

# PRESERVATION

## OPEN SPACE



### How much open space preservation is enough?

An analysis of undeveloped lands identified approximately 119,000 acres in Chester County that could potentially be available for protection, with over 88,000 of that in rural or agricultural landscapes. Beyond a single number as an indicator of success are questions of what functions need to be preserved, what critical mass will support those functions, and what linkages are necessary between clusters of protected lands. While possible to determine numeric measures for some of these questions, achievement of a single number cannot ensure full success.

### The numbers

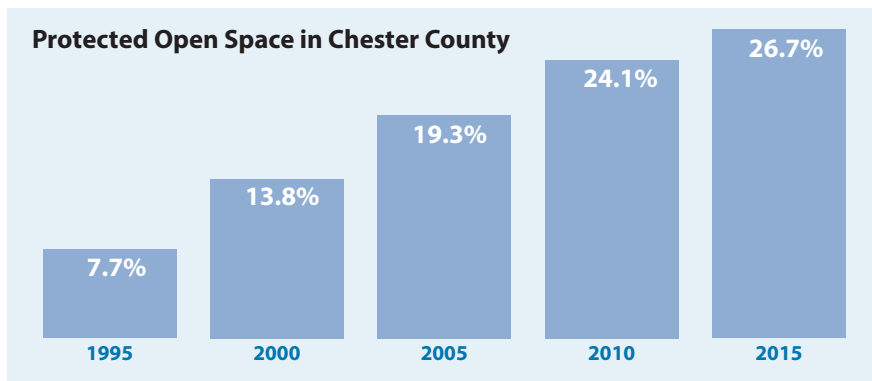
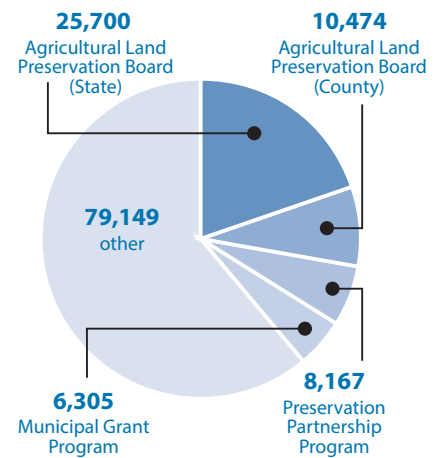
129,795 acres (26.7%) of Chester County has been protected as permanent open space including agricultural lands, nature preserves, and parks, with ownership across private individuals, land trusts, municipalities, and homeowners associations.

Since the start of Chester County's state agricultural easement program in 1989, 290 farms, with 25,700 acres, have been protected, ranking in the top five in the state. An additional 147 farms and 10,474 agricultural acres have been protected through the county program, bringing the total of agricultural lands permanently protected to 36,174 acres. Combined state and county funding for 2015 in Chester County was the highest of all PA counties, funding 20 easements.

Acres protected through the Preservation Partnership Program (PPP) since 1990 total 8,167 and consist of easements or fee simple ownership by land trusts or other non-profits. Acres protected through the Municipal Grant Program (MGP) since 1989 total 6,305 and consist primarily of fee simple ownership of municipal parks and preserves.

Open space protection is strong regionally and across the state, with protected open space making up 23% of the Delaware Valley nine-county region. PA's Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program leads the nation in the number of farms and acres preserved, with 4,951 easements covering a total of 520,619 acres.

### Protected lands funding source



## NATURAL RESOURCES

### The numbers

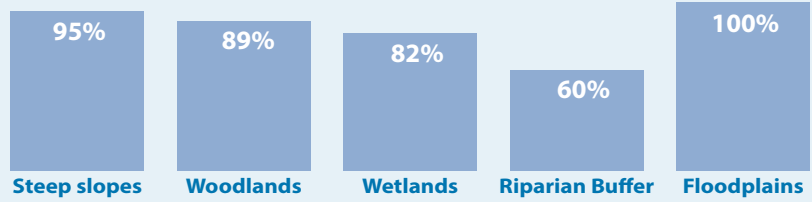
**Impaired:** 55% of Chester County's assessed streams

**Exceptional Value/High Quality (EV/HQ):** 43% of Chester County's streams/watersheds

**Scenic:** 13% of Chester County's streams/watersheds

**Heritage areas:** There are 172 species and natural communities of concern resulting in the designation of 169 Natural Heritage Areas - 13 of Global Significance, 9 of Regional Significance, and 144 of State Significance.

### Chester County municipalities with local regulatory protection of:



### Where do we need to be with natural resource preservation and restoration?

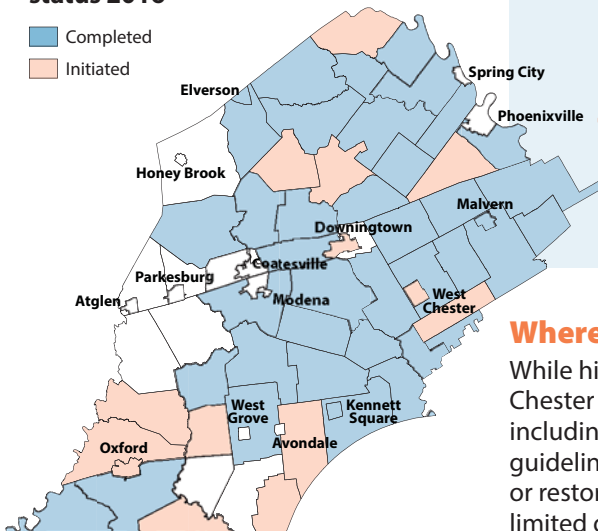
Natural resource regulation extends from the federal to the local level, yet critical functions provided by natural resources continue to be impacted. In addition to municipal efforts, Chester County benefits from many volunteer and non-profit organizations that work to improve water quality, forest cover, and wildlife habitat through research, education, and restoration projects. Restoration projects in the county are not at the same extent as regulations or easements, and not the same scale as development.

*“The challenge now is gaining the most benefits from a well-managed environmental infrastructure, benefits not limited to environmental health but economic and social health as well.”*

GreenPlan Philadelphia 2010

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Historic Resource Atlas status 2016



### Chester County has:

More than **2,000** participate in Town Tours and Village Walks annually

**526** National Register listed or eligible structures

**97** National Register listed or eligible historic districts

**5** National Historic Landmark structures

**4** National Historic Landmark historic districts

**40** municipalities with a completed Historic Resource Atlas, 14 initiated

**58** municipalities with historic resource regulation

**60** municipalities with a historic entity (Historic & Architectural Review Board, historical commission, etc.)

### Where does historic resource preservation go next?

While historic preservation and heritage tourism have broad support across Chester County, the depth of municipal regulations is limited, with few including the ability to deny demolition of a historic structure, and design guidelines not available in most municipalities. Funding for preservation or restoration of historic resources is primarily through private action, with limited government funding.