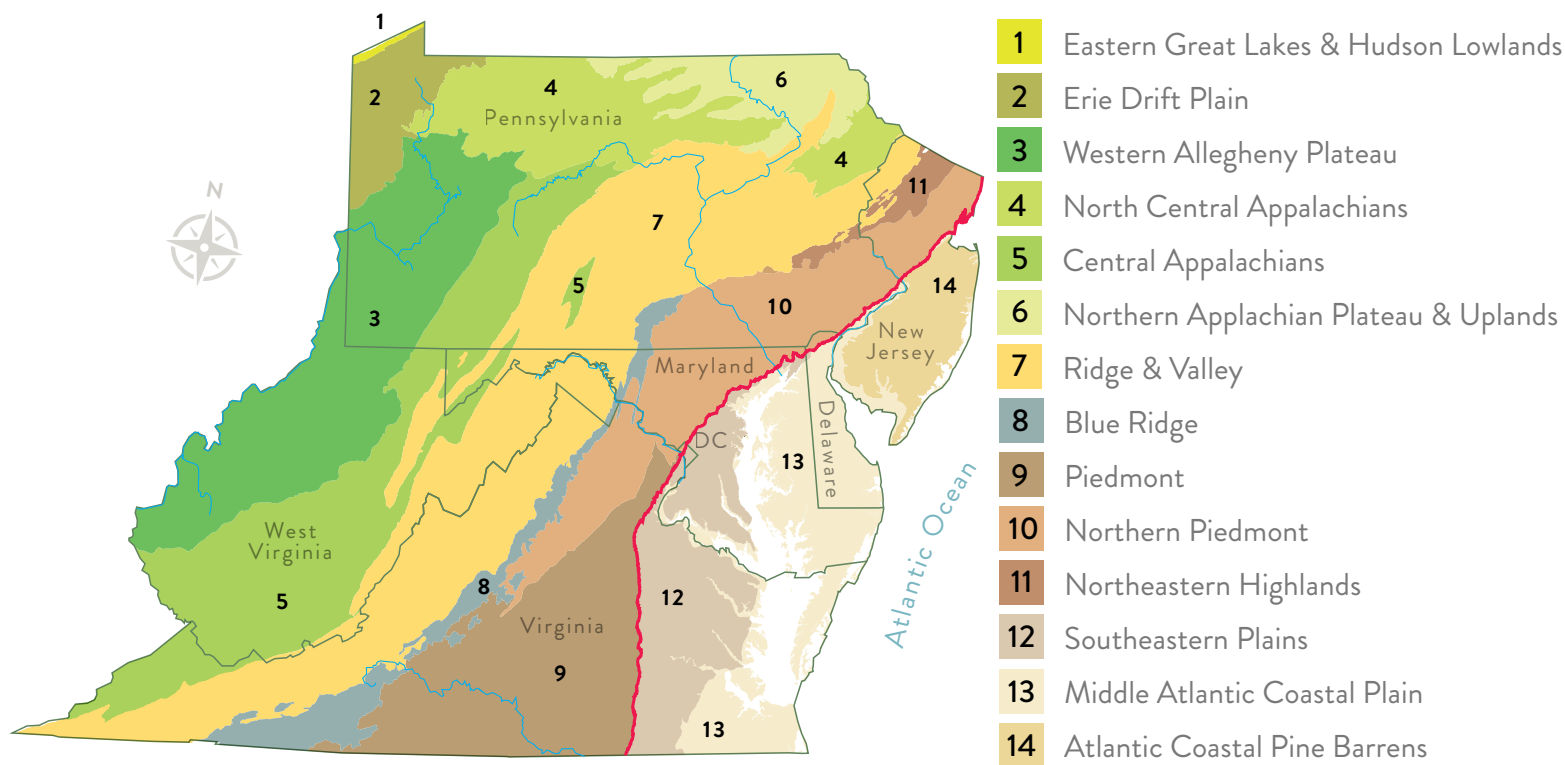


Fig. 1. Level III Ecoregions of the Mid-Atlantic.

Graphic by Amanda Wray, based on data from the April 2013 Continental United States Map; courtesy of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory. Red line denotes the Fall Zone; drawn by E.C. Fisher.