

WOODLAND PROTECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Woodlands are often characterized as an area of dense, extensive tree cover and other woody vegetation. They play a vital role in supporting the environmental, social, and economic well-being of communities across southeast Pennsylvania. Trees help mitigate flooding by absorbing rainfall through their roots and allowing water to infiltrate the soil. These forested areas also act as natural buffers, filtering out air and noise pollution. In addition, they contribute to climate change mitigation by capturing and storing carbon.

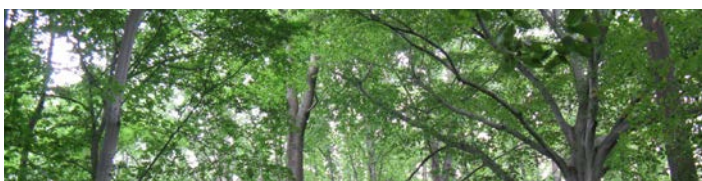
Woodland protection regulations are accomplished through the Zoning or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, which applies all the time and not just during development scenarios. Resource protection regulations may stipulate use limitations or outright prohibitions, and may apply disturbance limitations and/or performance standards. Establishing maximum disturbance limits by woodland type (i.e. Woodlands – 20% maximum disturbance; Interior woodlands – 10% maximum disturbance) is a simple way to define regulations in a zoning ordinance. Municipalities may also wish to include language that requires woodland replacement if disturbance limits are exceeded, as an incentive. Where replacement onsite is not possible, a fee-in-lieu of replacement provides funds for tree plantings elsewhere in the municipality.



APPLICABILITY

Woodland Protection Ordinances can be used to support the following:

- 1. Conservation:** Woodlands protect and improve natural resources including the land, waterways and wetlands within the a watershed.
- 2. Water Quality:** Woodlands offer one of the most cost-effective measures for improving in-stream water quality.
- 3. Education and Public Engagement:** Woodland standards can help promote and foster watershed and natural resource education to residents.
- 4. Climate Resiliency and Sustainability:** Woodlands help absorb stormwater, slowing and lessening flooding, regulate local climates, and help filter both air and water borne pollutants, increasing community resiliency, protecting local resources, and safeguarding people and assets in flood-prone areas.



BRANDYWINE
CONSERVANCY

IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Process

- After a review of the Township's existing Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO)
- Through recommendations of a Comprehensive Plan and other plans or studies, such as an Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, etc.
- Draft Ordinance developed
- Task Force meetings with municipal staff, boards and commissions
- Public meeting/input
- 30-Day review by Municipal and County Planning Commission, neighboring municipalities, public
- Public Hearing & Adoption
- Other Zoning and Subdivision ordinances should be amended to reference the protection standards accordingly.

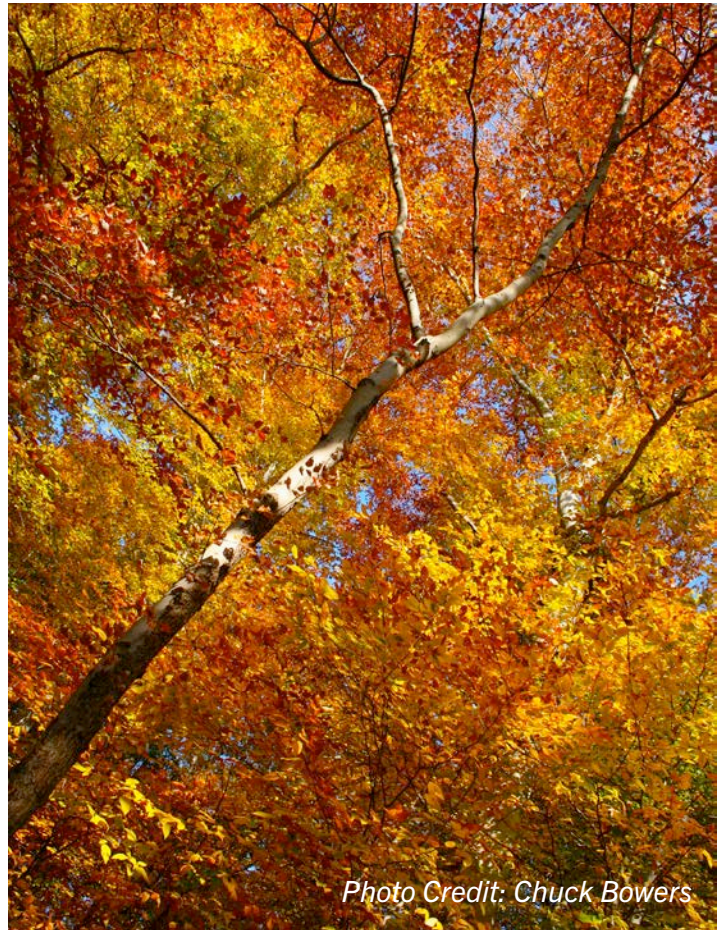


Photo Credit: Chuck Bowers

SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDIES

Chester County:

- East Bradford Township – \$114-45
- East Vincent Township – \$22-429
- Kennett Township – \$240-1802
- Pennsbury Township – \$162-1503
- West Brandywine Township – \$200-100
- West Vincent Township – \$202
- Willistown Township – \$73-13

Delaware County:

- Radnor, Township – \$280-89.6
- Middletown, Township – \$500-2601

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



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