

Cumberland County – “Land Partnerships”
 Comprehensive Open Space
 Preservation Plan

Cumberland County, PA

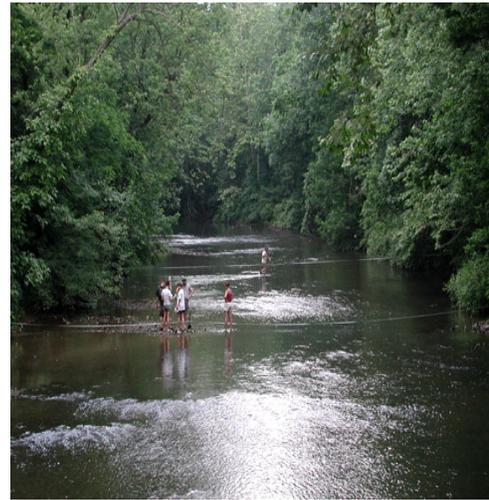
Project Description:

In 2000, the Cumberland County Commissioners applied for a DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant to develop a county wide comprehensive open space preservation plan. The commissioners' intent was to build on past planning efforts (i.e., the then recently adopted County Greenway Plan) to develop a tool that could be used for farmland preservation, natural resource protection,

park, greenway and trail development and other smart growth initiatives.

Recognizing the importance of such a study, DCNR awarded the County \$93,000 in Keystone Grant funding to produce what is known today as “Land Partnerships- Cumberland County’s Open Space Preservation and Smart Growth Plan.”

The planning effort kicked off in January of 2003 with the formation of a study committee and the hiring of a consultant team. Together, the groups worked through several phases of plan development including inventory and mapping, public participation, the creation of a vision, the formulation of goals and objectives, the development of conclusions and the establishment of recommendations. The recommendations set forth a multifaceted approach to the smart growth of Cumberland County.



The planning process inspired the commissioners to explore the possibility of floating a bond to fund priority projects identified in the plan. They were successful in doing so and to date have managed to appropriate and leverage almost 12 million for recreation, natural education and preservation initiatives throughout Cumberland County.

“Overall support for the Land Partnerships grant program has been very positive and demand for the program has far exceeded grant funds available. Forty nine applications totaling \$1.9 million in projects was received from 23 municipalities and 5 non-profit organizations. 29 grants were awarded totaling nearly \$1 million. As a result of grant offering, another \$1 million in local, state and private dollars was leveraged. All Land Partnerships grant projects are to be fully implemented by the end of 2008. When complete, these projects will result in:

- *Four land acquisition projects totaling 130 acres in priority conservation areas;*
- *Sixteen park & trail development projects including 14 park expansion/improvements projects, 2 new parks and over 5 miles of new trail;*
- *Five updated land use ordinances including innovative smart growth techniques such as conservation subdivision and traditional neighborhood development; and*
- *Four updated comprehensive land use plans for greenway & open space including 2 multi-municipal plans.”*

Stephanie Williams, Cumberland County Greenway and Open Space Coordinator

The vehicle for distributing county bond funds is known as the “Land Partnerships Grant Program.” It allows Cumberland County municipalities to invest independently or in conjunction with not-for-profit organizations to plan, acquire and develop parks, trails





and open space as well as fund farmland preservation and ordinance adoption initiatives. Land Partnerships Grant Program funding can be matched directly against DCNR grant funding and has already supported several

projects including: the county wide multi-municipal open space and greenway planning efforts, the Beamer Property Acquisition in Upper Allen Township and the Mechanicsburg Community Pool Renovation Project.

Amount of funds awarded, year and matching sources:

2001: Total Project Cost:	\$186,000
Grant Amount:	\$93,000
Match:	\$93,000