

# Growing Greener

## Conservation By Design



## What is a Community Assessment ?

The first step that a community can take to see how well its local ordinances conserve land as development occurs, is to complete an assessment of its land use regulations. An assessment entails a thorough review of the local Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Plan, subdivision and zoning codes by Natural Lands Trust staff. The community receives a written report, outlining specific changes to the various sections of the code that would be necessary to incorporate *Growing Greener* development standards. The assessment also includes a public presentation of the report, usually at an informal work session with Supervisors and Planning Commission members.

Pennsylvania communities are finding that the assessments are a convenient, low cost means of reaching consensus and charting the course, or “next steps,” before starting the more time-consuming and detail-oriented process of ordinance revisions.

Assessments generally cost \$1,500, and with a maximum *Growing Greener* subsidy of \$1,000, the community’s share is only \$500, plus travel expenses.

Now in its tenth year, *Growing Greener: Conservation By Design* is a statewide community planning initiative, a collaborative effort of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Natural Lands Trust and the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services. *Growing Greener* is designed to help communities use the development regulation process to their advantage to protect interconnected networks of permanent open space. The program offers multi-media educational material and technical assistance to communities so that conservation and development objectives may be achieved simultaneously, in a manner that is fair to all parties concerned.

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### *How Do I Learn More?*

If you are interested in having a community assessment completed for your municipality, call Monica Drewniany or Ann Hutchinson at Natural Lands Trust: 610-353-5587.