

# Taking the Next Step:

East Amwell Township  
Municipal Assessment

December 2004





## ***The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association***

Since 1949, our member-supported organization has worked on behalf of local residents to protect, preserve and enhance our local environment. We are dedicated to caring for the integrity of the natural ecosystems of the 265-square miles of central New Jersey drained by the Stony Brook and the Millstone River. We focus on environmental education, watershed stewardship and water resource advocacy – helping future generations understand the wonders and workings of the natural world we are preserving on their behalf.

We are headquartered on a 830-acre nature reserve in Pennington that includes a community supported organic farm, nature center, pond, and a 14-mile trail system that leads visitors through our woodlands, wetlands, and fields.

Many activities within our watershed affect the quality of streams, wetlands, ground water and forests. By changing how we carry out these activities, we can improve our environment and our quality of life. So whether at home, work or play, we can all make a difference.

**If you have questions about this report or want to learn more about membership support, volunteer opportunities, and new programs please contact us at: (609) 737-3735.**



## Executive Summary

**Picture it: Spring, 2025, East Amwell, NJ...**Families and friends gather on a still crisp morning in historic Ringoes after patronizing the local bakery for hot coffee and fresh pastries. A group of friends decide to embrace the new season and head to the Sourland Mountain preserve for a hike with the hopes of spotting some of the returning migratory songbirds such as scarlet tanagers and chestnut-sided warblers. One family decides to attend the historic tour of East Amwell on which they will learn about the area's first residents the Lenni-Lenape, and how John Ringo was an early organizer of township residents who supported the Revolutionary War. As the spring sun vanquishes the last traces of winter chill, music can be heard coming from the Fairgrounds on the east end of town. Residents are gathering to purchase fresh strawberries from local farmers who have come to join the festivities. There is a celebration going on to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of parks, open space, woodlands, and farmland preserved in the Township. Everyone is celebrating healthy waterways, clean air, and a sense of community spirit as local officials set up booths to continue generating support and ideas for the incoming administration.

Sound like Utopia? Maybe. The issues are real, however, and municipalities have the opportunity to make decisions that will lead to this heightened standard of living. Municipal officials can enact ordinances and educate the public, but they cannot do it alone.

The protection and health of the watershed relies a great deal on the land use laws and policies that govern development. The elected and appointed officials of East Amwell, who are responsible for those laws and policies, have a difficult job. They are charged with the tasks of balancing natural resource protection with economic prosperity, encouraging business while maintaining the rural, agricultural feel of the township, and determining where to site residential and commercial interest. The Township leaders also strive to ensure that the needs of current residents are met while planning for those of the future. To carry out this daunting task, officials look to their Master Plan for the Township's vision and to policies and ordinances as the tools to move towards the vision. The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (The Association) realizes the magnitude of municipal leaders' responsibilities, and therefore, developed the Municipal Assessment Program.



***Hunterdon County Fairgrounds***

The Association's Municipal Assessment Program is designed as a partnership between the Association and the municipality. The program aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of a municipality's Master Plan and how it is supported by the township's ordinances, policies, plans, and best management practices. The Association then produces a municipal assessment report that provides recommendations on additional proactive measures to ensure that the township's natural resources are preserved and the necessary regulatory structure is established. Through this partnership, the Association is then available to assist in implementing those recommendations.

When beginning the assessment, we reviewed East Amwell's Master Plan and amendments - as those documents lay the foundation for the Township's vision. Members of the East Amwell Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, Health Department, Historic Preservation Committee, and several municipal staff members articulated their general goals and vision for the Township by answering our survey. After evaluating these responses and providing a memo to township officials summarizing the results of the survey, we reviewed East Amwell Township's land use ordinances, policies, and best management practices. The results of the assessment were then compared to the goals and vision of the Township, as articulated by its leaders. Inconsistencies between that vision and what was "on the books" - the local zoning and ordinances- were noted and recommendations drafted. These recommendations became the focus of the assessment report and a "step" toward successfully achieving the township's goals.

Each chapter, or "step", in the assessment report lists the Township's *Goal* according to the Master Plan and survey responses, and the *Current Protection* the Township has on the books. Each step focuses on *Options* for new opportunities, as suggested by the Association. Here the municipality is given a menu of choices for planning and conservation projects to implement now and in the future. The *Did You Know* section offers information such as land use change within the Township and proactive measures initiated by surrounding communities. Finally, *Additional Resources* show where the Township can find additional materials to conduct further research.

The Association would first like to commend East Amwell Township on the success of a few of their recent and ongoing projects including:

- ⊗ Low density zoning in both the Amwell Agricultural and Sourland Mountain Districts
- ⊗ Enrolling Clawson Park into the Green Acres Program
- ⊗ Permanently preserving contiguous tracts of farmland running through the center of the Township
- ⊗ Mapping the Township's historic bridges

This report is a general guide as to what can be done and what has been done in this community to connect the Township's vision and goals with implementation projects. The results of this analysis for East Amwell Township are documented in this report, entitled "**Taking the Next Step**". Outlined below, and in no particular order, are the 15 strategies to achieving East Amwell's goals. (Please refer to the report for more detail).

⊗ **Master Plan Development**

*Township Goal:* The Municipal Land Use Law requires planning boards to reexamine the township's master plan every six years and to produce a report outlining their findings.

*Current Practices:* East Amwell produced periodic reexamination reports in 2003, 1999, and 1998.

*Recommendation:* Conduct a comprehensive master plan reexamination and produce a master plan report that incorporates all of the Township's Master Plan Elements.

⊗ **Open Space Preservation**

*Township Goal:* Develop "a Greenway system linking significant public open spaces along a network of pathways, waterways and significant natural features."

*Current Practices:* Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee seeks preservation opportunities, advises the Township Committee, educates residents about the Township's preservation program, and maintains an inventory of preserved lands and conservation easements

*Recommendation:* Reexamine and update the greenways and open space element of the East Amwell Township Master Plan.

§ **Farmland Preservation & Support**

*Township Goal:* Maintain “the community’s prevailing agricultural character by promoting the industry of farming and preserving the productive agricultural land base.”

*Current Practices:* East Amwell has established low density (10 acre) zoning in the Amwell Valley Agricultural District that promotes open space conservation.

*Recommendation:* Encourage the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee to maintain agricultural master plans and maps that will support East Amwell’s vision.

§ **Stormwater Management**

*Township Goal:* Comply with the 2004 state stormwater regulations. Additionally, the township seeks to address stormwater on a regional scale for the Sourland Mountains.

*Current Practices:* The Township is working toward compliance with the 2004 state stormwater rules, including a municipal stormwater management plan and eventually a stormwater control ordinance. Additionally, the Township received a NJDEP grant to develop a Regional Stormwater Management Plan (RSWMP) for the Sourland Mountain Watershed.

*Recommendation:* Create and adopt a stormwater management plan that includes an ordinance, BMPs, implementation, and enforcement.

§ **Septic System Maintenance**

*Township Goal:* “Require that wastewater treatment facilities do not compromise/affect groundwater quality.”

*Current Practices:* East Amwell has adopted "Standards for Individual Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems" (N.J.A.C. 7:9A).

*Recommendation:* Adopt additional ordinances and policies to improve performance and monitoring of septic systems.

§ **Stream Corridor Protection**

*Township Goal:* “Protect and preserve the stream corridor systems and related water resources...”

*Current Practices:* The Greenways Plan (1993) recommends “a variable width of 200 feet be designated for the stream corridor greenways.”

*Recommendation:* Adopt a comprehensive stream corridor ordinance and ensure an explicit description in the master plan and conservation element.

§ **Groundwater Protection**

*Township Goal:* “Assure that the density of development in all locations throughout the Township does not violate environmental and other reasonable constraints with special consideration to groundwater quality.”

*Current Practices:* The Township’s Water Supply Ordinance aims to ensure an adequate, clean, and healthy water supply to new and existing wells. The ordinance also looks to provide a means to collect data about several underground aquifers within the Township.

*Recommendation:* Adopt ordinance language that sets minimum standards for wellhead and aquifer recharge areas.

§ **Woodlands Management and Protection**

*Township Goal:* Respondents to our survey indicated a strong desire to protect the Township’s forests.

*Current Practices:* Zoning in the Sourland Mountain region limits agricultural use to existing cleared areas, regulates tree clearing and prohibits clearing any forests or native vegetation in excess of 30,000 square feet.

*Recommendation:* Adopt additional ordinances and management practices to ensure further preservation and protection of woodlands.

§ **Critical Habitat Protection**

*Township Goal:* “Ensure the integrity of the fragile Sourland ecosystem and biological diversity (especially migrating birds) through the maintenance of large contiguous tracts of forest.”

*Current Practices:* The Land Management Ordinance definition of Lot Suitability states that “at least 30% of one acre which includes the building site shall consist of land less than 12% slope”.

*Recommendation:* Adopt additional ordinances and management practices to ensure further preservation and protection of critical habitats.

§ **Historic Preservation**

*Township Goal:* To preserve “the cultural landscape by recognizing historic structures and districts, and managing change within the historic villages.”

*Current Practices:* The Township has a very active Historic Preservation Committee, that has worked to ensure that every hamlet in East Amwell is listed on either the National or State Historic Register.

*Recommendation:* Adopt additional ordinances and policies to ensure further preservation and protection of historic structures and lands.

§ **Viewshed Protection**

*Township Goal:* Protect “scenic vistas of the rural countryside and the village and hamlets that impart the special character of East Amwell.”

*Current Practices:* Major site plans and subdivisions are subject to buffers and landscaping plans that “will reduce the visual impact of dwellings located on ridges or within unique viewsheds, promote environmental benefits, and preserve the rural character of East Amwell Township.”

*Recommendation:* Adopt a viewshed protection ordinance with specific language for height requirements.



***A view from Manners Road***

§ **Appropriate Development**

*Township Goal:* Preserve “community character by carefully managing the scale and intensity of new development and retaining farmland and open spaces.”

*Current Practices:* Each of the Township’s zones have their own provisions that are tailored to address the unique cultural and environmental factors of their respective zones.

*Recommendation:* Adopt Design Guidelines and Low Impact Development Techniques that will compliment existing community design elements and enhance quality of life.

### § **Affordable & Senior Housing**

*Township Goal:* “Provide a variety of housing opportunities for the existing and future residents of the Township, consistent with the rural setting on which these are located. Affordable housing should be provided, and the township should comply with COAH regulations, choosing locations and types of housing that are appropriate and suitable for a rural town without infrastructure.”

*Current Practices:* East Amwell implements a variety of strategies in order to comply with its fair share housing obligations including a Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA), a mortgage assistance program, and a group home program.

*Recommendation:* Start an educational campaign to inform residents about affordable and senior housing.

### § **Public Participation & Communication**

*Township Goal:* Respondents to our survey said that they thought the Township was doing a good job communicating with residents and encouraging public participation.

*Current Practices:* The Township encourages participation through the monthly volunteer paper (VIP), township newsletters, the bi-annual environmental newsletter, and the website. A call for volunteers is included as a tax bill insert, and residents are targeted with postcards for specific issues. Also, every Township meeting is announced, open to the public, and minutes are available.

*Recommendation:* Create evaluation materials to measure the success of outreach and communication efforts.

### § **Education of Municipal Officials**

*Township Goal:* Several Respondents to our survey felt that the Township committee, and board members as well as Township employees are proactive and professional.

*Current Practices:* In understanding that local decisions are made through Township officials and staff, it is imperative to ensure municipal officials and staff are knowledgeable about environmental issues.

*Recommendation:* Encourage training and site walks for staff and commission members.

This document is an interim step that represents ideas for connecting and implementing the Township’s vision for its future. Now that the Assessment is complete, the next step is for East Amwell to prioritize a few of the recommendations in this report. The Association will work with Township officials to implement options the Township identifies, and enact ordinances, policies, or best management practices to allow East Amwell Township to move even farther to the forefront of preserving its rural character, planning for its future, and protecting the environment.

In performing the municipal balancing act, officials must employ sound planning strategies to provide a high quality of life for all residents. By committing to follow through on this report, the Association and East Amwell Township are achieving the mission of preserving and enhancing the watershed and the communities within it. This report is the next step in creating that healthy, livable community.

## Acknowledgements

We commend East Amwell's leaders for participating in this program and for allowing the Association to evaluate the Township's current policies and practices. It is difficult for anyone—individual, municipality, or business—to submit to an evaluation and identify areas to build on what has already begun. East Amwell is in a fortunate position because of all that it has already accomplished. We now offer a myriad of choices for future endeavors and look forward to continuing to work with the Township in embracing new opportunities that support efforts in proactive planning.

We wish to thank the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their generosity in funding this project, and the East Amwell Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, municipal clerk and staff for their enthusiastic responses to our survey. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Deputy Mayor Andrea Bonette, and Planning Board members Bela Kamensky, and Linda Lenox for guiding us through a tour of the municipality, and Joan McGee, Planning Board Administrative Officer and Terri Stahl, Township Clerk, for promptly and thoroughly providing answers to our questions.



***The Taft House***



***A view of Unionville***



***Black River & Western Railroad Station***

*Although the information in this document has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement WS982909-03-0 to the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, it has not gone through the Agency's publications review process and, therefore, may not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency and no official endorsement should be inferred.*

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## How to Use This Report

This report outlines fourteen STEPs that can aid East Amwell Township in continuing to realize its vision for the future through zoning, ordinances and policies that govern land use in the Township. These STEPs were identified after the Association distributed questionnaires to municipal officials and staff, reviewed the Master Plan, Land Management Ordinance, as well as other relevant ordinances, policies, and practices, and toured the municipality. Each STEP was determined by comparing the goals that were identified by the Township's leaders, as well as in the Master Plan, and the current protection that exists.

Each STEP compares both the goal and current protection for the respective issue. Following each comparison are specific OPTIONS that are designed to provide guidance to the Township and identify specific measures that can be implemented to assist municipal officials in continuing to meet and exceed their goals for East Amwell. Options are followed by a "Did You Know?" section that provides further information on the issue and an "Additional Resources" section that identifies other references and organizations that can provide support to the Township in implementing certain options.

The Association intends this assessment document to be used as a guide for present and future boards and committees to inspire work on new projects and to support those tasks before them. It also provides an opportunity for those municipal groups to support other community and local non-profit groups.

### Next Steps



As East Amwell Township continues its work enhancing quality of life, this document can serve as guidance for future projects or provide ideas on where to begin. The Association suggests that East Amwell Township officials prioritize the STEPs and determine which measures can and should be implemented at this time. The Association will then work with municipal officials to develop more detailed information, models, and guidance to help implement the various options. The Township will not be alone in implementing the chosen options. This partnership will allow for the Association to support East Amwell Township and to also learn from experiences.

The Association will work by East Amwell's side in its efforts to provide the citizens that reside in the Township with a sense of community, a healthy environment, and a strong economy all within a rural setting. We realize that the Township has already begun implementing some of the options listed in this report, and we offer our assistance to the Township in continuing with those projects. We also offer our assistance to the Township in its efforts to achieve comprehensive planning and ensure that plans relate to the strategies of the surrounding communities. By committing ourselves to follow through on this report and its results, the Association is achieving its mission of protecting and preserving the watershed.

# Highlights of Your Town



## ***Good Things...***

Over the years, East Amwell Township has created progressive ordinances and programs that contribute to the health of the watershed, to the preservation of the Township's rural character and quality of life, and to sound planning strategies. A few examples of such tools include:

- ⌘ ***Farmland Preservation*** efforts have been very successful due to a 15-year old farmland preservation program and more recently, an active Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee. To date, 30 percent of the land in the Amwell Valley Agricultural District has been permanently preserved. In addition to pursuing preservation opportunities, the Farmland and Open Space Committee provides advice to the Township Committee, educates residents about the Township's preservation program, and maintains an inventory of preserved lands and conservation easements. East Amwell also has a Municipal Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund that is funded in the amount of "\$0.04 per \$100 of assessed valuation of each annual tax levy." The Township's fund is used in conjunction with the NJDEP's Green Acres Program and the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) to preserve land and develop parks. East Amwell also developed a Greenways and Open Space Element of the Master Plan to use as a "guide for a township-wide network of preserved open spaces."



***East Amwell's last remaining dairy farm.***

- ⌘ ***Open Space Preservation*** has also been very successful in East Amwell. To date, East Amwell has preserved one-third of the township's land, which is more than 6,000 acres of open space. The Master Plan states that it is the intent of the Township to "Expand and implement the Greenways Plan so that it links environmentally sensitive areas, historic places, existing State, County, and Municipal land holdings and provides for opportunities for a network of open space."
- ⌘ ***Land Use Plan*** takes a proactive planning approach by identifying five districts, based on similarity of environmental constraints and/or development patterns, within the municipality in order to "preserve as much as possible those existing development patterns and traditions." East Amwell has also adopted Land Use Plan Amendments and large lot/low density zoning for two of the Township's more environmentally sensitive areas, the Sourland Mountain and Amwell Valley Districts. The Land Use Plan and 15-acre zoning for the Sourland Mountain District focus on forest protection and sustainability, whereas the focus of the Amwell Valley Plan and 10-acre zoning is to encourage an agricultural economy. East Amwell's large lot zoning works to promote low density, open space, good water quality, and a rural future.

# Highlights of Your Town

- ☞ **Stormwater Control** in addition to working on compliance with the new state stormwater rules, East Amwell was awarded a grant to develop a regional Stormwater Management Plan for the Sourland Mountain. In developing a regional stormwater plan, East Amwell is working with neighboring municipalities to address stormwater on a watershed scale and more effectively protect the habitat, surface, and groundwater resources of the Sourland Mountain.
- ☞ **Tree Harvesting Ordinance** addresses commercial logging within the Township and requires compliance with the Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual, as prepared by the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry.

- ☞ **Historic Preservation** is supported by both an active committee and the Township's Municipal Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. The Historic Preservation Committee has successfully worked to ensure that every hamlet in East Amwell is listed on either the National or State Historic Register. The Committee also recently completed a map Hunterdon County's historic bridges. Copies of the map are available at the municipal building.



**The Landis House**

- ☞ **Golf Course Management** is also proactive in East Amwell. The Township requires its golf courses to comply with certain design standards including, but not limited to, maximum allowable woodland removal and mitigation standards, Integrated Pesticide and Pest Management, minimizing conflicts with existing and future land uses, and a water budget and recycling plan.

It is the Association's intent that the recommendations that follow in this assessment report will assist East Amwell in its continuing efforts to protect and preserve its natural and cultural resources as well as plan for the needs of current and future residents. Our hope is that East Amwell will learn from and expand on their own experiences, challenges, and successes, as well as those of surrounding municipalities, keeping in mind that zoning and policies should look regionally to provide comprehensive, sensible regional growth. We look forward to continuing to work with the Township in embracing new opportunities that protect and enhance the character and natural environment that make East Amwell a special place to live.





# Next Steps



## Introduction

The elected and appointed officials in East Amwell have a challenging task: balance natural resource protection with economic prosperity, encourage business, provide residential services, and determine where to best site a variety of land uses in the Township. East Amwell leaders strive to ensure that the needs of current residents are met and to ensure a high quality of life for residents in the future. To carry out this daunting task, officials rely on their Master Plan to provide a vision for the future, and they use zoning, policies, and ordinances as the tools to ensure the prosperity and health of the Township.

By developing a Master Plan that guides both growth and conservation, clearly states goals and objectives, and highlights the vision for the future, East Amwell is planning for the quality of life for current and future residents. The leaders recognize their current position and are actively working to ensure that their community retains its historic character, environmental health, sense of community and viable economy.

The Association recognizes the magnitude of this task, and acknowledges that the protection and health of a watershed relies a great deal on the land use laws and policies that govern development. Over the years, the Association has received numerous requests from municipalities for guidance on various planning and environmental issues. The Association decided that a comprehensive response to issues would be most effective and therefore developed the Municipal Assessment Program. In partnering with municipalities we provide an outside evaluation of current practices and we support planning that protects the natural environment and ensures the vision in the Master Plan is achieved. Making the bold move to assess their own practices, East Amwell is advancing efforts to take on the challenge of protecting and enhancing their community.

The process began when the Township formally agreed through a resolution to participate in the Municipal Assessment process. The Association distributed surveys to committees throughout the Township and received detailed responses. The survey responses, coupled with the Master Plan, served as the Township's vision—what they see for their community in 10 to 20 years. After completing a review of the land use ordinances, Best Management Practices, and policies, the Association compiled a list of recommendations to guide municipal projects. Each chapter of this report lists the *Goal* of each issue, the *Current Protection* on the books, and the *Options* for addressing the issue, *Did You Know* facts provide additional information about each issue, and finally, *Additional Resources* provide suggestions for further research. The recommendations in this report can be used at any time by any committee to address issues in the Township.

Once finalized, the report will become a public document, located in the Township's municipal building, clerk's office, and public library. The Township will begin utilizing the document by prioritizing a few recommendations and consulting with the Association. Throughout the implementation process, the Association remains by the Township's side to assist with projects that achieve the Township's vision.

We are excited to partner with East Amwell Township on the Municipal Assessment Project, as it is a diverse community that includes a variety of elements including farmland, the Sourland Mountain region and historic areas important to both New Jersey and our Nation. East Amwell has a defined historic village, including homes, shops, and churches listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places, a farmland preservation program that has protected many farms, and a well-informed and well-educated public that is active in events and issues throughout the township. This unique combination of elements presents an opportunity for the Township to share experiences with surrounding municipalities and with the Association.



## STEP

# 1

## Master Plan Development

**GOALS:** The Municipal Land Use Law requires planning boards to reexamine the Township's master plan every six years and to produce a report outlining its findings.



**RECENT DIRECTION:** East Amwell produced periodic re-examination reports in 2003, 1999, and 1998; however, the last comprehensive master plan report dates back to 1993. Since 1993, the Township has passed a number of Elements and amendments to the Master Plan including Land Use Plan Amendments for the Amwell Valley, Land Use Plan Amendments for the Sourland Mountain and Stony Brook Districts, Greenways and Open Space Element, Traffic Circulation Plan Element, Housing Element, and many others. Within the next year, the Planning Board intends to update and amend the Master Plan. Compiling all of the Township's Master Plan elements and amendments would benefit the Township and work towards ensuring a systematic review of and therefore compliance with East Amwell's goals and policies.

### **OPTION: CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION AND PRODUCE A MASTER PLAN REPORT THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE TOWNSHIP'S MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Ensuring that Master Plan updates specify their goals and objectives clearly, and are consistent with goals expressed in existing elements.
- ⊗ Including available technical data, such as aquifer recharge, water quality, and economic reports to support zoning and planning decisions.
- ⊗ Adding GIS information for the Conservation and Open Space elements of the Master Plan, landscape issues, soils data, hydrogeological study, work of the Sourland Planning Council, and other necessary water quality data.
- ⊗ Providing data on development trends within the Township and how natural resources have been and could be affected.
- ⊗ Identifying where and how development and conservation should occur, taking into consideration existing infrastructure and potential impacts. Specifically, review Land Use Plans for districts other than the recently updated amendments for Amwell Valley Agricultural and Sourland Mountain Districts.
- ⊗ Utilizing information about carrying capacity and the limitations of the natural environment to make careful zoning and planning decisions.
- ⊗ Clearly depicting the look of the Township if 'build-out' occurs so that community members and leaders understand their future.
- ⊗ Involving the public and utilizing their expertise, historical knowledge, and ideas for their community.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Master Planning and implementation is not about applying restrictions, but rather providing direct guidelines for the future.
- ⌘ Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) states that “*land use can be guided to promote public health and safety.*” (NJSA 40:55:D-2 et seq.). This principal should be the core of any proposed planning action.
- ⌘ The provision of infrastructure, such as sewer and roads, should always follow extensive planning and zoning, not vice versa. Sound planning should foster growth that is contingent upon the appropriate infrastructure for the area.
- ⌘ The US Census Bureau predicts that New Jersey’s population will grow by 11% between 2002 and 2020. Municipalities need to proactively plan to ensure that growth is compatible with the municipal visions, goals, and objectives.
- ⌘ East Amwell can save money by using existing data from the County, other municipalities, State and local nonprofits. Such data often provides a more regional picture and may save East Amwell additional time and expense of collecting the same data again.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has been involved with local municipal planning efforts and is available to answer questions, recommend consultants and review ordinances. ([www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org))
- ⌘ New Jersey League of Municipalities is “a voluntary association created to help communities do a better job of self-government through pooling information resources.” League services include: Bureau of Municipal Information; Ordinances and Codes; Research; Legislative Analysis; Legislative Bulletins; New Laws; Contracts, In-Service Training; Personal Consultation; Instructional Seminars and Research Publications. ([www.njslom.com](http://www.njslom.com))
- ⌘ American Planning Association, New Jersey Chapter is a nonprofit public interest and research organization committed to urban, suburban, regional, and rural planning ([www.njapa.org](http://www.njapa.org))
- ⌘ New Jersey Department of Community Affairs ([www.state.nj.us/dca](http://www.state.nj.us/dca))



**View of farm on Cider Mill Road**



## STEP

2

## Open Space Preservation

**GOALS:** One of East Amwell's goals, according to the 2004 Master Plan Amendments is to develop "a Greenway system linking significant public open spaces along a network of pathways, waterways and significant natural features." Through the Greenways and Open Space Plan the Township would also like to link "environmentally sensitive areas, historic places, existing State, County and Municipal land holdings and provides for opportunities for a network of open space." The 1999 Greenways and Open Space Element inventories existing preserved lands and serves as a guide to the Township's open space network.

The majority of respondents to our survey also indicated a desire to preserve the rural community character of the township while preserving open space, agricultural lands, and the Sourland Mountains.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** To date, East Amwell has preserved one-third of the Township's land as open space.

The Township's has established a Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee, and a Municipal Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, respectively.

East Amwell's zoning establishes minimum open space requirements when clustering new homes in the Amwell Valley Agricultural District, and prohibits clearing more than 30,000 square feet for any lot within the Sourland Mountain District.



***Clawson Park has recently been enrolled in the Green Acres***

### **OPTION: REEXAMINE AND UPDATE THE GREENWAYS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT OF THE EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

Specifically the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Using the Greenways and Open Space Plan Point Ranking System to prioritize the various committee and commission recommendations for open space acquisition. Develop a prioritization list of sites to be acquired for preservation. Consider using NJDEP Landscape Project data as criteria for open space prioritization.
- ⌘ Coordinating with adjacent municipalities to promote contiguous areas of open space preservation where possible. Review open space maps and plans as well as zoning across municipal boundaries for consistency.
- ⌘ Preserving open space is important, but managing the activity on that space is just as crucial. Consider pursuing the Association's River-Friendly certification for all municipally owned property. The Association's River-Friendly Programs are designed to provide education and information on non-point source pollution reduction and best landscape management practices.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ East Amwell Township is an active participant in the Sourland Mountain Smart Growth project which aims to produce a build-out analysis and compare master plans and ordinances for municipalities located within the environmentally sensitive region.
- ⌘ An overlay district that promotes flexibility in subdivision and site plan design can accomplish both Township goals and respect the rights of landowners to develop their property.
- ⌘ The benefits of open space design can be amplified when it is combined with other better site design techniques such as narrow streets, open channels and alternative turnarounds.
- ⌘ Green Acres serves as the real estate agent for New Jersey. They buy land directly from property owners to add to the system of state parks, forests, natural areas, and wildlife management areas.



*A view from Manners Road*



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey Office of State Planning. ([www.state.nj.us/osp/osp.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/osp/osp.htm))
- ⌘ Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions.  
(Tel: 973-539-7547, Fax: 973-539-7713, E-mail: [anjec@aol.com](mailto:anjec@aol.com), [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org))
- ⌘ Center for Watershed Protection. ([www.cwp.org/index.html](http://www.cwp.org/index.html))
- ⌘ Randall Arendt (author of *Growing Greener* and *Rural By Design*)  
([www.greenerprospects.com](http://www.greenerprospects.com)).
- ⌘ Natural Lands Trust. ([www.natlands.org/planning/growgreen.htm](http://www.natlands.org/planning/growgreen.htm))
- ⌘ "Open Space Zoning: What it is and Why it Works". Randall Arendt.  
([www.plannersweb.com](http://www.plannersweb.com))
- ⌘ Ohio State University Fact Sheet. "Community Development".  
([www.ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1270.html](http://www.ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1270.html))
- ⌘ Daniels, Tom and Deborah Bowers. *Holding Our Ground: Protecting American Farms and Farmland*. Island Press: Washington, DC, 1997.
- ⌘ Grasslands Reserve Program ([www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/))
- ⌘ Wetlands Reserve Program ([www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/))



## STEP

### 3

## Farmland Preservation & Support

**GOALS:** The 2004 Master Plan Amendments state that the Township envisions “Maintaining the community’s prevailing agricultural character by promoting the industry of farming and preserving the productive agricultural land base.” To achieve the vision, Township objectives include recognizing the important economic contributions of agriculture, preserving productive soils and contiguous tracks of land, educating citizens on benefits as well as burdens of living in an agricultural community, and encouraging “harmonious existence between agricultural operations and neighboring non-agricultural development.”

Also, The majority of respondents to our survey indicated a desire to preserve the rural community character of the Township while preserving open space and agricultural lands.

### CURRENT PROTECTION:

East Amwell has adopted a comprehensive Land Use Plan Amendment for the Amwell Valley District titled *Planning for Farming in the Future of East Amwell*. The Amwell Valley Agricultural District also has its own zoning provisions that promote open space conservation through clustering, establish 10-acre minimum low density zoning, and encourage “the separation of residential

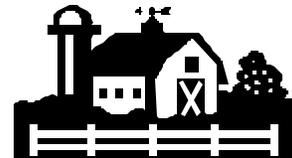
development from active farms” in order to “limit conflicts between agricultural and nonagricultural uses.

The township has received Green Acres and Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) funding from the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) and has successfully preserved one-third of the land in the Amwell Valley Agricultural District.

The Township also has a “Right-to-Farm” Ordinance and a Right-to-Farm Initiative that encourages economic growth of East Amwell’s farming industry.

The Township has also established a Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee, and a Municipal Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

The Township has adopted a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance as well as a Soil Protection Ordinance.



### **OPTION: ENCOURAGE THE FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE TO MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL MASTER PLANS AND MAPS THAT WILL SUPPORT EAST AMWELL’S VISION**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Initiating and promoting cooperation between the Township and adjacent municipalities to advance the consistent development of agricultural policies and plans, and contiguous farmland preservation, where possible.
- ⊗ Continue pursuing lands for preservation through easements, fee simple program, and other programs.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ East Amwell has preserved, to date, 30 percent of the Amwell Valley Agricultural District.
- ⌘ In 1995, East Amwell Township ranked second to neighboring Delaware Township among 26 municipalities in Hunterdon County with 70.3% of its total land base qualifying for farmland assessment, according to the Township's 1997 Agricultural Base Study.
- ⌘ East Amwell received the River-Friendly Community Award in 1999 for efforts to preserve farming and farmland.
- ⌘ Agriculture is the largest single provider of scenic vistas in the state.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Agricultural Management Assistance “provides cost share assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farming operations.” ([www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ama/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ama/))
- ⌘ Conservation Enhancement Reserve Program (CREP) is a voluntary program for agricultural land owners in which they can “receive incentive payments for installing specific conservation practices” ([www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crep.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crep.htm))
- ⌘ Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) “provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters, and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought.” ([www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/ecp00.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/ecp00.htm))
- ⌘ Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land” ([www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/))



***Dairy farm in East Amwell.***



## STEP

### 4

## Stormwater Management

**GOAL:** East Amwell's current goal is to comply with the 2004 state stormwater regulations. Additionally, the township seeks to address stormwater on a regional scale for the Sourland Mountains.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** The Township is working toward compliance with the 2004 state stormwater rules, including a municipal stormwater management plan and eventually a stormwater control ordinance.

The NJDEP also awarded East Amwell a grant to develop a Regional Stormwater Management Plan (RSWMP) for the Sourland Mountain Watershed. Through that grant, East Amwell is seeking to work cooperatively with members of the five townships and three counties situated in the Sourland Mountain Watershed.

### **OPTION: CREATE AND ADOPT A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT INCLUDES AN ORDINANCE, BMPs, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ENFORCEMENT**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

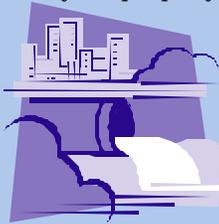
- ☞ Seeking financial assistance to educate the public about stormwater management including education about non-point source pollution, storm drain stenciling, and water conservation. The Association is a local leader in environmental education and offers a variety of programs that can fulfill state requirements and get community members involved.
- ☞ Adopting additional ordinances to protect water quality, and reduce non-point source pollution and flooding. (See STEP 6 Stream Corridor ordinance information.) When drafting the municipal stormwater control ordinance, the township should also consider cross-referencing and amending the Land Management ordinance as needed to ensure that steep slopes are protected, low impact development is encouraged, and impervious cover is limited.
- ☞ Becoming River-Friendly certified. The Association's River-Friendly program strives to reduce non-point source pollution through implementing better landscape management practices. Association staff would conduct an individualized assessment, and develop specific goals for the municipality. Association staff would also lend support and expertise as the township implements actions to achieve its goals.
- ☞ Compiling a hierarchical list of environmental enhancement projects that provide groundwater recharge, control flooding, or control nonpoint source pollution to include in the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (MSWMP). The NJDEP requires that the MSWMP include a list of such projects if the Township intends to allow mitigation plans as an option for proposed development.
- ☞ Identifying and mapping stormwater outfalls. The Association's GIS Center has mapping-grade GPS equipment, ideal for fulfilling outfall mapping requirements and providing additional useful information.



## Did You Know?

Stormwater and nonpoint source pollution are major sources of pollutants entering our water, contributing up to 60% of our existing water pollution problems (NJDEP 2/28/02). Stormwater washes across parking lots, roads and lawns, carrying pollutants into storm drains that eventually dump into streams and lakes. Most of these pollutants do not evaporate and remain a permanent part of the hydrologic ecosystem. That is why it is critical to ensure that pollutants do not have the opportunity to enter the water cycle. By reducing the overall area of impervious surfaces and lawns, the total volume of stormwater runoff is reduced.

The effects of stormwater/nonpoint pollution are widespread and result from a wide variety of human activities on the land. Nonpoint source pollution can prohibit recreational activities (beach closings, fish advisories); impact the tourism economy (commercial fishing and shellfishing) and increase drinking water treatment costs. There are alternatives to the way we choose to plan our communities, commute to work, or treat our lawns that can aid in protecting water supplies. Everyone can work to reduce non-point source pollution by changing certain everyday habits. The River-Friendly Program at the Stony Brook– Millstone Watershed Association can help you learn how to reduce non-point source pollution coming from your property.



The new NJDEP Stormwater Rules were adopted in February 2004 and address pollutants entering our waters from storm drainage systems. Tier B municipalities, like East Amwell Township, are required to implement best management practices and conduct public education and outreach. The new rules allow phased-in approaches which will aid municipalities in implementing the rules in a feasible manner.



## Additional Resources

- ⊗ Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. GIS Center: ([www.giscenter.org/](http://www.giscenter.org/)); Municipal Stormwater Rules Primer: ([www.thewatershed.org/WSM/nln/Stormwater\\_Primer\\_final.pdf](http://www.thewatershed.org/WSM/nln/Stormwater_Primer_final.pdf)); River-Friendly Program: ([http://www.thewatershed.org/river\\_friendly\\_program.php](http://www.thewatershed.org/river_friendly_program.php))
- ⊗ New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program (EIFP) provides low-cost financing to municipal, county, and other local government units as well as to water purveyors for the construction of wastewater, drinking water and stormwater or non-point source pollution management projects, including open space acquisition that provides a water quality benefit. ([www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/mface.htm#finance](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/mface.htm#finance))
- ⊗ NJ DEP Stormwater Website includes information on the State's stormwater permitting and management programs, including the municipal stormwater regulation program and more. ([www.njstormwater.org](http://www.njstormwater.org)).
- ⊗ Clean Water Network. "Technology Fact Sheet for BMPs". ([www.cwn.org](http://www.cwn.org))
- ⊗ Center for Watershed Protection (410-461-8323 or [www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org)). Also see their project, The Stormwater Manager's Resource Center, an extensive educational website that contains more than 3,000 pages of technical content ([www.stormwatercenter.net](http://www.stormwatercenter.net)).





## STEP

### 5

## Septic System Maintenance

**GOAL:** The Wastewater Plan of the 1993 Master Plan Amendments states that one of the Township's objectives is to "Require that wastewater treatment facilities do not compromise/affect groundwater quality."

### CURRENT PROTECTION:

East Amwell has adopted "Standards for Individual Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems" (N.J.A.C. 7:9A) and all subsequent amendments.

The Board of Health has more stringent regulations in place governing septic systems than N.J.A.C. 7:9A, as allowed for in the regulations. Soil testing requirements, design, siting, separation distances, the requirement for a reserve area, and construction are all regulated with a goal of protecting groundwater and surface water in the Township.

The Board of Health has more stringent regulations in place for closed sewage tanks than are in place for septic systems. Closed sewage tanks are permitted as "a means of sewage disposal [that] may be constructed and used only by special permission by the Board of Health. Such permission will be considered only in cases where soil tests and an engineer's report or certification indicate that the septic system will not function properly...and in cases where no other satisfactory method of handling sewage is available at the time of such application." Closed sewage tanks are required to be emptied immediately when full and must apply for a permit on a yearly basis.

The Board of Health also regulates portable sanitation units by ordinance. In addition to regulating the maintenance and use of these units to protect from pollution and nuisance, they are only allowed to be used on a temporary basis to supplement an existing septic system that is appropriately sized for the permanent use of the property.

### **OPTION: ADOPT ADDITIONAL ORDINANCES AND POLICIES TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

Specifically the Township should consider:

- ∅ Facilitating and regularly scheduling resident education workshops about septic system maintenance. Also consider expanding distribution and updating educational information to include information on who to contact in the Township and/or County if residents have problems or questions.
- ∅ Adopting an ordinance requiring regular pump-outs and upgrades or expansions when a house is expanded or altered.
- ∅ Adopting a septic system monitoring policy/ordinance for residential systems to detect failing septic systems. The Township should assess alternatives for failing septic systems.
- ∅ Providing incentives, and perhaps financial assistance, for septic system maintenance.
- ∅ Referring to U.S. EPA Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ All of East Amwell Township is on septic systems.
- ⌘ Nationwide, failure rates for septic systems vary, but the regional rate of septic failure is reported to range between 5 and 40%, with an average of 10%. Failing septic systems can contribute nitrogen, phosphorus and harmful bacteria to local surface and ground waters.
- ⌘ According to the Wastewater Plan of the 1993 Master Plan Amendment “Some septic malfunctions have occurred within Ringoes...Most of the septic problems have occurred on residential lots...Most of the residential septic problems have occurred on relatively small lots (.5 to 1.5 acres). However, some residential septic malfunctions have also been identified on very large lots as well (5 acres or more). Such lots are typically located in the Mountain Zone....Several problem sites involved soils having moderate limitations.”
- ⌘ Improperly maintained septic systems can result in health risks for humans and cause water quality problems.
- ⌘ Incomplete treatment of wastewater can result in the spread of hepatitis, dysentery and other diseases caused by harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites in the wastewater.
- ⌘ High levels of nitrate in surface and groundwater can also result from inadequately maintained septic systems.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Other Townships, including Montgomery, Byram, Sparta, Bedminster and Mount Olive Townships, have passed septic maintenance ordinances that can provide guidance for creating an ordinance.
- ⌘ River Friendly Resident Manual, Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735 or [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)).
- ⌘ NJDEP, Division of Water Quality, Onsite Wastewater Management Program ([www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/sep\\_site.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/sep_site.htm)).
- ⌘ U.S. EPA Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems ([www.epa.gov/OW-OWM.html/mtb/decent/download/guidelines.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/OW-OWM.html/mtb/decent/download/guidelines.pdf) )
- ⌘ Raritan Basin Watershed Management Project, Draft Ground Water Technical Report ([www.raritanbasin.org/ground\\_water.htm](http://www.raritanbasin.org/ground_water.htm)).
- ⌘ New Jersey Smart Growth Grants, Department of Community Affairs and Office of State Planning ([www.state.nj.us/osp/resources/sggrants.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/osp/resources/sggrants.htm)).
- ⌘ Handouts for home owners to aid in record keeping ([www.shelterpub.com/\\_shelter/septic\\_record\\_folder.html](http://www.shelterpub.com/_shelter/septic_record_folder.html); National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association 1-800-966-2942)
- ⌘ Rutgers Cooperative Extensions and NJDEP both produce educational materials.



## STEP

### 6

## Stream Corridor Protection

**GOAL:** The Greenways Plan (1993) states that the objective of the plan is “to protect and preserve the stream corridor systems and related water resources...it is recommended that a variable width of 200 feet be designated for the stream corridor greenways. This would entail the dedication of 100 feet on each side of the stream with increased dedication of lands associated with floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, slopes in excess of 12% and other valued sensitive plant or wildlife habitat.”



***Stream Corridor in the Sourland Mountain region***

**CURRENT PROTECTION:**

There is currently a lack of ordinance language protecting stream corridors in East Amwell. However, the Township has clearly expressed its desire to protect stream corridors as mentioned in the zoning provisions and Greenways Plans.

According to the Greenways and Open Space Plan (1999), “The previously proposed Stream Water Quality Protection Ordinance would regulate new development on land with streams and would exempt active farms and existing residences. It would protect streams and flood plains with a 100-ft buffer of undisturbed land. These areas are indicated on the Proposed/Recommended Greenways and Open Space Preservation Plan (Figure 8)”

### **OPTION: ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE STREAM CORRIDOR ORDINANCE AND ENSURE EXPLICIT DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES IN THE MASTER PLAN AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

The stream corridor ordinance should include:

- ⊗ Protection of the stream corridor including protection of the flood plain, plus 100 feet.
- ⊗ Clear definitions for ***flood plain, stream corridor, and impaired.*** The Watershed Association has been working with the Hunterdon County Municipal Toolbox Committee to tailor a Stream Corridor Ordinance for this region.
- ⊗ Minimum acreage measurements for the stream’s watershed should be consistent with NJDEP’s standards.
- ⊗ Monitoring and penalty provisions.
- ⊗ Maintenance of the stream bank vegetation with native species trees, shrubs and grasses and a “no-mow” policy.
- ⊗ Extension of the stream corridor if wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes or critical habitats are adjacent.
- ⊗ Best Management Practices for stream bank restoration in impaired areas.
- ⊗ Apply for NJDEP 319 grants to support planning for the above.



## Did You Know?

The Stony Brook and tributaries within the Amwell Lake Wildlife Management area is designated by the NJDEP as a Category One (C-1) stream. This designation provides additional protections to help prevent water quality degradation.

It is easier and less expensive to protect these areas now rather than trying to restore them in the future. If stream corridors are maintained in their natural condition, with minimum disturbance, they are instrumental in performing the following functions:

- ⌘ Removing sediment, nutrients, and pollutants by providing opportunities for filtration, absorption, and decomposition;
- ⌘ Reducing stream bank erosion by slowing stormwater velocity, which aids in allowing stormwater to be absorbed in the soil and taken up by vegetation;
- ⌘ Preventing flood related damage to surrounding communities;
- ⌘ Displacing potential sources of non-point source pollution from the water's edge;
- ⌘ Providing shade that maintains cooler water temperatures needed by certain aquatic species during the hot summer months;
- ⌘ Maintaining genetic diversity;
- ⌘ Helping maintain adequate flows of filtered water to underground aquifers; and
- ⌘ Providing greenway corridors for wildlife.

The Watershed Association is actively revamping our model Stream Corridor Ordinance to be available for municipal use.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Model Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance and Implementation Package prepared by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735).
- ⌘ StreamWatch Program, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735 or [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)).
- ⌘ Seth Wenger and Lori Fowler, "Guidebook for Developing Local Riparian Buffer Ordinances" (Office of Public Service & Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, 706-542-3948) (1999).
- ⌘ Center for Watershed Protection (410-461-8323 or [www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org)). Also see their project, The Stormwater Manager's Resource Center, an extensive educational website that contains more than 3,000 pages of technical content ([www.stormwatercenter.net](http://www.stormwatercenter.net)).
- ⌘ ANJEC, "Protecting Our Streams" (P.O. Box 157, Mendham, NJ, 07945, 973-539-7547).
- ⌘ North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development, Technical Guidelines for Streambank Restorations (908-735-0733).
- ⌘ Society for Ecological Restoration ([www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org)).
- ⌘ Seth Wenger, "A Review of the Scientific Literature on Riparian Buffer Width, Extent and Vegetation" (Office of Public Service & Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, 706-542-3948) (1999).
- ⌘ United States Department of Agriculture, "Riparian Forest Buffers: Function and Design for Protection and Enhancement of Water Resources" (202-512-2250) (1991).





## STEP

### 7

## Groundwater Protection

GOAL: Respondents to our survey indicated a strong desire to protect water quality.

One of the goals of the township as expressed in the 1993 Master Plan Amendments are to “Assure that the density of development in all locations throughout the Township considers geology, groundwater quality and quantity, and other constraints.”

One of the Township’s wastewater planning goals, according to the 1993 Master Plan Amendment, is to “assure that the density of development in all locations throughout the Township does not violate environmental and other reasonable constraints with special consideration to groundwater quality and quantity, surface water quality, soil capacities and wetland [sic].”

CURRENT PROTECTION: East Amwell has low density zoning, prohibits clearing more than 30,000 square feet, and establishes

impervious cover limits for lots in the Sourland Mountain District.

The township adopted a water supply ordinance to ensure that new and altered wells produce sufficient volumes of water, maintain acceptable standards of hygiene and sanitation, ensure that new wells will not impinge upon the use of existing wells, and to “collect data and information about the several groundwater aquifers...in order to determine prospects of groundwater supply for existing and potential uses.”

The Board of Health’s septic system ordinance increases the State’s allowable separation of distance between a new well and a septic system in order to protect well water quality.

The Township commissioned Demicco and Associates, Inc. in 2002 to conduct a study of groundwater resources in the Sourland Mountain area.

### **OPTION: ADOPT ORDINANCE LANGUAGE THAT SETS MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR WELLHEAD AND AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Amending the East Amwell Greenways and Open Space Point Ranking System to include aquifer recharge area criteria.
- ⌘ Developing and implementing a Non-Point Source Pollution Control Ordinance.
- ⌘ Creating a Wellhead and Aquifer Recharge Protection Ordinance that meets local concerns or demands and is in accordance with the protection plan.
- ⌘ Including appropriate language for Wellhead and Aquifer Recharge areas into the Critical Areas section of the Land Development Ordinance.
- ⌘ Creating a Wellhead Protection Overlay Zone to accompany ordinance language where in the event of a conflict with the requirement of the underlying zone, the provisions of the WHPO Zone shall supersede.
- ⌘ Applying best management practices to wellhead and aquifer protection areas while a model ordinance is in the works.
- ⌘ Distributing information to residents in order to educate them on best management practices in the home.



## Did You Know?

East Amwell is part of three drainage basins, including the South Branch Watershed, Stony Brook Watershed, and the Delaware River Basin. “The importance of these drainage basins lies not only in the fact that they supply groundwater recharge to East Amwell residents, but that these streams are the headwaters that also supply groundwater recharge to regional neighbors in the Stony Brook, Millstone, South Branch, Raritan, and Delaware Watershed,” according to the 1993 Master Plan Amendments.

The build-out analysis presented in the 2002 Land Use Amendment for the Sourland Mountain and Stony Brook Districts indicates “Development occurring at these densities would have a detrimental impact on the health and safety of potential residents to the Sourland Mountain region. The geological formations and their implications for water availability and groundwater recharge detailed by Demicco [and Associates, Inc.] suggest a hazard of well contamination from septic systems, due to concentrations of effluent and penetration into bedrock fractures. The resulting densities in Table 3 would amplify this effect and pose risks to the health, safety, and welfare of residents of the Sourlands region” (p. 22 LUP, 2002).

Best Management Practices like Bioretention Basins provide maximized infiltration and are more aesthetically pleasing than the typical dry detention basins.

Wellhead protection is a preventive program designed to protect public water supply wells. The goal of wellhead protection is to prevent contaminants from entering public water supply wells by managing the land that contributes water to the wells.

The quality of drinking water from private wells is not regulated by any State or Federal agency. Residents should, therefore, test their well water on a regular basis to ensure that their water is safe to drink.



## Additional Resources

- ☞ Model Wellhead Protection Ordinance and Implementation Package prepared by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735).
- ☞ The Township of Stafford, New Jersey gives an example of a *Wellhead Protection Overlay Zone*. The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has a copy of this ordinance language. Please call 609-737-3735 for more information.
- ☞ The Watershed also has a copy of the *New Jersey Highlands Wellhead Protection Project*, which includes a model ordinance for Wellhead Protection Areas and Drinking Water Aquifer Protection. Please call 609-737-3735 for more information.
- ☞ Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System ([www.nemo.uconn.edu](http://www.nemo.uconn.edu)).



## STEP

# 8

## Woodlands Management & Protection

**GOAL:** Respondents to our survey indicated a desire for a stronger tree harvesting ordinance that would prevent clear cutting.

East Amwell's vision, according to the 2004 Master Plan, is to ensure "the integrity of the fragile Sourland ecosystem and biological diversity." The Township's objective's include considering water and soil constraints in conjunction with new development, limiting impervious cover, maintaining large contiguous tracts of forest, and supporting the State's Special Resource Designation for the Sourland Mountain region.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:**

Zoning in the Sourland Mountain region limits agricultural use to existing cleared areas, regulates tree clearing and prohibits clearing any forests or native vegetation in excess of 30,000 square feet. The Township sent a summary of these regulations to residents living in the Sourland region.

The Environmental Commission is currently re-evaluating the Township's Tree Harvesting Ordinance which addresses commercial logging and requires compliance with the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry's Best Management Practices Manual.



*A view of Clawson Park*

### **OPTION: ADOPT ADDITIONAL ORDINANCES AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO ENSURE FURTHER PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WOODLANDS.**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Amending the Master Plan to include goals and objectives for woodlands.
- ⌘ Amending the Township's Tree Harvesting Ordinance's language on clear cutting. Currently existing dwellings are exempt from permitting for "any tree(s) harvested on a residential lot, provided that no more than a total of two acres are clear cut." However, there is no existing language referring to a time frame or limit between harvesting no more than 2 acres at a time. Also consider revising the Tree Harvesting ordinance to make it compatible with zoning provisions for the Sourland Mountain region that prohibit clearing any forests or native vegetation in excess of 30,000 square feet.
- ⌘ Initiating and promoting cooperation between the Township and adjacent municipalities to advance the consistent development of woodlands management goals, policies, and plans, and zoning.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Forests cover approximately 20 percent of East Amwell.
- ⌘ East Amwell is one of five municipalities located in the Sourland Mountain region.
- ⌘ East Amwell has preserved 33 percent of the Sourland Mountain area that lies within the Township's borders.
- ⌘ East Amwell is an active participant in the Sourland Mountain Smart Growth Project which aims to produce a build-out analysis and compare master plans and ordinances for municipalities located within the environmentally sensitive region.
- ⌘ Three of the five major forest regions in the United States are found in New Jersey according to the New Jersey Forestry Association.
- ⌘ Trees help to refresh and replenish and cool the air we breathe.
- ⌘ Of New Jersey's 4,748,000 acres some 1,864,300 are classified as forestland, 75% of which are privately owned.
- ⌘ New Jersey woodlands have many species of trees (near 90), and differences in topography, soils, drainage and vegetation located in a relatively small area. Three of the five major forest regions in the U.S. are found in New Jersey. This makes our forests tremendously diverse, interesting and useful.
- ⌘ New Jersey has lost 8,000 woodland acres per year to other uses since 1956.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey Conservation Foundation's mission is to preserve New Jersey's land and natural resources for the benefit of all. Website: [www.njconservation.org](http://www.njconservation.org)
- ⌘ D&R Greenway, Inc. protects and preserves central New Jersey's treasured open space. They protect land along the Delaware & Raritan Canal and the streams flowing through the surrounding 1,000-square mile region. They protect woodlands, wetlands, stream corridors, scenic vistas, and open fields. Website: [www.delrargreenway.org/](http://www.delrargreenway.org/)
- ⌘ North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D). Planning for Woodland Conservation Manual provides information, tools, and techniques to protect forest resources in developing communities. 54 Old Highway 22, Suite 201 Clinton, NJ 08809-1389 Phone: (908) 735-0733 website: [www.northjerseyrcd.org](http://www.northjerseyrcd.org).
- ⌘ The New Jersey Forestry Association. "Dedicated to the wise use and management of the States forest land resource in a manner which will provide many products and services for the benefit of all our citizens, now and for future generations. These include economic and environmental benefits such as wood products, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, watershed protection, air purification, soil stabilization, temperature amelioration, windbreaks, urban buffers and landscape beautification. These values are most important to New Jersey in the face of its continued rapid growth and urbanization." P.O. Box 130 Milmay, N.J. 08340 Tel: 856-696-5300; Fax: 856-205-0009 website: [www.njforestry.org](http://www.njforestry.org)



## STEP

### 9

## Critical Habitat Protection

GOAL: The 2002 Land Use Plan Amendment for the Sourland Mountain and Stony Brook Districts states that one of the Township's goals is to "Ensure the integrity of the fragile Sourland ecosystem and biological diversity (especially migrating birds) through the maintenance of large contiguous tracts of forest."

The Land Management Ordinance also states that for the Sourland Mountain District, "The convergence of critical features, including wetlands, large contiguous forests, limiting geology, characterized by low rates of recharge for bedrock aquifers and low yielding wells, and critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, points to the need for land use policies and regulations that promote sustainability and resource preservation."

There is, however, a lack of language in the Master Plan to articulate the Township's vision for its critical habitats.

CURRENT PROTECTION:

The Township has some ordinance language protecting steep slopes. The Land Management Ordinance definition of Lot Suitability states that "at least 30% of one acre which includes the building site shall consist of land less than 12% slope."

East Amwell enacted low density/large lot zoning for both the Agricultural and Sourland Mountain districts which in addition to protecting groundwater, preserves open space and habitat.

East Amwell also has an active and successful Open Space Committee that works to preserve critical areas within the Township that are used by humans and wildlife alike.

### **OPTION: ADOPT ADDITIONAL ORDINANCES AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO ENSURE FURTHER PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF CRITICAL HABITATS**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Adopting a Critical Areas ordinance that protects critical habitats, steep slopes, and woodlands. Assuring that development occurs away from steep slopes will also aid in reducing non-point source pollution. Montgomery Township has such an ordinance that could be adapted to suit the needs of East Amwell Township.
- ⌘ Using NJDEP Landscape data to assist with prioritizing open space preservation areas.
- ⌘ Amending municipal mowing practices, and establishing no-mow meadow areas. Meadows provide habitat for a variety of wildlife including birds and butterflies. The Association's River-Friendly program can provide advice with landscaping for habitats.
- ⌘ Contacting the NJDEP about registering vernal pools that have already been identified in East Amwell. Also, encourage volunteers to participate in NJDEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Volunteer Program to identify vernal pools.
- ⌘ Initiating and promote cooperation between the Township and adjacent municipalities to advance the consistent preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and critical habitats goals, policies, and plans.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Some examples of critical habitats include steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands, and vernal pools.
- ⌘ The most common types of wetlands in East Amwell are Riverine and Palustrine systems. Riverine wetlands are related to streams and are generally narrow and correspond to floodplain areas. Palustrine wetlands are found in forested areas which, in East Amwell, is the Sourland Mountain area.
- ⌘ The Sourland Mountain Preserve, in which East Amwell is partially located, is a 273-acre second generation oak forest that contains many vernal pools.
- ⌘ Vernal pools are vital to maintaining NJ's ecological diversity because they are a breeding ground for many species of amphibians, insects, reptiles, plants, and other wildlife. The NJDEP estimates that fewer than 10% of NJ's vernal pools have been identified. The NJDEP's Vernal Pool Project works with volunteers to identify and report vernal pools. Currently there are no vernal pools recorded by the NJDEP for East Amwell.
- ⌘ The NJDEP's Landscape Project can provide maps and overlays as a basis for the development of local habitat protection ordinances, zoning to protect critical wildlife areas, management guidelines for species conservation on public and private lands, and land acquisition priorities. The Landscape Project indicates that East Amwell has several critical habitat areas: one of which includes the Wood Turtle, a State Threatened Species, emergent wetlands, priority and state threatened forest land, State and Federal Threatened and Endangered Species Grasslands, and forested wetlands.
- ⌘ The State Development and Redevelopment Plan has a statewide policy for the protection of biological diversity, forests, wildlife habitat, critical slope areas, and water resources through preservation and protection of contiguous open spaces, connecting corridors, and public lands and management of the character and nature of development (SDRP,



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Vernal Pool Project ([www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/vrnpoolupdate03.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/vrnpoolupdate03.htm)). NJDEP has also mapped areas that it has certified as vernal habitats ([www.state.nj.us/dep/landuse/fww/vernal/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/landuse/fww/vernal/index.html))
- ⌘ i-MapNJ DEP, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. An environmental mapping tool that can provide you with information about your neighborhood, county, or state (NJ) in which you can view and query NJDEP's Geographic Information System (GIS) data. Website: ([www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/depsplash.htm#](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/depsplash.htm#))
- ⌘ Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) ([www.nrcs.usda.gov/progras/whip](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/progras/whip))
- ⌘ Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association River Friendly Program. Our River-Friendly Programs are designed to provide education and information on non-point source pollution reduction and best management practices focused on the landscape. Contact Amy Weaver or Peggy Savage at 609-737-3735. ([www.thewatershed.org/WSM/riverfriendly.html](http://www.thewatershed.org/WSM/riverfriendly.html))

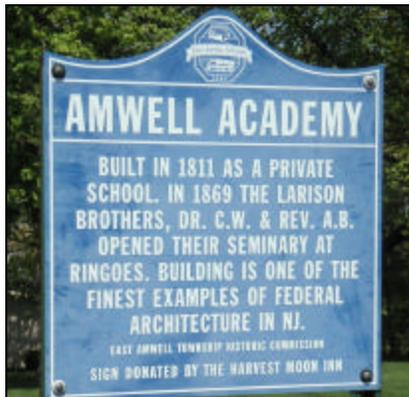


## STEP

# 10

## Historic Preservation

**GOAL:** The 2004 Master Plan Amendments state that it is the Township’s intent to preserve “the cultural landscape by recognizing historic structures and districts, and managing change within the historic villages.” The same amendments state that the Township plans to “provide a mechanism for the inventory of historic resources, and establish zoning and design regulations which support their protection and preservation, and encourage their rehabilitation and improvement.”



***The historic Amwell Academy is noted at the spot of the present day Harvest Moon Inn***

Respondents to our survey also indicated a desire to establish requirements for historic preservation, and for monitoring activities on historic sites/districts.

**CURRENT EFFORTS:** The Township has a very active Historic Preservation Committee (HPC), that has worked to ensure that every hamlet in East Amwell is listed on either the National or State Historic Register.

In the Township’s Historic Preservation Plan, the HPC stated that it “would also serve to assist individual homeowners in efforts to make individual nominations for their homes to these registers.”

With grant assistance from the Kaplan Fund, the HPC produced a full size, fold out map that identifies and details the significance of Hunterdon County’s historic metal truss bridges.

The HPC is also working with consultants to have all of East Amwell’s historic sites GIS mapped.

### **OPTION: ADOPT ADDITIONAL ORDINANCES AND POLICIES TO ENSURE FURTHER PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND LANDS**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Developing a Point Ranking System to prioritize historic sites for preservation and inclusion on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.
- ⌘ Encouraging cooperation among local and regional entities involved in similar historic preservation initiatives. Consider hosting a joint meeting of historic committees from neighboring municipalities to discuss regional preservation goals.
- ⌘ Continuing to update the survey of historic sites in the municipality. The Township should also continue to work with the HPC to present these sites to the public in an appropriate manner (i.e., signage, parking facilities, etc.).
- ⌘ Continuing to conduct education programs to heighten awareness of the historic and cultural heritage of East Amwell Township and its environs.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ East Amwell's road system developed through foot paths used by the Lenni-Lanape Indians.
- ⌘ Hunterdon County has more historic bridges than any other county in the nation. Of the 87 sites in the county that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, six are bridges.
- ⌘ Preserving the historic and cultural character of the Township will also encourage shopping, dining, and sightseeing for visitors.
- ⌘ The National Register makes determinations based upon the level of importance or significance in American history and architecture displayed by the district.
- ⌘ Historic cities, towns and rural areas are in jeopardy. Misplaced priorities, unwise public policies, and a lack of information threaten the livability and "sense of place" that make our older communities unique. The National Trust helps citizens by continuing to develop resources that address specific problems now facing communities across the country.



*Stone Bridge at entrance to Lindbergh House*



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office, located within the Division of Parks and Forestry, Department of Environmental Protection, brings expertise in a variety of fields essential to preserving historic resources. It responds to more than 40,000 calls yearly from people working to preserve, protect and promote New Jersey's historic resources. 609-292-2023 ([www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/))
- ⌘ The New Jersey Historic Trust is a non-profit historic preservation organization affiliated with the Department of State. It recommends awards from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund for a variety of planning projects for historic preservation. 609-984.6017 ([www.njht.org](http://www.njht.org))
- ⌘ Preservation New Jersey's mission is to protect and promote the state's historic resources, communities and landscapes through education and advocacy. 609-392-6409 ([www.preservationnj.org](http://www.preservationnj.org)).





# STEP

## 11 Viewshed Protection

**GOAL:** One Township goal, as expressed in the 2004 Master Plan Amendments, is to protect “scenic vistas of the rural countryside and the village and hamlets that impart the special character of East Amwell.” The Township intends to “develop review procedures and recommendations which encourage the location of buildings, roads, and the landscape quality and which respect the existing visual quality that is presently found in the Township’s viewsheds and scenic vistas.”

Several respondents to our surveys indicated an interest in measures to protect the Township’s scenic viewsheds.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:**

The Township’s Land Management Ordinance defines viewsheds or scenic corridors as “A

right-of-way or an area visible from a highway, waterway, railway or major hiking, biking, or equestrian trail that is accessible to the public, and which provides vistas over water, across expanses of vegetation such as farmlands, woodlands or wetlands, or from mountaintops or ridges.”

The Land Management Ordinance also states that major site plans and subdivisions are subject to buffers and landscaping plans that “will reduce the visual impact of dwellings located on ridges or within unique viewsheds, promote environmental benefits, and preserve the rural character of East Amwell Township.”

Additionally, the Land Management Ordinance establishes visual compatibility requirements for telecommunications.

### OPTION: ADOPT A VIEWSHED PROTECTION ORDINANCE WITH SPECIFIC LANGUAGE FOR HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Setting a minimum setback between a ridgeline and the top of a structure when viewing hills that surround the Valley.
- ⌘ Establishing design review standards for the various zoning districts, particularly the Sourland Mountain District.
- ⌘ Proposing an ordinance that seeks to provide standards for hillside development that minimizes the impact of buildings and grading on views of existing land forms, open space, and unique geological and landscape features that can be seen from public roads.
- ⌘ Promoting architecture and design compatible with hillside terrain that minimizes visual impacts. Include drawings and other visuals in the Master Plan as a reference.
- ⌘ Holding a photo contest for citizens so that the Township could develop a photo inventory of existing viewsheds.



**View of Amwell Valley**



## Did You Know?

Scenic vistas and viewsheds are often destroyed during rapid change, especially in natural or open space settings. Identification and protection of these assets is an important component of scenic conservation.

Views are resources that cannot be recovered once they are lost. It is important that they be protected since “the eyes go up to the ridge tops” and are highly visible.

The purpose of a viewshed protection ordinance is to “protect the scenic quality” of an area. Examples of language for this type of ordinance should include:

- ∅ Maximum feasible preservation of existing topographical forms;
- ∅ Minimal disturbance to existing topographical features and vegetation;
- ∅ Vehicular circulation and how it relates to existing contours;
- ∅ Roads and driveways sensitive to existing contours and minimized length and width not affecting the health, safety, and welfare of residents;
- ∅ Maximum preservation of existing vegetation;
- ∅ Minimal loss of existing vegetation and minimal earthwork to fit development into the hillside.

Standards used in a design review process are often called "design guidelines." Unlike zoning codes, which are prescriptive and specific, design guidelines are more descriptive and suggestive. Design review is *not* the imposition of one person's or one committee's personal tastes upon developers or upon the community as a whole.

View protection is a form of aesthetic-based regulation, has a clear property value basis that can also be justified on general public health and welfare grounds and as contributing to the overall quality of life in a community.



***A view of Unionville***



## Additional Resources

*Scenic America* helps communities identify and map special places as a way to manage new development and conserve significant visual assets. [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

*Napa County, California* proposed a viewshed protection ordinance in 2001. Controversy regarding setbacks and building heights are highlighted in an article in the *St. Helena Star* newspaper. Read the article at: [www.sthelenastar.com/8-9-01/headlines/viewshed\\_controversy.html](http://www.sthelenastar.com/8-9-01/headlines/viewshed_controversy.html)

*Aesthetic Regulation—Legal Issues* by Bob Meinig, MRSC Legal Consultant. Please review these regulations at: [www.mrsc.org/Publications/mrnews/sept93.aspx#aesthetic](http://www.mrsc.org/Publications/mrnews/sept93.aspx#aesthetic)



## STEP

# 12

## Appropriate Development

**GOAL:** Many of the respondents to our survey expressed concerns about appropriate future development.

The Township's vision for future development, according to the 2004 Master Plan Amendments, includes "Conserving community character by carefully managing the scale and intensity of new development and retaining farmland and open spaces." The Township's objectives are to "provide a pattern of growth management that preserves the rural character of the Township by balancing the desirable qualities of open space and agricultural activities." As well as to "assure that planned development densities and intensities throughout the Township can be adequately served by the natural infrastructure, including geology, soils, groundwater and surface water."

**CURRENT PROTECTION:**

The Township has designated several zoning areas. Each district has its own set of zoning provisions outlined in the Land Management Ordinance. The zoning provisions are tailored to address unique cultural and environmental factors of their respective zones. For example the Village zoning provisions state that the zone "is established to set specific standards to protect the character of the designated areas and the historic Village of Ringoes...As the Township grows in population, the village is intended to provide local not regional needs and services." Similarly, the zoning provisions for Amwell Valley Agricultural District support open space preservation while those in the Sourland Mountain district are design to protect water quality.

**OPTION: ADOPT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES THAT WILL COMPLIMENT EXISTING COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENTS AND ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Developing, adopting and implementing design guidelines; create spatially defined, visually appealing and functionally efficient places in ways that establish an identity; design circulation systems to promote connectivity; maintain an appropriate scale in the built environment; and redesign areas of sprawl, as described in the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
- ⊗ Planning and engineering checklists that reflect environmental protection, design elements, and amenities that will enhance quality of life.
- ⊗ Using physical design or architectural guidelines to both enhance the workings of natural systems and support the quality, integrity and continuity of the built environment.
- ⊗ Continuing to require impervious cover limits in the Sourland Mountain district and consider requiring developers and planning consultants to create plans that minimize impervious cover for other districts.
- ⊗ Encouraging development, redevelopment and economic growth in locations that are well situated with respect to present or anticipated public services and facilities and that seek to protect the environs.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ State Plan Strategies recommend guiding growth to Centers and other areas identified within Endorsed Plans where infrastructure exists or is planned and where it can be provided efficiently, either with private or public dollars.
- ⌘ A traditional village ordinance should have a defined village and a rural/semi-rural edge composed of parks, greenbelts and wilderness preserves or conservancy areas. The edges of a traditional village ordinance are recognized for its environmental, aesthetic, sporting and recreational benefits.
- ⌘ The traditional village decreases the land utilized for physical development. It is spatially related to pedestrian users, compact and limited in size.
- ⌘ The traditional village has a mixed use center, various gathering places, public buildings, open areas, and a variety of residential buildings forming the edge of public and semi public spaces, all interwoven and in close proximity.
- ⌘ Civic buildings that are carefully placed reinforce the character of the traditional village ordinance. These buildings become community symbols and provide identity for places of cultural, social and religious assembly.
- ⌘ Creating a center design that is easily walkable and bikeable fosters an interconnected hierarchy of roads, pathways, sidewalks and trails. These serve equitably the needs of the pedestrian, the bicycle and the automobile. A traditional village ordinance has a minimal need for motorized transport and contributes to the preservation of contiguous open spaces for scenic enjoyment, recreational use and identity.



*Peacock Country Store*



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ *Traditional Village Ordinance, Florida Keys, FL.* The Traditional Village Ordinance (TVO) is a Monroe County ordinance designed to ensure the development of land along the lines of traditional villages, hamlets and settlements. Please visit their website at <http://www.urbanism.com/paper0297.htm#ordinance> or at <http://www.urbanism.com/tvo.htm>
- ⌘ The award winning *Washington Town Center* is New Jersey's first Neo Traditional Town Center and the nation's first such community designed by the municipality. Visit the Township's website for a better view of the Town Center. <http://www.washington-twp.org/town.htm>
- ⌘ The *New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)* offers planning guidelines for all communities in the state. Please go to <http://nj.gov/osp/plan2/main.htm> for more information on the Plan and how it can aid your community.
- ⌘ Ahwahnee Principles for more Livable Communities can be found at: <http://www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles.html>
- ⌘ Scenic America is an organization that is dedicated to protecting viewsheds and community character: <http://www.scenic.org/>



## STEP

# 13

## Affordable & Senior Housing

### GOAL:

Many of the respondents to our survey indicated that they would like the township to promote both diversity and stability in its population by pursuing more affordable housing, and in-home support for seniors.

East Amwell intends to “Provide a variety of housing opportunities for the existing and future residents of the Township, consistent with the rural setting on which these are located. Affordable housing should be provided, and the township should comply with COAH regulations, choosing locations and types of housing that are appropriate and suitable for a rural town without infrastructure,” according to the 2004 Master Plan Amendments.

### CURRENT EFFORTS:

The Township currently has a Housing Element that is certified by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), and has received substantive certification pending COAH’s adoption of new plans.

East Amwell implements a variety of strategies in order to comply with its fair share housing obligations. In May 2004, the Township amended the Hunterdon County Housing Corporation Housing Rehabilitation Program Agreement to provide for up to five new rehabilitation projects within the township. The Township has established a Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) with Perth Amboy. East Amwell also has a mortgage assistance program and a group home program that led to the establishment of the Women’s Crisis Center.

### **OPTION: START AN EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO INFORM RESIDENTS ABOUT HOUSING AND MIXED-USE DESIGN.**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Reviewing COAH’s new proposed rules. When COAH adopts new guidelines for affordable housing, the Township will need to draft a new plan and submit it for certification. A certified Housing Element is the only way in which the Township can protect itself from ‘builders’ remedy’ lawsuits.
- ⊗ Supporting the Agricultural Committee in its efforts to promote and sustain agricultural economics viability in the township.
- ⊗ Amend Ordinance language to accommodate for necessary Senior Housing and to avoid spot zoning.



***‘The Point’ at Ringoes - Post Office***



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ The Hunterdon County LINK Transportation offers modestly priced fixed route bus service from Ringoes. Designated food shopping trips are also offered, generally on Tuesdays, leaving from Ringoes.
- ⌘ The State Development and Redevelopment Plan contains the housing policy that age restricted housing should be physically integrated or connected to Centers or other areas with facilities and services (SDRP, Policy #7).
- ⌘ New Jersey's population reached 8.15 million in 2000 and it will grow by 908,000 during the period 2000 to 2020. Where will these people live?
- ⌘ Involving citizens in the visioning process creates a community where everyone's voices are heard and ideas are taken into consideration. A variety of voices and ideas will make for a diverse and energetic community. Finalizing the town's vision should include a vote by the townspeople regarding the recommendations on the table.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing's (COAH) new proposed rules are available at: [www.state.nj.us/dca/coah/thirdround.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/coah/thirdround.shtml). COAH's mission is "To facilitate the production of sound, affordable housing for low and moderate income households by providing the most effective process to municipalities, housing providers, nonprofit and for profit developers to address a constitutional obligation within the framework of sound, comprehensive planning." ([www.state.nj.us/dca/coah/](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/coah/)).
- ⌘ Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions—"ANJEC is a statewide non-profit organization that assists the efforts of environmental commissions, local officials, interested citizens, private organizations and government agencies" ANJEC has available a guide to assist municipalities in planning and meeting their COAH requirements for affordable housing. For the *Smart Growth Survival Kit for Affordable Housing* visit: [www.anjec.org/pdfs/SG\\_AH.pdf](http://www.anjec.org/pdfs/SG_AH.pdf) (Tel: 973-539-7547, Website: [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org)).
- ⌘ New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) provides support services to municipal governments, private developers, and non-profit organizations to assist NJ townships in meeting their affordable housing needs. DCA also provides financial and technical assistance to municipal governments. For more information on their many programs, visit their website ([www.state.nj.us/dca/coah/](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/coah/)).
- ⌘ The Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey is "a statewide association of more than 250 affordable housing and community development corporations (CDCs), individuals, and other organizations that support the creation of housing and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Jersey residents. The Network's mission is to help our members create and preserve long-term affordable housing and build strong communities in New Jersey through: capacity building and resource development; education and public policy advocacy; and networking and support services. ([www.hcdnnj.org/](http://www.hcdnnj.org/)).



## STEP

# 14

## Public Participation & Communication

### GOAL:

Overall, respondents to our survey said that they thought the Township was doing a good job communicating with residents and encouraging public participation.



### CURRENT EFFORTS:

Respondents to our survey overwhelmingly stated that the most prominent means of encouraging participation is through the monthly volunteer paper (VIP), Township newsletters, the bi-annual environmental newsletter, and the website. Respondents noted that a call for volunteers is included as a tax bill insert, and that residents are targeted with postcards for specific issues concerning specific neighborhoods. Respondents also noted that every Township meeting is announced, open to the public, and that minutes are available.

### **OPTION: CREATE EVALUATION MATERIALS TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION EFFORTS**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Utilizing the Township website to notify residents about issues or events that may be of interest.
- ⊗ Allowing residents to receive meeting notices and other Township information by e-mail.
- ⊗ Posting op-ed pieces written by Committee people in order to gain the public's interest in the decision making process.
- ⊗ Creating a survey or evaluation form for residents to complete at the end of public meetings.
- ⊗ Evaluating the success of meetings by gauging what is learned and how residents will apply the knowledge in their own jobs or communities.
- ⊗ Continuing to provide sufficient notice of meetings to increase awareness and participation.
- ⊗ Encouraging nonformal access to information on, and opportunities to learn and make informed decisions about, an issue as it relates to citizens' personal work and community lives.





## Did You Know?

- ⌘ East Amwell's website, <http://www.eastamwelltownship.com/>, lists upcoming township events, such as clean-up days, as well as contact information for township officials.
- ⌘ Conducting public meetings and obtaining public comment will give citizens a sense of ownership within their community. They will participate more and show more of an interest, in general, if their opinions are heard and taken into account.
- ⌘ Empowering community members to make informed decisions based upon the best available information will result in a commitment to a future that reflects the will of the people and provides a unified focus for all municipal activities.
- ⌘ Education programs sponsored by museums, zoos, nature centers, and 4-H clubs encourage lifelong learning about issues so that individuals can make well-informed decisions.
- ⌘ Raising public awareness of and support for community goals and conveying information on indicators for these goals will encourage residents to apply practices towards these goals into their daily lives.
- ⌘ Partnerships extending throughout communities and levels of government will encourage a support for community decisions, processes, and assessments.

**"All power is inherent in the people." --Thomas Jefferson to John Cartwright, 1824.**



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ North Hampton, New Hampshire conducted a pilot project called *Sustainable Development in the Little River Watershed*. This document gives a glimpse of the citizen participation involved in the visioning process. Please contact the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association for more information. 609.737.3735.
- ⌘ *Public Linkage, Dialogue, and Education: Task Force Report*. This document, distributed by the President's Council on Sustainable Development, provides sufficient case studies and results from projects throughout the country. Focuses mostly on sustainable development, but citizen participation efforts are well laid out and assessed. This document is available at the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.



**Linvale Church**



# STEP

## 15 Education of Municipal Officials

GOAL:  
Several respondents to our survey felt that the Township committee, and board members as well as Township employees are proactive and professional.

CURRENT EFFORTS:  
Because local decisions are made through Township officials and staff, it is imperative to ensure municipal officials and staff are knowledgeable about environmental issues.



*Dr. Larison's House*

### **OPTION: ENCOURAGE TRAINING AND SITE WALKS FOR STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Specifically, the Township should consider:



- ⌘ Encouraging and supporting officials, board and commission members to obtain education relevant to their duties.
- ⌘ Encouraging the EC to conduct more public education campaigns.
- ⌘ Utilizing local organizations for hands-on trainings.
- ⌘ Encouraging site walks by the planning board and environmental commission.
- ⌘ Keeping Township staff members aware of documents that are updated and those that need updating.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ East Amwell's municipal ordinances are available on-line through:  
<http://www.nj.gov/localgov.htm>
- ⌘ Many of East Amwell's committees are staffed by volunteers who live in the community.
- ⌘ East Amwell's website lists contact information for township officials as well as section titled "What's New in East Amwell" which details upcoming township events.  
<http://www.eastamwell.hunterdon.nj.us/>



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ The Natural Lands Network (NLN) is a free service that provides a network for citizens, organizations, and public officials that are committed to preserving open space and natural resources in the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed. NLN regularly hosts continuing education opportunities for municipal officials and others. To become an NLN member contact the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association at (609) 737-3735.
- ⌘ The New Jersey State League of Municipalities "is a voluntary association created to help communities do a better job of self-government through pooling information resources and brain power...All 566 municipalities are members of the League. Over 560 mayors and 13,000 elected and appointed officials of member municipalities are entitled to all of the services and privileges of the League. <http://www.njslom.org/>
- ⌘ Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) is an educational program developed by the University of Connecticut for land use decision makers that addresses the relationship of land use to natural resource protection. <http://www.nemo.uconn.edu/>
- ⌘ Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) has a variety of educational resources available to the public and officials alike. ANJEC also hosts workshops, conferences, and special events for environmental committee and other municipal leaders to network and increase their knowledge base. <http://www.anjec.org/>



## **Appendix A:**

# **Letter of Introduction to Municipal Assessment Program**

October 27, 2003

Mayor Andrea Bonnette  
1070 Route 202  
Ringoes, New Jersey 08551

Dear Mayor Bonnette,

On behalf of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association I would like to commend East Amwell Township on recent planning decisions that will enhance water quality and preserve open space in the Township. In the past few years, the Watershed Association has been working in East Amwell by providing technical information and recommendations through our Bedens Brook Subwatershed study and providing support for your rezoning efforts. We have also been actively involved in regional efforts to protect the Sourland Mountains.

We realize, as I know you do, that the health of the watershed depends a great deal on the positive actions of the municipalities within it. It is to this end that we hope to engage East Amwell Township in our Municipal Assessment program to develop additional proactive measures to protect the environment. We designed the Municipal Assessment to identify activities the Township could implement to better preserve our natural resources. Once the Assessment process is complete, we work alongside the Township to help enact ordinances, policies, or Best Management Practices that will enable East Amwell Township to move to the forefront of environmental protection.

The Municipal Assessment is divided into four major themes:

1. Land Use Planning Techniques – which include land use ordinances, conservation easements, and stormwater management;
2. Land Conservation - which assesses the system East Amwell Township has for a natural resources inventory, an open space plan, and funding for land acquisition;
3. Direct Municipality Responsibility for the Environment – which includes an assessment of the efficiency of your municipality's Planning Board and Environmental Commission, whether your Department of Public Works implements Best Management Practices, and the comprehensiveness of your recycling programs; and
4. Watershed Stewardship Projects – which include community education, working with other municipalities to protect the watershed, and encouraging stream monitoring, streambank restorations, and reforestations.

Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has the funding and time needed to complete the Assessment, working with your municipal officials and staff. We have the GIS capabilities and can provide your municipality with valuable maps and data, including build-out analysis, land use changes, and our volunteer water monitoring information. Partnering with the Township, we will produce specific strategies for your community, as we have with your neighboring towns of Hopewell Township and West Amwell Township.

We look forward continuing our relationship with East Amwell Township, while working to protect our watershed. Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding this program at 609.737.3735.

Best Regards,

Angela S. Clerico  
Environmental Planning Specialist  
Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association

**Appendix B:**

**Memo to East Amwell Township**



## **Memo**

To: Mayor Kurt Hoffman, East Amwell Township; Kathy Machnik, Planning Board & Environmental Committee liaison; Teresa Stahl, Municipal Clerk; Bill Zick, Board of Health

From: Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association

Date: April 8, 2004

Re: Municipal Assessment Officials Survey Summary

This memo summarizes the ten (10) responses we received to our Municipal Assessment Officials Survey, which was distributed to various East Amwell Township officials, and places those responses in context with the vision of East Amwell Township's Master Plan.

The first question asked the recipients to tell us their vision for the future of East Amwell Township. The majority of respondents indicated a desire to preserve the rural community character of the Township while preserving open space, agricultural lands, and the Sourland Mountains. Respondents were also interested in protecting habitats and forest. Respondents were concerned about future development. Particular concerns included maintaining high quality and availability of natural resources, particularly water. Respondents suggested protecting water quality, in general, streams, and ground water. They indicated that they want to maintain a high quality of life, including public services, in the township at a reasonable cost. While respondents indicated they wish to support limited infill development in Ringoes, they also want to prevent "mindless" development in general.

We next asked the recipients to list their goals for the environment, for the economy, and for the historic aspects of the town. Again, protecting water was a reoccurring theme, and respondents indicated their desire to protect water quality, including streams corridors, groundwater, and drinking water. Suggestions included incorporating streams and forests into the development review process. Several respondents indicated taking steps to preserve East Amwell's long-standing agricultural community by protecting the Right to Farm, preserving farmland and open space, and protecting soil. Other areas that respondents highlighted include:

- ◆ Reducing air, noise, and light pollution
- ◆ Fostering proactive environmental stewardship
- ◆ Protecting forestland
- ◆ Protecting the Sourland Mountains
- ◆ Protecting threatened and endangered species
- ◆ Strengthening partnerships

Most respondents Most respondents indicated that the township should promote both diversity and stability in its population including more affordable housing, and in-home support for seniors. Development was once again a concern. Respondents expressed interest in providing support for home occupations and farming businesses to sustain stable rural and agricultural economies. Simultaneous with support for farmers, respondents indicated that they want to limit development of over-sized homes, or McMansions, but support more accessible land for recreation. Respondents indicated that they thought the Historic Preservation Committee was doing an excellent job, but they also indicated a desire to establish requirements for historic preservation, and for monitoring activities on historic sites/districts. Respondents indicated a need to maintain riding trails through formal agreements, such as easements, rather than verbal "ok's." Respondents also indicated that they would like to continue to encourage public participation while increasing public education of township issues.

The respondents were then asked to discuss how East Amwell Township is protecting open space, viewsheds, and ground water, and improving water quality. Respondents indicated that East Amwell is working to preserve open space mainly through an aggressive approach to farmland protection that resulted in establishing the Farmland and Open Space Committee that is working to take advantage of various state grant programs including Green Acres, Planning Incentive Grants (PIGs), and to partner with organizations such as D&R Greenways and the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC). Additional means of preserving open space, according to respondents, include zoning ordinances, public bonds, creative purchasing, and reaching out to farmers. Suggestions included consulting the preservation priorities list more often and implementing additional open space taxes. Most respondents indicated that East Amwell is mostly working to improve water quality on two fronts: (1) through the Board of Health's stringent regulations for septic systems, and (2) through education about and compliance with the new stormwater regulations. Other tools for improving water quality, according to respondents, include the water study by Pete DeMicco, large lot zoning, floodplain regulations, and ordinances for protecting the mountain region, septic, well, health, and zoning.

Respondents indicated that viewsheds are primarily protected through land development regulations, lighting ordinances, and the work of the Historic Preservation Committee. Several respondents indicated concern about a lack of regulations or ordinances to protect viewsheds.

East Amwell is protecting its groundwater, according to respondents, through large lot zoning, forest protection, and a variety of ordinances primarily pertaining to well and septic. Respondents indicated a need and desire to adopt a stream corridor ordinance.

Respondents indicated that the township is protecting natural resources, other than water and open space, with the Sourlands Mountain ordinance, and public education. Respondents indicated a desire for a stronger tree harvesting ordinance that would prevent clear cutting.

The respondents were then asked to identify what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses within East Amwell Township. Respondents felt that the Township is committed to providing a safe, beautiful, rural environment with bountiful trails and outdoor recreation and is supported by smart, committed, volunteers, and citizens. Respondents also felt that the Township committee, and board members as well as Township employees are proactive and professional.

Respondents indicated weaknesses that included a limited tax base, little economic diversity, and proximity to rapidly growing communities. Respondents also indicated that traditional farming and economics can work against resource protection and preservation. Respondents felt that communication could be improved between residents and Township officials, as well as between Township Boards and Committees.

Next, the respondents were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses in efforts to protect the environment in East Amwell Township. The most frequently cited strength was the commitment of volunteers and residents. Other strengths, according to respondents, included rural traditions, open space and the tax dedicated to it, active farming, good environmental quality, political will and commitment of Board members and elected representatives. Respondents cited few weaknesses, but did cite perceived property rights/ infringement issue relating to large property owners and farmers. Respondents also expressed frustration with the speed of the farmlands preservation process as well as with external forces such as the County Agriculture Board and lawsuits. Respondents once again expressed that they felt that the availability of outreach and education programs could be improved.

Finally, the respondents were asked how the Township encourages public participation. Respondents overwhelmingly stated that the most prominent means of encouraging participation is through the monthly volunteer paper (VIP), township newsletters, the bi-annual environmental newsletter, and the website. Respondents noted that a call for volunteers is included as a tax bill insert, and that residents are targeted with postcards for specific issues concerning specific neighborhoods. Respondents also noted that every Township meeting is announced, open to the public, and that minutes are available. The stated goals of the respondents are well represented in the listed objectives of East Amwell Township's revised Master Plan. The overall sentiment of the respondents is that they want the Township to retain its rich rural and agrarian character while providing for a stable economy and appropriate development. Overall, the respondents are very pleased with the quality of life within East Amwell Township.

As the Association prepares the next phase of the assessment, we look to these responses to provide the areas of concern - areas where we can help bridge the gaps between vision and implementation. Based on the responses of this survey and on the language of the Master Plan, the Association will focus its assessment of ordinances and Best Management Practices on the following areas:

- ◆ Open Space
- ◆ Agrarian Support
- ◆ Stormwater Management
- ◆ Septic System Maintenance
- ◆ Stream Corridor Protection
- ◆ Groundwater Protection
- ◆ Forest and Critical Habitat Protection
- ◆ Tree Harvesting
- ◆ Historic Preservation
- ◆ Viewshed Protection
- ◆ Context Sensitive Design
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Public Participation & Communication
- ◆ Education of Municipal Officials