



A Big Step Forward Township Supervisors Make Official Map Official (Continued from Cover Page)

Beginning in 2004, Bushkill Township supervisors and Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) worked closely with the Department of Environmental Resources (DCNR) staff from Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center and the Bushkill Stream Conservancy to make sure that Bushkill Township's official map reflected and supported regional greenway planning efforts. Bushkill Township is the first municipality in the Lehigh Valley and one of few in Pennsylvania to use the official map to help protect its important natural resources.

In the coming months and years, Bushkill Township supervisors will continue to work closely with our township EAC, Planning Commission, land owners, and developers in protecting the rural character of the township through successfully using the official map.

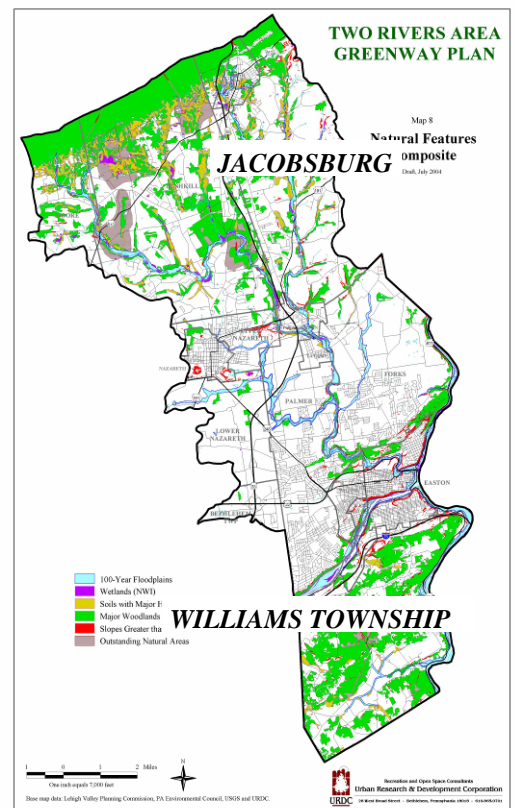
Bushkill Township Support Region's Greenways Project

On Thursday, June 2, 2005, Bushkill Township became the third municipality to adopt a resolution in support of the Two Rivers Greenway Plan, a project funded by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) helping to protect recreation and conservation greenways along the Bushkill Creek corridor. The plan covers the heart of Northampton County from Bushkill Township at the northern boundary of the project to Williams Township to the south.

Greenways are connected parcels of land considered to be important for protection of significant natural resources such as streams and wetlands, public recreational resources such as DCNR's Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, and historical and cultural resources and landscapes such as those found in the Jacobsburg National Historic District and all along the Bushkill Creek.

With the planning tools in place, including the Two Rivers Greenway Plan, the Bushkill Township Official Map, and a joint comprehensive plan that Township supervisors have been working on with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and 10 Nazareth area municipalities, Bushkill Township is in an excellent position to take advantage of

Northampton County's open space fund and DCNR's recently passed Growing Greener II program. Bushkill Township is well prepared to take the next step in protecting our quality of life into the future.



Bushkill Township Residents To Vote on Open Space Fund

Residents of Bushkill Township will have the opportunity to decide whether they want to pay to keep their township's rural character. At the July 2005 board meeting, Supervisors voted to place a referendum on the November 2005 ballot for a 0.25 percent increase in earned income tax for township residents to create a township open space fund.

If approved, the money collected would be used to purchase development rights from property owners interested in keeping their land mostly open or in protecting greenways and their significant natural, recreational, and historical resources.

Over the last year, Moore and Williams Townships passed similar referendums, and Upper Nazareth is considering one for its May ballot next year. It is estimated that \$450,000 annually will be generated in Bushkill Township. These funds could then be used to match open space funding projected to be available from the Northampton County's Open Space Fund, as well as from Growing Greener II funding recently passed by

Pennsylvania legislators and available through special funds already approved by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Lehigh Valley Greenway Initiative.

Bushkill Township supervisors believe that the residents of the township will support this initiative and will want to continue to move toward a future that provides for the conservation of those things that make the quality of life here something special. Investing locally in open space protection is a "smart" investment, especially considering the available matching funds which virtually double our tax dollars.



Township Stream To Get Exceptional Value Status

For several years, the Bushkill Stream Conservancy has worked diligently to improve water quality protection throughout the Bushkill Creek watershed. A primary goal has always been to gain better protection for Sobers Run by upgrading its regulatory status from classification as a High Quality Cold Water Fishery to a classification of Exceptional Value. Such an upgrade in status helps to preserve the habitat and water quality values by creating the highest standards against degradation associated with land development, especially with respect to potential wastewater treatment discharges from sewage treatment plants and industrial facilities.

Finally, through the work of numerous project partners, including Bushkill Township, Lafayette College, Muhlenberg College, Bushkill Stream Conservancy, Coldwater Heritage Partnership, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and others, a large portion of the Sobers Run watershed was upgraded to Exceptional Value. Testing conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection during the Spring of 2005 indicated that the eastern branch of Sobers Run, from its headwaters along the base of the Blue Mountain Ridge to its confluence with the western branch of Sobers Run in Jacobsburg EE Center, met the biological standards for this highest resource value classification.

Bushkill Stream Conservancy and its partners are continuing their efforts to gain the upgraded status for the remainder of the Sobers Run watershed based on local resource significance, water quality, and biological integrity. Additionally, such an upgrade is also being considered for the uppermost reaches of the Bushkill Creek between headwater areas in Bushkill and Moore Townships and Jacobsburg EE Center.

Protection initiatives such as this one will help promote "smart growth and development" and in most cases will protect and preserve not only environmental resources, but also property values and local quality of life.



Environmental Advisory Council

Get Involved!!

Currently, the EAC consists of five members. However, two additional positions may be added to meet ever increasing needs for new environmental initiatives and programs provided through the township. Assistance is specifically needed for recycling and composting programs, plan reviews, website updates, environmental education projects, greenways plan implementation projects, and many other opportunities.

How You Can Help

As the conservation challenges in the township continue, so does the need for your support and involvement. What can you do to help?

- **Help us identify opportunities to conserve key parcels of land.** You may own land worthy of having its natural qualities permanently protected, or you may know other owners of important parcels who might be open to considering conservation alternatives. Pass on your ideas about land conservation opportunities to a member of the EAC.
- **Volunteer.** There are many ways that volunteers can be helpful, including helping steward conservation lands, serving on committees, or providing specialized talents. Contact Township Manager, Aaron Hook at (610) 759-1250.
- **Talk up your EAC's good work,** and encourage friends, neighbors and relatives to support our efforts.
- **Support private and public open space and greenway funding initiatives.** Let your local state, county, and municipal leaders know that you support conservation funding. Support the creation of a Bushkill Township Open Space Fund.

Northern Regional Compost Authority

Bushkill Township has been involved with five other local municipalities to create a regional compost authority/facility for disposal and reuse of yard waste and other qualifying organic materials. This new facility is funded through recycling program grant money obtained by the municipalities. Now that the plan is developed and approved, the grand opening should occur in time to accept yard waste in Fall 2006.

The new facility is intended to operate like the Bethlehem compost authority, where residents from the municipalities can dispose of unwanted reusable yard wastes, as well as obtain composted materials for use such as topsoil and mulch. For additional information on the new Northern Regional Compost Authority, visit www.bushkilltownship.org.



Stormwater Management Upgrade – Act 167 Plan Revision

The township supervisors and engineer have finalized the revised Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan which upgrades the original plan that was only designed to improve flood management to now provide water quality improvement standards associated with stormwater runoff from new development.

BUSHKILL TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Stay tuned!! We are currently redesigning our website at www.bushkilltownship.org

Inside this issue: Township November ballot referendum for open space fund.

A Big Step Forward in Protecting Bushkill's Natural and Historical Heritage Township Supervisors Make Official Map...Official

On Thursday, April 21, 2005, Bushkill Township supervisors made it "official," unanimously voting to adopt the proposed official map and ordinance that will give the township greater leverage in protecting its remaining greenways (i.e., the woodlands along its streams which include the headwaters of the Bushkill Creek and its tributary, Sobers Run).

As a planning tool, the official map allows a municipality up to one full year following the submittal of a site development plan to work with developers and landowners to create a plan that would minimize impact on stream-side woodlands and other important natural resources. Planning alternatives include conservation easements, the purchase of development rights, deed restrictions, conservation zoning, and land acquisition. (Continued inside)

