

CENTRE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Phase I



Recommended Revisions

December 2003

An Initiative of the Centre County Board of Commissioners

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE I December 24, 2003

INTRODUCTION

On December 30, 2003, the Centre County Board of Commissioners adopted Phase I of the Centre County Comprehensive Plan, with its appended recommendations and revisions dated December 24, 2003.

Those recommendations and revisions are presented here as a separate but very important component of the Centre County Comprehensive Plan.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Agricultural and Soils

Amend the Natural Resources Goal to read “Identify, preserve, enhance, and monitor Centre County’s agricultural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Amend recommendation four to read “Coordinate with conservancies and land-trust organizations to encourage the donation and purchase of conservation easements on agricultural lands.”

Include the following text:

“Purchase of Agricultural Easements - Each year, the County allocates funds for the purchase of agricultural easements. Over the past 14 years, Centre County contributed \$886,967 for the purchase of development rights, and has provided additional funds for program administration (some of which is reimbursed by the state -- “closing costs”: appraisals, surveys, attorney’s fees, etc.). By the end of 2002, the County’s contribution leveraged \$5,644,147 in state funds, \$203,000 in federal funds, and \$99,116 in private contributions (through the Centre County Farmland Trust, Ferguson Township, Potter Township and Spring Township).

For 2003, Centre County Government’s allocation of \$163,243 includes: a donation of \$30,000 from Ferguson Township, \$20,000 from Potter Township and \$7,500 from Spring Township.

State funds for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements traditionally have come from grants by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture under the provisions of Act 43 of 1981. The \$100 million bond issue overwhelmingly approved by voters to launch the agricultural conservation easement program has been exhausted.

The source of on-going state funding for the program is a 2 cent per pack tax on cigarettes, which generates approximately \$20 million a year for the program. The State's Growing Greener Program provides approximately \$25 million. The 2003 State Budget contains a total allocation of \$40 million for counties to purchase of development rights on farmland. County appropriations totaled \$25.6 million.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchases in Centre County

	<u>Land Owner</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Location</u>
1.	Murry C. McJunkin	187.64	Spring Twp.
2.	Thomas & Sherry Craig	144.63	Spring Twp.
3.	Thomas & Shirley Boldin	141.02	Spring Twp.
4.	Ira & Patricia Whiteman	160.03	Potter Twp.
5.	James & Maryann Donovan	175.81	Spring Twp.
6.	R. Jay Summers	187.69	Ferguson Twp.
7.	Mark & Dorothy Smith	116.60	Spring Twp.
8.	Jerry & Thelma Weight	343.82	Marion Twp.
9.	Cecil & June Irvin	140.90	Ferguson Twp.
10.	S. Elwood & Aileen Homan	292.77	Ferguson Twp.
11.	Howard & Betty Ardry	197.06	Walker Twp.
12.	LeRoy & Geraldine Dreibelbis	172.70	Ferguson Twp.
13.	Lynn Illingworth, et al	151.71	Ferguson Twp.
14.	Murry C. McJunkin	111.83	Spring Twp.
15.	Guy & Elsie Fleck	133.14	Ferguson Twp.
16.	John, Howard, & Jodi Dashem	171.41	Potter Twp.
17.	James & Constance Harpster	67.95	Ferguson Twp.
18.	Joseph & Gladys Hartle	239.67	Benner Twp.
19.	Claude & Linda Homan	147.90	Potter Twp.
20.	William & Norma Beck	101.00	Walker Twp.
21.	Robert & Beverly Connolly	218.90	Walker Twp.
22.	Cecil J. Irvin	109.26	Ferguson Twp.
23.	Cinda B. Corl	123.10	Ferguson Twp.
24.	L. Thomas & Joan Musser	207.49	Spring Twp.
25.	Dane & Dean Hooper	232.80	Potter Twp.
26.	Donald & Linda Bierly*	<u>164.67</u>	Spring Twp.

GRAND TOTAL: 4,441.50 Acres

*Easement purchased in 2003"

Add to the Soils section the following text: "Use and Management of Soils - Soils are organized and described by capability classes and designated by Roman numerals I through VIII. The numerals indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical uses and are defined as follows:

Class I Soils have few limitations that restrict their use.

Class II Soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require conservation practices.

Class III Soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require special conservation practices or both.

Class IV soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require very careful management, or both.

Class V Soils are subject to little or no erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use largely to pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat.

Class VI Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat.

Class VII Soils and landforms have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plants and restrict their use to recreation, wildlife habitat, water supply, or esthetic purposes.

In Centre County, the soils are classified by the capability class levels and further broken down into subclass levels. The management needs for crop and pasture are discussed in detail in the Soil Survey for Centre County and described in mapping units. The mapping units of the survey mention conservation practices needed to control erosion, reduce runoff, and retain soil nutrients. Examples of conservation practices that help control erosion and reduce runoff are strip-cropping, contour farming, cover cropping, and using grass crops and diversions. Drainage practices that increase the suitability for crops and allow tillage or use earlier in spring include surface field drains, surface main and lateral drains, subsurface drains, diversions, and sod waterways.

The Centre County Soil Survey also includes a table with information on management concerns. All soils are rated on erosion hazard, equipment limitations, seedling mortality, plant competition, and windthrow hazard.

Many species of animals, fish, and songbirds, are found throughout Centre County. The soils, topography, and pattern of land use are favorable for increasing the kinds and numbers of these species. Alls soils are capable of supporting some kinds of wildlife and every kind of soil is generally occupied by several game and non-game species. In planning land use, the soils that are most suitable for crops and that have the highest economic value are generally not used or devoted entirely to wildlife. Source: Centre County Soil Survey.”

Geology and Mineral Resources

Amend the first recommendation to read: “Allow for the reasonable expansion of mineral extraction operations, consistent with historic production levels, in areas that are compatible with present and proposed future land uses.”

Reword the third recommendation to read: “Ensure that adverse impacts to the above ground natural resources do not occur as a result of underground mineral extraction of high quality limestone.”

Add text to Appendix A-1 “Map of Centre County Industrial Mineral Mining Operations”, to clearly note that the mineral resources shown are the uppermost geologic formation.

Forests

Amend the Natural Resources Goal to read “Identify, preserve, enhance, and monitor Centre County’s forest resources for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Add a recommendation in Forest element to “Encourage municipalities to form Environmental Advisory Councils.”

Amend objective number five to say “Encourage owners of forested lands to develop and implement forest management plans.”

Amend recommendation number five to say “Protect, restore, and encourage development of riparian buffers for improving water quality and preserving biological diversity”

Add the following recommendation to the Forest element: “Provide assistance to municipalities interested in open space funding referendums and identify appropriate opportunities.”

Revise on page 8 under State Park Land the amount of acres listed to only include the park land instead of including some Bureau of Forestry land

Add the following text to the Benefits of Forests section: “A healthy tree canopy also has a significant impact on carbon sequestration and global warming.”

Reword on page 10 the first sentence under Threats to Forested Lands to read “The main threats to forests come from poor logging practices.”

Reword on page 11 the first sentence of paragraph three to read “Too many deer browsing on seedlings and saplings is a major concern for forest regeneration and timber harvest”.

Add the following text to the Threats to Forested Lands section: “Fragmentation of forested land also impacts on the forest products industry and economic gain from harvests.”

Change the Sub-heading on page 12 to read “Municipal Tree Commissions and Street Trees”

Add the following text: “Understanding the importance of open space in Patton Township, residents were mailed an informational brochure before the November 2001 election with information about an open space referendum and what they could expect to see on the ballot question. Township residents voted to authorize the township to borrow 2.5 million to preserve land as open space in the township”.

Wildlife

Amend the Natural Resources Goal to say “Identify, preserve, enhance, and monitor Centre County’s wildlife resources for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Add the following text to the Trout Unlimited section on page 19: “The local chapters in Centre County are Spring Creek Trout Unlimited, #185, Wood Duck Trout Unlimited, #235, and the Lloyd Wilson Trout Unlimited, #224. More information on these organizations and other Pennsylvania Trout Chapters can be found on the organization’s website at www.patROUT.org.”

Delete objective number one from the wildlife element.

Amend recommendation number four to read “Protect, restore, and encourage the development of riparian buffers for improving water quality and preserving biological diversity.”

Amend recommendation number five to read “Coordinate with conservancies and land-trust organizations to encourage the donation and purchase of conservation easements on lands that provide quality habitat.”

Add the following text to page 19: “National Wild Turkey Foundation – A non-profit organization with members in 50 states, Canada, and 11 other countries that supports scientific wildlife management on public, private, and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport.

Groundwater

Rephrase the fifth recommendation to read, “Identify groundwater recharge areas and develop strategies to protect them.”

Separate the seventh recommendation into two as follows: “Implement the Nittany and Bald Eagle Greenways Study” and “Preserve environmentally sensitive open space for groundwater recharge”.

Remove “of this resource” in the eighth recommendation.

Add the following recommendation: “ Encourage municipalities to adopt ordinances regulating construction and operation of private water wells and water supply systems that are too small to be regulated by PADEP. “

Surface Water

Revise, on Page 9, the third paragraph in the first column to read: “An example of this is the upgrade of the University Area Joint Authority’s Wastewater Treatment Facility. Since Spring Creek’s protection status is High Quality, the expansion of this facility required a Wastewater Alternatives Study, which evaluated 14 alternatives for addressing the future wastewater treatment, and disposal needs of the Centre Region. Through this study, the Beneficial Reuse alternative was selected for implementation. It is important to note that since the Beneficial Reuse Alternative does not require an increased discharge to a High Quality stream, the preparation of a detailed social economic justification (SEJ) was not required. “

Amend page 11, second paragraph in the second column, section on Natural Heritage Inventory, to read: “The Centre County Planning Office and designated planning agencies are the first point of contact and are responsible for making an initial determination as to whether a resource is within the project area.

Add the Spring Creek Watershed Community and ClearWater Conservancy to the list of watershed associations on page 14.

Change, on page 14, Moshannon Creek Watershed Association to Moshannon Creek Watershed Coalition.

Add, on page 14, the website addresses for the watershed organizations.

Add the following recommendations: “Support the continuation of the stream monitoring efforts throughout the County.” and, “Encourage municipalities to retrofit storm water systems that contribute to the impairment of the surface waters.”

Revise the fourth recommendation on page 18 to read: “Encourage measures to eliminate illegal dumping.”

Amend the fourth recommendation under Encourage Centre County municipalities to: to read: “Discourage plantings of invasive species by property owners.”

Steep Slopes

Amend the first paragraph, second column on page 2, by adding the following to the end of the paragraph: "The mountain ridges are also significant groundwater recharge areas, particularly where the rocks are adequately fractured to allow for infiltration."

Change the Slope Map to include areas of the County that are of 15 to 25% slope.

Add to the end of the section on 'Significance of Slopes', page 2, the following: "The most common benefit that we receive from steep slopes is their scenic beauty. Whether you live, visit, or pass through Centre County, no one can escape the mountainous viewsheds. The pronounced presence of our steep slopes is due to the contrast of the wide carbonate valleys extending the viewsheds for long distances. Preservation of the aesthetic value of steep slopes should be seriously considered as part of any land use planning effort.

Include the Landslide Susceptibility Map.

Amend the third paragraph on page 2, column 3, to read: "One example of the significance of forested mountains to wildlife, as cited in the Bald Eagle and Nittany Greenways Plan, is the designation of Bald Eagle Ridge by the Audubon of Pennsylvania as an Important Bird Area (IBA)¹ for Pennsylvania. In addition, the update of Centre County's Natural Heritage Inventory, references and modifies Audubon's identification and mapping of the County's Important Bird Areas (IBAs). (See Figure#: Map of Important Bird Areas in Centre County and description of the IBAs.) The Inventory recognizes forested ridgelines as 'regionally significant migration routes for raptors and neotropical migrant bird species because they form corridors of unbroken forest.'² Both the Nittany and Bald Eagle Greenway Plan and the Natural Heritage Inventory emphasize the importance of ensuring the viability and continuity of the forest ridgelines.

Add the Steep Slopes statement provided for in the County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to the beginning of the second paragraph under 'Summary' on page 5.

Lands with slopes of 15% or greater have had limited development in the past. Future uses, such as sensitively designed residential development, should maintain the sloping lands for their scenic, watershed, recreational, forested and

¹ "An IBA is a site that is part of a global network of places recognized for their outstanding value to bird conservation. An IBA can be large or small, public or private and must meet one of several objective criteria. Since the IBA program is voluntary, there are no legal or regulatory restrictions." (Source: Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory, 2002 Update Edition) The IBA Program is administered by Audubon of Pennsylvania.

² Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory, 2002 Update Edition, Page xvii

mineral repository roles.”

Reword the second recommendation to read, “Promote sensitively designed residential development in appropriate growth areas on slopes less than 25%.”

Change the term “watershed” in the third recommendation to “water recharge”.

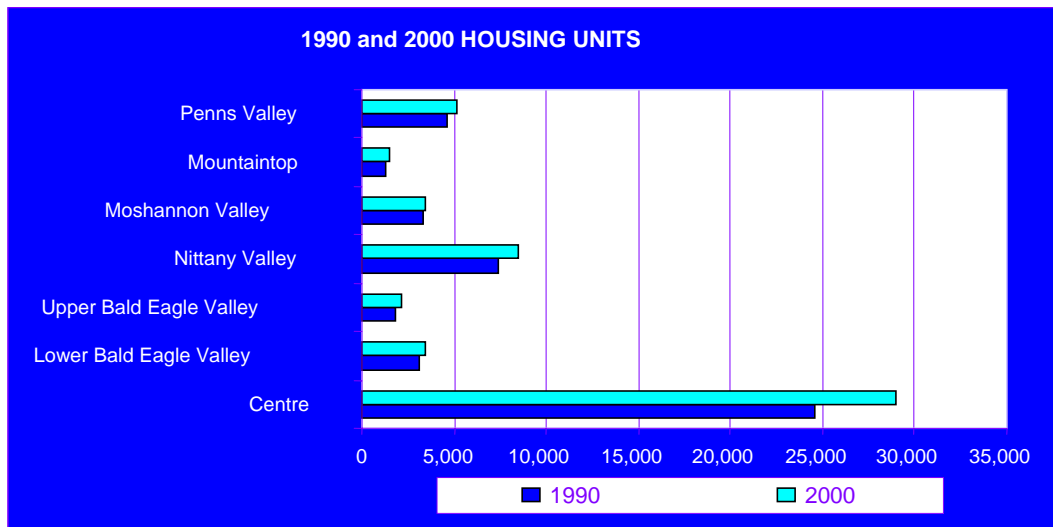
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Include a map showing communities identified by the Centre County Historical Society as having the potential to be designated as ‘eligible for listing’ on the National Register of Historic Places.

HOUSING

Revise paragraph three, second column on Page 2, to read, “The population fluctuations (numerically shown in Figure 2)...

Revise the legend on page 5 for the ‘1990 and 2000 HOUSING UNITS’ chart as follows:



Add the following recommendations: “Explore other resources and opportunities for affordable housing development, particularly affordable rental housing.” and “Explore with other public, private, and non-profit housing entities the creation of a countywide Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).”

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Sewer

Add the following text: “Act 537 requires a review of all sewage facility plans by the County and/or municipal planning agency prior to municipal adoption of the document.” to page two, paragraph four.

Add the following text: “The treatment process includes micro-filtration and reverse osmosis.” to page three, column two, paragraph one.

Add the following text: “Phase I of the project is currently under construction and will result in the construction of a water distribution line that will provide the reuse water to the Dale Summit Industrial Area for use by industry. Subsequent phases of the project will involve the construction of a water transmission line upstream of South Atherton Street along Slab Cabin Run. Along the transmission line, the water will be available for spray irrigation, agricultural use, and stream augmentation. A wetlands area will be constructed in the Slab Cabin Run basin where the water will be returned to the ground and surface water system. This recharge will help replenish spring and stream flow in this headwater.”

Health Care

Add the following text: “**Other Medical Facilities Serving Centre County Residents** - Depending on the health care need, Centre County residents continue to seek services and care at medical facilities in nearby counties. Whether the need is based on a specialized service or physician, the Lewistown (Mifflin County), Tyrone (Blair County), and Lock Haven (Clinton County) hospitals provide a range of services that supplements those of Centre County’s facilities and services. Another facility serving a specific population is the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, located in the CATO Industrial Park, Ferguson Township. This Center was established as a satellite center for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Altoona to better serve the Veterans of Centre County.”

Move the first recommendation to the Objectives section: “Assure equal access of medical facilities and human services to all population sectors within the County, regardless of age, sex, income, religious or ethnic background.”

Libraries

Amend the services areas for each of the County’s library facilities.

On page 3:

Under Aaronsburg Area Public Library, include the following change: “This Library serves the residents of Haines and Penn Townships, and Millheim Borough.”

Under Centre County Bookmobile, first sentence, include the following change:
“Bringing the library system to the entire County is the mission of Centre County Bookmobile.”

Correct on page 4 the date as to when construction of Schlow Library is to begin to ‘2004’.

Recreation

Add the Curtin Tract to the Public Lands Map.

Segregate Forest Type from Forest Lands on the Public Lands Map.

Show Forest Type on the Forest Lands portion of the Public Lands Map.

Add the following text at the end of the section on Outdoor Recreation, Page 4, first paragraph:

“The importance of greenways with respect to recreation is that they provide opportunities featuring pathways for alternative transportation, fitness, wellness, and enjoyment. These pathways connect heritage tourism sites, parklands, schools, towns, and other related features.

This Plan includes a recommendation to establish a County Parks Department. The Department is intended to ‘grow over time’ and would be charged with natural resources and resource protection, greenway and trail development, park and facility planning, land acquisition, coordination in environmental education, partnership development and outreach, and seeking alternative revenue sources. Having a County-wide perspective on outdoor recreational facilities establishes a baseline for planning and future opportunities particularly at the multi-municipal level. Regional cooperation is key to the enhancement and development of recreational opportunities.”

Add, to the last paragraph of page 2, the State of Pennsylvania to the list of major providers of outdoor recreation in the County.

Add the following recommendations: “Facilitate opportunities for state funding for parkland acquisition development through development of municipal parks and open space plans.”, “Prepare an inventory of existing open space and recreational facilities.”, and “Implement the Nittany and Bald Eagle Greenways Plan.”

Public Safety

Add to the Emergency Services providers list the Centre Region’s Emergency Management Coordinator and the Centre Region’s Emergency Communications Center.

Add the following recommendation: “In order to ensure efficient and effective delivery of emergency services, the Centre County Emergency Management Plan should be regularly evaluated and updated.”

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Add the following recommendation, “Identify current and proposed land uses which have a regional impact and significance (e.g. large shopping centers, major industrial parks, mines, office parks, storage facilities, etc.).

LAND USE

Amend the agriculture land use calculations table on page 2 to reflect a decrease of 10.1% from 1995 to 2000.