

~ Executive Summary ~

Before you begin reading this Stream Corridor Management Plan, please take a moment to look out your window. The landscape you see, whether rural or urban, is part of a watershed. Within that watershed, every natural and human activity has the potential to affect:

- the quality of both ground and surface water
- the ecological health of the aquifer, pond, lake, stream, river, or reservoir that contains the water
- the enjoyment and health of those who view, recreate in, or drink the water

Over the past few centuries we have used streams for transportation, power, food, recreation and water supplies. Our past efforts at management activities to protect and preserve our streams and floodplains have been relatively uncoordinated and site specific. In recent years, efforts have started to focus on the management of the watershed as a system. Through this approach we are trying to better understand stream function, instability causes, and the effects of management practices on the entire system, not just the site. It is important to understand how a natural stream functions, and measure and document these “traits.” Replicating natural stream conditions when implementing management practices allows for better stream function and health. It is equally important to understand floodplain function and that **the floodplain is part of the stream**, “...constructed by the river in the present climate and inundated during periods of high flow.” (Leopold, 1997)

This Stream Corridor Management Plan focuses on the East Branch Delaware River watershed above the Pepacton Reservoir dam at Downsville. The watershed not only contains the Pepacton Reservoir, the East Branch Delaware River, and its many tributaries— it contains communities in which people live and work. The writers of this Plan strove to create a document that would take the needs and desires of watershed residents into account while outlining ways to conserve, preserve, and enhance the watershed itself. Plan development began in May 2005. A series of visioning sessions were held for the local communities, the issues and concerns of which were compiled to help with their vision of future stream stewardship and management. Outreach was also extended to the local planning boards to define stream management, solicit their input, and encourage them to consider adopting a stream management plan component into their local comprehensive plans. In other words, empower local residents and communities to take ownership of stream management.

This Plan should echo the sentiments of those who provided comments and suggestions at every planning board outreach and visioning session. And as the needs of the watershed change, this Plan will change with them. Current key findings include concerns with gravel deposition, flooding issues, need for technical assistance, lack of recreational access, and a desire for stream management education.

The Stream Corridor Management Plan should also – and most importantly – extend beyond the agencies that partnered to create it. It contains recommendations that can realistically be pursued and implemented by watershed residents and municipalities. These recommendations, driven by residents, planning board members, and the Project Advisory Committee members, will hopefully be a template and call to action for those who turn to this Plan for guidance. Key recommendations include:

- Continue and Enhance Education and Outreach
- Implement a Streamside Assistance Program (also a 2007 FAD requirement)
- Selective Stream Gravel Management
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities
- Debris Management.

This Stream Corridor Management Plan is separated into two volumes. Volume 1 contains an overview of the watershed, both from a physiographic standpoint and from that of human-environmental interactions. Community snapshots and lists of issues and concerns raised at each planning board outreach meeting are also covered. Volume 1 additionally includes a guide to living and working with streams, reprinted from “Stream Processes: A Guide to Living in Harmony with Streams” with permission by Janet Thigpen, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board. Finally, the “meat and potatoes” of Volume 1 is the **Recommendations** section.

Volume 2, the more technical of the two volumes, is chocked full of fascinating information about the watershed. The first section is a detailed look at each of the eleven sub-basins within the East Branch Delaware River watershed. This is where specific geomorphic conditions and problem areas are documented. The “Sub-basins” section is followed by “Principles of Stream Science,” from which one can obtain an education regarding the geology and fluvial geomorphology of the watershed. Descriptions of fisheries, wildlife, vegetation, water quality, flood response, and permitting processes can also be found in Volume 2.

Please note that, as you read this Plan, you may encounter re-iterations of the same content between Volume 1 and Volume 2. This is because some information presented in Volume 1 is a summarized version of that which is contained in Volume 2. These instances are marked by references to the proper section in Volume 2. Also, the definitions of acronyms and words that are *italicized* can be found in the “List of Acronyms” in Volume 1 or the “Glossary” section of Volume 2.