



**Pennsylvania Open Space Advisory Committee
Roundtable Discussion
Tuesday, February 26, 2013
9:30am to 2:00pm**

Highlights

Welcome

Chris Linn, Manager of the Office of Environmental Planning, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Featured Presentation: New Farmers and Access to Land, Knowledge and Capital

- GSA's Study – Transforming Open Space to Sustainable Farm Enterprises

Patty Elkis, Deputy Director of Planning, DVRPC and board member of the GreenSpace Alliance

- PASA's Farm Leasing Program

Marilyn Anthony, Eastern Region Director, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and board member of GreenSpace Alliance

- Financing Young and Beginning Farmers

Alison Hastings, Manager, Office of Strategic Partnerships, DVRPC

Presenters representing GreenSpace Alliance, PASA, and DVRPC collaborated on a presentation about new farmers struggle to gain access to land, knowledge and capital. The GreenSpace Alliance (GSA) commissioned a study on converting preserved open space to sustainable farm enterprises. Simone Collins was selected through a competitive process to be the lead consultant on this study. The goals of the study were to increase food production and promote open space conservation, identify issues related to sustainable food enterprises, and to inform municipal officials and land trusts about these opportunities. Based on the land use analysis, it was estimated that the potential additional annual crop value of the five county region would total between \$155 and \$258 million.

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) offers a Farm Leasing Program. The goals of this program are to connect people to the land and train future farmers. Beginning farmers face limited access to land and money. Leasing land can help overcome those obstacles by allowing farmers to build equity without the burden of initial purchasing costs.

DVRPC's Food System Planning Program identified recommendations for keeping farmland affordable and making more capital accessible to new and beginning farmers. Beginning farmers, defined as those who have been farming for 10 years or less, may have a hard time



gaining access to land and capital. Less than half of principal farm operators are full-time farmers. All types of farmers rely upon non-farm income, although farmers with farm sales of \$250,000 rely less on non-farm income than farmers with lower sales. There is a wide range of alternative financial assistance programs for farmers, in addition to many sources of technical assistance, although it can be hard to navigate.

Featured Presentation: Open Space Institute’s Preservation Programs in Pennsylvania and New Jersey – Update

Peter Howell, Executive Vice President, Open Space Institute

The Open Space Institute (OSI) has preserved over 110,000 acres of open space, primarily in New York. They also provide re-grants and loans for preservation by other land trusts. They have a \$5 million grant from the William Penn Foundation (WPF) for their Bayshore Highlands Fund to preserve land in those two areas. The goal is to target land preservation to be more strategic and see greater effects of preservation. Watershed conservation is one of the new focus areas of the WPF. The Bayshore Highlands Fund requires a 5:1 leverage, and OSI has exceeded that match in some cases. OSI delineated target areas in both landscapes to prioritize preservation. They have had success in some target areas, but have not been able to close transactions in other target areas. There is still \$1.8 million remaining in the fund, which they intend on focusing on those target areas with the greatest activity.

Discussion: GreenSpace Alliance Update

Molly Morrison, Natural Lands Trust and board president of the GreenSpace Alliance

Molly gave an overview of the GreenSpace Alliance’s mission, current board members, and recent projects, and the transition GSA is now facing. Roundtable members expressed appreciation for GSA’s efforts and the desire and need to continue regional collaboration, networking, education, advocacy, communications and research.

Lunch & Roundtable Discussion: Participants Share Brief Updates

Facilitated by Alison Hastings, DVRPC

- [Chester County Planning Commission](#) – Jake Michael highlighted a handful of Chester County Planning Commission projects, including an upcoming update to Landscapes2, a forthcoming Natural Areas Inventory, and an open space ordinance review being conducted in conjunction with Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. [Conservation Economics](#) – Cliff David discussed Conservation Economics’ mission to help owners in realize value and generate revenue streams from land and water resources in an ecologically responsible manner. Louise Tritton discussed her



work at Temple University's Fox School of Business to engage students in business planning for "real world" clients, including PASA, Heritage Conservancy, and the Williston Land Trust.

- [Delaware County Planning Department](#) – Steven Beckley discussed Delaware County's forthcoming [Open Space, Recreation, and Greenway Plan](#), which will feature a countywide comprehensive plan for open space, specific plans for county-owned recreational areas, and a county greenway plan. He also highlighted coordination with Natural Lands Trust on a plan [for the Mineral Hill Area](#), a recently acquired tract of county land along Ridley Creek.
- [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission \(DVRPC\)](#) – Patty Elkins reported on a recent application to PENNVEST to support the planting of trees in the region. Chris Linn announced the upcoming Phase III of the Regional Trails Program, which will provide funding for the design and construction of trails in the DVRPC region. Amy Miller discussed and distributed maps from the recently complete Open Space Inventory for the DVRPC region.
- [Heritage Conservancy](#) – Jeffrey Marshall discussed Heritage Conservancy's continued work in the Pennsylvania Highlands and recent riparian buffer assessment. Data from this assessment is available on [PASDA](#). Jeffrey also reported that Heritage Conservancy's merger with The Conservancy of Montgomery will expand Heritage Conservancy's capacity for historic research and surveys.
- [Montgomery County Lands Trust](#) – Dulcie Flaharty described recent conservation efforts in Montgomery County and efforts to build and maintain support for conservation, including a recent conservation art exhibit at Montgomery County Community College and the Montgomery County Green Futures program. She also announced the republication of the *Shop Local, Save Land* guide.
- [Montgomery County Planning Commission](#) – Beth Pilling described work being undertaken in preparation for a county master plan update. In this update a greater connection will be made between recreation and public health, which will help to guide discussions about how to use existing and preserve additional open space.
- [Natural Lands Trust \(NLT\)](#) – Peter Williamson described NLT's role as external lead for Pennsylvania's Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative, which he reported has successfully united stakeholders behind a joint conservation plan and provided important mini-grants to carry out conservation goals on a local level.
- [Open Space Institute \(OSI\)](#) – Peter Howell indicated that OSI is assisting the William Penn Foundation in developing their watershed protection program as well as exploring innovative financing opportunities for protection and restoration in the Delaware River watershed. Jake Beineke explained OSI's new Lease-to-Own Program for agricultural

lands, which allows farmers to lease land while having their rent payments credited towards eventual purchase.

- [Partnership for the Delaware Estuary](#) – Tom Davidock reported on several efforts being undertaken by the Partnership, including prioritization of key lands for protection, grants to cover the transaction costs for land conservation acquisitions and easement purchases, and outreach to municipalities.
- [Philadelphia City Planning Commission \(PCPC\)](#) – Jeannette Brugger reported on the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's forthcoming Trails Master Plan, which includes 100 miles of proposed trail segments. She also highlighted efforts to encourage greater use of existing facilities, including continual bicycle lane improvements and new bicycle way-finding signage.
- [Philadelphia Parks Alliance](#) – Tracie Blummer discussed several of the Parks Alliance's recent campaigns, including advocacy for increased city park funding and against the state "parks for cash" bill. She also described the Parks Alliance's careful monitoring and public comments of several cases currently before the Commission on Parks and Recreation, which will test the robustness of the new Open Lands Protection Ordinance.
- [Philadelphia Water Department \(PWD\)](#) – Nicole Hostettler reported on implementation of the *Green City, Clean Waters*, a 25-year plan to protect and enhance regional watersheds through innovative green infrastructure. She highlighted coordination with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation in implementation of *Green 2015*, stakeholder partnerships, and new efforts to use vacant lands to meet PWD's goals.
- [Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture \(PASA\)](#) – Marilyn Anthony reminded participants of the upcoming [Philly Farm and Food Fest](#) on April 14, 2013.
- [Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources \(DCNR\)](#) – Carolyn Wallis reminded participants that DCNR's [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#) grant application deadline of April 10, 2013 is approaching. She also requested that participants share "stories" with her that can be included in DCNR annual reports and other publications.

Discussion: DVRPC's Long Range Plan Update – *Connections 2040*

Facilitated by Mike Boyer, Manager, Office of Long Range Planning, DVRPC

DVRPC is updating its Long Range Plan – *Connections*. The plan lays out a regional vision for sustainable development which combines economic growth, maintenance of a multi-modal transportation system, and preservation goals. Mike Boyer presented information on the growing need for increased transportation funding to maintain the current transportation system in a state of good repair.



In addition to presenting the need for funding, Mike also presented draft land use, conservation focus areas and greenspace network maps.

If you missed the meeting, or would like to further review the maps, they can be accessed here:

<http://www.dvrpc.org/FTP/Connections2040/Connections2040DraftMaps.pdf>

http://www.dvrpc.org/FTP/Connections2040/DRAFT_2040_GIS.zip

DVRPC is interested in hearing feedback on the maps. Please contact Patty Elkis at pelkis@dvrpc.org or 215-238-2838 with your questions or comments. Any GIS technical questions can be directed to Chris Pollard, cpollard@dvrpc.org or 215-238-2815. The maps will be finalized in April, so please submit comments by March 30

Closing Thoughts and Adjournment

Patty Elkis, DVRPC