

# Taking the Next Step:

Millstone Township  
Municipal Assessment

July 2005



## ***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.**



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## Executive Summary

**P**icture it: **Spring, 2025, Millstone, NJ.** Residents gather on a warm spring morning at the Municipal Building for a guided tour of the Township. They are eager to travel the protected scenic roadways, visit the historic villages of Clarksburg and Perrinville, and learn the tales of Millstone's past. On the other side of town, a family mounts their horses and sets out for a morning ride along Millstone's equestrian trails. In the afternoon, friends and family gather at Perrineville Park 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 Millstone Township, 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 interests. 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.

It takes strong community leadership to step back and evaluate goals, policies, and strategies to determine how to connect them with the Township's overall vision. Millstone Township is ready for this challenge and the Association is, in turn, excited to work with such a dedicated community. The Association would first like to commend Millstone Township for their ongoing efforts and accomplishments, which include:

- ⌘ Low Density zoning in the Rural Preservation district (RU-P)
- ⌘ Enactment of a stormwater management ordinance
- ⌘ A comprehensive Open Space, Recreation, Conservation, and Farmland Preservation Plan
- ⌘ Green Acres funding approval to cover 50 percent of the Millstone's costs to preserve land identified in the Township's Open Space Plan
- ⌘ Preserving more than 300 acres for Perrineville Park
- ⌘ Establishment of a public horse riding trail

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 available to assist municipalities and their leaders in implementing those recommendations.

After Millstone Township formally partnered with the Association through a resolution, we began the municipal assessment process with a collection of survey responses from municipal officials, staff, and community volunteers to help determine the community's vision. The Association also reviewed Millstone's Master Plan - as it lays the foundation for the Township's vision. The Association then reviewed the Township's land use ordinances, policies, and best management practices. Association staff, in conjunction with Millstone officials and volunteers, toured the Township to see how the Master Plan, Land Use Ordinance and other policies shape the community. Using the Master Plan and survey responses as the Township's overall vision, the evaluation of the Township's ordinances and best management practices determined areas that need to be strengthened for Millstone to realize its vision. These areas became the focus of the assessment report.

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.

This report is a general guide to current and future projects for this community that will connect goals with implementation and implementation with vision. The results of this analysis for Millstone Township are documented in this report, entitled **"Taking the Next Step"**. Outlined below, and in no particular order, are the nine strategies to achieving Millstone's goals. (Please refer to the full report for more detail).

#### § **Open Space & Farmland Preservation**

*Township Goal:* "To maintain the rural character of the community and secure the environmental, economic, and social benefits of a coordinated system of open space, outdoor recreation, and farmland."

*Current Protections:* The Township has an Open Space and Farmland Preservation Council uses the municipal open space tax revenues to leverage additional State and County funding to preserve open space.

*Recommendation:* Work with Monmouth County Agricultural Development Board, State Agriculture Development Committee, and Green Acres Program to promote the Farmland Preservation Program to Local Farmers.

### § **Woodlands Management & Tree Protection**

*Township Goal:* “Preserve natural areas throughout Millstone that are vital habitats of threatened or endangered species or that are outstanding examples of the forest resources.”

*Current Protections* Millstone’s Flood Hazard and Stream Corridor (FHSC) Overlay Zone prohibits clearing or cutting trees, but only so long as those trees are located within the stream corridor or stream corridor buffer. There is a lack of ordinance language protecting woodlands outside of stream corridors.

*Recommendation:* Re-examine and Clarify Language in the “Woodsy Lane” Development Option so that it Supports the Township’s Woodland Preservation Goals.

### § **Stream Corridor & Steep Slope Protection**

*Township Goal:* “Protect environmentally sensitive lands including stream corridors and... steep slope areas.”

*Current Practices:* The Township’s Flood Hazard Stream Corridor Overlay Zone requires an average stream corridor buffer of 100 feet from the 100 year floodplain, and minimum buffer of 75 feet.

*Recommendation:* Adopt a Comprehensive Stream Corridor Ordinance that Includes Protection of Steep Slopes

### § **Viewshed Protection**

*Township Goal:* “To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements such as, but not limited to, the establishment of scenic corridors which respect the natural beauty and environmental qualities of the Township.”

*Current Practices:* Zoning in the Township’s Rural Preservation (RU-P) and Conservation (RU-C) districts provide for a cluster option to preserve environmentally sensitive and other Township features including scenic views.

*Recommendation:* Adopt a Viewshed Protection Ordinance with Specific Language for Height Requirements

### § **Maintaining Rural Character**

*Township Goal:* To support the State’s designation of Millstone Township as a rural environmentally sensitive planning area and maintain that rural character.

*Current Practices:* Millstone has established several committees that are staffed with volunteers dedicated to preserving the rural character of the Township

*Recommendation:* Strengthen Ordinance Language and Public Outreach to Ensure Rural Characteristics of the Township are maintained.

### § **Groundwater Protection**

*Township Goal:* To protect both water quality and quantity.

*Current Practices:* Millstone adopted the Township Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (208 Plan) with no plans pending for extension of sewer lines into the Township from surrounding areas.

*Recommendation:* Adopt Ordinance Language, and other Strategies that Support Aquifer Recharge and Pollution Reduction.

### ☞ **Stormwater Management**

*Township Goal:* Millstone Township' current goal is to comply with the 2004 NJ Stormwater regulations.

*Current Practices:* Millstone has amended its Land Use and Development Ordinance to include stormwater management requirements for major developments, and is planning to submit their Stormwater Management Plan to the County in early April 2005

*Recommendation:* Create and adopt a Stormwater Management Plan that Includes an ordinance, BMPs, implementation, enforcement, and an educational component.

### ☞ **Public Participation & Communication**

*Township Goal:* Through responses to the Association's surveys and interviews, municipal officials, staff, and volunteers have indicated that they would like to see an increase in local participation and involvement in the various committees and commissions.

*Current Practices:* The Township has a monthly newsletter that is distributed to residents, available at the municipal building, and on the Township's website.

*Recommendation:* Develop a program for residents to spark an interest in protecting Millstone's rural and historic culture.

### ☞ **Education of Municipal Officials**

*Township Goal:* Respondents to our surveys stated that one of Millstone Township's greatest strengths extends from the inhabitants and officials' genuine concern for the natural environment.

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

*Recommendation:* Encourage Training and Site Walks for Staff and Committee 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 Millstone 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 Millstone 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 Millstone 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 Millstone'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 participate in an evaluation and identify areas to build on what has already begun. We want the readers of this report to look at not only what can be done, but what has already been accomplished in Millstone Township.

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 Millstone Township officials, volunteers, staff, and municipal clerk for their responses to our survey. We thank the members of the point committee who provided valuable information, document review, and served as liaisons between the Association and their respective committees; Point Committee members include: James Pickering, Administrator, Mitch Newman, Planning Board, Donna Haag, Environmental Commission, and Bill Kastning. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Mayor Elias Abilheira, Mark Cascella, and Cory Wingerter for guiding us through a tour of the municipality, and Maria Dellasala, Township Clerk, for promptly and thoroughly providing answers to our questions.



**One of several day camps in Millstone**



**Farmland in Millstone**



**Horse Farms are an important feature  
Millstone Township's rural character.  
*Photo courtesy of Millstone Township website.***

*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.*



## How to Use This Report

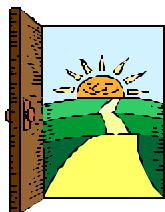


This report outlines nine STEPS that can aid Millstone Township in continuing to realize its vision for the future through zoning, ordinances and policies that govern land use in the Township. These STEPS were identified after the Association distributed surveys to municipal officials and staff, reviewed 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. The 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 Millstone 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 Millstone 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 Millstone Township and to also learn from experiences.

The Association will work by Millstone Township'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, Millstone 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:

- ⌘ ***Open Space & Farmland Preservation*** is important to maintaining Millstone Township's rural character. The Township's 2001 Open Space, Recreation, Conservation, and Farmland Preservation Plan outlines Millstone's objectives for preserving farmland as well as land for public community parks, recreation. As of 2001, the Township preserved more than 460 acres of open space and sought to preserve an additional 300 acres. Residents of Millstone Township have also voted to support farmland and open space preservation in the Township through a dedicated tax. As of 2002, the open space and farmland preservation tax in Millstone Township was assessed at five cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation. The Township has used these funds to leverage funding from NJ Green Acres Program and was approved for State funding that will cover 50 percent of the Township costs to purchase lands for preservation.
- ⌘ ***Land Use Planning*** in Millstone has taken a proactive approach by identifying more than 10 districts to accommodate the variety of land uses in the Township including residential, business, neighborhood and highway commercial. Millstone's Rural Preservation zone (RU-P) is zoned for low density and comprises almost 50 percent of Township lands.
- ⌘ ***Public Outreach*** is also important to Millstone Township leaders. When new residents move to Township, they receive an information pack that includes a listing of municipal officials and contacts, an application to volunteers with various committees and commissions, information about well testing and management, township recycling requirements and facilities, Monmouth County's hazardous waste disposal facility, and backyard composting. The Township also produces a monthly newsletter that includes current Township news and announcements. The Township hosts an annual community day for residents where residents can learn more about their Township, meet their local officials and neighbors, and have fun.

It is the Association's intent that the recommendations that follow in this assessment report will assist Millstone 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 Millstone 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 Millstone a special place to live.



# Next Steps



# Introduction

The elected and appointed officials in Millstone Township 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. Millstone 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, Millstone 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 the Association provides an outside evaluation of current practices and supports 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, Millstone 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 Program. The Association distributed surveys to local leaders including members of the Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, Watershed Council, Open Space and Farmland Preservation Council, Historic Commission, Recreation Commission, Economic Development Council, Township Clerk, Planner, Engineer, and other staff and officials. The survey responses, coupled with the Master Plan, served as the Township's vision. 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.

The finalized report will become a public document, located in the Township's municipal building, clerk's office, and public library. The Association will work with the Township to implement recommendations of Millstone's choosing. Throughout the implementation process, the Association remains by the Township's side to assist with projects that achieve the Township's vision.

The Association is excited to partner with Millstone Township on the Municipal Assessment Project, as it is a diverse community that includes a variety of elements including farmland, woodlands, and the headwaters of five bodies of fresh water important to central NJ. This combination of elements presents an opportunity for this rural Township to share experiences with surrounding municipalities



## STEP

### 1

## Open Space & Farmland Preservation

**GOAL:** One of Millstone Township's goals, according to the 2002 Master Plan, is "to maintain the rural character of the community and secure the environmental, economic, and social benefits of a coordinated system of open space, outdoor recreation, and farmland."

Millstone's Master Plan includes language that recognizes the importance of open space and farmland preservation in preserving Millstone's rural community character and protecting water quality in the Township and regionally.

The Master Plan also outlines a vision for a network of bridal/horse paths "connecting



**Horse farms are an important part of Millstone's economy and rural character.**

county, state and municipal parks and facilities through a series of trails along greenways, stream corridors, and property lines."

Specifically, the Township is working to acquire at least 300 additional acres for open space in a manner such that "the municipal park sites will be interconnected by a greenway system that links local parks to State and County parklands and open space in the Township." (Millstone 2001 Open Space, Recreation, Conservation, and Farmland Preservation Plan.)

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** The Township has an Open Space and Farmland Preservation Council responsible for promoting the benefits of and obtaining grants to facilitate additional preservation. The Township also uses its municipal open space tax revenues to leverage additional State and County funding to preserve open space.

The Township has enacted low density zoning with minimum open space requirements to accompany clustering options. Most notably, the Rural Preservation Zone, with minimum 10 acre zoning, accounts for almost half of the land area in the Township.

### **OPTION: WORK WITH MONMOUTH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, AND GREEN ACRES PROGRAM TO PROMOTE THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM TO LOCAL FARMERS.**

Specifically the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Creating a point ranking system to prioritize lands for acquisition. Such ranking systems establish numeric scores associated with a variety of site features, such as: proximity to existing preserved land, presence or absence of streams, steep slopes, forests, farmland, etc. Since funding resources are limited, these scores provide one way to assess the priority of land preservation within the Township. Also consider using NJDEP Landscape Project data as criteria for open space prioritization.
- ⌘ Hosting an educational workshop for landowners to ensure they are aware of the tools for preserving open space, including conservation easements and their benefits.
- ⌘ Reviewing open space maps and plans as well as zoning across municipal boundaries for consistency. Work with adjacent municipalities to create a comprehensive regional open space plan to help preserve ecosystems across jurisdictional lines.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Millstone Township has more than 2,500 acres of preserved open space land that are open to the public.
- ⌘ “In 2000, Millstone applied to the State and was approved under Green Acres Planning Incentive Grant (PI) Program for funding that will cover 50% of the Township’s cost to preserve lands identified in the Township plan for open space and recreation use.” (Millstone 2001 Open Space, Recreation, Conservation, and Farmland Preservation Plan.)
- ⌘ A variety of critical habitats are found within Millstone’s borders including grassland, and wetlands. Much of the critical habitat in Millstone, however, is forested areas of importance to wildlife, ranging from Suitable Habitat (suitable for fulfilling the habitat requirements of species of concern, but no such species documented there) to State Threatened (habitat where state threatened species have been documented), according to NJDEP Landscape Project Data.
- ⌘ The benefits of open space design can be amplified when it is combined with other better site design techniques such as narrow streets and alternative turnarounds in residential development.
- ⌘ The Green Acres Program 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.



**Green Acres provides a stable source of funding for preservation efforts.**



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ ***The Economic Value of New Jersey State Parks & Forests.*** This NJDEP report identifies the economic benefits of open space preservation. Such benefits include: Benefits from recreation/tourism, benefits to the natural environment, and benefits reflected in the willingness of State residents to pay for the existence of the State Parks and Forests.
- ⌘ ***New Jersey Green Acres Program.*** Goal is “To achieve, in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces, whose protection will preserve and enhance New Jersey’s natural environment and its historic, scenic, and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment. <http://www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/index.html>
- ⌘ ***Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)*** “is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.” <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/>
- ⌘ ***Conservation Resource Enhancement Program (CREP).*** “Through the CREP, farmers can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible land.” <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crep.htm>





## STEP

### 2

## Woodlands Management & Tree Protection

**GOAL:** Respondents to our survey indicated that they would like the Township's forests to be better protected and preserved.

Millstone's Master Plan states that "the upland forest areas are particularly vulnerable to development" and the Township should "preserve natural areas throughout Millstone that are vital habitats of threatened or endangered species or that are outstanding examples of the forest resources."



**Forests are often located along the ridges and side slopes in central Millstone**

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Millstone's Flood Hazard and Stream Corridor (FHSC) Overlay Zone prohibits clearing or cutting trees, but only so long as those trees are located within the stream corridor or stream corridor buffer.

Millstone's standards for reviewing development applications require the Environmental Commission, Shade Tree Commission and/or Engineer to recommend to the Planning Board only those applications that: "Preserve the maximum number of trees and other vegetation onsite and along existing and proposed rights-of-way to avoid critical degradation of forest areas as shown on the vegetation map of the Township's Natural Resource Inventory."

There is a lack of ordinance language protecting woodlands outside of stream corridors.

### **OPTION: RE-EXAMINE AND CLARIFY LANGUAGE IN THE "WOODSY LANE" DEVELOPMENT OPTION SO THAT IT SUPPORTS THE TOWNSHIP'S WOODLAND PRESERVATION GOALS**

Specifically the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Amending the Master Plan to include goals and objectives for woodlands.
- ⌘ Implementing a Tree Protection and Removal Ordinance
- ⌘ Adopting a Woodlands Protection and/or Retention Ordinance
- ⌘ Amending the Master Plan to include the Township's 2002 Watershed Assessment Report.
- ⌘ Establishing Priority Woodlands in terms of their types and relative values.
- ⌘ Amending the Zoning Ordinance to establish uses and densities/intensities and development alternatives that permit development to occur without the destruction of Priority Woodlands.
- ⌘ Establishing the position of and responsibilities for a Township Woodlands Advisor.
- ⌘ Requiring a concept plan to be submitted to the Planning Board and the Environmental Commission at the start of the application review process to ensure that development avoids tree removal as much as possible.
- ⌘ Appointing an enforcement officer.
- ⌘ Promoting cooperation between the Township and adjacent municipalities to advance the consistent development of woodlands management goals, policies, plans, and zoning.
- ⌘ Adopt an official Township policy that ensures native plants are used for landscaping new developments





## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Millstone provides habitat for eight threatened and endangered bird species including: Grasshopper sparrow, Bobolink, Red-headed woodpecker, Savannah sparrow, Pied-billed grebe, Vesper sparrow, and the Barred owl. Millstone also provides habitat for three threatened and endangered reptile species, Wood turtle, Bog turtle, and Northern pine snake, and 2 endangered plant species, Swamp-pink and Purple fringeless orchid.
- ⌘ Several wetland areas in Millstone, according to the Township's 2002 Watershed Assessment Report, could be classified as exceptional resource value wetlands. The NJDEP awards exceptional resource designations to wetlands that are actual or potential habitats for threatened or endangered species, and for wetlands that flow into trout production waters. Exceptional resource value wetlands are further protected by law with larger buffer areas.
- ⌘ New Jersey woodlands have many species of trees (about 90), and differences in topography, soils, drainage, and vegetation located in relatively small area. Three of the five major forest regions in the United States are found in NJ, according to the NJ Forestry Association. This makes NJ Forests tremendously diverse, interesting, and useful.
- ⌘ Of New Jersey's 4,748,000 acres some 1,864,300 are classified as forestland, 75 percent of which are privately owned.
- ⌘ Woodlands ordinances protect trees in a larger mass and provide more comprehensive benefits to a habitat. A woodland area or corridor consists of tree canopy, the tree stand, the understory, and the ground cover. Protecting woodlands on this level will help to increase infiltration of rainwater, maintain the wildlife habitat, shield unpleasant noises, and slow stormwater runoff.
- ⌘ Invasive plant species such as multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, and autumn olive can severely impair health native forests



**Red-headed woodpeckers are a threatened species in NJ.**



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ **Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association** has model ordinances for tree cutting, and woodlands management, and other general information. Phone: (609) 737-3735
- ⌘ **Building Greener Communities—Planning for Woodlands Conservation.** North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council. Community Development to improve economic and community development in rural areas. Phone: (908) 735-0733. Fax: (908) 735-0744. The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has a copy of this file for review (609) 737-3735.
- ⌘ **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 (609) 735-0733. Website: [www.northjerseyrcd.org](http://www.northjerseyrcd.org)



## STEP

### 3

## Stream Corridor & Steep Slope Protection

**GOAL:** One of the goals of Millstone's Land Use Element is to "protect environmentally sensitive lands including stream corridors and... steep slope areas." The Township's Master Plan Principles include protecting water quality, steep slopes and stream corridors.

Several respondents to our survey indicated the need for water quality monitoring and stream buffers and were concerned about development contaminating water resources.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Millstone's Flood Hazard and Stream Corridor (FHSC) Overlay Zone applies to all tracts of lands that fall within a stream corridor or stream corridor buffer and are subject to an application for subdivision, site plan, conditional use, or

variance approval. The FHSC states, "Stream corridors and stream corridor buffers shall remain in their natural state, with no clearing or cutting of trees and brush...altering of watercourses, regrading or construction."

The FHSC requires an average stream corridor buffer of 100 feet from the 100 year floodplain, and minimum buffer of 75 feet.

The Township's Design & Performance Standards require that steep slopes on existing and proposed lots be contained in conservation easements with a 50 foot buffer at both the top and bottom of the slope.



### **OPTION: ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE STREAM CORRIDOR ORDINANCE THAT INCLUDES PROTECTION OF STEEP SLOPES**

Specifically, the Township should consider including:

- ⌘ Protection of the stream corridor, similar to that of the FHSC Overlay Zone, that includes protections of the floodplain, plus 100 feet.
- ⌘ Clear definitions for "100 Year Flood Plain," "stream," "impaired," and "steep slope."
- ⌘ Minimum acreage measurements for the stream's watershed.
- ⌘ Extension of stream corridor if wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, or critical habitats are adjacent.
- ⌘ Language to assign monitoring and enforcement to a Township official, or an outside person. Volunteers are also a useful as well as inexpensive way to ensure protection strategies are working and not violated.
- ⌘ Prohibition of parking areas, loading areas, and golf courses in the stream corridor buffer.
- ⌘ Guidelines for maintenance of streambank vegetation with native species trees, shrubs, and grasses, and a policy of not mowing healthy streambank flora.
- ⌘ Guidelines for Best Management Practices for streambank restoration in impaired areas.

Also consider:

- ⌘ Reconsider starting a water quality monitoring program.
- ⌘ Since headwater areas of streams are often intermittent, consider prioritizing those areas for preservation using open space funding.
- ⌘ Nominating some of the exceptional water quality streams in the Township for Category One designation.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ It is easier and less expensive to protect stream and stream corridors now rather than trying to restore them in the future. If stream corridors are kept in their natural condition, with minimum disturbance, they help maintain clean, healthy streams, and reduce flooding. Natural stream corridors also help maintain adequate flows of filtered water to underground aquifers; and provide greenway corridors for wildlife.
- ⌘ “Data from the Monmouth County Health Department and the NJDEP shows that the surface water quality in Millstone streams is exceptional. (Millstone 2002 Master Plan).
- ⌘ Millstone Township contains the headwaters of five waterways of regional and state significance including: Assunpink Creek, Crosswicks Creek, Metedeconk River, Tom’s River, and Millstone River. Millstone is the origin for one-quarter of New Jersey’s twenty watershed areas identified by the State Department of Environmental Protection.
- ⌘ The Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association performed detailed Characterization & Assessments and outlined specific recommendations for protecting water quality for many of the subwatersheds located within the larger 265-square mile Millstone Watershed. Millstone Township lands account for almost half of the land area in the Rocky Brook subwatershed including the headwaters of the Rocky Brook.
- ⌘ NJ DEP “319” grants offer financial support for water quality monitoring projects.



**Millstone Township contains the headwaters of the Rocky Brook.**



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ ***Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.*** The Watershed Association has a model Stream Corridor Ordinance and an Implementation Package on file for municipalities to use and tailor language to their own needs. Phone: (609)737.3735 Website: [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org). The Watershed Association also has various stream corridor ordinances from other New Jersey communities.
- ⌘ ***NRCS Technical Resources for Streambank Restorations.*** This document is a benchmark document that is being used by a variety of agencies and others who are interested in restoring the functions and values of the nation's stream corridors. Website: [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov). *FISRWG (10/1998). Stream Corridor Restoration: Principles, Processes, and Practices. By the Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group.*



## STEP

### 4

## Viewshed Protection

**GOAL:** The Township's Master Plan states that one of Millstone's objectives is "To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements such as, but not limited to, the establishment of scenic corridors which respect the natural beauty and environmental qualities of the Township."

Respondents to our survey also indicated a desire for a Township plan to preserve scenic corridors.



**Agriculture is one of the largest providers of scenic viewsheds in NJ.**

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Zoning in the Township's Rural Preservation (RU-P) and Conservation (RU-C) districts provide for a cluster option to preserve environmentally sensitive and other Township features including scenic views.

Millstone's Land Use Ordinance encourages cell towers and antennas to be constructed in such a manner that "minimizes the adverse visual impact...through careful design, siting, landscape screening, and innovative camouflaging techniques."

Monmouth County has designated scenic roads that run through and border Millstone Township, including Stagecoach Road (County Road 524). A map of those roadways is included in the Township's 2002 Master Plan.

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

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Amending the Township's Land Use ordinance to include a definition for scenic corridors and/or viewsheds. In crafting the definition, consider a variety of land uses that are important to the rural character of Millstone including: stream corridors, farmlands, fields, and scenic roads.
- ⌘ Proposing an ordinance that seeks to provide standards that minimize the impact of buildings and grading on views of existing land forms, open space, and unique geologic, landscape, and/or historic features that can be seen from public roads.
- ⌘ Establishing design review standards for the various zoning districts.
- ⌘ Promoting architectural and design compatible with various terrain that minimizes visual impacts. Include drawings and other visuals in the Master Plan as a reference.
- ⌘ Conducting a visual assessment of views in the Township. Photograph the views and mark their locations on a map, include beginning and end points.
- ⌘ Involving the residents of Millstone Township in learning about and protecting viewsheds and scenic resources. Hold a photo contest to allow residents to highlight their favorite views in the Township.



## 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.
- ⌘ 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.
- ⌘ Communities are increasingly using conservation easements, overlay zoning, historic districts, design guidelines, transfer of development rights, and other measures to protect scenic areas from degradation.
- ⌘ 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.
- ⌘ Telecommunications towers can disrupt views just the same as buildings. A community can place a moratorium on the construction of new telecommunication towers as they decide on alternative design and location. Some innovative locations include the interior of church steeples or on top of farm silos - depending on the size of the tower. Some other regulations include:
  - Restricting the types and heights of facilities within certain zoning districts;
  - Limiting tower height to no more than 10-20 feet above other features such as trees and buildings;
  - Imposing setbacks of at least 150 percent of the tower's height.
- ⌘ 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.



## 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).
- ⌘ **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)
- ⌘ **Scenic Resources Ordinance.** The State of Maine has an ordinance protecting Scenic Resources that applies to the entire state, but is encouraged to be used as a model for communities. The Watershed Association has access to this ordinance, but it can be found on the state's Historic Preservation Commission website: <http://www.state.me.us/mhpc/>





## STEP

### 5

## Maintaining Rural Character

**GOAL:** The 2002 Master Plan supports the State's designation of Millstone Township as a rural environmentally sensitive planning area and indicates that it is one of the Township's objectives to maintain that rural character. Additionally, respondents to our survey indicated a desire to preserve Millstone as a rural community.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Millstone has established several committees that are staffed with volunteers dedicated to preserving the rural character of the Township. Such Committees include: Environmental Commission, Watershed Council, Open Space and Farmland Preservation Council, and Historic Commission.

Millstone Township is also dedicated to preserving its natural resources such as farmland, open space, forests, stream corridors, and steep slopes and more; see STEPS one

through four of this report for more information about specific Township efforts and options for strengthening resource protection. The options listed in this STEP outline additional measures for Millstone to implement to help maintain its rural character.



**Sixty-eight historic sites in the Township are identified in the Township's *Historic Resources Report*.**

### **OPTION: STRENGTHEN ORDINANCE LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH TO ENSURE RURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOWNSHIP ARE MAINTAINED.**

Specifically the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Developing checklists for committees and commissions to guide application review. Such checklists should reflect environmental protection, design elements, and other amenities that would enhance the quality of life for Millstone residents.
- ⌘ Preparing a developers' checklist of environmental protection measures for the developer to answer during the application process.
- ⌘ Amending the Township's lighting ordinance to include examples of lighting fixtures appropriate for specific uses, i.e. parking lots, utility poles, wall mounts, etc, that would limit the negative impacts of misdirected or excessive light such as glare, light trespass, and evening skyglow.
- ⌘ Working with property owners to establish a continuous trail network for equestrian use.
- ⌘ Conducting a public tour of Millstone Township that includes ecologically important areas as well as historic buildings and sites
- ⌘ Creating and adopting a design ordinance for alterations of a historic building or site.
- ⌘ Developing a point Ranking System to prioritize historic sites for preservation and inclusion on the New Jersey and/or National Register of Historic Places.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ In Millstone Township, both the Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church and the Clarksburg School are listed on the New Jersey and National Historic Registers. Both sites are located on County Route 524.
- ⌘ A community can define rural character in its own way, according to the rural nature of the community. Once rural character is defined, the community can move forward with protecting those resources. Some definitions of rural character may include the following elements: tree-lined streets, farmland, woodlands, clean air and water, undeveloped open space, natural stream banks, natural lake shorelines, outdoor recreation opportunities, small villages and communities.
- ⌘ Historic preservation can be the keystone of a comprehensive residential and commercial revitalization strategy, as it creates more jobs, income, and wealth than comparable new construction. (source: *National Trust for Historic Preservation*)
- ⌘ A municipality with scarce resources for Historic Preservation can spend funding wisely by targeting a handful of structures that are historically/ architecturally/ culturally important to the community. It is often unrealistic to preserve every historic building or site in a community.



**Ely-Taylor Farm House.**



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ **The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.** The Association has recent information regarding legalities of TDR, funding, and other general information. Phone: (609) 737-3735.
- ⌘ **Planners Web.** The Planning Commissioner's Journal. Transfer of Development Rights Resource page located at: [www.plannersweb.com/tdr.html](http://www.plannersweb.com/tdr.html). This website provides information for starting a TDR program and links to other communities with TDR Programs such as the Pinelands Commission in southern NJ.
- ⌘ **Preservation New Jersey.** Mission is to "to sustain and enhance the vitality of New Jersey's communities by promoting and preserving their diverse historic resources." They have a variety of fee materials available to assist municipalities with preservation planning. Website: [www.preservationnj.org](http://www.preservationnj.org).
- ⌘ **Rural Information Center.** Provides support and resources to help maintain America's rural communities. The website provides information on funding sources, resource and education materials, and upcoming conference that address issues facing rural communities. Website: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/>





## STEP

### 6

## Groundwater Protection

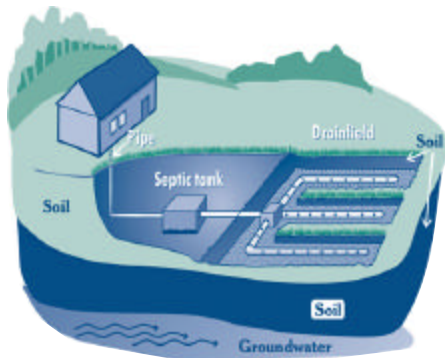
**GOAL:** Millstone's Master Plan expresses the Township's desire to protect both water quality and quantity. The principles of the 2002 Master Plan recognize the Township's regional importance as an area with high water quality and a convergence zone for central NJ watersheds.

"Millstone Township is unique in the fact that so many different aquifers traverse the subsurface. As the demand for water increases with the

growth in residential and commercial development, the Township must ensure that water quality and groundwater recharge is sufficient to supply homes, businesses and agriculture with a safe and secure water supply. Since the Township is entirely reliant on well water, protection of water quality and quantity in the aquifers is crucial to the sustainability of the community."

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** In 1994, Millstone adopted the Township Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (208 Plan) with no plans pending for extension of sewer lines into the Township from surrounding areas.

Millstone's Land Use and Development Ordinance requires an environmental impact and assessment report for development applications located in environmentally sensitive areas including aquifer recharge areas.



**Septic System Care and Maintenance is important to water quality protection.**

### **OPTION: ADOPT ORDINANCE LANGUAGE, AND OTHER STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT AQUIFER RECHARGE AND POLLUTION REDUCTION.**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Amending the Land Use Ordinance to include impervious cover limitations for new development.
- ⌘ Using GIS to identify high ground water recharge areas and applying to Green Acres funding to preserve those land areas.
- ⌘ Facilitating and regularly scheduling resident education workshops about septic system care and maintenance.
- ⌘ Adopting an ordinance requiring regular pump-outs and inspections, upgrades or expansions when a house is sold or expanded.



**Groundwater discharges maintain the base levels of streams and lake.**





## Did You Know?

- ⌘ The primary threats to water resources in the region are pollution, overuse, and reduction in groundwater recharge.
- ⌘ In the Millstone Watershed, groundwater provides more than 50 percent of the water used for drinking water. Virtually the entire watershed has been designated by the USEPA as relying on “sole source” aquifers, which are defined as “aquifers that contribute more than 50 percent of the drinking water to a specific area and the water would be impossible to replace if the aquifer were contaminated.”
- ⌘ Homeowners are required by NJ law to test their well water when selling their home.
- ⌘ NJDEP recommends that well water be tested annually.
- ⌘ NJ Green Acres Program prioritizes funding for land areas with high aquifer recharge.
- ⌘ Millstone Township’s sanitary waste disposal needs are serviced exclusively by septic systems. At this time, the Township has decided not to pursue sewer service.
- ⌘ Household toxics poured down the drain, including oil-based paints and wood stains can cause septic systems to fail.
- ⌘ Signs of septic system failure include: Pooling water or muddy soil around your septic system or in your basement; Toilet or sink backing up when you flush or do laundry; Strips of bright green grass over the drainfield on your lawn; Polluted wells, nearby streams, or other bodies of water; Your toilets and sinks drains slowly; Noticeable sewage odors.
- ⌘ A well maintained septic system saves you money, protects your drinking water, and can preserve the natural environment.



Courtesy US EPA

# Groundwater Protection



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ ***Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.*** The Association has a series of guides and checklists for residential Septic System Management & Maintenance. The Association also offers a groundwater protection guide for citizens. For municipal leaders, the Association has provided each Township in the watershed with specifically tailored maps and reports titled *Water Resource Protection in Your Municipality*. To obtain copies of these materials, or any of the other resources the Association offers, call or visit the website. Phone: (609) 737-3735. Website: [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)
- ⌘ ***USEPA Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems.*** These are guidelines written for local officials and focus on ways to “improve system performance by raising the quality of management programs, establishing minimum levels of activity, and institutionalizing the concept of management.
- ⌘ ***Monmouth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility.*** The Facility offers year-round disposal services at no charge to all Monmouth County Residents. For safety, appointments are required. Phone: (732) 922-2234.





## STEP

### 7

## Stormwater Management

**GOAL:** Millstone Township' current goal is to comply with the 2004 NJ Stormwater regulations.

The Township has also incorporated maintenance and repair regulations for stormwater management facilities into its Land Use and Development Regulations.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Millstone has amended its Land Use and Development Ordinance to include stormwater management requirements for major developments in accordance with 2004 NJ Stormwater regulations.

As of the time of this report, Millstone Township is preparing to submit their Stormwater Management Plan to Monmouth County officials in early April 2005, in accordance with NJDEP requirements.

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

Specifically, the Township should consider:

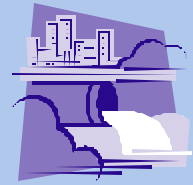
- ⌘ Applying for grants and financial assistance to work with neighboring municipalities on a stormwater management plan that addresses regional concerns.
- ⌘ Seeking financial assistance to educate the public about stormwater management including education about non-point source pollution, storm drain 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. Consider encouraging low impact development and implementing ordinances to limit impervious cover, and protect steep slopes and stream corridors.
- ⌘ 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 hierarchial 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 municipalities maintain a list of such mitigation plans to implement in instances in which a township issues a variance to its stormwater management ordinance.
- ⌘ 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 percent of our existing water pollution problems (NJDEP 2/28/02).
- ⌘ Stormwater occurs when rain and snow melt wash across parking lots, roads and lawns. Stormwater carries pollutants into storm drains that eventually dump into streams and lakes.
- ⌘ By reducing the overall area of impervious surfaces and lawns, the total volume of stormwater runoff is reduced.
- ⌘ 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 Millstone Township, are required to implement best management practices and conduct public education and outreach.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ ***Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.*** The Association is offering a variety of assistance to municipalities in complying the NJ Stormwater Rules, such as ordinance and plan review, mapping and modeling, and assistance with fulfilling public education requirements. For additional information call or visit the website. Phone: (609) 737-3735. Websites: 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); Association: [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)
- ⌘ ***River-Friendly Program.*** The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association's River-Friendly Program focuses on environmental stewardship and better land management practices to reduce non-point source pollution. The program aims to work cooperatively with residents, businesses, and golf courses to protect our local environment and reduce the amount of chemicals entering water bodies. To learn more about certification, call or visit the website. Phone: (609) 737-3735; Website: [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)).
- ⌘ ***Center for Watershed Protection*** The Center has a Stormwater Manager's Resource Center, and an extensive educational website that contains more than 3,000 pages of technical content. Phone: (410) 461-8323 Website: [www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org) and [www.stormwatercenter.net](http://www.stormwatercenter.net)



## STEP

### 8

## Public Participation & Communication

**GOAL:** Through responses to the Association's surveys and interviews, municipal officials, staff, and volunteers have indicated that they would like to see an increase in local participation and involvement in the various committees and commissions. Survey respondents also added that they believe residents of Millstone have a genuine concern for the natural environment.

**CURRENT EFFORTS:** The Township has a monthly newsletter that is distributed to residents, available at the municipal building, and on the Township's website.

New residents are sent a "Talent Bank Application" on which they can indicate committees and/or commission for which they would like to be considered.



### **OPTION: DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTS TO SPARK AN INTEREST IN PROTECTING MILLSTONE'S RURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER**

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Hosting informative social events, such as a brunch, to foster a sense of community, articulate Township needs and opportunities for involvement, and provide an opportunity for residents to meet their local leaders in a casual setting.
- ⌘ Including a description of committees/commission with the "Talent Bank Application" sent to new residents. Also consider making the form available via the Township's website.
- ⌘ Including a call for volunteers with the annual tax bill insert.
- ⌘ Targeting residents with a mailing for specific issues or projects affecting specific areas of the Township.
- ⌘ Creating a link to the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association for reports, programs, and other resources that may be helpful for finding answers to questions and issues.
- ⌘ Enabling Township residents to receive meeting notices and other information via e-mail.
- ⌘ Posting op-ed pieces on the website written by committee people in order to gain the public's interest in the decision making process and other issues facing the Township.
- ⌘ Creating a survey or evaluation form for residents to complete at the end of each meeting.





## Did You Know?

- ⌘ “Millstone Township has received an honorable mention award in the 43rd Annual Municipal Information Contest (November 2004) in recognition of the outstanding efforts made to keep the community informed of the activities undertaken by the municipality. The award was bestowed by the Center for Government Services at Rutgers University, the NJ State League of Municipalities, and the NJ Municipal Management Association.” (<http://www.millstone.nj.us/events.htm>).
- ⌘ Citizen input and participation and input is inherent in most public programs and decisions, including review and comment on land use changes, planning documents, development proposals, and required permits. There are many opportunities during these review processes where citizens’ comments are invited, encouraged, and taken into consideration.
- ⌘ Millstone’s website includes a directory with Township officials’ contact information, a calendar of events, recycling information, links to local newspaper, and other useful information. Website: [www.millstone.nj.us/events.htm](http://www.millstone.nj.us/events.htm)
- ⌘ 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 municipal activities.
- ⌘ Raising public awareness of an support for community goals and conveying information on indicators for these goals will encourage residents to apply practices toward these goals into their daily lives.

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



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ ***Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.*** The Association offers year round programs for children and adults on a variety of topics. Some example of such programs include tapping maple trees to make syrup, star gazing and night hikes, pond and stream exploration, using GIS in your community, the importance of a Natural Resource Inventory, and much, much more. The Association also has a guide for citizens available titled: *Speaking Out: The power of Public Participation*. Contact the Association for information. Phone (609) 737-3735. Website: [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)
- ⌘ ***Sustainable Development in the Little River Watershed..*** This is a report of a pilot project conducted in North Hampton, New Hampshire. 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.
- ⌘ ***Community and Environmental Defense Services.*** Helps citizens with smart growth victories, and produced the publication *How to Win Land Development Issues*. Phone: 1-800-773-4571. Website: [www.ceds.org](http://www.ceds.org)
- ⌘ ***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.





## STEP

### 9

## Education of Municipal Officials



**The Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1845 and is non non-denominational and owned by the Township.**

GOAL: Respondents to our surveys stated that one of Millstone Township's greatest strengths extends from the inhabitants and officials' genuine concern for the natural environment.

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

### **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. This could also include hosting a training workshop in the Township and inviting neighboring municipalities to attend.
- ☞ Encouraging the Environmental Commission, Open Space and Farmland Preservation Council, and Watershed Council to conduct more public education campaigns to heighten awareness of environmental issues in the Township and to increase the feeling of ownership and value for the environment amongst residents.
- ☞ Utilizing local organizations for hands-on trainings.
- ☞ Encouraging Planning Board and Environmental Commission members to conduct site walks prior to any application approval.
- ☞ Keeping Township staff members aware of documents that are updated and those that need updating. Ensure that the process to update these materials includes a public process.





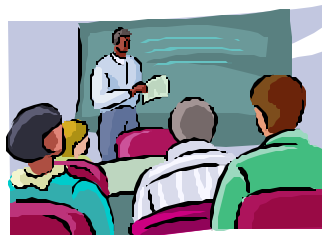
## Did You Know?

- ☞ Millstone Township's municipal ordinances are available on-line through: <http://www.nj.gov/localgov.htm>
- ☞ Millstone Township's website lists contact information for municipal workers and elected officials, a calendar of current events, links to local newspaper, and more.
- ☞ Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association staff can help organize and conduct educational programs or hikes in Millstone Township for residents, officials, or both.
- ☞ Through the Natural Lands Network, the Association offers six annual workshops with opportunities to share ideas, garner support and work with communities across town boundaries, produces municipal guides on environmental issues, policies, laws, regulations, and produces monthly newsletters addressing innovative planning and environmental topics



## Additional Resources

- ☞ **The Natural Lands Network (NLN)** at the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. 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 Association. Phone: (609) 737-3735. Website: [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)
- ☞ **The New Jersey State League of Municipalities.** The League "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/>
- ☞ **Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC).** 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/>
- ☞ **Environmental Manual for Municipal Officials.** This book is produced by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and "describes the powers of municipal boards and commissions and introduces opportunities for each local agency to participate in environmental protection. The manual provides a general discussion of major environmental laws, as well as programs within the DEP." This publication is available through ANJEC.
- ☞ **Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials.** Furnishes educational tools for land-use decisions, nonpoint source pollution in runoff, and natural resource protection. Phone: (860) 345-4511. Website: [www.nemo.uconn.edu](http://www.nemo.uconn.edu)







## **Appendix A:**

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





RARE TODAY... PRICELESS TOMORROW

Swep T. Davis  
Chair

August 2, 2004

George S. Hawkins  
Executive Director

**Board of Trustees**

Mary Baum

Nancy Beck

Lori Citrone

Lila Cruikshank

Pepper deTuro

Tim Dillingham

Zvi Eiref

Joan A. Emerick

Trish Fillo

Peter E. Gibson

Ed Gwazda

Robert Hillas

Betsy Hoover

Rich Levandowski

Miyuki Kaneka

Mary Beth Koza

David Loevner

Leah W. McDonald

G. Nicholas Miller

Dennis W. O'Neal

W.L. Porter, Jr.

Van Zandt Williams, Jr.

Dear Point Committee members:

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (the Association) understands that the health of the watershed depends a great deal on the positive actions of the municipalities within its boundaries. We also recognize the tremendous workload elected and appointed officials bear in day-to-day township affairs. It is to this end that we developed the Municipal Assessment program to assist municipalities in creating additional proactive measures to protect the environment, plan for the future and ensure that residents feel a sense of community. We have obtained a formal commitment from Millstone Township to proceed with this project and we look forward to this partnership.

We thank you for your commitment to the assessment process. As point committee members, you will serve in the crucial capacity as liaisons between the Association and your respective committees/commissions. You will also be asked to review and comment on a draft of the assessment report itself.

Enclosed please find a step-by-step work plan of the Municipal Assessment process and please note the resources needed from the Township.

If you have any additional questions, or I can be of further assistance, please call me at (609) 208-2833.

Sincerely,

Jennifer M. Coffey  
Environmental Policy Specialist  
Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association

J. Seward Johnson, Sr.  
Environmental Center

31 Titus Mill Road  
Pennington, NJ 08534

609-737-3735

Fax: 609-737-3075

sbmwa@thewatershed.org

www.thewatershed.org

# Memorandum

**Date:** August 2, 2004  
**To:** Millstone Township Municipal Assessment Point Committee  
**From:** Jennifer M. Coffey, Environmental Policy Specialist  
**RE:** Municipal Assessment Work Plan Summary

## **Project Summary:**

The Municipal Assessment program is designed to compare a municipality's vision for its future with the on the ground "tools" (i.e., zoning, ordinances, policy) that shape the current development patterns and environmental protection. Are the necessary tools in place to reduce sprawl, protect critical habitat, preserve open space and encourage public participation? These are some of the topics we address in the Municipal Assessment and provide recommendations for how to make your policies, laws and regulations implement your vision. The key to the success of the Municipal Assessment is the enthusiastic participation and active engagement of the Environmental Commission, Planning Board, Township Committee and professional staff.

### ***Step 1***

We have obtained a formal commitment from the Millstone Township Committee to participate in this process.

### ***Step 2***

Next, an Association member will meet with key partners (the Township Committee, Environmental Commission, Planning Board and professional staff) and create a point committee consisting of one representative from each of those committees. Surveys will be distributed to all committee/commission members and professional staff. The intent of the survey is to help the Association in developing an understanding of Millstone Township's vision for the future.

**EXPECTED ACTION:** Point Committee members will distribute surveys to their respective committee/commission members. Point Committee members should collect completed surveys no later than September 1, 2004 and mail them to:

Jennifer Coffey  
Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association  
31 Titus Mill Road  
Pennington, NJ 08534

A memo summarizing the Association's understanding of Millstone Township's vision for the future, based on the results of the surveys and goals stated in the Master Plan will be distributed to point committee members for comment and review.

### ***Step 3***

Next, the Watershed Staff will review local zoning, ordinances, and best management practices and policies to determine if they are complimentary to the goals and visions as identified in the Master Plans, and surveys distributed to municipal officials. Following is a list of areas that we review in the municipal assessment process:

1. *Land Use Planning Techniques* – which include land use ordinances, conservation easements, and stormwater management;
2. *Land Conservation* - which assesses the system Millstone Township has for a natural resources inventory, an open space plan, and funding for land acquisition;

1. *Direct Municipal Responsibility for the Environment* – which includes a look at your Planning Board and Environmental Commission's policies, whether your Department of Public Works implements Best Management Practices, and the comprehensiveness of your recycling programs; and
2. *Watershed Stewardship Projects* – which include community education, working with other municipalities to protect the watershed, and encouragement of stream monitoring, streambank restorations, reforestations, wetlands and stormwater controls.

**EXPECTED ACTION:** A point committee member(s) will be needed to accompany Association representatives on a tour of Millstone Township. We have found that conducting a municipal tour is an excellent way to see how the Master Plan and ordinances come to life in the Township.

#### ***Step 4***

Once completed, a summary of the assessment and recommendations will be presented to the representatives in the form of a report entitled "Taking the Next Steps". This report is not the end of the process. It is a guidance document for your community to use now and into the future. We expect to have this draft complete by the end of October and receive your comments one month later.

**EXPECTED ACTION:** Point Committee members will be asked to review and comment on a draft of the assessment report.

#### ***Step 5***

Next, the Association will present the assessment findings to the Township Committee. The Township can prioritize which recommendations it wishes to implement first. The Association will work by your side to enact ordinances, policies, or Best Management Practices or conduct education programs that will allow Millstone Township to move towards its vision, as well as protect the environment and quality of life for residents. We hope to receive your thoughts on project ideas and prioritization by the end of August. Implementation of those projects can begin right away.

**EXPECTED ACTION:** Point Committee members will be asked to discuss the assessment report with their respective committees/commissions and prioritize implementation projects with which the Association will assist.

#### **Benefits:**

The Municipal Assessment is a tool that Millstone Township can use to analyze whether the zoning, ordinances and policy measures currently in place ensure that the vision for the future will one day be a reality. By focusing our energy on areas that your staff and representatives have outlined, we can narrow our work and move toward implementing new strategies, rather than just outlining a concern.

The Municipal Assessment provides an external analysis of current policies focuses on critical issues and proven strategies to resolve those issues. Our staff is fully funded to devote the time needed to work through the Municipal Assessment with your municipal officials and staff. The Association has GIS capabilities and can provide your municipality with valuable maps and data, including a build-out analysis, land use changes, and our volunteer water monitoring information.

As a regional organization, we hope to bring ideas of success stories from other municipalities to the Township and to bring your lessons and expertise to other communities, as well.

#### **Necessary Resources:**

As mentioned above, this project is funded with grants from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the U.S. EPA. We require the following commitment from Millstone Township:

- Representatives from the Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission and professional staff that are enthusiastic and willing to participate and seek active participation from other members of their committees. The average commitment is 10-15 hours in total; and
- Time to review and comment on reports provided by the Watershed Association.
- Copies of any relevant plans/ordinances/best management practices not available on Millstone's website.



## **Appendix B:**

### **Memo to Millstone Township re: Officials' Surveys**







RARE TODAY... PRICELESS TOMORROW

Swept T. Davis  
Chair

George S. Hawkins  
Executive Director

**Board of Trustees**

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**MEMO**

To: Point Committee Members: James Pickering, Administrator; Mitch Newman, Planning Board; Donna Haag, Environmental Commission; Richard Brody, Environmental Commission  
Cc: Mayor Nancy Grbelja; Maria Dellasala Township Clerk; Marianne Heyesey, Environmental Commission  
From: Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (The Association)  
Date: October 1, 2004  
Re: Millstone Township Vision & Municipal Assessment Officials Survey Summary

This memo outlines the Association's understanding of Millstone Township's vision as it is expressed in its Master Plan and in surveys distributed to municipal officials. The purpose of the surveys was to supplement the Principles, Objectives, Policies and Standards listed in the 2002 Master Plan with personal accounts, goals, and observations of township officials. Through these surveys the Association sought a diversity of perspectives to assist us in examining how Millstone's Land Use Plan, as well as other ordinances and practices, support the Township in achieving its vision. The survey was distributed to members of the Millstone Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, Watershed Council, Open Space and Farmland Preservation Council, Historic Commission, Recreation Commission, Economic Development Council, Township Clerk, Planner, Engineer, and other staff and officials.

The Association received eight (8) responses to our municipal official surveys; Six (6) of those received are from members of the Environmental Commission. The Association is grateful to those who put forth the time and effort to complete the survey. However, because of the low response rate and homogeneity of respondents' perspectives, we will rely primarily on the Principles, Objectives, Policies and Standards listed in the 2002 Master Plan to formulate our understanding of Millstone Township's vision for the future. The survey comments will be used as a supplement, but will not weigh as heavily as they would have, had we received a greater number of responses from diverse committees.

The Association, through the Municipal Assessment Program, aims to provide recommendations and lend support and resources to better enable Millstone Township to realize its vision while protecting and preserving the integrity of the natural environment. As members of the point committee, you serve as liaisons between your respective committee's and the Association. We ask that you review this memo and respond with any questions, comments, or further information by **October 22, 2004** to Jennifer Coffey at jcoffey@thewatershed.org, (609) 737-3735 (phone), or (609) 737-3075 (fax).

## **MEMO re: Millstone Township Vision & Municipal Assessment Officials Survey Summary 10-1-04**

Millstone Township's 2002 Master Plan does not include a vision statement, but provides detailed Principles, Objectives, Policies and Standards to guide the present state and future of the Township. The Association understands that Millstone Township is a rural community situated in an environmentally sensitive locale and is designated as such by the State Plan. The Master Plan expresses the desire of the Township to remain a rural community, preserve open space, forests, and farmlands, and protect cultural, historical, and natural features, including, forests, agriculture, scenic vistas, steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, floodplains, and headwaters located within Millstone's boundaries including Assunpink Creek, Crosswicks Creek, Metedeconk River, Tom's River, and the Millstone River.

After careful review of the Master Plan and survey responses, the Association believes that is the intent of Millstone Township to avoid random development and instead plan for the economic, residential, open space, and natural resource needs of both current and future residents. Such planning should prepare Millstone for development in a manner that will maintain the rural/agricultural characteristics of the township as well as protect the adequacy and quality of drinking water sources.

In planning for development, Millstone Township will also comply with the Fair Share Housing Act the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) rules and regulations. In concert with planning for the Township's future, Millstone desires to encourage transportation routes that will result in free-flowing traffic while simultaneously preserving scenic vistas.

Respondents to the Association's municipal officials survey generally reiterated and supported the Principles, Objectives, Policies and Standards listed in the 2002 Master Plan. Some respondents did, however, indicate additional specific areas of interest that they would like to see the Township pursue in order to fully realize Millstone's vision.

Most of the survey respondents specifically supported the Township's 2002 Master Plan objective to "protect its exceptional high quality water resources." Respondents expressed support for assuring adequate and high quality drinking water and providing additional protections for ground and surface water as well as rivers, creeks, and wetlands. Several respondents detailed the need for water quality monitoring and stream buffers in response to concerns about development that could potentially contaminate water resources. . One respondent felt that it is important for Millstone to ensure cleanup of contaminated sites within the Township. Several respondents also expressed concerns about adequate soil erosion and stormwater practices in the Township.

Respondents also expressed support for township initiatives that would protect healthy, native habitats. In addition to continuing protection and preservation efforts for woodlands, open space and agriculture, respondents would like to pursue protection of vernal pools, endangered animals and plants, and control of invasive plant species, especially in wetlands. Several respondents indicated that they feel the Township should implement a tree clearing or tree management ordinance to protect Millstone's forests and woodlands. One respondent was concerned about the cumulative effects of air and water pollution on Millstone's natural habitats and environment.

**MEMO re: Millstone Township Vision & Municipal Assessment Officials Survey Summary 10-1-04**

Respondents also supported the Township's goal of documenting and preserving aspects of Millstone's cultural history. Several respondents expressed the need to preserve old farmhouses, school houses, and houses of worship within the Township. Several respondents also stated that Millstone should plan to preserve its scenic viewsheds. One respondent expressed concern over additional cellular towers and antennas entering the Township.

Respondents said that Millstone Township is generally doing a good job at preserving open space and farmlands. Large lot zoning, cluster development option, easements, active committees, and grant funding are some of the means by which Millstone is accomplishing open space and farmland preservation.

Respondents also stated that Millstone Township's greatest strength extends from the inhabitants and officials' genuine concern for the natural environment. Other strengths, according to respondents, include ordinances and strong zoning and Master Plan. Conversely according to respondents, some of the Township's weaknesses include lack of monitoring and enforcement, and lack of planning which has led to haphazard development. Respondents also stated that in the past there has been a lack of compromise among officials which results in slow progress, as well as a misalignment of objectives and priorities for various committees.

As the Association prepares the next phase of the assessment, we look to the Principles, Objectives, Policies and Standards listed in the 2002 Master Plan and municipal survey responses to determine areas of concern. We then look to the Land Use Plan, zoning, and other relevant ordinance, policies, and practices to determine recommendations that can help bridge the gaps between Millstone's vision and implementation. The following is a preliminary list of topics that we plan to address in the assessment report.

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

After careful review of this memo, please submit questions, comments, and/or suggestions by **October 22, 2004** to Jennifer Coffey at [jcoffey@thewatershed.org](mailto:jcoffey@thewatershed.org), (609) 737-3735 (phone), or (609) 737-3075 (fax).