



*Strategic Plan 2007-2011*

## **Executive Summary**

Wildlands Conservancy is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3), member-supported organization established in 1973 dedicated to protecting the “quality of place” in the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley in eastern Pennsylvania. Wildlands Conservancy's mission is to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the land, water, ecological, and recreational resources of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley. We fulfill our vision and mission through involvement with many partners in broad-based educational programs, various land-protection and stewardship strategies, science-informed water quality and ecological restoration projects, comprehensive community planning efforts, plus greenway and recreational trail development. In our 33 years of conservation activities, the Conservancy has preserved more than 45,000 acres of open space, educated more than 275,000 children and adults, developed and maintained significant trail systems, and developed and implemented several watershed-management plans. Wildlands Conservancy has a staff of 14 full- and part-time professionals and an annual operating budget of \$1.6 million.

This strategic plan provides consensus and alignment of the organization’s activities. This plan, a high priority for the organization, was facilitated by an outside consultant and overseen by a board-designated committee. The document was completed with input from the staff and Board of Directors. The plan presents four major goals: 1) shelter high-priority natural, agricultural, and recreational areas in the region, and foster responsible stewardship of these assets; 2) proactively address water-quality and water-quantity issues to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the Lehigh River and its tributaries; 3) provide educational and recreational opportunities to the community that will foster appropriate stewardship of the region’s natural treasures; and 4) ensure a viable organization. Each goal contains multiple objectives and each objective contains specific initiatives. These initiatives represent the core activities of the organization and, when completed, will enable the organization to reach its goals and fulfill its mission and vision.

This strategic plan will guide the organization and its activities for the next five years. The plan will be the foundation of the direction of the organization and help align the staff and Board with the mission and activities of Wildlands Conservancy. With this information in hand and the initiatives carried out, the organization will effectively preserve, protect, and enhance the land, water, ecological, and recreational resources of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley.

## **Performance Core Values of Wildlands Conservancy**

These beliefs reflect Wildlands Conservancy's perspective on the world and guide its day-to-day activities:

1. We value all life on earth and appreciate its inherent worth, beauty, and inspiration.
2. Stewardship of the earth sustains life, our economy, and our sense of being and place. It is our responsibility and legacy to future generations and the source of great enjoyment.
3. Connecting people to land fosters good stewardship and a sense of community. An educated and informed citizenry will be better stewards of the environment.
4. We respect the inherent diversity and interrelatedness of human beings and nature. What affects one affects all.
5. The prosperity and health of our economy, citizenry, and environment are directly linked to each other. To make progress in any one area, we must strive for simultaneous, sustained excellence in all.
6. Positive conservation action requires change, innovation, and creativity.
7. Transparency and accountability are fundamental to earning public trust and aligning people to achieve effective conservation success.
8. It is necessary for local leadership to drive sustained conservation success.
9. We maintain our credibility by being objective, responsive, and practical.
10. We provide our employees a safe and enjoyable place to work and strive to keep valuable employees involved with the organization.
11. Conservation success depends upon cultivating and sustaining organizational relationships and partnerships. Different people bring different gifts and perspectives to a team. A strong team is founded on diversity.



## **VISION**

Saving the natural treasures of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley for now and for future generations.

## **MISSION**

Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the land, water, ecological, and recreational resources of the Lehigh Valley and the Lehigh River valley.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- I. Shelter high-priority natural, agricultural, and recreational areas in the region, and foster responsible stewardship of these assets.
  - A. Continue to preserve an average of 1,500 acres per year of high-priority land in the region focusing on the Blue Mountain, Lehigh River corridor, South Mountain, Natural Area Inventory Sites, working farms, and area greenways and trails.
  - B. Restore, repair, and upgrade the facilities and properties owned and operated by Wildlands Conservancy.
  - C. Identify and implement planning projects to promote the proper stewardship of our land, water, and recreational resources.
  
- II. Proactively address water-quality and water-quantity issues to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the Lehigh River and its tributaries.
  - A. Remediate the abandoned mine drainage (AMD) impacts in the Lehigh River watershed.
  - B. Continue to complete streambank remediation and protection projects on five critical miles of streams in the Lehigh River watershed.
  - C. Monitor the quality of local waterways and work to address water-quantity issues in the watershed.

**III. Provide educational and recreational opportunities to the community that will foster appropriate stewardship of the region's natural treasures.**

- A. Provide experiential education and awareness opportunities for school-aged children.
- B. Use Pool Wildlife Sanctuary and other natural areas to provide educational opportunities that conform to the state's educational mandates for school-age children.
- C. Offer educational leadership by providing programs and services to local governments and landowners.
- D. Provide experiential education and awareness opportunities for the general public.
- E. Provide innovative educational programming to encourage knowledge and appreciation of nature and to foster healthy, life-affirming activities for residents and visitors.

**IV. Ensure a sustainable organization with a sound financial operation.**

- A. Increase and diversify organizational funding.
- B. Ensure a sound financial operation to provide flexibility and growth.
- C. Improve the marketing of the organization's programs and activities.
- D. Develop and attract career professionals with a commitment to our principles and goals.
- E. Maintain, enhance, and diversify partnerships