

# **NATURAL RESOURCES ROUNDTABLE CLEARFIELD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SEPTEMBER 8, 2005**

## **ATTENDEES**

Jodi Brennan, Director of Clearfield County Planning Office  
Meredith Krejny, Planning Specialist of Clearfield County Planning Office  
Chuck Failing, Director of GIS Office  
Rita Bass, Clearfield County Planning Commission  
Gerry Hatcher, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee  
Haley Sankey, Canaan Valley Institute  
Beth Rosevear, Park Manager of Parker Dam State Park  
Robert Merrill, Jr., Moshannon State Forest District  
Michael Smith, Moshannon District DEP Office  
David Carlini, PA Game Commission  
Sandy Fink-Barrett, Director of Clearfield Co. recreation & Tourism Authority  
Sharon Josefik, Central Counties Concerned Sportsmen  
Carl Undercoffer, President of Senior Environmental Corp.  
Donna Carnahan, Conservation District Watershed Technician  
Lou Ann Swope, Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Ross Orner, Orner Farms, Inc.  
Lou Stubbs, Sr., PPL Gas Utilities  
Jen Demchak, Moshannon Creek Watershed Coalition

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

After introducing one another, the question was asked, “who’s missing from this roundtable that should be contacted?” Participants did not have any additions to the existing contact list.

## **PURPOSE**

County Planning Director Jodi Brennan explained that the input collected at today’s roundtable would be used for the purpose of updating the county’s comprehensive plan. She then briefly explained what a comprehensive plan was and the purpose it serves. She also stressed that they would accept input after the meeting as well and asked for participants to share any data sources or reports that would be useful in the development of this plan. The roundtable participants will be sent the final draft of this comprehensive plan section for final review and comment.

## **PROCESS**

The Director also explained the process in which today’s meeting would be run to obtain this input. The SWOT analysis, a commonly used planning process, would be utilized which simply stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. These items would then be used to develop a list of goals.

After lengthy discussion, participants developed a list of the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and goals. Participants were then given five stickers, which they used to vote for the top five goals they felt were the most important. Participants were allowed to use more than one sticker per goal if they so desired. These “votes” were then used to prioritize the goals.

### **STRENGTHS:**

- Variety of wildlife
- Headwaters of West Branch Susquehanna, Chesapeake Bay
- Undeveloped river corridors
- Natural gas fields in county, two distribution companies
- Many coal reserves
- Availability of building stone
- Forest resources (e.g. lumber)
- Idle agriculture lands
- Available land for development
- Quehanna Wild area and other unspoiled lands, state forests, etc.
- Wetlands, water sheds
- Water supply quality
- Natural Heritage Inventory exists
- Eco-tourism potential
- Abundant hunting/fishing opportunities
- Variety of lake types, different fish types, activities provided
- AMD cleanup progress
- Watershed Associations
- Air quality (not as many problems as in other areas)
- Lots of youth: potential future stewards of land
- Good educational opportunities (PSU, Lock Haven)
- Senior volunteers

### **WEAKNESSES**

- Not allowing youth to provide input
- AMD, bad water
- Lack of land use management
- Lack resource protection
- Legacy of past resource extraction, (mining, timbering) etc. leads to high walls, dumping
- Aging farmers, not many younger people in farming
- Attitudes of citizenry
- Bureaucracy (leads businesses to leave)
- Noise of traffic (disrupts natural environment) smells, etc.
- No hunting / no trespassing signs
- Inaction by citizens when problems arise
- Lack of wastewater treatment in many areas

- Loss of prime farmland soils
- Inadequate infrastructure (roads, gas lines, public sewer and H2O)
- Lack of education
- Lack of potable water
- Inability to handle increased tourism (restrooms, hunting grounds, trails crowded, etc.)
- Abandoned mine areas attractive to landfill companies
- Lack of stewardship of forest resources (particularly in southern parts of county)
- Lack of statewide strategies for managing natural resources

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Use AMD water for other purposes (abandoned mine pools for water supply)
- Local agriculture for ethanol plant (Plant derivatives instead of trucked in corn)
- Alternative energy
- Nutrient trading
- Opportunity to use public lands for recreation and forest resources
- Low use – high yield recreation and tourism plan
- Clearfield Creek, Moshannon Creek, Bennetts’ Branch, other creeks and tributaries could be cleaned up (tourism, fishing, other recreational uses)
- Dark skies: Need to educate and have better management to make skies darker, reduce light pollution (can increase tourism)
- Can be proactive rather than reactive when preserving natural resources due to current low population / development
- Programs promoting continuation of farming
- Development of ag. Security areas
- Positive development of abandoned mine sites, vacant lands, brownfields (ATV parks, etc.)
- Have plan for vision for protection of forest, agriculture lands
- Education
- County located along western gateway of PA Wilds

### **THREATS:**

- Erosion from improper land use
- ATV’s (why so much land is posted)
- Habitat loss
- Pollution
- Urban sprawl
- Lack of land use planning controls (i.e., zoning, other ordinances)
- Light pollution
- Impacts of development on wetlands, open spaces
- Large amount of open space (can lead to unwanted development)
- Loss of natural resources (many used outside our area) e.g. natural gas, hardwoods, etc.

- Attitude of “econ. Development at any cost”
- Eco-tourism (bringing in people can lead to resource habitat degradation), especially if poorly managed
- Apathy
- Landfills
- Uneducated / irresponsible tourism
- Raise pressure on open lands (like as hunting grounds)
- Lack of cohesive message on natural resources issues

**GOALS (in order of priority as voted on by roundtable participants)**

1. Develop county plan with incentives to attract environmentally – friendly economic development (like using Brownfields, low-impact development, best management practices, previously strip-mined areas, etc. (8 votes)
2. Restore key streams to point of fish recovery (7 votes)
3. Countywide zoning (6 votes)
3. Encourage businesses that are willing to clean up AMD (6 votes)
4. Cohesive message (5 votes)
4. Reduce AMD in county (5 votes)
4. Protect forestlands, farmlands, streams (5 votes)
5. Preserve agriculture Lands for future use / needs (agriculture Security areas) (4 votes)
6. Direct new development towards Brownfields, infill (use existing structures) (3 votes)
6. Increase natural resource conservation (and knowledge of it) (3 votes)
7. Develop countywide standards for responsible tourism development and encourage their use (3 votes)
8. Manage urban development (2 votes)
9. Address current environmental issues like wastewater treatments, flooding, mowing too close to stream banks) may require infrastructure investment, regulations enforcement, education (2 votes)
9. Track and develop alternative energy sources (2 votes)
10. Increase environmental education, develop stewardship opportunities (1 vote)
10. Enhance quality of life (1 vote)
10. Maintain or improve upon state of natural resources in county (prevent further degradation, increase land protection practices) etc. (1 vote)
10. Getting infrastructure out to rural areas (sewer, water), include possibilities for alternative methods (1 vote)
11. Maintain or reduce current light pollution levels (don’t get worse) (0 votes)
12. Instill sense of accountability in people (0 votes)
13. Hold businesses accountable for pollution, product life cycle (0 votes)

Participants were informed that they would receive minutes from this roundtable with the results of the prioritization of goals in the near future. An invitation will follow for a second follow up meeting to develop a plan of action to implement the top 5 goals established at today’s roundtable. Participants were encouraged to provide additional goals.