

Natural, Environmental, Cu

INTRODUCTION

This Element provides policies related to the preservation and protection of the Centre Region's natural, environmental, cultural, and historic resources. This Element provides policy guidance for the continued identification and protection of significant natural and environmental resources. Natural and environmental resources in the Centre Region provide significant natural habitats for wildlife but also provide the region with clean air, clean drinking water, and recreational space as well as other benefits. This Element also provides policy guidance for the identification and preservation of important cultural and historic resources that help maintain the culture and character of the Region. Goals, objectives, and policies in this Element are organized under the following headings:

- **Key Issues and Findings**
- **Goals, Objectives, and Policies**
 - **Natural Resources - Map M18**
 - **Environmental Resources**
 - **Cultural and Historic Resources**



Natural & Historic Resources

KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS

The Centre Region is home to a variety of natural, environmental, cultural, and historic resources. These resources provide an array of benefits and are essential to maintaining a high quality of life for Centre Region residents. The following issues and findings emerged as a result of the Inventory and Assessment portion of the Comprehensive Plan and act as a basis from which goals, objectives, and policies are identified. Key findings from the Inventory and Assessment portion of the Comprehensive Plan include:

1. The Centre Region's prime agricultural soils help sustain its thriving agricultural community.
2. The Centre Region has a rich and diverse mix of natural, environmental, and historic resources, including state forests and parks, Biological Diversity Areas, Audubon Important Bird Areas, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas.
3. Protection of the diverse and fragile natural, environmental, and historic resources will help ensure their continued sustainability.
4. The Centre Region's agricultural heritage is still present in and around the community through local farms as well as agricultural research efforts of Penn State University.
5. Determining what natural, environmental, and historic resources are important to the Centre Region will help shape and guide future protection and preservation efforts.
6. Extensive programs exist for the protection and preservation of historic and archaeological resources.



Preservation of prime agricultural soils helps maintain agricultural production in the Region.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Natural Resources

The Centre Region has a diverse variety of natural resources that provide the Region with numerous benefits and opportunities. Surface resources include timber and prime agricultural soils, both of which were instrumental in development of the Centre Region. The region is also home to extensive subsurface resources, such as limestone, shale, and clay. Natural resources provide a variety of benefits to the Centre Region, including economic viability, recreational opportunities, and health benefits. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are focused on identifying and preserving the Centre Region’s natural resources to ensure their continual benefit to the Region.

GOAL 1 - The Centre Region’s natural resources, which include agricultural soils, surface and groundwater quality, and forests, are protected and preserved, and restored to continue providing Region-wide benefits.

CENTRE REGION AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS	
MUNICIPALITY	TOTAL ACRES
College Township	1,304
Ferguson Township	15,918
Halfmoon Township	5,353
Harris Township	3,014
Patton Township	2,993
Centre Region Total	28,582

Objective 1.1

Encourage the preservation of prime agricultural soils and farmland.

Policy 1.1.1

Promote farm enrollment in the Agricultural Security Area and Clean and Green Programs in appropriate locations.

Policy 1.1.2

Update municipal Agricultural Security Areas as required by law.

Policy 1.1.3

Consider creating and supporting Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs in appropriate locations.

Objective 1.2

Protect groundwater resources and minimize property damage by identifying geologic features within the Centre Region and preserving their natural functions.

Policy 1.2.1

Utilize existing sinkhole inventories to notify property owners of potential risks when developing property.

Policy 1.2.2

Identify areas that may be prone to sinkholes and other natural drainage features. Provide information to property owners regarding the natural functions of sinkholes, closed depressions, and natural drainage ways; the importance of their protection; and the potential risks of developing near them.

Policy 1.2.3

Discharge of pollutants to sinkholes should be minimized to protect groundwater quality.

Policy 1.2.4

Utilize existing mapped public source water protection areas as a factor when considering significant new or proposed development and infrastructure to evaluate potential risks to groundwater quality.



Minimizing surface water discharge to sinkholes helps protect groundwater resources.

Objective 1.3

Ensure that negative impacts related to any future natural resource extraction activities in the Centre Region are minimized.

Policy 1.3.1

Identify areas of the Centre Region where Utica Shale is present and monitor activities related to Utica and other shale industry development.

Objective 1.4

Protect the quality of the Region's groundwater resources.

Policy 1.4.1

Continue to support the creation and implementation of water protection programs and well and borehole ordinances that seek to protect groundwater resources.

Policy 1.4.2

Discourage intensive development activities from occurring in close proximity to groundwater recharge areas through effective land-use management.

Policy 1.4.3

Continue to support and develop programs that educate the public about the importance of protecting groundwater resources as well as methods and benefits of water conservation.

Policy 1.4.4

Discourage intensive development activity from occurring on highly erodible soils and steep slopes to prevent excessive erosion that can affect groundwater quality.



Protection of surface water resources, like this reservoir in Shingletown Gap, ensures that clean drinking water can be provided to Centre Region residents.

Policy 1.4.5

Create and implement municipal regulations that protect groundwater resources from stormwater discharge.

Policy 1.4.6

Work with the agricultural community to promote agricultural practices that help protect and improve groundwater quality where practical.



Environmental Resources

The Centre Region has numerous environmental resources that provide both challenges and benefits to the Region as a whole. Environmental resources include important habitats that support biodiversity, wetlands, protected open space, groundwater recharge areas, steep slopes, floodplains, and high-quality streams. These environmental resources provide habitats that support a variety of flora and fauna, provide educational and recreational opportunities for Centre Region residents, and help to provide cleaner air and water for the Region. Environmental resources can also create challenges for development and should be protected to ensure that the benefits they provide will continue for future generations. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are aimed at protecting important environmental resources located throughout the Region and ensuring their long-term sustainability.

GOAL 2 - The Centre Region's diverse and fragile environmental resources are preserved, restored and responsibly managed.

Objective 2.1

Identify and protect significant natural habitats of threatened and endangered plant and animal species in the Centre Region.

Policy 2.1.1

Assist in any updates to the 2002 Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory.

Policy 2.1.2

Develop and implement programs that educate residents about the location of significant natural habitats and the importance of preserving them.

Policy 2.1.3

Revise municipal regulations to provide adequate development buffers adjacent to important ecological areas in the Centre Region.



Protection of wetlands and other natural areas provides habitats for a variety of wildlife.

Objective 2.2

Protect and preserve wetlands and surface-water resources throughout the Centre Region.

Policy 2.2.1

Continue to implement municipal regulations and assure compliance with state and federal regulations that restrict development activity within 100-year floodplains.

Policy 2.2.2

Continue to support and implement educational programming at the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center and future programming at the Kissinger Meadow Wetlands about the importance of preserving wetlands.

Policy 2.2.3

Implement riparian buffer ordinances in Centre Region municipalities to help create and protect environmental habitats.

Policy 2.2.4

Create and implement educational programs about protecting Spring Creek, Spruce Creek, and their tributaries from pollution and invasive species.



Objective 2.3

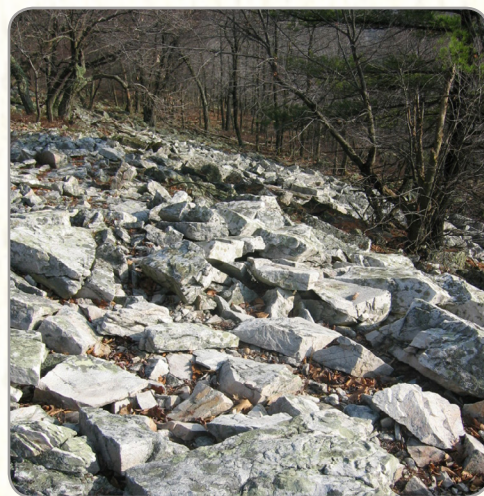
Protect and preserve ridges and areas with steep slopes.

Policy 2.3.1

Implement municipal regulations that protect ridges, steep slopes, colluvial soils, and highly erodible soils from intensive development activity.

Policy 2.3.2

Create municipal regulations that promote best-management practices for forests located on mountains and ridges.



Protecting steep slopes from intensive development activity promotes soil stability and creates habitat for threatened and endangered plants and animals.

Cultural & Historic Resources



The Rock Hill School in Harris Township is located in the Linden Hall National Historic District.

The Centre Region is fortunate to have a variety of historical and cultural resources that date from multiple periods in the Region's history. Historic resources include structures, districts, and landmarks. Cultural resources include archaeological sites that may be either historic or prehistoric. Historic and cultural resources serve as reminders of the Centre Region's past, connecting it with its cultural heritage and allowing a better understanding of the people and events that shaped the patterns of its development. Preservation of these resources ensures that they continue to play an integral and vital role in promoting the culture and character of the community. The goals of this Element of the Comprehensive Plan are focused on identifying and actively preserving historic resources throughout the Region as well as educating the public about the significance of such resources.

GOAL 3 - The Centre Region's community identity, history, and culture are maintained.



The Centre Furnace Mansion in College Township once served as the Centre Furnace ironmaster's residence. Today it is home to the Centre County Historical Society and is open to the public for tours.

Objective 3.1

Identify significant historic resources located throughout the Centre Region.

Policy 3.1.1

Assist local historical societies and groups in conducting and updating surveys of historic resources in the Region.

Policy 3.1.2

Support efforts to nominate historic districts and qualifying properties, where appropriate, for inclusion in the Pennsylvania Inventory and National Register of Historic Places.

Objective 3.2

Protect historical and cultural resources that reflect the history and cultural character of the Centre Region.

Policy 3.2.1

Create municipal regulations that protect existing structures located in identified historic areas. Regulations should protect existing structures and encourage new development within or adjacent to existing districts to be consistent with the pattern and character of the original village or rural center that contain the resource(s).

Policy 3.2.2

Support the work of existing local preservation groups, as appropriate, that seek to preserve historic and cultural resources. Encourage the creation of new preservation groups.

Policy 3.2.3

Assist in the creation and implementation of public educational programs about the history of the Region, preservation techniques, and local historic and cultural resources.

Policy 3.2.4

Encourage the use of appropriate fire suppression systems in historic structures.

Policy 3.2.5

Modify municipal regulations to permit and promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures.

Policy 3.2.6

Encourage the protection of historic and cultural districts and sites from degradation, destruction, or demolition through neglect.

RESOURCES LISTED IN THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER			
RESOURCE NAME	MUNICIPALITY	YEAR BUILT	RESOURCE CATEGORY
Lemont Historic District	College Township	1850-1924	District
Oak Hall Historic District	College Township	1825-1874	District
General John Thompson House	College Township	1813	Building
Tudek Site	College Township	Unknown	Site
Felix Dale Stone House	College Township	1823	Building
Houserville Site	College Township	Unknown	Site
Bucher Ayers Farm	Ferguson Township	1858	Building
Abraham Elder Stone House	Halfmoon Township	1808	Building
George Wilson Homestead	Halfmoon Township	1810	Building
Boal Mansion	Harris Township	1789	Building
Boalsburg Historic District	Harris Township	1800-1899	District
Hill House	Harris Township	1830	Building
Linden Hall Historic District	Harris Township	1810-1919	District
John Gray House	Patton Township	1793	Building
Camelot	State College Borough	1922	Building
Centre Furnace & Mansion House	State College Borough	1830	Site
Farmer's High School (Pennsylvania State College)	State College Borough	1825-1974	District
Ag Hill Complex (Pennsylvania State University)	State College Borough	1900-1924	District
College Heights Historic District	State College Borough	1896-1944	District
Holmes-Foster/Highlands Historic District	State College Borough	1896-1944	District