

## SOUTHERN EVESHAM/MEDFORD CONSERVATION PLAN

The William Penn Foundation awarded a grant to the Pinelands Commission to prepare a detailed conservation plan for a 22.5 square mile area in the north-western quadrant of the Pinelands National Reserve. The project area encompasses the southern portion of Medford and Evesham Townships. The Plan, which will include innovative zoning, land preservation and community design recommendations, will be prepared by the Pinelands Commission, in cooperation with Medford, Evesham and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

To prepare this Plan three different groups have been assembled; a *Steering Committee*, *Project Advisory Committee*, and a *Technical Support Group*. The *Steering Committee* is the chief decision making body for this project. This four-person Committee is comprised of representatives from Medford, Evesham, the NJDEP and the Pinelands Commission. The *Project Advisory Committee* is intended to represent a broad range of interests and will be comprised of representatives from local, regional and statewide organizations, including environmental and development interests. Its responsibility will be to provide the Steering Committee with recommendations and feedback relative to the preservation and land use policies that will be considered. The *Technical Support Group* comprised of natural resource experts and planning and design professionals will help assemble and analyze relevant data and prepare policy recommendations. An experienced project manager will be engaged to organize the project help to facilitate the planning process. This effort and the lessons learned from it will serve as a model for future efforts elsewhere in the Pinelands and New Jersey. At the conclusion of the planning process two seminars will be conducted to educate the public, local officials and other interested parties about the planning process, the recommendations and how regional land use and environmental resource planning can be put into practice at the local level.

This project will result in four major outputs:

1. An up-to-date and comprehensive natural resource inventory of the project area;
2. A conservation plan for the project area identifying important natural resource values and how those resources can be sustained;
3. Detailed zoning, resource management, design and community development recommendations for each of the two municipalities; and
4. An integrated public land acquisition strategy that targets and coordinates the land protection initiatives of municipal, county and state governments within the project area.

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