

## Overview - Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability focuses on the natural resource base of the County, dealing with planning issues as varied as maintaining an agricultural base, encouraging nature-tourism, and interrelating natural limitations and sensitive areas with sound land use planning and development. As much as one may want to isolate topics and recommendations within the *Sustainability Triad* of Community, Environment and Economy, the existence of overlap should be recognized. In this vein, there are environmental sustainability recommendations that impact community and economic sustainability.



Environmental Sustainability Recommendations may be summarized within the following categories:

- ❑ CCPC technical assistance to communities having Growth Areas in land use and development planning;
- ❑ Support the continuing Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) remediation efforts to address long-standing environmental needs and address water-based recreational needs;
- ❑ Improve public access to streams, rivers and lakes in a coordinated effort involving CCPC, the County Conservation and Recreation Authority, the Cambria-Somerset Authority and other water supply agencies, appropriate state agencies and local sport groups and association;
- ❑ Prioritize infrastructure projects in Growth Areas and those that resolve public health issues; and
- ❑ Support nature-oriented resources (i.e. trails, greenways, water-based, etc.) and attractions via development and marketing of resources



**TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE 2010-2030 – ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY  
ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>Vision Statement: By 2030 Cambria County communities will benefit by preserving while taking appropriate economic advantage of sensitive resources</b>				
<b>SUBCATEGORY</b>	<b>ISSUES</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>GOALS/OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<b>Land Use</b>	<p>Concentration of undeveloped public lands in pockets in northeast, northcentral, southeastern, eastcentral and southwestern sections of County</p> <p>Over half of the County municipalities have no SALDO in effect, complicating the incorporation local storm water management measures into subdivisions/land development planning</p> <p>A number of developmental constraints have been identified reflecting physical features, hazards and sensitive resources</p> <p>60% of the municipalities in the County have sewage facilities plans that are 40 years old.</p>	<p>Environmentally sensitive areas in pockets generally confined to the undeveloped public lands along northeast, northcentral, southeastern, and southwestern sections of County</p> <p>Act 167 storm water management plans are completed for the Stonycreek River drainage area/subareas, Little Conemaugh River drainage area and Chest Creek drainage area</p> <p>Act 166 Flood Plain Management ordinances are being revised by municipalities to reflect the Federal Emergency Management Agency's new digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)</p> <p>Several Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plans have been recently or are being updated by municipalities as needed</p> <p>Approximately 59% of the land area of the County is undeveloped, a portion of which has few or no developmental limitations</p>	<p><b>Guide development in appropriate locations and promote preservation of critical natural and environmental features located in the County:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Address land development regulation gaps and philosophy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on the links between transportation and land use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage agricultural land use preservation techniques such as conservation easements and agricultural security areas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preserve environmentally sensitive land such as agricultural land, floodplains, wetlands, steeply sloping areas and Natural Heritage Inventory designated areas, while encouraging new development and expansion in areas served/anticipated to be served by public sanitary sewer and water.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use the land based assets found in the County as a means to enhance the quality of life for existing residents and to attract new residents into the County</li> </ul>	<p>County Planning Commission to encourage development in delineated Growth Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CCPC reviews revises Growth Areas as needed in relation to the identified developmental constraints mapping in this Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reviews of infrastructure projects for plan consistency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage <i>Cambria County Economic Partnership</i> to assign priority to projects in Growth Areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit Existing/Future Land Use Maps to municipalities in Growth Areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare/revise/submit model land use/land development ordinances to municipalities in Growth Areas</li> </ul> <p>County provides Technical assistance and support in relation to local land stewardship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain and expand Agricultural Conservation Easements as funding permits and the use of Agricultural Security Areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage adoption of or revisions to existing SALDO's as a method to guide the development of new housing in appropriate locations and away from areas that are best left for agricultural preservation and open space.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Revise existing SALDOs to include incentives for a conservation subdivision alternative especially in the Townships that would conserve open space and utility costs via clustering of development</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Resources</b>	<p>Numerous large pockets of surface mine impacted areas in the northwest, South Fork/Ehrenfeld and Portage/Lilly areas</p> <p>There are large concentrations of watersheds with exceptional value/high-quality streams on privately-owned land in the central portion of the County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some are in areas subject to few or no developmental regulations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Many are inaccessible to local residents</li> </ul> <p>203 illegal dump sites have been identified within the County, 27% of which are within 50 feet of surface water</p>	<p>Significant surface mine land reclamation activities are in process in southeastern sections of the County</p> <p>Relatively large concentrations of watersheds with exceptional value/high-quality streams are on publicly-owned land along County borders</p> <p>In addition to the 38 Naturally Producing Trout Streams and 20 waterways officially classified as "approved trout waters", there are 4 Class-A and 2 Wilderness Trout streams in the County</p> <p>The Cambria County Solid Waste Management Authority (CCSWMA) administers 19 voluntary recycling sites and sponsors several special collection and recycling activities, which augment curbside recycling within 25 (40%) of the County's municipalities</p>	<p><b>Encourage greater recreational use of surface waters and resolve water quality and land use issues associated with past mining practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support efforts to remediate Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) discharges</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support efforts to eliminate sanitary sewer bypasses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support efforts to eliminate Impacts to nature tourism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support continued and expanded efforts to reclaim mine refuse piles that affect land and water resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support the creation of additional public access points along streams, rivers and lakes</li> </ul> <p><b>Recognize Nature Tourism as an environmental asset for the County</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improve the access by residents to the higher quality streams, rivers, water bodies and other natural resource assets in the County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain and enhance natural resource based 'outdoor enthusiast' recreational opportunities and continue to value the preservation of open space and critical natural areas for use by existing and future residents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage continued restoration of land impacted by mining activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue development and maintenance of land and water-based trails</li> </ul>	<p>Support the Cambria County Conservation District's Super 7 AMD Discharge Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Long-discussed AMD treatment systems for St. Michael Discharge and Portage areas are needed to continue to improve critical surface waters.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Greater attention to fishing as nature-tourism is needed.</li> </ul> <p>Maintain existing public infrastructure and support regionalization in service delivery efforts.</p> <p>Enhance infrastructure development prioritizing projects in delineated Growth Areas and to resolve environmental/public health threats</p> <p>Improve public access to area streams, rivers and lakes</p> <p>Support the implementation of the Mainline Canal Greenway as a link among natural, community and culture heritage resources of the County, and other components of the planned land and water-based trail system</p> <p>Support sanitary sewer rehabilitation, extension and separation projects that resolve sanitary sewer overflows and malfunctioning or illegal on-lot sewage discharges.</p>

## Environmental Sustainability Implementation Strategy

The preceding matrix helps define *Environmental Sustainability* in terms of identified issues, opportunities, goals/objectives and recommendations, related to functional planning categories. This subsection establishes short and longer-term implementation measures and action statements.

Environmental Sustainability Recommendation	Short-Term Implementation Strategy	Long-Term Implementation Strategy
<p>Prioritizing and balancing developmental constraints posed by natural resource base and environmental features with planned growth and development</p>	<p>CCPC distributes land use and growth area mapping to affected municipalities, water/sewer authorities and developmental agencies</p> <p>CCPC prepares model land use/Subdivision/Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) for Growth Area municipalities</p> <p>CCPC offers to assist Growth Area communities in securing planning assistance (i.e. Municipal Assistance Program, other DCED) to prepare and/or update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Comprehensive Plans</li> <li>o Land use ordinance</li> <li>o SALDO</li> <li>o Municipal management training</li> </ul> <p>To better reflect and implement Growth Areas concept within the context of developmental constraints and opportunities</p>	<p>Land use ordinances reflecting Growth Areas, nature-based resources to preserve and developmental constraints to avoid, or in communities not choosing to have land use ordinances, infrastructure planning (i.e. Act 537 Plans, utility extensions) should reflect the same</p> <p>CCPC continues to assist communities in preparing and updating plans and regulatory framework</p> <p>County gradually adopts Growth Areas concept to prioritize projects seeking County assistance or o/b/o applications, including CDBG, HOME, Keystone Communities, etc., and future funding sources that develop during the 20-year planning period</p>
<p>Support the continuing Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) remediation efforts addressing environmental needs and address water-based recreational needs</p>	<p>Coordinated County, local and private inter-agency focus to support the Cambria County Conservation District's (CCCD) <i>Super 7 AMD Discharge Strategy</i></p> <p>CCPC, County Conservation and Recreation Authority and other authorities/agencies involved in recommended countywide Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan identify additional public access points on rivers, streams and impoundments</p>	<p>Continued coordinated County, local and private inter-agency focus to support the Cambria County Conservation District's (CCCD) <i>Super 7 AMD Discharge Strategy</i></p> <p>CCPC and County Conservation and Recreation Authority coordinate efforts with state agencies and local authorities/agencies to increase the number and availability of public launches, ramps, docks and other public water access points</p>

Environmental Sustainability Recommendation	Short-Term Implementation Strategy	Long-Term Implementation Strategy
<p>Maintain and expand nature-oriented resource base</p>	<p>County Conservation and Recreation Authority completes segments of the Path of the Flood Trail, connecting various communities and nature-based resources</p>	<p>Implementation of the Mainline Canal Greenway as a link among natural, community and culture heritage resources of the County, involving various County agencies, local/regional authorities and communities</p> <p>More centralized economic marketing by the County <i>Economic Partnership</i> via coordination with the Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Johnstown Cambria County Chamber of Commerce and other promotional agencies the stressing quality of life and nature-tourism opportunities and sites within the County</p>
<p>Prioritize infrastructure enhancement/extension projects in Growth Areas and/or in areas resolving public health issues</p>	<p>Support local efforts to resolve long-standing sanitary sewage issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ On-going local actions to resolve systemic problems causing sanitary sewer overflows in the Johnstown Regional System</li> <li>❑ Initiation of service Area expansions in the Forest Hills Area</li> </ul> <p>CCPC finds funding sources for the update of the County Sewer and Water Plan keyed to regional approaches, highway access and developmental opportunities</p>	<p>Pending funding success, CCPC coordinates the update of the County Sewer and Water Plan emphasizing regional solutions and linkages with development</p> <p>Continued County support of local efforts to resolve long-standing sanitary sewage issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Resolving systemic problems causing sanitary sewer overflows in the Johnstown Regional System that must be resolved by 2022</li> <li>❑ Service Area expansions in the Forest Hills Area</li> </ul>