Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan
Northampton County,
Pennsylvania

Adopted by the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors on March 10, 2010

Open Space Task Force Members
Jane Mellert          Robert Cornman, Jr
Robert Simpson       Matt Glennon
Terry Kleintop       James Sandt
Kevin Harwick        John Santo
Bruce Rabenold

Consultants
Urban Research & Development Corporation
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Acknowledgment
This Lehigh Valley Greenways project was funded in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Environmental Stewardship Fund, administered by the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc.
# Table of Contents

**Background** ................................................................. 1

**Introduction** ........................................................................... 2

**Community Background** ....................................................... 3
  Regional Location ............................................................... 3
  Demographics ................................................................. 4

**Existing Natural Features** ..................................................... 6
  Prime Agricultural Soils ...................................................... 6
  Steep Slopes ........................................................................ 7
  Hydrology ........................................................................... 8
  Woodlands & Natural Areas .................................................. 11
  Composite Analysis ............................................................ 12

**Developed and Preserved Land** ............................................. 13
  Existing Land Use ............................................................. 13
  Proposed Development ....................................................... 14
  Preserved Farmland ........................................................... 15
  Recreation and Open Space Land ......................................... 17
  Existing, Proposed and Future Trails ..................................... 18
  Permanently and Temporarily Protected Lands ...................... 19

**Existing Preservation Techniques** ....................................... 19
  Statewide Programs .......................................................... 19
  Regional Plans .................................................................... 19
  County Programs & Plans ................................................. 22
  Municipal Plans .................................................................. 24

**Goals & Recommendations** ................................................ 27
  Goal A: Create a Sustainable Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program .................................................. 27
  Goal B: Increase Farmland Preservation Techniques and Acreage ................................................................. 35
  Goal C: Continue to Enhance Active and Passive Recreational Opportunities ...................................................... 36
  Goal D: Improve, Enhance and Conserve Natural Resources and Open Spaces .................................................... 38
  Goal E: Increase Preservation Efforts for Preserving Historic Resources .......................................................... 41

**Implementation** ..................................................................... 43
  Action Program .................................................................. 43
  Priorities ............................................................................ 44
  Possible Funding Sources For Implementation ........................ 45
  Additional Ways To Preserve Open Space ............................... 48
Table of Contents

Tables
Table 1 - Total Population, 1980 - 2000 ................................................. 4
Table 2 - Estimated & Forecasted Population, 1980 - 2000 .......................... 5
Table 3 - Total Housing Units, 1990 - 2000 .............................................. 5
Table 4 - Building Permits, 2000 - 2007 ................................................ 6
Table 5 - State Stream Quality Designations ........................................... 9
Table 6 - Existing Land Use, 2006 ......................................................... 14
Table 7 - Preserved Farmland, April 2009 ............................................. 15
Table 8 - Recreation & Open Space Sites ............................................... 17
Table 9 - Guidelines For Protecting Important Natural Features ................ 39
Table 10 - Action Program .................................................................. 43
Table 11 - Possible Trail Funding Sources ............................................. 45

Maps
Regional Location .............................................................................. 1
Prime Agricultural Soils .................................................................. following page 6
Steep Slopes .................................................................................. following page 8
Hydrology ...................................................................................... following page 8
Woodlands & Natural Areas ............................................................ following page 12
Composite of Natural Features ......................................................... following page 12
Existing Land Use ......................................................................... following page 14
Preserved Farmland ...................................................................... following page 16
Recreation & Open Space ................................................................. following page 18
Trails & Greenways ..................................................................... following page 18
Permanently and Temporarily Protected Lands ......................... following page 20
LVPC Natural Resources Plan ........................................................ following page 20

Appendices
A - Plainfield Township Ordinance No. 315 ........................................... A-1
B - Plainfield Township Ordinance No. 332 ........................................... B-1
C - Plainfield Township Ordinance No. 342 ........................................... C-1
D - Northampton County Farmland Preservation, Farmland Ranking System .......... D-1
BACKGROUND

In 2002, Northampton County voters authorized a $37 million bond program to assist in the preservation of farmland and open space. The County increased taxes by .5 mills to raise approximately $3.6 million per year to fund a pay as you go open space program. From these funds the County makes annual allocations to the County Farmland Preservation program, the County Environmentally Sensitive Preservation program and to the County and Municipal Parks programs. The County seeks the cooperation of municipalities to complete an Open Space Plan that outlines threatened or environmentally sensitive farmland and/or open space.

Plainfield Township’s Board of Supervisors enacted and ordained Ordinance No. 315 (Appendix A) on December 13, 2006, which created the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). Among other duties the EAC acts as the Open Space Committee which advises the Board of Supervisors.

In the November, 6, 2007 election, the residents of Plainfield Township voted to approve a 0.25% tax assessed on all wages, salaries, commissions, and other earned incomes of individuals residing in Plainfield Township. On December 26, 2007, Plainfield Township enacted and ordained Ordinance No. 332 - a 0.25% earned income tax for open space funding (Appendix B).

The County of Northampton has a current Open Space Board and Plan to match Township, State (DCNR) or private Non-Profit funds in order to ease or acquire environmentally sensitive open space. The County Farmland Preservation Board is currently exploring ways for the County to cooperate with the purchase of agricultural easements with the seven (7) municipalities which have levied and Earned Income Tax through voter referendums.

The Pen Argyl - Plainfield - Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan, adopted in September 2004, outlines important farmland and open space objectives. The Plan also contains information on directing the growth to the most appropriate areas of the Township, in accordance with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan. Plainfield Township recognizes that its farmlands and sensitive natural features are community assets. Planning ahead to ensure an appropriate balance between growth and the natural environment is the motivation behind the Plainfield Township Open Space Plan.
INTRODUCTION

Plainfield Township has a rich history of farming dating back to the earliest settlers. Today, much of the land is still in the possession of farmers but due to pressure from regional development, the landscape is beginning to change. The Plainfield Township Open Space Plan will allow for further regulations to be set and the opportunity for the Township to provide assistance to those who seek the preservation of farmland and open space.

An Open Space Plan must be adopted by the Township’s Board of Supervisors to begin the process of acquiring easements. This Plan builds upon existing Plans and includes guidelines for using the open space funds. The Plan includes the following sections:

- **Community Background** - The community background section includes issues pertaining to a regional influence. Development from neighboring municipalities and along transportation routes and a look at the Lehigh Valley as a whole will help determine trends for the Township. Demographics on total population, population estimates and forecasts, housing units and building permits issued before 2008 are identified for historical trends within the Township.

- **Existing Natural Features** - Natural features such as prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, hydrology, woodlands and natural areas are identified. All natural features and a composite of all natural features are mapped.

- **Developed and Preserved Land** - Existing land use, taken from the Penn Argyl - Plainfield - Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan are mapped and discussed. Proposed development, which may hinder preservation objectives was studied as well as existing preserved farmland, open space lands and public/private recreational lands. A discussion of greenways and trails are identified.

- **Existing Preservation Techniques** - A look at existing preservation techniques is discussed. Issues raised in the Regional Comprehensive Plan, Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance, Lehigh Valley Natural Resource Plan, Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan, Two Rivers Area Greenway Trails Implementation Study, Northampton County and statewide programs are studied for the best results to represent preservation techniques for Plainfield Township.

- **Goals & Recommendations** - Goals and recommendations are assessed and discussed.

- **Implementation** - Guidelines for implementing the goals and recommendations sections are identified. An overall implementation plan will assist the EAC, Township and County members in the preservation of lands within Plainfield Township.
COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Understanding the ongoing and historical trends of Plainfield Township, will assist in the creation of the Open Space Plan. Information about the Township's location, the proposed developments, and population trends will help provide an estimate of future development and open space. This Open Space Plan will assist in the conservation of open space, natural features, recreation and agricultural lands.

REGIONAL LOCATION

Plainfield Township, 24.38 square miles in area, is located in a region known as the Slate Belt. Located within the north-central area of Northampton County, Plainfield Township surrounds the Boroughs of Pen Argyl and Wind Gap. To the north, the Township is bordered by Blue Mountain and Monroe County. The Townships of Bushkill (west), Forks (south), Lower Mount Bethel and Stockertown Borough (southeast) and Washington (east) surround Plainfield Township.

PA Route 33 extends through the western portion of the Township before connecting to I-80, I-78 and Route 22. The connection with other routes, Routes 191 and 512, allows for alternative access to the Greater Lehigh Valley area of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton and the Poconos.

Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center is a 1,168-acre historic and forested area located just west of the Plainfield Township border in Bushkill Township. To the north, in Monroe County, the newly established Cherry Valley Wildlife Preserve will further conserve open space lands in the area. The Wildlife Preserve is now underway purchasing easements within an 20,000 area within the 30,000+ acre boundary.
DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics provides a good analysis of the human landscape within Plainfield Township. Analyzing the total and future populations, housing development and permits, and major employment opportunities in an area, helps create an overall estimate of future development. All these factors can threaten open space and farmland within the Township.

Population

The total population in the Township was 5,668 people in the year 2000, a 17% increase since 1980 (Table 1). The Pen Argyl-Plainfield-Wind Gap Region¹, during the same time period grew at 11%. All of Northampton County grew from 1980 to 2000 by 18.5%. Plainfield Township’s growth during the 20-year period, was similar to the County’s growth percentage, which was at steady pace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plainfield Township</td>
<td>4,833</td>
<td>5,444</td>
<td>5,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>10,872</td>
<td>11,677</td>
<td>12,095</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
Total Population 1980-2000

Source: U.S. Census

The latest estimated population in 2007, provided by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC), shows 6,113 for the Township and 12,546 for the Region (Table 2). Plainfield Township is forecasted to have a much higher percent increase compared to the Region, a 56.8 percent increase by 2030. Northampton County is only projected to grow by 27.9 percent by 2030. These forecasts indicate that Plainfield Township will increase its population exponentially, which will dramatically effect the open space, natural resources and farmland of the Township.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plainfield Township</td>
<td>5,668</td>
<td>6,082</td>
<td>6,855</td>
<td>8,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>12,095</td>
<td>12,546</td>
<td>13,363</td>
<td>15,259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Plainfield Township

Several key statements from the Pen Argyl–Plainfield–Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

- Northampton County townships to the south experienced a much higher growth rate during the 1990's than Plainfield Township. One of the factors contributing to the faster growth was in-migration from New Jersey, and the townships to the south are much closer to the main arteries connecting the Lehigh Valley to New Jersey: U.S. 22 and I-78.

- Total population in the Pen Argyl–Plainfield–Wind Gap area is expected to grow at a much faster rate than the Lehigh Valley as a whole, with virtually all of the growth occurring in Plainfield Township.

Housing

A total of 140 housing units were constructed between 1990 and 2000 in Plainfield Township. The percentage of housing units constructed was similar to the Regional total. Forks Township, to the south, had the largest of increase housing units constructed at 900, a 39.8 percent increase during the same time frame.

Table 3
Total Housing Units 1990-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Total Housing Units</th>
<th>Change (1990-2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plainfield Township</td>
<td>2,051</td>
<td>2,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>4,653</td>
<td>4,991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census
Housing growth can also be determined by the number of residential building permits that have been issued. Since 2000, Plainfield Township has issued 205 residential building permits.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Residential Permits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plainfield Township</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Plainfield Township

**EXISTING NATURAL FEATURES**

The following section identifies the natural features of Plainfield Township. The Open Space Plan will allow procedures to protect the natural features of the Township. The mapping and narrative will identify all natural features within the Township to serve as a documentation of all existing natural features.

**PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS**

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has established soil capability classes based on each soil type’s agricultural productivity. Capability classes range from Class I to Class VIII. Class I through IV soils are considered “prime agricultural soils” (Map 2). Capability Classification definitions are as follows for Classes I to IV:

- **Class I** - soils that have few limitations which restrict their use.
- **Class II** - Soils that have some limitations which reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.
- **Class III** - Soils that have severe limitations which reduce the choice of plants, require special conservation practices, or both.
- **Class IV** - Soils that have very severe limitations which restrict the choice of plants, require careful management, or both.

Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan

Map 2

Prime Agricultural Soils

Class 1
Class 2
Class 3
Class 4

Background Information Provided By:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008

0 5,000 Feet

Urban Research & Development Corporation
24 W. Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018 (610) 865-527
Prime agricultural soils indicate the suitability of soils for farming. The majority of Plainfield Township is under the Class II designation. Prime agricultural soils often drain well and have other characteristics that are well suited for development. As a result, land that is good for farming is typically among the property most sought after by residential and non-residential developers.

**STEEP SLOPES**

Topography (Map 3) is one of the most obvious environmental features. The Blue Mountain and the Wind Gap are visually prominent throughout the area. The lowest elevations (approximately 375 feet above sea level) occur toward the southern extreme of the Township, where the Little Bushkill Creek and Mud Run cross the township boundary. From the southern border to Blue Mountain, elevation increases by about 400 feet. Within the rolling, primarily agricultural area, most areas lie within a range of 500 to 700 feet above sea level. Toward the northern boundary of the area, the Blue Mountain abruptly rises to a crest elevation of about 1,600 feet above sea level.

Most of the area south of Blue Mountain exhibits gentle slopes from 0% to 8%. The largest and most concentrated area of steep slopes (over 15%) are found along Blue Mountain and along Mud Run and its tributaries. Other steep slopes are found along other creek and stream valleys. Steep slopes are susceptible to erosion when soil and vegetation are disturbed, which can add significantly to the cost of constructing and maintaining roads and buildings and become an environmental hazard to local creeks and streams.
HYDROLOGY

Hydrology (Map 4) is the science of water. In planning, hydrology involves surface waters, drainage basins, floodplains, and wetlands.

Watersheds

A watershed is an area where all runoff is naturally directed into a particular creek or river. Watersheds are defined by topographic ridge lines, which may be prominent ridges or less notable areas of high ground. Since the activities occurring within a watershed affect the quality of the collecting stream, environmental protection measures are often performed on a watershed basis.

Plainfield Township encompasses three minor watersheds: the Bushkill Creek, Martins Creek and Mud Run watersheds. Each of the three minor watersheds flow into the larger Delaware River watershed.

Streams

Creeks, streams and other surface waterways are valuable aquatic habitats that provide both active and passive recreation. Principal waterways in the Township include the Little Bushkill Creek, Mud Run, Waltz Creek and their tributaries (Map 4). The Little Bushkill Creek is the largest waterway and drains most of the area through Plainfield Township. Mud Run is a small stream which drains the southeast corner of Plainfield Township, eventually flowing into the Delaware River through Lower Mount Bethel Township. The headwaters of Waltz Creek are located in the Borough of Pen Argyl, while flowing through the northeastern section of Plainfield towards Martins Creek in Washington Township.

The Little Bushkill Creek (pictured above) is designated as a high-quality cold water fishery and migratory fishery. It eventually flows into the larger Bushkill Watershed. Protecting streams and watersheds in Plainfield should be a constant priority to help control water quality, flooding and the natural habitat for flora and fauna.
Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan

Map 4

Hydrology

Streams & Tributaries

100-Year Floodplain

Lakes & Ponds

Wetlands

Bushkill Creek

Martins Creek

Mud Run

Background Information Provided By:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008
Pennsylvania’s water quality standards, called for under Pennsylvania Code 93, designate protection categories for streams and establish water quality criteria for each category that are used in regulating the discharge of effluent into streams. The following are standards for streams found in Plainfield Township:

- Cold Water Fisheries - streams that should be protected as habitat for cold water fish and other fauna and flora indigenous to cold water.

- High-Quality Cold Water Fisheries are Cold Water Fisheries with excellent water quality and other environmental attributes.

- Migratory Fisheries are streams that should be protected for the movement of trout and other anadromous fish species which ascent streams to spawn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little Bushkill Stream</td>
<td>Basin</td>
<td>High-Quality Cold Water Fishery, Migratory Fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mud Run</td>
<td>Basin</td>
<td>Cold Water Fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltz Creek</td>
<td>Basin, Source to Greenwalk Creek</td>
<td>Cold Water Fishery, Migratory Fishery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2008

**Floodplains**

Floodplains surround streams and rivers in varying widths, depending on the topography of the surrounding natural land. 100-year floodplains are areas that would theoretically be inundated in a storm even of such magnitude that it would only occur once in a hundred years, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In other words, the entire area of the 100-year floodplains has a 1 in 100 (or 1%) chance of flooding in a given year.

Floodplains, while controlling flooding, also produce environmental benefactors. The benefits are seen as erosion control, sustaining water quality by filtration and shading streams and habitats for many flora and fauna. In addition to providing natural habitat, floodplains carry flood waters and help moderate flood heights.

All three streams, including their tributaries have 100-year floodplains. The most significant concentration can be found along the Little Bushkill Creek (Map 4).
The Pennsylvania Floodplain Management Act (Act 166 of 1978) requires municipalities identified as being flood-prone to enact floodplain regulations which, at a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. Plainfield Township participates in the program and have floodplain studies that were prepared by the Federal Insurance Administration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.³

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that have vegetation and soil characteristics of a permanently or a frequently saturated environment. Marshes, swamps, bogs, high water table soils, and vernal pools are all examples of wetlands. Wetlands are important groundwater recharge areas that support wildlife, fish and other aquatic life. Wetlands also reduce flooding by detaining stormwater discharge and thereby help filter impurities that contribute to surface water and groundwater pollution.

Map 4 shows wetland areas identified in the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) performed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There are many other wetlands which would need to be identified by a qualified professional at the time any individual tract is considered for preservation or development. Wetlands are found within the 100-year floodplains of the various streams and tributaries within Plainfield Township. Small pockets are also found towards the southern area of PA Route 512.

Hydric Soils

According to the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, hydric soils are those soils that have formed "under the conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part." The most important implication of hydric soils is that they may contain wetlands. Major hydric component soils are very likely to be wetlands, while minor components are likely to contain wetlands. Most hydric soils occur in or near stream valleys, floodplains, and other low-lying areas.

WOODLANDS

Woodlands are an important natural resource in several regards. The root systems of trees and other woodland vegetation stabilize the soil, preventing erosion. Woodlands act as natural stormwater control by the vegetation and forest floor absorbing and reducing runoff. With these controls on erosion and runoff, water quality in nearby streams benefit immensely. The largest concentration of woodlands in the Township is on Blue Mountain (Map 5). Blue Mountain serves as a linear band of habitat stretching 200 miles from the Delaware Water Gap to the Potomac River in Western Maryland. Other concentrations of woodlands exist along streams and their tributaries within the Township.

OUTSTANDING NATURAL AREAS

In 1999, the Pennsylvania Science Office (PSO) of the Nature Conservancy (in contract with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission) prepared a Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) for Lehigh and Northampton Counties. The NAI identifies critical areas of plant and animal habitat, and also includes inherently unique natural features. Critical habitat areas are based on the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index, a comprehensive database of outstanding natural habitats and sensitive plant and animal species.

Natural areas are grouped into two categories by the PSO. Sites of statewide significance are identified for the protection of biological diversity. These sites contain exemplary natural communities and documented habitats for species of special concern. Those state-significant sites that are the most critical to biodiversity in the future have been labeled "top priority" by the PSO.

Sites of local significance are unique areas chosen because of size, diversity of wildlife and plant life, water quality protection, and recreation potential. Plainfield Township contains three outstanding natural areas (Map 5). The following are descriptions of the sites prepared by the PSO:

- **Grand Central Woods - Local Significance** - Grand Central Woods is a mesic hardwood forest dissected by the headwaters of the Little Bushkill Creek. The area has a good diversity of tree species and is fairly mature (80-100 yrs). Preserving the site will be of value for human recreation and for wildlife.

- **Big Offset Barren - Top Priority** - Big Offset Barren is a broad, forested plateau which straddles the Northampton/Monroe County line on Blue Mountain. The barren supports a fair-to-good quality population of G2G3 PA-Endangered Species. Long-term survival of species at the site may depend on the availability of forest gaps. Big Offset Barren is partly on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Corridor.

- **Blue Mountain - Exceptional Natural Feature** (larger scale systems that are important in the movement and diversity of living things) - Blue Mountain is the most extensive, relatively contiguous area of natural habitat in Lehigh and Northampton Counties. The mountain includes extensive forests with streams, seeps, springs, vernal pools, rock outcrops, and boulder fields. Blue Mountain has long been recognized as one of the major east coast flyways for migratory raptors. Conserving sites on the mountain must be considered as part of the effort to conserve the greater natural functional value of the mountain ridge.

**NATURAL FEATURES COMPOSITE**

Map 6 shows an overlay of the natural features of the Two Rivers area described in above sections. Areas with many overlapping natural features are ideal candidates for protection efforts.
Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan

Map 5

Woodlands &
Natural Areas

Background Information Provided By:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008

Urban Research & Development Corporation
38 CC Street/Philadelphia, PA 19131 © 2006 UDR, Inc.
Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan

Map 6

Composite of Natural Features

Streams & Tributaries
100-Year Floodplain
Lakes & Ponds
Wetlands
Steep Slopes
Woodlands
Outstanding Natural Area

Background Information Provided By:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008

Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 W. Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018 • 610-865-07
DEVELOPED AND PROPOSED LAND

The use of land is the primary focus on comprehensive planning, zoning and open space planning. Both planned and unplanned development has occurred in Plainfield. Major development has occurred along highways and major roadways, while farmland and parkland have been successfully preserved. This section identifies existing land use, preserved lands and future development.

EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use of Plainfield Township was compiled by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (Map 7). An inventory of the existing land use allows for the various uses within the Township to be documented. Creating a profile of where residential lands exist now, can further help enhance the efforts to preserve and conserve land within Plainfield.

Agriculture & Vacant Lands

Farmland and other underdeveloped property is the largest land use category in Plainfield, comprising 9,935.5 acres (63.3%). The total acreage of farmland has been steadily decreasing due to new development of residential, commercial and other development; from 1992 to 2000 there was a net loss of 322.8 acres\(^5\).

Residential Lands

Residential development has experienced exponential growth within the Lehigh Valley, especially in the southern bordering municipalities. Plainfield has been slightly shielded, due to the lack of proximity to either I-80 or I-78. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 81.8% of the housing stock was built before 1990. Although, with the built-out environment of the local boroughs, and the connection of Route 33 to I-78 and I-80, residential development is on the rise. An increase of 268.5 acres became residential development from 1992-2000, according to the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Other Lands

Transportation, Communications & Utilities have the largest concentration of this group, mainly due to the 533-acre Grand Central Landfill. In addition, the Wind Gap Municipal Authority is located between Sullivan Trail Road and Abel Colony Road. Two of the most notable recreation sites within the Township are the Plainfield Township Recreation Trail and Plainfield Township Community Park.

Table 6
Existing Land Use, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>3,331.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>167.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>303.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Warehousing</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, Communications &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>1,130.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public &amp; Quasi-Public</td>
<td>165.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>633.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Vacant</td>
<td>9,935.5</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Plainfield Township has experienced a steady request for development purposes since 2000. On average, twenty-four housing units have been permitted from 2000 to 2007, according to Township records. With these permits being approved, the overall number of housing units constructed has varied. The downturn in the housing industry, which started in 2007, has greatly affected the actual building of these units.

Many approved lots within the past three years have not been built to date due to the downturn in the housing industry. Many Township officials are weary of the actual outcome of these projects, although they are still conditionally approved. Since 2007, a total of five permits for 46 residential lots are conditionally approved to be constructed. A total of two permits have been issued for subdivision for non-residential uses, within the same two year time frame.
PRESERVED FARMLAND

Plainfield has an aggressive farmland preservation program. Currently there are 22 farms that have an agricultural easement on them, totaling 1,944.2064 acres\(^6\) (Map 8). Plainfield Township has the second most preserved farmland in Northampton County, only behind Lower Mount Bethel which has over 3,000 acres preserved.

Plainfield is preserving farmland through various zoning techniques. Much of the Township is under the FF – Farm and Forest designation. The FF district encourages the continuation of farming, a rural setting, forested areas, limited development, and an attractive rural residential living environment for single-family homes on relatively large lots. The techniques, described in the Pen Argyl– Plainfield–Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan should continually be addressed to allow for development and conservation to be planned correctly.

Plainfield Township has the second most preserved farmland in Northampton County at nearly 2,000 acres. A continued effort to support farmland preservation is essential. Efforts to contact farmers, government officials, non-profit agencies and educational institutions to help preservation techniques should be a priority for Plainfield Township.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Parcel</th>
<th>Easement Date</th>
<th>Easement Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G9 14 9**</td>
<td>12/9/2003</td>
<td>4.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9 12 5**</td>
<td>5/11/2007</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8 13 4</td>
<td>5/7/2007</td>
<td>81.6165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8 12 7</td>
<td>7/18/2006</td>
<td>119.369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) Northampton County Farmland Preservation
## Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Parcel</th>
<th>Easement Date</th>
<th>Easement Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G8:16:17</td>
<td>7/13/1995</td>
<td>151.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:10:6</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:11:10</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:15:5</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:10:16</td>
<td>11/16/1998</td>
<td>34.7419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:10:5</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:10:5B</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:10:8G</td>
<td>11/3/2000</td>
<td>23.3265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:10:8</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:8:6</td>
<td>10/6/2005</td>
<td>79.7872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:18:1</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:13:16B</td>
<td>10/6/2005</td>
<td>80.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:12:4A</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:12:2**</td>
<td>4/12/2006</td>
<td>180.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:12:3</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:12:4</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:13:1</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:6:5</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:25:4</td>
<td>10/28/2003</td>
<td>77.1198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:26:4</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:1:1</td>
<td>9/17/2008</td>
<td>80.3359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:18:8</td>
<td>12/9/2004</td>
<td>196.7581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:18:10</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:25:1</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:25:2</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:26:1</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:18:7</td>
<td>6/14/2007</td>
<td>118.3298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:7:6</td>
<td>6/25/2003</td>
<td>64.0568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:7:8</td>
<td>4/8/2005</td>
<td>33.8358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:7:7A</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:11:3</td>
<td>2/2/2006</td>
<td>38.9276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:4:4</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9:4:14</td>
<td>7/9/2004</td>
<td>75.4205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:15:2</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:16:2</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:24:1</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8:24:2</td>
<td>9/19/2007</td>
<td>incl.above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8:13:5</td>
<td>11/7/2007</td>
<td>52.0374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F9:6:5</td>
<td>11/14/2008</td>
<td>117.7411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9:11:5</td>
<td>12/22/2008</td>
<td>50.3172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Plainfield Township Preserved Farmland 1944.206

Source: Northampton Co. Farmland Preservation

**parcel straddles two townships; acreage is approximate
Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE LAND

Recreation and open space lands allow for the preservation of land within Plainfield Township. Recreation and open space areas can be various sizes, lengths and have many different purposes. These lands are controlled either by public or private entities. Currently, a total of 18 public and private recreation and open space lands exist within the Township (Map 9).

Table 8
Recreation and Open Space Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map #</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Lands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>State Game Lands No. 168 (Plainfield Township)</td>
<td>213.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plainfield Township Recreation Trail</td>
<td>51.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recreation Area (at Township Building)</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plainfield Township Farmers' Grove</td>
<td>37.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Plainfield Township Community Park</td>
<td>78.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gall Farm</td>
<td>156.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private Lands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cortez Picnic Grove</td>
<td>30.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bit-By-Bit</td>
<td>24.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Blue Valley Riding Center</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sawmill Golf Course</td>
<td>83.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Brocknell Farm</td>
<td>20.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hillside Rod and Gun Club</td>
<td>25.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>St. Peter's Church Playground and Ballfield</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Plainfield Riding Club</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Belfast-Edelman Sportsmen Association</td>
<td>19.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Belfast-Edelman Youth Club</td>
<td>12.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Stockertown Rod and Gun Club</td>
<td>24.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LVPC, Wildlands Conservancy, Keystone Consulting Engineers
EXISTING, PROPOSED AND FUTURE TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

Trails and greenways allow for linear stretches of recreational and open space areas to be preserved. Greenways are normally located along streams and creeks, while trails can be created through open land, developments and along roads. Both trails and greenways allow for people and wildlife to have linear connections from public and private lands and larger preserved recreation and open space features.

Governmental and non-profit entities such as the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc., in cooperation with others, have conducted several studies within and around Plainfield Township. These studies have surveyed possible connections for trail development to a much larger system that could connect areas from the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area south towards Philadelphia. A major connection to the Appalachian trail, at several locations and within the Township, would allow users the possibility of a connection from Georgia to Maine.

Map 10 shows all LVPC greenways and existing, proposed, and future trail systems within Plainfield Township. Where provided by the Two Rivers Area Greenway Trail Implementation Study, alternative sections are identified.

The Plainfield Township Recreation Trail (pictured above) is nearly a 7 mile long linear trail. This trail will eventually connect to the Appalachian Trail and Blue Mountain to the City of Easton. A larger regional trail study has been completed in 2009 that shows efforts to create other connections to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, the Delaware and Lehigh Heritage Corridor and other destinations. Greenways already exist in Plainfield by the zoning and SALDO techniques adopted by Township.
Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan

Map 9

Recreation Sites

**Public Recreation Sites**
1. State Game Lands, 168
2. Plainfield Township Recreation Trail
3. Recreation Area (at Township Building)
4. Plainfield Township Farmers Grove
5. Plainfield Township Community Park
6. Gall Farm

**Private Recreation Sites**
7. Cortez Picnic Grove
8. Bit-By-Bit
9. Blue Valley Riding Center
10. Sawmill Golf Course
11. The Brocknell Farm
12. Hillside Rod and Gun Club
13. St. Peter's Church Playground and Ballfield
14. Plainfield Riding Club
16. Belfast-Edelman Youth Club
17. Stockertown Rod and Gun Club

Background Information Provided By:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008
Keystone Consulting Engineers, Inc.

URDC
Urban Research & Development Corporation
28 W. Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018 • 610-855-0701
Plainfield Township
Open Space Plan

Map 10

Trails & Greenways

- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Future Trails
- Alternative 1
- Alternative 2
- Alternative 3
- Alternative 4
- LVPC Designated Greenways

Note: All trail designations are taken from the Two Rivers Area Greenway Trails Implementation Study. Urban Research & Development Corporation. 2009

Background Information Provided By:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008
Keystone Consulting Engineers, Inc.
PERMANENTLY AND TEMPORARILY PROTECTED LANDS

The past sections have highlighted, in separate settings, permanently and temporarily protected lands. Lands that are owned by the federal, state, county or municipal government, as well as any easements are lands that are considered permanently protected. Privately owned recreational areas and school lands are considered temporarily owned because they can change their land use in the future. Map 11 shows all permanent and temporary protected lands in Plainfield Township, as of June, 2009.

EXISTING PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES

Existing preservation techniques are programs and objectives already set in place through other plans, ordinances and laws. Understanding the objectives already studied in past plans allows for non-duplication of plans and reiterates the objectives that are the most threatened. The following consists of a summary of past plans and county and statewide programs.

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

Programs exist in the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Agriculture, Fish and Boat Commission and the Game Commission that promote preservation of natural resources. Funding predominately comes in form of a grant, with various amounts of local match money or in-kind services required.

REGIONAL PLANS

Regional plans are conducted throughout the Lehigh Valley for regional purposes. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and other public and private agencies create the plans for regional development/preservation purposes. The following plans are pertinent to Plainfield Township.

Comprehensive Plan: The Lehigh Valley...2030\(^7\), prepared by the LVPC incorporates a natural resource plan and information about farmland preservation. Within the natural resource plan, a hierarchy of conservation priorities is distinguished. These priorities identify the areas that should be considered for preservation (Map 12). The following is a listing of the hierarchy of the priorities in the natural resource plan:

---

\(^7\) Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. *Comprehensive Plan: The Lehigh Valley...2030*. April 28, 2005
Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

- **Very High Conservation Priority** - Areas that should be given first consideration for public and private conservation acquisition programs.

- **High Conservation Priority** - Areas that should also be considered for acquisition, especially if they are part of a larger natural feature identified as very high conservation priority. In some cases, such as flood plains and steep slopes high priority areas might be adequately protected through municipal zoning.

- **Medium Conservation Priority** - Areas that should be protected through zoning regulations, conservation subdivision design and conservation farming practices. Many of these areas may include small stands of woodland, drainage swales or poorly drained soils that are either part of local farm operations or are part of larger residential lots.

The Comprehensive Plan also identifies farmland preservation as a high priority. Only 4.5% of the total land within the Lehigh Valley consists of farmland protected by agricultural easements. The Comprehensive Plan also states, “Northampton County also has areas where farmland preservation should be encouraged. There are sizable areas in Moore, East Allen, Plainfield, Washington and Upper and Lower Mt. Bethel where farming should remain as the primary land use.” The Comprehensive Plan puts a high priority on municipal zoning techniques to help control development if acquisition is not feasible.

**Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan: A Regional Greenways Plan for Lehigh and Northampton Counties**, incorporates the statewide vision for Pennsylvania’s greenways into a regionally specific and valuable network of corridors, hubs and nodes. The plan identifies three areas within Plainfield Township: Blue Mountain / Kittatinny Ridge, Mud Run Creek Watershed and the Two Rivers Area (Bushkill Creek Corridor) as focus areas. The following are descriptions taken from the Plan:

- **Blue Mountain / Kittatinny Ridge** (Priority, Multi-Use, Scenic Greenway) - The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has identified the Kittatinny Ridge and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) as one of the 34 major greenways in Pennsylvania. It is recognized as one of the major East Coast flyways for migrating raptors.

- **Bushkill Creek Corridor** (Priority, Conservation, Proposed Multi-Use Greenway) - The Bushkill Creek Corridor extends from the Delaware River at Easton, north and west to the foot of the Blue Mountain in Moore, Bushkill and Plainfield townships. The Corridor includes Bushkill Creek, Little Bushkill Creek and both branches of the Sobers Run, all of which are designated as High Quality Waters by DEP.

---

Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

Map 11

Permanently & Temporarily Protected Lands

- **Federal Protected Lands**
  - 1. Appalachian Trail

- **State Lands**
  - 2. State Game Lands No. 168

- **County Land**
  - 3. Gall Farm

- **Public Recreation Sites**
  - 4. Plainfield Township Recreation Trail
  - 5. Recreation Area (at Township Building)
  - 6. Plainfield Township Farmers Grove
  - 7. Plainfield Township Community Park

- **Agricultural Easements**

- **Temporarily Protected Lands**
  - **Private Recreation Sites**
    - 8. Cortez Picnic Grove
    - 9. vicinity D.C.
    - 10. Blue Valley Riding Center
    - 11. Swann Golf Course
    - 12. The Brockwell Farm
    - 13. Hillside Rod and Gun Club
    - 14. St. Peter's Church Playground and Bull Field
    - 15. Plainfield Riding Club
    - 16. Belfast Eddleman Sportsmen's Assoc
    - 17. Belfast Eddleman Youth Club
    - 18. Stockertown Rod and Gun Club

- **School District Lands**

Background Information Provided by:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2008
Keystone Consulting Engineers, Inc.

0 5,000 Feet
Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

- **Mud Run Greenway** (Conservation Greenway) - The area extends northwest into Plainfield Township and ends just south of Route 191. Much of the stream valley is wooded, and the adjacent landscape is almost entirely in agricultural production. Several farms adjacent to Mud Run are in the State’s Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, with a number of other farms in the Township’s Agricultural Security Area program.

**Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan**\(^9\) identifies greenways along the Bushkill Creek corridor and its tributaries for preservation. Four major goals originated from the Plan for areas within the Township, they are as follows:

- Promote environmentally-sensitive development on brownfield sites near Sobers Run headwaters.
- Protect portions of Blue Mountain not under public ownership.
- Establish a trail connection from Plainfield Township to Appalachian Trail.

**Two Rivers Area Greenway Trail Implementation Study**\(^10\) went into further detail in phasing, constructing and planning for future trail and greenway development in the Martins-Jacoby and Bushkill watersheds. The plan incorporated data from the previous Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan and provided a gap analysis for the connection of existing trails. In the gap analysis, alternative sections were studied for development depending on the future of land sales, conservation practices and/or donations from public/private entities. In the Martins-Jacoby watershed the framework for proposed and future trail development was studied.

---

\(^9\) Urban Research & Development Corporation. *Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan.* 2005

\(^10\) Urban Research & Development Corporation. *Two Rivers Area Greenway Trail Implementation Study.* 2009
**COUNTY PROGRAMS & PLANS**

Northampton County has a variety of programs and plans that outline open space and farmland preservation techniques. The County provides agricultural and conservation easements to municipalities and provides technical assistance for the process. Information regarding farmland preservation can be found through the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Office.

**Northampton County 21st Century Open Space Initiative**\(^{11}\) identifies key guidelines for the County acquisition program. The guidelines are divided into three separate sections: Open Space and Natural Areas Program; Municipal Park Acquisition and Development; and Farmland Preservation Program. Each section has guidelines that are based off a 100 point system that identify specific criteria.

**Northampton County Parks – 2010**\(^{12}\) identifies specific ways Northampton County can increase its active and passive recreation facilities in the future. The following is a summary of the major recommendations:

- Northampton County should focus its efforts on acquiring land for regional parks, linear parks, important natural areas, and connections between regional recreation facilities.

- Northampton should continue its efforts to implement the recommendations of the reports *A Natural Areas Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, Pennsylvania* and *Natural Areas Inventory Summary*.

- Northampton County should support park and open space projects that enhance the potential greenways identified in the report.

- Northampton County should commit the financial resources needed to support a first-rate park acquisition and development program.

- Northampton County should implement the recommendations of the County Council’s Open Space Committee for a Northampton County 21st Century Open Space Initiative.

---


Agricultural Easements to Preserve Farmland

The most effective method to permanently preserve farmland is through purchasing the “development rights” of the land. The goal is to preserve large contiguous areas of farmland over time, as opposed to smaller isolated farms. This program uses funds from the State and County to pay property owners to preserve their land. Property owners voluntarily apply to the County for consideration. The farms are then ranked according to a set of standards, such as the quality of the soils for crops and the proximity to other farms that have been preserved. Within the funds available each year, the highest ranked farms are selected. Those lands are appraised, and then offers are made to the landowners. If the landowner agrees to the sale, he/she is paid the difference between the market value of the land and the value as farmland.

A landowner can voluntarily agree to a payment that is less than this value, particularly if insufficient funds are available to the County for the full amount. In that case, the landowner can deduct the difference on their Federal income tax as a charitable donation. A permanent “Conservation Easement” is then placed on the land that permanently prevents its use for non-agricultural uses. The land remains privately owned and can be sold to another farmer. The easement does not require that access be provided to the public onto the land.

There are limited funds available each year to buy easements to preserve farmland, and many farmers must be placed on a waiting list for years. During the time it takes a farmer to move up on the list, he/she may face pressure to sell for development. Therefore, once one farm is preserved, it is easier to obtain funding to preserve adjacent farms. The State’s goal is to have large contiguous areas of preserved farmland as opposed to fragmented pieces that may not be viable over time.

The State now allows the County to make installment purchase agreements (IPA) of farmland easements. This guarantees a farmer that they will receive certain payments in future years – which should increase participation. It also helps landowners to spread out the income over more than one year, which can reduce the tax rates. IPA’s are also valuable to get a property under contract at the present time, particularly if a large property is involved and sufficient funds are not available to preserve it in one year.
Municipal Plans

Planning and zoning techniques at the local level are the forefront for preservation techniques. Each municipality may set up their zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan in accordance to what residents desire. Plainfield Township updated their comprehensive plan with Pen Argyl and Wind Gap Boroughs in September 2004. The Township’s Zoning Ordinance was amended in 2006.

Pen Argyl - Plainfield - Wind Gap - Regional Comprehensive Plan\textsuperscript{13} was the first regional comprehensive plan in Northampton County. The Regional Comprehensive Plan allows for the municipalities to work in cooperation with each other on development, preservation and legislative objectives. High priority recommended actions that pertain to this Open Space Plan includes the following:

- Continue to expand Agricultural Security Areas to make more land eligible for easement purchase and to protect farmers against nuisance challenges.

- Adopt provisions that preserve farmland and natural areas.

- In agricultural areas, permit a range of activities that allow opportunities for supplemental income for farmers on larger tracts of land.

- Use other incentives and techniques outlined in the plan to keep farmers farming.

- Consider proper controls on very intense Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations.

- Protect water quality and fish habitats, carefully enforce State regulations on erosion control through on-site inspections.

- Minimize unnecessary removal of trees during construction, and make sure temporary fencing is used to avoid damage to tree trunks and root systems.

- Require groundwater supply studies to insure adequate water supply at the time any major new development is submitted for approval.

- Use zoning regulations to direct most housing away from prime agricultural areas. Provide density incentives to build on lands (preferably with public water and sewage service) that are not planned for long-term agricultural preservation.

• Implement the 14 specific recommendations listed in the water supply element of the plan to protect the amounts and quality of ground water.

• Improve existing parks and make land acquisitions as needed to meet a wide variety of recreational needs. Continue to cooperate with the Pen Argyl Area School District in efforts to provide recreation opportunities and maintain facilities.

• Pursue the opportunities identified in this plan and the Two Rivers Area Greenways Plan for regional trail connections and greenways, especially connections from the Plainfield Recreation Trail to the Appalachian Trail, Wind Gap Borough, Pen Argyl Borough and Stockertown Borough; and, seek State and county funding to make these connections a reality.

• Protect important natural features, with a special emphasis upon the creeks, steep slopes, mature woods and important natural areas.
  - Continually work to avoid and address stormwater problems.
  - Continue to limit development in flood-prone areas.
  - Work with neighboring municipalities, State agencies and volunteer organizations to preserve important natural areas.
  - Maintain and plant thick vegetation along streams to protect water quality and fishing habitats.

Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance allows standards to control land use decisions. Within the zoning ordinance, special criteria are included to preservation of open space and farmland. The following zoning districts and environmental protection provisions directly related to this Open Space Plan:

• Farm and Forest District (FF) - the purpose of a Farm and Forest District is to encourage the continuation of farming, a rural-farm setting, forested areas, limited development, and an attractive rural residential living environment for single family homes on relatively large lots. Refer to the Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance for further detailed requirements in the Farm and Forest District.

• Blue Mountain Conservation District (BMC) - the purposes of the Blue Mountain Conservation District are to protect the scenic, recreational and environmental resources of Blue Mountain, to protect and preserve natural resources in the Township, and to provide for the orderly development of the Township. The predominant land uses in the district are forest land, state game land, and other open space uses. Regulations for this district are designed to protect these land uses. The minimum lot area (per dwelling unit for residential uses) is 10 acres.
Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

- Article 5 – Environmental Protection - Article 5 in the Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance establishes certain overlay areas and/or setbacks, for the following:
  - Steep Slopes - in excess of 15%;
  - Areas with High Water Table;
  - Development Along Waterbodies - 50' setbacks;
  - Alluvial Soils Areas;
  - Floodplains.

- Ordinance Number 342 - Section 10.23 - Riparian and Wetland Buffers - This amendment was enacted on August 12, 2009 to increase the buffers around watercourses. The entire ordinance can be found in Appendix C.

Plainfield Township has been progressive with zoning techniques. In 2006, the Township adopted an amendment to the Ordinance that revised the text of the Farm and Forest Zoning District, added definitions, revised agricultural product sale provisions, added farm-based business, revised a use in the GI District, added regulations for a contiguous lot area free of natural features, provided for conservation development, provided for transfer of development rights, and added grading plan provisions. In 2007, the Ordinance was again amended to revise and clarify the transfer of development rights option.
GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals for this plan, as listed below, describe Plainfield Township’s ambitions for:

- preserving farmland;
- conserving open space;
- preserving water quality;
- maintaining and enhancing the natural resources, and;
- allowing for additional recreational spaces.

GOAL A: CREATE A SUSTAINABLE OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM.

Recommendations:

A.1. Establish and administer a Plainfield Township Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program in accordance with the following procedures.

Setting up the Program

The Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), that consists of residents knowledgeable in farming, real estate, municipal government, law and open space planning would report to the Plainfield Township Supervisors. The EAC with permission of the Supervisors would announce, advertise and otherwise publicize that the Plainfield Township Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program is accepting applications from people who own land in the Township.

Percentage of Funding Opportunities per Program

The Township collects funding from a variety of sources on a yearly basis. The collected money is to be spent on farmland preservation, open space and recreational needs. The following is a generalized priority breakdown based on the needs of the community.

- Farmland Preservation
- Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation
- Active and Passive Recreational Needs
NOTE: Additional funding opportunities should be continually addressed. Money taken from the EIT can and should be used to match various grants to maximize the monetary outcome. Refer to the Additional Funding Techniques section (pg 48) for further programs that can be implemented to enhance the overall outcome for conservation and preservation of lands.

Accepting and Evaluating Applications

Interested landowners would submit an application for the program that includes the following information:

- name and phone number of the land owner
- address of subject property
- total acreage of property and total acreage of proposed easement
- deed reference (book and page)
- County/Township tax parcel numbers
- name of any lien or mortgage holder, and amount of lien or mortgage
- United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map showing the location of the property
- a tax map showing the location of the property
- a list of structures on the property
- information on any applicable agreements to sell and/or applications to subdivide
- building acreage deducted by occupied acreage

The EAC would then schedule a visit to view the property and subsequently evaluate the property according to the 100-point numerical ranking system shown below. Numerical scores for specific properties would be recorded by the individual(s) during the site visit. The recorded rankings will than be submitted to the entire council for a consensus vote, during the EAC’s regularly scheduled meetings. All results, pass or fail, would be reported to the Township’s Board of Supervisors.

Determining Value

Based on the total funds the Township has accumulated for each program, the EAC would request the Board of Supervisors order appraisals on a certain number of properties. The order of the appraisals would follow the order of numeric rankings given to the various applications. The highest scoring property gets appraised first, and so on.

Appraisals would be conducted by a State Certified General Real Estate Appraiser, who would be selected and paid by the Township. The appraisal report would estimate the market value of the property both with and without the proposed easement. The value of the easement would be the difference between these two estimated values. All results would be reported to the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors.
Making Offers

Upon authorization from the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors, the EAC, on behalf of the Township, could elect to make offers to purchase easements from one or more landowners who applied for the program. The order of offers would follow the order of the numeric rankings. The total number of offers made would be based on the amount of available funding. The offer price for a specific easement could be less than the appraised value of the easement but could not exceed the appraised value.

Accepting Offers

Within a prescribed period, landowners who receive an offer must either: a) accept the offer; b) reject the offer (and drop out of the program); or c) announce they intend to submit an independent appraisal they pay for themselves. As authorized by the Board of Supervisors, the EAC would have the option to revise its offer based on the independent appraisal. If an offer is accepted, a legal agreement would be executed between Plainfield Township and the landowner.

Settlement

At a real estate settlement, the landowner would sign an easement that is legally recordable and Plainfield Township would pay the agreed purchase price to the landowner. The agreed purchase price could be paid as a lump sum or by installments, whichever is mutually acceptable to the Township and the landowner.

Relying on Conservation Easements

Plainfield Township should remain open to receiving donated land or perhaps buying land in fee simple if appropriate opportunities arise. However, the Township should expect to rely mainly on buying easements to preserve land under this program. Easements can be donated, but more often the landowner granting the easement expects to be compensated financially.

Enforcing the Easement

In most cases, Plainfield Township will allow an easement to be controlled by Northampton County or a non-profit conservancy. Allowing these entities to take control of the easement will allow for no further maintenance costs on the Township. If the Township would purchase an easement for a certain period of time, it would than be responsible for enforcing the terms of the easement.
The terms of the easement should not prohibit the following activities provided these activities comply with Township zoning regulations, and Township subdivision and land development ordinances:

- Sale of agricultural products produced on the property.
- Construction of ancillary structures limited in coverage to a certain percentage of the property.
- Use of the property for allowable home occupations.
- Subdivision of less than two acres (or the minimum acreage required by the Township’s zoning or subdivision regulations) for the construction and use of the landowner’s principal residence or a family member’s principal residence (one time only).

At least once per year, the EAC would determine if the landowner is complying with the terms of the easement. If the EAC determines the landowner is not complying, the Board of Supervisors would be notified. At that point, the Township would take appropriate action in consultation with the Township Solicitor.

NOTE: Northampton County is currently under review for partnering with local municipalities for farmland preservation. The County will decide how to proceed with the administration of agricultural easements. Plainfield Township should continually be in contact with Northampton County to understand the new procedures of the yet-to-be developed program.

Cooperating with the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Program and the Area’s Non-Profit Conservancies.

Under this program, Plainfield Township could also consider using municipal funds to assist Northampton County in purchases of conservation easements on farmland in Plainfield Township. The Township should work with Northampton County and the non-profit conservancies to preserve lands that none of these entities would be able to preserve alone.

Legal interest in an easement can be shared by two or more entities. However, subject to advice from the Township solicitor, it may be simplest for the Township to convey the easement (and enforcement responsibilities) to the Northampton County Agricultural Preservation Board if a farmland easement is ever jointly purchased in this manner. The same procedures and provisions could also apply to an easement the Township may consider purchasing jointly with a land trust, conservancy or related entity.
A.2. Develop and use public information to increase future participation in the Plainfield Township Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program.

People will only consider participating in a land preservation program if they understand their options and what these options mean to them. Municipal officials and other residents can make informed judgements about whether to spend municipal revenues on open space preservation only if they are clear about what is meant for both landowners and the municipality. The Township should use the following information to help ensure residents understand the basic facts about open space and farmland preservation and easements.

- Property rights are often compared to a bundle of sticks with each stick representing a different right, such as the right to develop your land. Selling or donating development rights means giving up one of these sticks. The landowner retains all the other sticks and still owns the land after giving up development rights.

- Landowners transfer their development rights to someone else by granting a legally enforceable easement. The easement can pertain to all, or to just a portion, of a person’s property. These easements typically stipulate that the affected land shall remain undeveloped forever. The easement is attached to the property deed and its restrictions are transferred to the new owner if a property that is under a conservation easement is ever sold.

- The IRS Code allows people who donate easements to deduct the value of the easement in calculating their federal income tax, subject to certain limits. The value of the easement is the difference between the appraised values of the property before the easement and after the easement.

- Whether the landowner donates an easement or sells it for a fee, the reduced value of a property for which development rights were given up can be used to justify a reduced property assessment. The landowner can thereby save each year on real estate taxes.

- The entity that receives the donated or sold easement is said to “hold” the easement. That entity is responsible for enforcing it. Enforcement of a easement is usually done by periodic monitoring of the affected property.

- Subject to any special terms that may be part of an easement, the landowner is allowed to continue all regular activities on the eased property even though a easement is not in place. The only prohibited activity would be the activity specifically prohibited in the easement (usually development). The clear cutting of trees might also be prohibited. There is no restriction on selling land with an easement to someone else.
A.3. Use a numerical ranking system to evaluate the suitability of properties for potential preservation.

To ensure any open space and farmland preservation program is administered fairly, the Township could use a numerical ranking system. The EAC may wish to use a combination of ranking systems. For example, a ranking system that relates to the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Program might be more suitable, while an enhanced version might be better for natural areas, recreation areas and historic sites. The following pages provide an example of a numerical ranking system that can be used for open space and natural areas.
**EXAMPLE**

**PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA FOR OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL AREAS PROGRAMS**
Northampton County Open Space and Natural Areas Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASE CRITERIA</th>
<th>POINT VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The site is shown on the Natural Features Plan map for Northampton County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the rating is (maximum 12 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Very high conservation priority</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. High conservation priority</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Medium conservation priority</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The site is not in a conservation priority area</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The site has statewide significance as an important natural area and the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county rank is (see Natural Areas Inventory Summary, pp. 14-18) (maximum 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. #1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. #2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. #3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. #4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. #5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The site is not listed as having statewide significance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The site has local significance as an important natural area and the county</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rank is (see Natural Areas Inventory Summary, pp. 20-21) (maximum 4 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. High</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Medium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The site is not listed as having local significance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Acreage of the land to be acquired (maximum 6 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Over 100 acres</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 50–100 acres</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 25–49.99 acres</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Under 25 acres</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Type of acquisition (maximum 5 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Fee simple</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Easement (with public access)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Easement (without public access)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Public access (maximum 5 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Parcel links recreation or open space areas (maximum 5 points)
   a. Parcel links two or more existing publicly accessible areas .......................... 5
   b. Parcel is adjacent to an existing publicly accessible area ............................ 3
   c. No linkage or expansion of an existing park or open space .......................... 0

8. Possible partnerships (maximum 3 points)
   a. Project is in cooperation with another agency or municipality ....................... 3
   b. There are no partnerships involved ......................................................... 0

9. Non-county funding available for the project (maximum 9 points)
   a. Over 75% ......................................................................................... 9
   b. 60%–75% ......................................................................................... 6
   c. More than the required 50% match but less than 60% .................................... 3
   d. The local match is no more than the required 50% ....................................... 0

10. The land to be acquired is adjacent to the Delaware River or the Lehigh River
    (maximum 5 points)
    a. Yes ............................................................................................... 5
    b. No ................................................................................................. 0

11. The land to be acquired is adjacent to a stream that has been rated to have good
    water quality that should be protected (maximum 5 points)
    a. Stream is rated as having Exceptional Value Waters ................................... 5
    b. Stream is rated as having High Quality Waters ......................................... 4
    c. Stream is rated as Cold Water Fishes ..................................................... 3
    d. Stream is rated as Trout Stocking Fishes ............................................... 2
    e. Stream is rated as Warm Water Fishes .................................................... 1
    f. The land to be acquired is not adjacent to a stream .................................. 0

12. A natural resources study or a similar type of study has been done for the municipality
    in which the project is located (maximum 3 points)
    a. Yes ............................................................................................... 3
    b. No ................................................................................................. 0

13. Quality and completeness of the application (maximum 6 points)
    a. High .............................................................................................. 6
    b. Medium .......................................................................................... 3
    c. Low ................................................................................................. 0

TOTAL POINTS .................................................................

NOTE: LVPC has a grant process that incorporates this survey as 1/3 of the overall ranking system. The above numerical ranking system is an example and can be tailored to the EAC’s request.
GOAL B: INCREASE FARMLAND PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES AND ACREAGE.

Recommendations:

B.1. Create a partnership program between Plainfield Township and Northampton County.

Northampton County is looking to create a farmland preservation program that will partner the County with municipalities to match funding on the state level. Plainfield Township can use the EIT tax to help preserve farmland that is seeking an agricultural easement. The County already has guidelines (Appendix D) that rank each farm submitting to become a preserved farm by way of agricultural easements. Plainfield Township officials should continually stay in constant contact with county officials.

B.2. Develop and allow for a partnership to be created for educational and/or conservancy purposes.

Partnering with local colleges and/or non-profits that wish to use farmland for research or educational purposes can increase the overall awareness of farmland preservation. Educational and non-profit entities can purchase land for farmland preservation and use it to teach the public about the procedures in farming.

B.3. Continue to follow all procedures outlined in the adopted Pen Argyl-Plainfield-Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Procedures such as Transfer Development Rights (TDR), conservation construction of large tracts of land and others have been outlined in the Regional Comprehensive Plan. These procedures should be followed on an on-going basis to maintain other types of farmland preservation techniques.

Grand Central Sanitary Landfill is remaking 200 acres into a nature preserve. Partnering with large corporations, non-profit agencies and educational institutions will enhance the conservation effort within Plainfield Township. Plainfield should reach out to these entities to further enhance the education of the public of the importance of the conservation of natural resources and preservation of open space and farmland.
GOAL C: CONTINUE TO ENHANCE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Recommendations:

C.1. Continue to improve existing municipal parks, trails, greenways and other recreational facilities.

Plainfield Township should continue to improve their existing facilities through upgrades and scheduled maintenance procedures.

C.2. Continue a shared use cooperation between federal, state, county, school district, public and quasi-public lands for shared use.

Entities with lands that are either public or private within the Township should continue to work with Plainfield to allow for a shared use of their facilities. This type of cooperation, from both parties, will only further enhance the recreational experience for residents and visitors.

C.3. Identify opportunities to increase public access to local waterways.

Most of the lands adjacent to waterways in the Township are privately owned. Few waterways exist along local roadways and allow for public access, although, an exception would be the Little Bushkill Creek that flows along the Recreation Trail and through Gall Farm. Thin strips of land that could be accessed for fishing would allow for both recreation and conservation purposes.

C.4. Establish a Park, Trail and Greenway Endowment Fund supported by donations and fundraiser.

The Township can establish a fund to finance future park, trail and greenway improvements. Land acquisition or proceeds can be accumulated from fundraisers, donations and bequests. Whitehall Township has received several land donations along the Ironton Rail Trail for conservation purposes.
C.5. Update the Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance to include provisions to protect the Appalachian Trail (HB 1281, PA Act 24, 2008, The Appalachian Trail Protection Act).

Plainfield Township should look into strengthening the zoning around portions of the Appalachian Trail that are within the Township boundaries.

C.6. Create an official Trails Map.

Forks Township has completed an official Trails Map that shows the future development of trails. Forks has used this map, along with their subdivision and land development provisions, to require developers to build new trails. This requirement has expanded the overall connectivity and milage of trails within the Township.

C.7. Continue to use funding opportunities for recreational purposes

Money collected by the Township can be used as a match for state programs. Additional revenue sources, such as the gaming fee and landfill fee can be optional ways. A variety of projects have and can continually be accomplished through this method.

C.8. Continue to work with federal, state, county and conservancys to enhance the recreational opportunities within the Township.

Plainfield Township has federal, state, county and conservancy lands already within the Township. Not all of these lands are for recreational purposes, but future commitments to land preservation should, at the minimum, be considered for passive recreational usage.

C.9. Provide maps, signs, historical information, and information on attractions and sponsors to better identify trails and inform trail uses.

Provide maps and signage at all trail heads and major intersections. All information should be clearly marked, easy to identify and understandable to the general public.
GOAL D: IMPROVE, ENHANCE, AND CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACES.

Recommendations:


The Regional Comprehensive Plan was adopted by all three municipalities to focus on development, land use, conservation, housing and natural resource techniques. The techniques should continually be reviewed for implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

D.2. Preserve additional selected natural areas in each municipality as opportunities arise.

The EAC can continually evaluate any new natural areas that arise in the future. New areas up for consideration should follow the listed criteria:

- Is the site “officially recognized” by being listed in the Natural Areas Inventory?
- Does the Natural Areas Inventory rate the site as being of Statewide significance?
- How does the Natural Areas Inventory prioritize the preservation of the site in comparison to other designated sites in Northampton or Monroe County?
- Does the site relate to preservation of a stream or pond?
- Is the site on or near a scenic road?
- Is the site within a large forest block?
- How vulnerable to development is the site given its current zoning?
- Is the site on permanently or temporarily preserved property already?

Areas that are significant to the local, regional or larger area should be taken into consideration to become preserved. Tracts of land that are next to large contiguous preserved tracts should be given a higher priority.
D.3. Make greater use of zoning and subdivision regulations to enhance environmental protection.

Land varies greatly in the amount of development it can physically support. Floodprone areas and very steep slopes should remain in open space. Other lands are suited for moderate or intense development. Plainfield Township should consider the following guidelines in reviewing development proposals.

Table 9
Guidelines For Protecting Important Natural Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURAL FEATURES (Type &amp; Description)</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IF NOT PROTECTED</th>
<th>STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Steep Slopes - Steep slopes of 15% have 15 feet of vertical change for every 100 feet of horizontal distance. Very steep slopes of 25% rise vertically 25 feet for every 100 feet. Steep slopes are sometimes wooded and found along creeks. | • Difficulty of maintaining and snow-plowing steep roads.  
• Higher costs of buildings.  
• High rate of septic system failures.  
• Increased erosion and runoff.  
• Winter driving hazards from steep roads and driveways.  
• Disturbance of scenic areas.  
• Increased costs to extend public water and sewer lines. | • Site houses on the most suitable land, while keeping steep slopes in open space.  
• Keep natural vegetation intact.  
• Strengthen municipal regulations that protect steep slopes.  
• Require larger lot sizes in steep areas.  
• Limit building on steep slopes of 15% to 25% and prohibit building on very steep slopes of 25% and above. |
| Groundwater - Groundwater is stored underground after entering through the soil or seeping from creeks. Maintaining groundwater quality is important because both private wells and public water systems are dependent upon groundwater. | • Polluted groundwater.  
• Dry wells. | • Continue to control the percentage of lots covered by buildings and paving.  
• Ensure remaining septic systems are designed and operated properly.  
• Monitor underground storage tanks for leaks.  
• Avoid polluted storm water runoff.  
• Avoid high volume withdrawals of groundwater.  
• Identify areas most feasible for future public water and sewer. |
| Floodplains - Areas that are prone to flooding include both legally designated floodplains and land along drainage channels. | • Increased flooding in other areas.  
• Loss of potential public recreation area.  
• Threats to important wildlife and bird habitats. | • Prohibit construction of new structures within the 100-year floodway (which is the actual main flood channel) and along the adjacent 100-year flood-fringe.  
• Prohibit construction within 50 to 100 feet of the centerline of a stream (depending on stream size).  
• Preserve buffers of natural vegetation immediately adjacent to creeks and drainageways.  
• Preserve more land along local streams and drainageways. |
| Wooded Areas - Concentrated areas of mature tree growth are found throughout the region’s steeply sloped lands noted above and in other scattered locations. | • Increased surface temperatures.  
• Loss of important bird and wildlife habitats.  
• Loss of hunting areas.  
• Loss of air purification.  
• Increased erosion and runoff.  
• Loss of scenic resources.  
• Noise and incompatible development may become more noticeable. | • Restrict cutting of trees during building to the building envelope and immediately adjacent areas.  
• Preserve tree stands in public or private open space.  
• Require replanting of removed trees. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURAL FEATURES (Type &amp; Description)</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IF NOT PROTECTED</th>
<th>STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shallow Depth to Bedrock - Areas with shallow soils and bedrock close to the surface are frequently found in steeply sloped locations.</td>
<td>- Higher construction costs.</td>
<td>- Avoid building in areas with shallow depth to bedrock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterways - Protecting waterways from pollutants involves controlling direct discharges and maintaining vegetative stream buffers.</td>
<td>- Loss of potential public recreation areas. - Threats to important bird, fish and wildlife habitats. - Increased erosion and flooding.</td>
<td>- Prevent soil erosion to avoid sedimentation of creeks and drainageways. - Work with soil conservation authorities and farmers to keep animals out of streams. - Consider areas along creeks and drainageways for public greenways. - Minimize runoff of pesticides, grease and industrial wastes. - Minimize direct runoff from parking lots. - Require buildings and paving to be setback from creek banks and significant drainageways. - Control the peak rates of storm water runoff from development to avoid increased flooding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Drainage Channels - Smaller natural channels that carry storm water to local creeks during heavy storms exist throughout the region.</td>
<td>- Increased flooding. - Erosion of soil.</td>
<td>- Preserve adequate width along channels in open space. - Prevent erosion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydric Soils - Hydric soils, often located in wetland areas, have a shallow depth to the seasonally high water table.</td>
<td>- Flooded basements. - Disturbance of natural drainage and groundwater recharge. - Poor foundation stability. - Failed on-lot septic systems.</td>
<td>- Continue to enforce local, state and federal wetland regulations. - Place on-lot septic systems and buildings outside these areas. - Waterproof basements of existing buildings. - Carefully design all facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: URDC

**D.4. Enhance wellhead protection efforts through regulation and other techniques.**

The quantity of water that seeps into aquifers (water trapped in underground rock or soil layers) depends on what soils and what impervious surfaces exist in the recharge areas. The quality of the water depends on the presence or absence of contamination above the aquifers. In eastern Pennsylvania, the primary sources of groundwater pollution (wellhead contamination) are:

- Underground or aboveground storage tanks;
- Industrial waste sites and other landfills;
- Agricultural fertilizers and pesticides, and;
- On-lot sewage systems.
Once the groundwater protection (wellhead protection) area is defined (by a qualified, professional geologist), protective strategies can be put in place. Since the quality of groundwater depends on nearby uses of land, groundwater can be protected by regulating development through zoning and subdivision ordinances. Wellhead protection districts are specially-created overlay districts around wells or well fields that afford extra protection for groundwater sources. Within wellhead protection districts, certain land uses may be prohibited entirely. Other uses may be permitted under special conditions, and only with the approval of the zoning hearing board or governing body.

In addition to regulation, ways to protect groundwater resources include public education about farming practices, recycling, septic system maintenance, and the proper disposal of toxic or hazardous household waste.

**GOAL E: INCREASE PRESERVATION EFFORTS FOR PRESERVING HISTORIC RESOURCES.**

*NOTE: As of June 2009, Plainfield Township does not have any historic sites/districts listed on the National Register of Historic Resources.*

**Recommendations:**

**E.1. Assist in creating a survey of historic resources in the Township.**

The Township should prepare a survey of historical resources (buildings, farms, structures) to be completed. Nationally registered resources, provide opportunities for potential property enhancement, repairs, etc. If the survey finds significant historical resources or properties that are deemed historically significant, the proper procedures should be performed for designation.

Plainfield Township is rich in history but lacks any formal attempt to promote that history. Churches, farmsteads and buildings dot the landscape. Plainfield should start to create an inventory of historic sites and pursue to get them registered in the National Register of Historic Places. If any do not qualify for this inventory, Plainfield can create a historic program to showcase its history.
E.2. Use a variety of methods to help conserve historic properties.

The following are ways to conserve the area’s historic resources, short of establishing an historic zoning district, which require a strong local consensus, state certification and an historic architectural review boards to approve most types of exterior building changes:

- Promote the donation of historic facade easements (and associated tax advantages) to preserve key historic structures in the same way as agricultural easements area sold.

- Expand local participation in the Pennsylvania Blue Markers Program. (The Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission will fund Blue Markers for sites of statewide significance. Blue Markers for locally significant sites must be funded locally.)

- Adopt delay of demolition regulations and require zoning hearing board approval for demolition of historic structures (as designated on an official historic structures list such the updated one recommended above).

- Within carefully defined limits, allow certain uses within historic properties that would otherwise be prohibited in residential areas (e.g. bed and breakfast, small craft sales, small office use). The exceptions will hopefully extend the economic viability of historic properties and help avoid demolition.
IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program will allow the EAC a preliminary schedule of events that should be performed in a timed manner. The Action Program will serve as a guideline, but will be a process that can change and be added to in the future. If new objectives come along for the EAC, they can and should be added to the Action Program. Also, on a yearly basis the Action Program should be reviewed for completed agendas and constraints on others. The Action Program should be looked upon as a work-in-progress agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10</th>
<th>Action Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATION</td>
<td>ON-GOING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL A: CREATE A SUSTAINABLE OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1 Establish and administer a Plainfield Township Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Develop and use public information to increase future participation in the Plainfield Township Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3 Use a numerical ranking system to evaluate the suitability of properties for potential preservation.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL B: INCREASE FARMLAND PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES AND ACREAGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1 Create a partnership program between Plainfield Township and Northampton County</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2 Develop and allow for a partnership for educational and/or conservancy purposes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.3. Continue to follow all procedures outlined in the adopted Pen Argyl-Plainfield-Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL C: CONTINUE TO ENHANCE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1 Continue to improve existing municipal parks, trails and other recreational facilities.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.2 Continue a shared use cooperation between federal, state, county, school district, public and quasi-public lands for shared use.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.3 Identify opportunities to increase public access to local waterways.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### RECOMMENDATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>ON-GOING</th>
<th>SHORT RANGE (Years 1-2)</th>
<th>LONGER RANGE (Year 3 &amp; Beyond)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.4 Establish a Park, Trail and Greenway Endowment Fund supported by donations and fundraisers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.5 Update the Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance to include provisions to protect the Appalachian Trail (HB 1281, PA Act 24, 2008, The Appalachian Trail Protection Act).</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.6 Create an official Trails Map.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.7 Continue to use funding opportunities for recreational purposes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.8 Continue to work with federal, state, county and conservancies to enhance the recreational opportunities within the Township.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.9 Provide maps, signs, historical information, and information on attractions and sponsors to better identify trails and inform trail uses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GOAL D: IMPROVE, ENHANCE, AND CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL D</th>
<th>ON-GOING</th>
<th>SHORT RANGE (Years 1-2)</th>
<th>LONGER RANGE (Year 3 &amp; Beyond)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.1 Continue to review and enact on all procedures adopted in the Pen Argyl - Plainfield - Wind Gap Regional Comprehensive Plan.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2 Preserve additional selected natural areas in each municipality as opportunities arise.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.3 Make greater use of zoning and subdivision regulations to enhance environmental protection.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.4 Enhance wellhead protection efforts through regulation and other techniques.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GOAL E: INCREASE PRESERVATION EFFORTS FOR PRESERVING HISTORIC RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL E</th>
<th>ON-GOING</th>
<th>SHORT RANGE (Years 1-2)</th>
<th>LONGER RANGE (Year 3 &amp; Beyond)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.1 Assist in creating a survey of historic resources in the Township.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.2 Use a variety of methods to help conserve historic properties.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRIORITIES

Priorities for implementation have been established as a result of the planning process. Priorities will change as items are implemented and circumstances change. The following example guidelines can be used to help with prioritization:

- Is the project consistent with the open space plan?
- Is the project needed to improve natural resources?
- Is there interest and support from the community or outlying agencies, non-profits, etc?
- Will the delay of scheduling the project result in a lost opportunity?
- Will the project benefit the entire Township or a larger area?
- Can the project be funded, in part, by a state or federal grant or other revenue sharing services (landfill and/or gaming fees) rather than with local and/or general obligation bonds?
POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The federal government, state government, county and local government, private organizations, and foundations provide various opportunities for open space funding. Some of the most commonly used funding sources, including grants and loans, can help preserve open space (see Table 12). Since funding sources are always changing, with new programs being added and older programs being revised or deleted, it will be important to continually add and revise the table below as funding sources change.

Table 11
Possible Trail Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Program</th>
<th>General Description of Program</th>
<th>Administering Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growing Greener Program</td>
<td>As part of Pennsylvania’s Growing Greener Program, PA DEP offers various grants that can be used for greenway related projects. They include: Watershed Grants, Technical Assistance Grants, and New or Innovative Technology Grants.</td>
<td>PA DEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) - Land Trust Grants</td>
<td>Grants to well-established non-profit land trusts and conservancies to plan for and acquire critical natural areas. Land that is acquired must be open to the public.</td>
<td>PA DCNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2P2 - Community Grants</td>
<td>Provides 50% matching grants to municipalities to fund: • Develop a plan for parks/recreation • Acquire parkland/nature preserves • Rehabilitate and improve public recreation areas. Grants up to $20,000, without a local match, are available for material and design costs in small municipalities.</td>
<td>PA DCNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton County Bond issue</td>
<td>Bond issue funding will be available for open space preservation, agricultural preservation, and park and recreation (including trails) projects. Guidelines are being developed for project applications.</td>
<td>Northampton County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)</td>
<td>Offers grants for a wide variety of activities, provided the applicant proves by survey or census that the project will benefit 51% low and moderate income persons or handicapped persons or eliminate &quot;blighted&quot; conditions in officially designated areas. For example, funds can be used for water and sewage improvements, storm drainage, handicapped accessibility, parks / recreation / greenways, street and sidewalk improvements, planning, and historic rehabilitation.</td>
<td>Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development &amp; PA DCED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEA-21 Transportation Enhancements Program (part of federal Transportation Efficiency Act)</td>
<td>Provides grants up to 75% of costs for projects within state-designated “Heritage Parks” to preserve and interpret the significant contribution that certain areas made upon the industrial heritage of the state and nation. Funds four types of projects: • Feasibility studies • Management Action Plan • Special purpose studies • Implementation projects. Projects are intended to conserve natural, historic and recreational resources relating to industrial heritage to stimulate regional tourism.</td>
<td>U.S. DOT funds administered by PennDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Program</td>
<td>General Description of Program</td>
<td>Administering Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School</td>
<td>The Home Town Streets Program provides funding for a variety of streetscape improvements that are aimed at reestablishing downtown and commercial centers. The Safe Routes to School Program provides grants and is designed to work with both school districts and pedestrian and bicycle safety advocates to make physical improvements that promote safe walking and biking passages to schools. Both programs require a 20% local match.</td>
<td>PennDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Revitalization Program</td>
<td>Very broad grant program. Officially intended to promote community stability, increase tax bases and improve quality of life. Applications may be made by municipalities, authorities, economic development organizations, and nonprofit corporations. Public/non-profit/profit partnerships are encouraged. Generally can be used for infrastructure, community revitalization, building rehabilitation, demolition of blighted structures, public safety, and park and greenways projects.</td>
<td>PA DCED &amp; Governor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program</td>
<td>The National Parks service operates this program aimed at conserving land and water resources for communities. Eligible projects include conservation plans for protecting these resources, trail development, and greenway development.</td>
<td>National Park Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Protection Program, PA</td>
<td>Offers design and construction of flood protection projects. The project must be deemed economically justifiable under the state capital budget process.</td>
<td>PA DEP Bureau of Waterways Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| PA Heritage Areas Program                           | Provides grants up to 75% of costs for projects within state-designated “Heritage Areas” to preserve and interpret the significant contribution that certain areas made upon the industrial heritage of the state and nation. Funds the following types of projects:  
  • Feasibility studies  
  • Implementation projects.  
  • Special purpose studies  
  Projects are intended to conserve natural, historic and recreational resources relating to industrial heritage to stimulate regional tourism. | PA DCNR D&L NHC                      |
<p>| Industrial Sites Reuse Program, PA (&quot;Brownfields&quot;) | Provides grants of up to 75% and low-interest loans for assessment of environmental contamination and remediation work at former industrial sites. Available to private companies, nonprofit economic development agencies, or authorities that own the land. Mainly targeted towards cities. Financing is not available to the company that caused the contamination. | PA DCED in cooperation with PA DEP    |
| Intermunicipal Projects Grants                      | Promotes cooperation between neighboring municipalities so as to foster increased efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of municipal services at the local level.                                                                                                                   | PA DCED                               |
| Keystone Historic Preservation Funds                | Provides 50% matching grants to fund analysis, acquisition, or rehabilitation of historic sites. The site must be on the National Register of Historic Places or officially determined to be eligible for listing. The site must be accessible to the public after funding. Grants can be made to public agencies or nonprofit organizations. | PHMC                                  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Program</th>
<th>General Description of Program</th>
<th>Administering Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)</td>
<td>This program provides grant funds for the preparation of community comprehensive plans and the ordinances to implement them. It promotes cooperation between municipalities in making sound land use decisions that follow or adhere to the Governor’s Executive Order on Land Use. Priority is given to any county government acting on behalf of its municipalities, any group of two or more municipalities, or a body authorized to act on behalf of two or more municipalities. Applicants are to provide a minimum of 50% match consisting of cash or in-kind services. There are no minimum or maximum amounts.</td>
<td>PA DCED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program</td>
<td>Provides low-interest loans to municipalities with populations of 12,000 or less for the purchase of equipment and the purchase, construction, renovation or rehabilitation of municipal facilities. Priorities are given to projects that are necessary for public health and safety or involve intergovernmental cooperation.</td>
<td>PA DCED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Recreational Trails Funding (Symms NRTA)</td>
<td>Provides grants for the acquisition and development of recreation trails (which may include trails for motorized vehicles). A 50% local match is required. Applications may be made by federal, state or local government agencies or organizations.</td>
<td>Federal, administered by PA DCNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rails to Trails, PA</td>
<td>Provides grants for feasibility studies, master site plans, acquisition, and improvement of former railroad lines for recreation trails. A 50% local match is required. Open to municipalities, authorities, and non-profit.</td>
<td>DCNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers Conservation Program, PA</td>
<td>Offers 50% grants to conserve and enhance river resources. Typically, funding is first provided for a conservation plan for a waterway. Grants are available to implement an approved plan. Available to municipalities, authorities, and non-profit.</td>
<td>PA DCNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Municipal Services</td>
<td>Provides modest-sized 50/50 matching grants to promote cooperation among municipalities, in order to increase the efficiency of public services. Two or more municipalities may apply, or a council of governments.</td>
<td>PA DCED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Legacy Program</td>
<td>The Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a federal program in partnership with the state, supports state efforts to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. The FLP directly supports property acquisition and also supports efforts to acquire donated conservation easements. Participation in the FLP is limited to private forest landowners.</td>
<td>USDA Forest Service in cooperation with State Foresters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land &amp; Water Conservation Fund</td>
<td>The Land &amp; Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.</td>
<td>National Park Service in cooperation with PA DCNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program</td>
<td>The Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program provides funds for the purchase of development rights on farmland. The perpetual easement ensures the farmland will be available for agricultural use indefinitely.</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation and the Northampton County Agricultural Preservation Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plainfield Township Open Space Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Program</th>
<th>General Description of Program</th>
<th>Administering Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stream Improvement Program</td>
<td>Provides design and construction assistance to eliminate imminent threats to flooding and streambank erosion.</td>
<td>PA DEP Bureau of Waterways Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Publications and internet sites of various agencies; *Pennsylvanian* magazine; PA DCED Resource Directory; PA DCNR and PA Growing Greener Websites

**ADDITIONAL WAYS TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE**

**Fee Simple Acquisition** - The most direct means of obtaining land for parks or greenways is through fee simple purchase. The main advantage of this procedure is that an entire parcel of land belongs to the municipality or other entity purchasing the land. In many situations, fee simple acquisition is the most appropriate manner by which to preserve land. However, the expense of fee simple purchase can sometimes exceed available funding sources.

**Condemnation** - Acquisition can occur by exercising the right of eminent domain where the public purpose is well defined, where fee simple acquisition is desired but not possible at a fair price and where the owner is reluctant to sell. It is prudent to view condemnation as a last resort when acquiring land for open space.

**Purchase and Lease-Back or Resale** - In certain cases, it is appropriate for a municipality to purchase land in fee simple, place restrictions on the deed prohibiting certain uses (e.g., residential development) and lease it back to interested parties. One advantage of this method is that the municipality can purchase land for future use (before the price increases, perhaps prohibitively so) and, through leasing, recoup some or all of the purchase price. In this way, land is maintained in open space until future demand warrants development of a recreational or agricultural facility. Resale of some or all of the land (after placement of deed restrictions) would maintain open space while also relieving the municipality of maintenance obligations and returning the land to the tax rolls.

**Conservation Easements** - Conservation easements are used to preserve land at a relatively low cost without acquiring it. With a conservation easement, the land remains privately-owned. The easement involves the property owner voluntarily agreeing to donate or sell the right to develop his or her land. The property owner agrees to place a restriction in the deed of the property, which then becomes binding on all future owners of the land. The easement can be written in many different ways to restrict or not restrict certain types of activities. Most conservation easements prohibit the construction of new buildings and cutting down woods. Often, the granting of a conservation easement can result in federal income tax and local property tax advantages to the property owner.
Pedestrian Easements - A conservation easement can also be combined with a “pedestrian easement” to allow the public the right to walk, hike and ride bicycles along a specific area, provided users follow pre-established rules. These easements can be particularly useful in connecting two or more greenway segments. Pedestrian easements may also be useful in establishing the Township’s greenway system.

Mandatory Dedication - The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247, as amended) enables municipalities to require that residential developers dedicate land, or fees in lieu of land, for public recreation. Municipalities must have an adopted recreation plan and an adopted ordinance relating to mandatory dedication before land or fees can be accepted. The amount of land required must be related to the demand for recreation land typically created by new development. The required fee should reflect the fair market value of the amount of land for which the fee is being substituted.

Donations - Land sometimes is acquired through donations from private owners, organizations and corporations. Local governments should encourage land donations by pointing out benefits of such actions, such as public relations values and federal income tax benefits. Prior to accepting a donation, a municipality should consider two things: first, it should analyze the location of the parcel and the anticipated development and maintenance costs. If the location is poor and/or projected costs will be excessive, the municipality should strongly consider accepting a fee rather than the land. Second, if the land is found to be suitable, the municipality should encourage the donor to provide an endowment fund along with the land to assist with development and/or maintenance costs.

Landfill Fee and Tax - A portion of land, situated between Wind Gap and Pen Argyl, is used for landfill purposes. Waste Management currently owns and operates the facility. Plainfield Township benefits financially from the operations through a serious of fees and taxes. The Township receives a $1 per ton (every three months) and $1.65 per ton (retro account) through the Act 101 Host Municipal Fee. The money provided through this fee can be placed in the general fund for Township expenses. The Business Privilege Tax, produces $0.45 per ton, cannot be used in the general fund and is placed in a trust fund.

Gaming Fund Revenues - Act 71, the Pennsylvania Horse Race and Gaming Development Act, set up a “local share assessment account”, that requires DCED to distribute money that is generated by licensed gaming facilities to support community and economic development projects and mitigate the impact of gaming activities\(^\text{14}\). In 2009, Monroe County passed guidelines that will distribute the money to its’ municipalities and the five (5) contiguous counties and municipalities from the Mount Airy Resort and Casino. Northampton County is currently underway (2009) developing their own set of guidelines for distribution of funds from the Sands Casino.

TOWNSHIP OF PLAINFIELD
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

ORDINANCE NO. 315

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLAINFIELD,
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA,
CREATING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY
COUNCIL, PROVIDING OPERATING PROCEDURES
AND STATING THE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Plainfield Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, deems it to be in the best interest and the general welfare of the citizens and residents of the Township to be advised as to environmental issues within the Township; the protection and preservation of natural resources within the Township; possible uses of open land in the Township; creating inventories of natural areas with unique features within the Township; and

WHEREAS, Section 1506 of the Second Class Township Code, Act of May 1, 1933, P.L. 103 No. 69, as amended by the Act of Nov. 9, 1995, P.L. 350, No. 60, found at 53 P.S. Section 65506, entitled “General Powers”, authorizes the Board of Supervisors to make and adopt ordinances necessary for the proper management, care and control of the Township and the maintenance of peace, good government, health and welfare of the Township; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Act 177 of 1996, the Consolidated Land Act and Section 11501 of the Act of Dec. 21, 1973, P.L. 425, No. 148, Chapter 30C – Environmental Advisory Councils – authorizes the governing body of any township to establish, by ordinance, an Environmental Advisory Council to advise other local government agencies, including, but not limited to, the planning commission, park and recreation boards and elected officials, on matters dealing with protection, conservation, management, promotion and use of natural resources including air, land and water resources, located within its territorial limits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED, and it is enacted and ordained by the Board of Supervisors of Plainfield Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, as follows:

SECTION I. An advisory council to be known as the Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council is hereby created and shall continue to function until this Ordinance is revoked.

SECTION II. The Environmental Advisory Council shall be composed of seven (7) residents of this Municipality.
municipal report (if applicable) or otherwise made known and available. Minutes of each meeting shall be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

**SECTION IX.** The Board of Supervisors of Plainfield Township may, from time to time, appropriate funds for the expenses incurred by the Council.

**SECTION X.** Severability. In the event any of the provisions of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional, unlawful, or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this Ordinance or of this Ordinance as a whole, but shall continue in full force and effect as though the unconstitutional, unlawful, or unenforceable provision had never been a part hereof,

**SECTION XI.** Repealer. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances conflicting or inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance hereby adopted are hereby repealed.

**ENACTED AND ORDAINED** by the Township of Plainfield, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, this 13th day December of 2006.

ATTEST: 

[Signature]

Secretary

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP

BY: 

[Signature]

Tim Frankenfield, Chairman
Board of Supervisors
PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP,
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

ORDINANCE NO. 332

AN ORDINANCE OF PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS IMPOSING AN ADDITIONAL
0.25% EARNED INCOME TAX FOR OPEN SPACE FUNDING.

WHEREAS, Plainfield Township is a Second Class Township organized and operating
under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted Act
153 of 1996, known as the Open Space Acquisition and Preservation Law, which amended the
Pennsylvania Conservation and Land Development Act, Title 32 P.S. Section 5007.1(A) which
contains provisions for a referendum on the question of the imposition of a tax for purposes of
preservation of open space pursuant to the local Tax Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, in the Municipal Election occurring on November 6, 2007, the registered
electors of Plainfield Township voted to approve a referendum imposing an additional earned
income tax at the rate of 0.25% for the preservation of open space with 622 voting for and 423
voting against.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED and it is enacted and
ordained by the Board of Supervisors of Plainfield Township, Northampton County,
Pennsylvania, as follows:

1. The Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors hereby adopt a tax of 0.25% on
wages, salaries, commissions, and other earned incomes of individuals residing in Plainfield
Township, in addition to the 1.35% earned income tax previously imposed, effective January 1,
2008 pursuant to the local Tax Enabling Act, Title 53 P.S. Section 6901 et seq.;
Economic Development, c/o Dennis Yablonsky, Secretary, Commonwealth Keystone Building, 400 North Street, 4th Floor, Harrisburg, Pa. 17120.

ENACTED AND ORDAINED into law by Plainfield Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania this 26th day of December, 2007.

ATTEST:

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

By:

Tim Frankenfield, Chairman
Board of Supervisors
PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

ORDINANCE NO. 342

AN ORDINANCE OF THE PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS AMENDING THE SUBDIVISION AND LAND
DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE ADOPTED MARCH 6, 1991, AS
AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME, BY ESTABLISHING
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION
OF RIPARIAN BUFFERS AND OPEN SPACE IN ORDER TO
PROTECT THE WATERCOURSES, PONDS, LAKES AND WETLANDS
OF PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP AND TO LIMIT THE SURFACE AREAS
OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES WITHIN THESE AREAS.

BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA AND IT IS
HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE AUTHORITY OF SAME AS
FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: Section 10.19.F of the Plainfield Township Subdivision and Land
Development Ordinance (SALDO) shall be deleted in its entirety.

SECTION 2: The Plainfield Township SALDO shall be amended by adding Section 10.23
entitled “Riparian and Wetland Buffers” and shall read as follows:

A. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this article to establish requirements for the establishment, maintenance and
preservation of riparian buffers and open space, as defined herein, to protect the watercourses, ponds,
lakes and wetlands in Plainfield Township, and to limit the surface areas of buildings and structures
within these areas.

B. AUTHORITY

This article is established in accordance with the Pennsylvania Constitution, Art. I, Sec. 27 (the
“Environmental Rights Amendment”), and Sections 301(a)(6), 503(2)(v), 603(c)(7), 605(2)(ii, iii, and
vii), 606, 609.1c(3)(4), 916.1(c)(5)(iii and iv) of the PA Municipalities Planning Code, 53 P.S. § 10101
et seq.

C. APPLICABILITY

1. This article shall apply to all lands within Plainfield Township that are adjacent to a
watercourse, pond, lake or wetland.
5. Agricultural uses in compliance with an approved, up to date USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) Conservation Plan.

6. Lawn areas of no greater than 10% of the total riparian and wetland buffer on the lot or 10,000 square feet, whichever is more restrictive. Lawn areas must conform to the natural grade of the land and must be mowed no lower than 4” in height.

F. PROHIBITED USES/ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE RIPARIAN BUFFER

1. All structures.
2. Impervious coverage unless permitted in Section E.
3. Grading, filling and any earth disturbance in the creation of new lawn areas or the maintenance of existing lawn areas.
4. The placing of chemicals or fertilizers.
5. Planting of non-native vegetation.
6. Mowing (except as allowed under E.6 above), removal or burning of native vegetation.
7. Soil disturbance, inclusive of grading, stripping of topsoil, plowing, cultivating or other practices.
8. Septic systems.
9. The production, storage or use of a substance or material, underground or aboveground, that is buoyant, flammable, explosive, or injurious to property, water quality, or human, animal, plant, fish or aquatic life.
10. Cutting or removal of trees (except as allowed under E.4 above).
11. The storage or disposal of materials used for snow and ice control including sand, salt and other deicing chemicals.
12. Sanitary landfills, dumps, junk and salvage yards, and outdoor storage of vehicles and/or materials.
13. The storage or disposal of any soil, loam, peat, sand, gravel, rock, or other mineral substance, refuse, trash, rubbish, debris, or dredged/excavated spoil.
14. Draining, excavating, or dredging, or removal or relocation of loam, peat, sand, gravel, soil, rock, or other mineral substance, except as accessory to work permitted as of right or by special permit.
15. Manure storage facilities and manure stockpiles.
16. The maintenance, housing or grazing of animals.

G. PERMITTED USES WITHIN THE RIPARIAN BUFFER SETBACK

Lawns, lawn care service, accessory structures, roads, driveways, utilities and passive outdoor recreation and education facilities are permitted within the setback area provided any structure associated with such uses is located outside the riparian buffer.

H. BOUNDARY DETERMINATION

The developer, applicant, property owner or designated representative shall be responsible for the initial width determination of the riparian corridor and identifying this area on any plan that is submitted to the municipality for subdivision or land development. This determination shall be subject to review by the Plainfield Township Engineer. Wetlands boundaries shall be delineated in the field by
Natural Succession. The process by which a habitat or environment naturally rejuvenates itself.

Non-native Vegetation. Vegetation reproducing outside its native range and outside cultivation that disrupts naturally occurring native vegetation by altering structure, composition, natural processes or habitat quality.

Passive Outdoor Recreation. Recreational activities that do not involve a developed site, and have minimal impact on natural resources.

Riparian Buffer. An area of trees and other vegetation adjacent to a watercourse or wetland that forms a transition area between the aquatic and terrestrial environment, and designed to intercept runoff for the purpose of mitigating the effects of nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides, or other pollutants before entry into surface waters and to provide control of water temperature.

Riparian Buffer Setback. The portion of a site where structures and uses of land are to be minimized expressly for the purpose of preserving and protecting a riparian buffer.

Streambank. The break in the slope between the waterline of a watercourse and the surrounding land area.

Watercourse. A watercourse is a channel or conveyance of surface water having defined bed and banks, whether natural or artificial, with perennial or intermittent flow, shown as Hydrology (blue lines) on the latest version of the Plainfield Township Zoning Map. Manmade swales, constructed specifically for stormwater management purposes, are excluded from this definition.

Waterline. The highest water level of a watercourse which is common and usual.

Wetland. All lands regulated as wetlands by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and/or the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Such areas are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, including swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

SECTION 3: Severability. The provisions of this Ordinance shall be severable, and if any provision hereof shall be declared unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of any of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance. It is hereby declared as a legislative intent of the Township that this Ordinance would have been amended as if such unconstitutional, illegal or invalid provision or provisions had not been included herein.
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION
FARMLAND RANKING SYSTEM

A. INTRODUCTION

The Farmland Ranking System is to be used to rank and prioritize for the purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements.

The system is designed to take the total accumulative points of the entire ranking system, to determine which farmland should be appraised for Agricultural Conservation Easement purchase.

The system shall address conditions at the time the application is processed.

B. CRITERIA

1. Location

The availability of utilities in relationship to the farm location and other farm locations.

The zoning of the farm, to be compatible with the land use of the municipality.

2. Resources

Soil capability, the ability of the farm to produce, plus size to make it worthwhile to sustain a farming operation.

Human resources adequate to maintain the farm at present and future status.

3. Stewardship

Soils; are they being protected to sustain maximum agricultural commodity production.

4. History

Has the farm been operated by the same family for many years. If the farm has any historic, scenic or environmental qualities that are of concern that effect the easement purchase decision.
(b) Farmland Potential factors. Factors that measure the potential agricultural productivity and farmland stewardship practiced on a tract.

(c) Clustering Potential factors. Factors that emphasize the importance of preserving blocks of farmland to support commercial agriculture and help to shield the agricultural community from conflicts with incompatible land uses.

(ii) Scoring scale. The County program shall require that each of the three general categories of factors described in paragraph (1) ranks tracts on a 100-point scale. The total combined maximum score under these categories shall be 300 points.

b. Development Potential (DP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Availability of Sewer and Public Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public water or sewer on farm</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public water or sewer within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of farm</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public water or sewer within 1 mile of farm</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public water or sewer within 2 miles of farm</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Development Pressure, subdivision on contiguous lots of 5 or more residences |
| Development adjacent to property line | 30 |
| Within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of property line | 20 |
| More than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from farm property line | 10 |

(iii) Road Frontage Available |
| 1000 feet or more of public road frontage | 25 |
| 400 to 999 feet of public road frontage | 15 |
| 1 foot to 499 feet of public road frontage | 7 |
| No public road frontage | 0 |

(iv) Distance to Urban Center |
The shortest distance between the tracts boundary and the boundary of the closest incorporated borough or city within Northampton County will be measured.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One mile</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two miles</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than two miles</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** The scores for each of these four factors will be summed and this total multiplied by 10% to yield the final weighted development score (DP).
d. Clustering Potential (CP)

(i) Contiguous Farms Adjacent to Farms Preserved by Conservation Easements
Farmland contiguous on all sides of property
  to an eased property ........................................ 40
Farmland contiguous on portion of property
  to an eased property ........................................ 20
Farmland not contiguous to an eased
  property ...................................................... 0

(ii) Contiguous Farms Participating in Ag Security Area Program
Farmland contiguous on all sides of property included
  in ag security area ......................................... 20
Farmland contiguous on portion of property included
  in ag security area ......................................... 10
Farmland not contiguous to property included in ag
  security area ................................................ 0

(iii) Contiguous Farms Participating in Purchase of Development Rights
Contiguous farm applied for purchase of development
  easements 100+ acres ....................................... 10
Contiguous farm applied for purchase of development
  easements 99 to 50 acres ................................... 5

(iv) Consistency with Regional Comprehensive Plan
Tract consistent within Farmland Protection Area ........ 30
Tract consistent within Natural Features Area ............. 15
Tract consistent within Rural Area ........................ 5
Tract consistent within Urban Area ........................ 0

** The scores for each of these four factors will be summed and this total multiplied by 30% to yield the final weighted Clustering Potential Score (CP).

*** The sum of the three weighted scores is the weighted SA score.

e. Calculation of farmland ranking score. The sum of the weighted LE score and the weighted SA score equals the farmland ranking score.

f. Use of farmland ranking score. The farmland ranking score shall determine the order in which tracts are selected by the County Board for appraisal. Selection for appraisal shall be made in descending order of farmland ranking score.