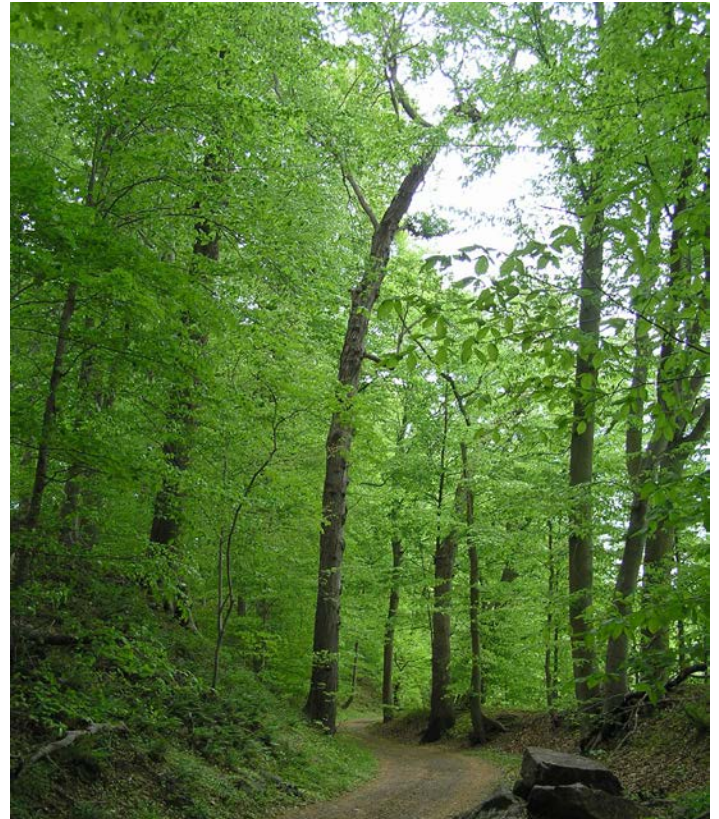
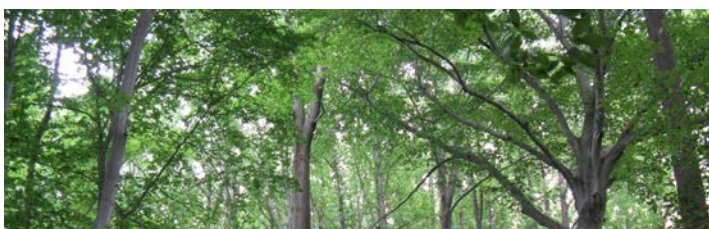


WOODLAND CLASSIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

Woodlands provide a variety of important environmental, social, and economic values and functions for our communities here in southeast Pennsylvania. Trees reduce and slow the impact of flood waters by absorbing water through their roots and infiltrating precipitation as it falls. On steep slopes or along streams, trees help reduce erosion, while their shade, root systems, and addition of leaf litter to waterways can have beneficial water quality impacts that protect valuable instream habitat for aquatic insects and fish communities, as well as drinking water that may be extracted further downstream. Woodlands also provide critical sources of nectar, pollen and habitat for our critical pollinator communities during the various stages of their life cycles. In addition, woodlands provide natural barriers and filters for both sound and air pollution, while actively performing carbon sequestration services, reducing the impacts of climate change. In order to better evaluate and compare the relative importance of the individual woodlands, a system was developed that utilizes GIS mapped data.

By examining ecological attributes such as interior woodland extent and watershed functions, including slope stabilization and headwater protection, this analysis enables the evaluation and comparison of municipal and regional woodlands, with results displayed in both map and tabular formats.



APPLICABILITY

The woodland classifications assessment and map can be used to support the following:

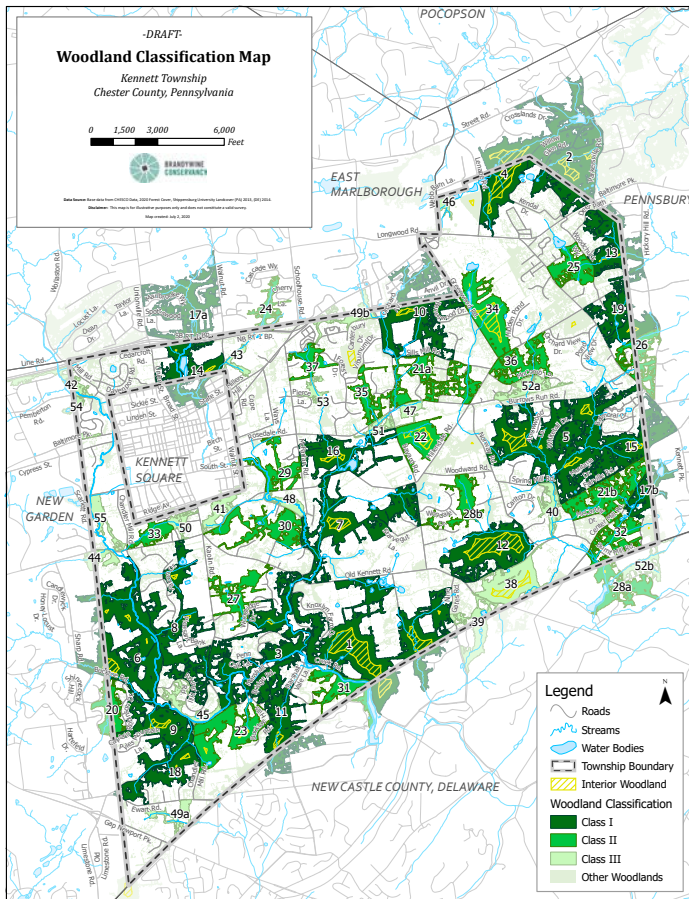
1. **Conservation:** The analysis can be used to identify areas of ecological value to stabilize steep slopes, strengthen headwater streams and forest riparian buffers.
2. **Climate Resiliency and Sustainability:** This classification allows to further safeguard natural resources, while providing for increased stormwater infiltration and reduced runoff of pollutants.
3. **History and Culture:** This planning can promote the protection of natural and scenic resources in a municipality, County, or greenway.



IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Process

- Through recommendations of a Comprehensive Plan and other plans or studies, such as an Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, etc.
- Task Force meetings with municipal staff, boards and commissions
- Inventory of existing conditions, land use and natural resources through GIS mapping exercises
- Development of woodland classification ranking system
- Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development (SLDO) ordinances should be amended to reference the classification system accordingly.



Kennett Township, Chester County
Woodland Classification (2020)

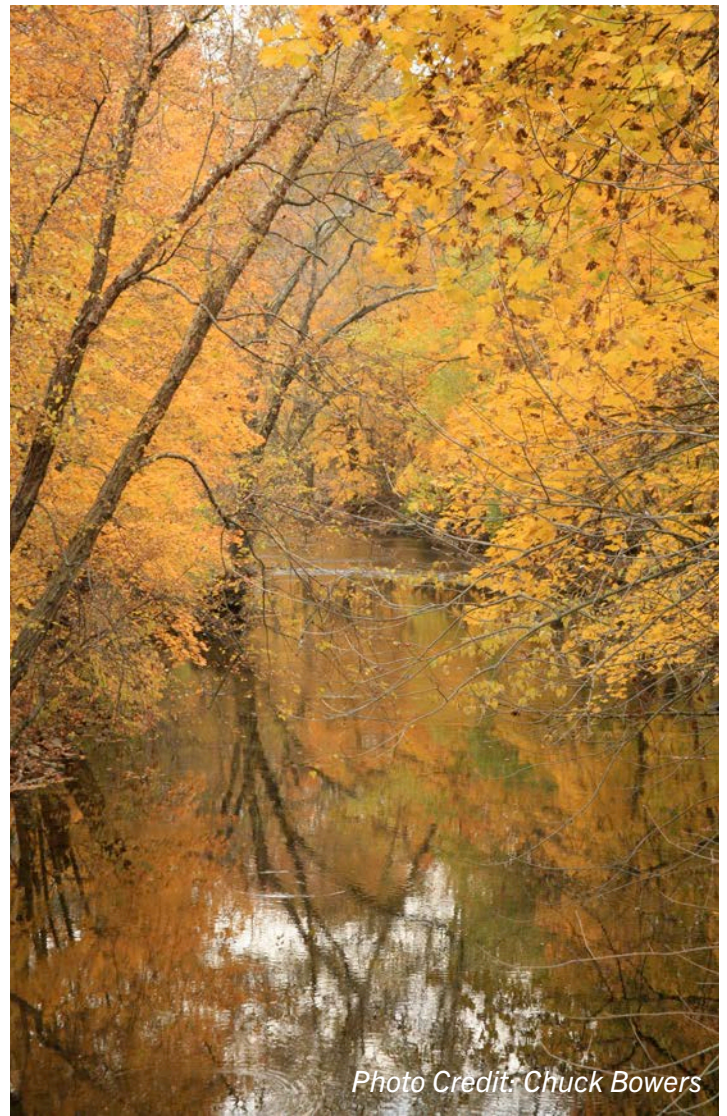


Photo Credit: Chuck Bowers

SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDIES

Chester County:

- Oxford Regional Planning Commission (East Nottingham, Elk, Lower Oxford, Oxford, Upper Oxford, and West Nottingham Townships) (2020)
- Kennett Township (2020)
- West Bradford Township (2016)
- East Goshen Township (2013)

For more information on Woodland Classifications process see the expanded technical bulletin included in this toolkit.



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