

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

Introduction

By virtue of a request from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for information to support the Sussex County application for Plan Endorsement, the natural resource studies undertaken by the County as part of the Strategic Growth Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan are also separately constituted as a Natural Resources Inventory. This document will provide a stand-alone discussion of natural resource issues that affect development, conservation, and the economic vitality of Sussex County.

One of the principal concerns underlying the Sussex County planning program is our ability to define and quantify the resources at hand. These resources include our natural resources, existing development, population, economic systems and the like. This report is prepared to consider the natural resources available to the County and its' constituent municipalities and the ability of those resources to sustain development and redevelopment.

As this is a combination of data presented in adopted County publications, individual portions of the relevant reports are presented below. Note that the format has been changed for consistency and readability and citations are omitted – please refer to the original documents.

Location

Sussex County is located in northwestern New Jersey. The county is bordered to the west by the Delaware River and Pennsylvania; to the north by Orange County, New York; to the east and southeast by Passaic and Morris Counties, respectively; and to the southwest by Warren County. Sussex County is approximately 336,000 acres, or 525 square miles, in area. The County generally takes the shape of a north-south rectangle tilted 45 degrees to the east.

Sussex County's topography is among the most diverse in the state. As **Map 1: Physiographic Provinces & Ridgelines in Sussex County** shows, the eastern one-third of the county lies in the Highlands physiographic province. The Highlands runs in a northeast belt from Reading, Pennsylvania, across New Jersey and into southern New York and western Connecticut. The region is characterized by forested ridges and glacially sculpted valleys that provide habitat for more than 240 species of wildlife. The region also contains significant water resources affecting over 11 million residents, approximately 4 million of whom reside in New Jersey. Ten of the twenty-four municipalities Sussex County fall within the Highlands.

The remainder of the County falls within the Ridge and Valley physiographic province. This region is characterized by parallel northeast-southwest trending ridges with fertile valleys in between. The Ridge and Valley area of New Jersey is geologically similar to the Appalachian provinces of western Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. The capstone of the Ridge and Valley in Sussex County is the Kittatinny Ridge. The