

Executive Summary

The Federation of Northern Chester County Communities (the Northern Federation) has been addressing planning issues that transcend municipal boundaries since it was established in 1974. Municipalities in the Region have worked over the last three decades to increase protection of resources through their individual planning documents and ordinances, as well as working together to develop regional water resource plans and studies. Municipal protection efforts have been progressive and effective at the *municipal* level, however, until now the Northern Federation has not developed a plan for *regional* resource protection.

Since 2003, the Northern Federation has been developing the Regional Resource Protection Plan. The goal of this Plan is to provide regionally consistent recommendations and actions for the identification and protection of the Region's Natural, Historic, Scenic, Agricultural, and Recreational resources. Specifically, the Plan:

- Identifies municipal resources and Regionally significant resources;
- Recommends developing community, Regional, County, and state support for municipal and regional plan initiatives;
- Coordinates municipal implementation of this Plan; and
- Provides strategies, the legal basis, legislative actions, and information on organizations which will help enable municipalities to succeed in their preservation efforts.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

Regional Perspective

The Regional Perspective Chapter provides an overview of the internal and external influences that impact resource protection in the Region including geographical setting and community character. This chapter also includes a discussion about regional projects that have been undertaken in municipalities adjacent to or that include members of the Region. Further, it outlines the influence of the County's planning policies as documented in the Plans: *Landscapes*, *Linking Landscapes*, and *Watersheds*.

PLAN CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Coordination and Implementation Plan

This Chapter provides guidance for the Region to begin coordinating important regional and municipal planning activities by prioritizing the Plan recommendations and actions in each of the five Plan Chapters. This Chapter is organized in a user-friendly table format to facilitate such coordination.

Chapter 2: Natural Resources Plan

This Chapter provides recommendations for the protection of natural resources with a focus on consistency of protection measures on a regional basis, building on the inventory provided in Chapter 7: Natural Resources Inventory. The Region is rich in a variety of natural resources and their protection is essential in maintaining a healthy and safe environment for residents living in the Region and beyond its borders. Several municipalities in the Region have already adopted some of the strategies proposed in this Chapter; however employing strategies in a consistent and coordinated manner on a regional basis is more effective for achieving resource protection across the Region.

Chapter 3: Historic Resource Plan

Chapter 3 builds on the inventory in Chapter 8: Historic Resources Inventory and provides recommendations to promote working together as a Region to provide historic resource protection through the creation of consistent policies and standards, setting priorities, and outlining strategies and programs. Some municipalities in the Region have already adopted some of the proposed strategies; however employing strategies in a consistent and coordinated manner on a regional basis is more effective for achieving resource protection across the Region.

Chapter 4: Scenic Resources Plan

Scenic resources help define the Region as a unique place and contribute to the experiences of residents and visitors. Scenic resources may be physical, such as: a building or structure, a place in which events occur, types of design, symbols, and landmarks. They can be less tangible such as: community organizations or events, neighborhood or village identities, and types of trades, arts, or crafts. While the range of scenic resources is quite diverse, this Plan chapter builds on the inventory included in Chapter 9 and focuses on the scenic roadways, vistas, landforms, natural features, man-made (historic), and dark skies of the Region, and strategies to protect them. In addition, this Chapter examines impediments to scenic quality and ways to mitigate them.

Chapter 5: Recreation Resources Plan

Recreation resources of differing types can be found in the Region and provide active and passive recreation opportunities for the residents in the Region and beyond. Planned facilities will supplement and provide additional connection in the future to existing recreational resources. This Chapter builds on the inventory included in Chapter 10 and focuses on regional and municipal efforts to expand and/or create parkland and recreation facilities, the connection of recreation facilities, and the coordination of community events and organizations.

Chapter 6: Agricultural Resources Plan

This Chapter provides an analysis of agricultural resources (which supplements Chapter 11), a discussion of their importance to the Region's vitality and rural character, and recommendations for their preservation and that of the agricultural industry in the Region. These recommendations serve to support the current practice of protecting agriculture through protecting open space,

while expanding municipal options. This Chapter engages the Region to debate agriculture as a viable economic industry.

Glossary of Terms

The supplement provides definitions for key terms used throughout the Plan and an identification of commonly used planning acronyms.

INVENTORY CHAPTERS

Chapter 7: Natural Resources Inventory

Chapter 7 provides an inventory of the natural resources that define the rural character of the Region. Further, this chapter highlights the legal basis that enables natural resource protection regulations

Chapter 8: Historic Resources Inventory

Chapter 8 provides a brief history of the Region and an inventory of already known and documented historic resources within each municipality in the Region, as well as provides an overview of federal, State, and municipal historic resource protection law, programs, regulations, activities, and techniques.

Chapter 9: Scenic Resources Inventory

This chapter contains a compilation of the inventories from the individual Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plans and Comprehensive Plans. In addition, this chapter looks at various protection efforts the Region has undertaken to protect scenic resources and the legal basis that enables the protection of scenic resources that define the rural character of the Region.

Chapter 10: Recreation Resources Inventory

This Chapter provides an inventory of resources that enable residents of and visitors to the Region passive and active recreational opportunities. Further, Chapter 10 provides an overview of the legal basis that enables management and expansion of these facilities.

Chapter 11: Agricultural Resources Inventory

Chapter 11 defines what agricultural resources are in the Region, and where they are located. In addition, this chapter inventories various preservation efforts and farmer initiatives that have been undertaken to preserve agriculture and the legal basis that enable such efforts. Finally, landowner programs are discussed to help with continued preservation initiatives.

APPENDICES A-E

Appendix A and Appendix B summarize public input received during the Plan Visioning Meeting. Appendix A summarizes the prioritization of the importance of different types of resources, while Appendix B outlines participant feedback regarding resource protection issues facing the Region and the vision for this Plan. Appendix C provides a comprehensive table of existing natural resource protection regulations. Appendix D provides a recommended Plant List to accompany recommendations of Chapter 2. Appendix E provides a summary of the results of the Township Historic Resource Surveys.