

West Pikeland Township, Chester County
Open Space Plan, Conservation Prioritization Mapping
Compiled by Natural Lands Trust
March 25, 2008

The Open Space Plan, Conservation Prioritization map is a localized compilation of conservation values that West Pikeland Township uses as a tool to assist in focusing land protection. This map enables the Township to prioritize their efforts based on regional and local township data. Four inputs were used to create an overall West Pikeland Township Conservation Prioritization Map. They include two regional data sets developed through SmartConservation®; Conservation Resources and Ecological Infrastructure and two local data sets are also included; Parcel Size Conservation Value and Protected Land Proximity.

Conservation Resources – a regional (15 county) data set developed through SmartConservation® to identify ecological value by overlaying multiple data layers that have been assigned conservation value that were determined by scientists and conservation practitioners. They are displayed in a way that shows a range of ecological values. These *Conservation Resources* are given a 60% weight in the overall conservation prioritization.

Ecological Infrastructure – a regional (15 county) data set developed through SmartConservation® to identify ecological priority areas and corridors that connect the priority areas. The ecological priority areas include the two highest Conservation Resources values, protected land, and PNDA / County Natural Areas Inventory Sites. Ecological values have been assigned to both the nodes and corridors through a method determined by scientists and conservation practitioners. The *Ecological Infrastructure* is given a 15% weight in the overall conservation prioritization.

Parcel Size Conservation Value – a localized data set that assigns conservation value to parcel size as a prioritization for protection using a basic assumption that larger parcels are inherently better protection targets. Values were assigned to parcel acreage ranges. Conservation values range from 0-10 with 10 being the highest value.

Parcel assigned value by size as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| 0 – 4 acres | 0 |
| 4.01 – 10 acres | 5 |
| 10.01 – 20 acres | 6 |
| 20.01 – 30 acres | 7 |
| 30.01 – 40 acres | 8 |
| 40.01 – 50 acres | 9 |
| 50.01 acres and greater | 10 |

The parcel size conservation value is given a 15% weight in the overall conservation prioritization.

Protected Land Proximity – a localized data set that assigns conservation value to buffers around existing protected land (including adjacent municipalities) in order to determine potential paths for connecting the protected lands. The protected lands are assigned value based on their type of public and protected land. This type value is used as a weight to assist in assigning value to the proximity buffers. Conservation values range from 0-10 with 10 being the highest value.

Protected lands were assigned value by type as follows:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Conservation Organization Ownership</i> | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Conservation Easement</i> | <i>8</i> |
| <i>County Agricultural Easement</i> | <i>8</i> |
| <i>Municipal Open Space</i> | <i>6</i> |
| <i>Homeowner Association Open Space</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Deed Restriction</i> | <i>2</i> |

These values were used to create the proximity data set. The protected land proximity is given a 10% weight in the overall conservation prioritization.