

CHAPTER II

GOALS AND POLICIES

1. Land bank as much land as possible for future use or conservation.

Land banking is a term to define the concept of acquiring the targeted land areas now when they are available and at today's values. Under land banking active management of the land is not needed. The purpose of land banking is to buy the land now before it is too late and lost to development or the seller is no longer willing to sell. Minimal maintenance is needed except in special cases.

2. Acquire properties along established and proposed trails specifically the Highlands/Warren Trail, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and the Morris Canal, to create greenways as a high priority.

The Morris Canal has been a high priority of the county for years. Created in 1981 by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Morris Canal Committee has been instrumental in recommending properties for purchase, educating the public, and preserving existing properties. The Morris Canal Greenway is described in the Warren County Directory as a major county preservation effort. As well, Morris Canal preservation offers recreation, conservation, historic preservation, and educational opportunities for residents and students.

3. Acquire properties along streams and rivers to establish greenways and linear parks.

The acquisition of properties along streams and rivers provide the public with opportunities for fishing access, hiking trails and nature exploration. Additionally, preserving these areas prevent development from occurring in flood prone areas thereby providing a flood control benefit.

4. Acquire environmentally sensitive sites.

These areas may be protected under recent laws. However, some of the more significant environmental sites should be protected because they may be in danger of being destroyed by development occurring on or adjacent to the site. In addition, acquiring environmentally sensitive sites open the possibility for scientific research, education, study, and public enjoyment of the county's natural resources.

5. Acquire cultural, historical, and archeological open space sites.

Open Space acquisition should consider the cultural, historical, and archeological features that may evident on a site. Once lost to development, they can never be recovered. As with environmental sites, these sites can open the possibility for education, study, and public enjoyment of the county's man made features.

6. Act as a facilitator in the coordination of land purchases among all levels of government and non-profit agencies.

The Open Space Plan's purpose is to act as a blueprint for open space acquisition in Warren County regardless of the agency or jurisdiction carrying out the effort. If an area is shown in the plan as one targeted for acquisition, any agency should feel empowered to make the acquisition for the purpose described in the Open Space Plan. Coordination with farmland preservation programs at the state, county and local level are highly encouraged and needed to achieve multiple goals and stretch the preservation dollar.

7. In the short term, develop a modest, passive recreation system that allows activities like walking, hiking, sight seeing, bird watching, etc.

With a modest county supported open space system, properties that require minimal county resources in time and money are desired in the short term.

8. Where appropriate, give consideration to providing opportunities for traditional uses, such as hunting and fishing.

Some county properties are appropriate in size and location to allow hunting. It is important to continue to allow hunting on those properties to control the herd, and to make additional lands open to all hunters. Currently the Sheriffs office issues hunting permits for county lands to gain an understanding of how many hunters may be on county lands. If it is determined that the land is over hunted then limits on the number of permits issued may have to be considered. Another consideration may be to charge hunters a small fee.

Access to fishing spots should be provided through the provision of parking facilities and trails to streams, lakes, and ponds.

9. If necessary, in the long term, develop active recreation sites, such as ball fields and other similar recreational facilities.

If the other agencies fail to provide a sufficient number of active recreational sites, the county may consider filling the void.

10. Interconnect various open space reserves.

As the blueprint for open space in Warren County, the plan envisions an interconnected system of open space lands that are accessible to one another. In this way one could walk for one reserve to another.

11. Interagency Coordination.

In some cases, in consideration of other county or municipal interests additional right of way or easements may be needed along roadways or bridges for future improvements and maintenance purposes. In addition, coordination is needed to accomplish the goals of farmland preservation, and municipal and state acquisition programs with the Open Space plan. For example, where properties are acquired that affect Morris Canal and farmland properties, the programs should be coordinated to allow for both the preservation of farmland and the preservation and public access along the Morris Canal corridor.

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