

Natural Systems Goal:

Promote the conservation and protection of natural resources, and balance the protection of these natural resources with the need for use and development.

Objective NS1: Protect air quality in the township.

Policy NS1.1:

Establish buffers at ground level between new developments that could release toxic or hazardous substances (as defined by the U.S. EPA¹) into the air and existing residential, public, conservation or preservation uses.

Policy NS1.2:

Promote voluntary actions in the township to improve air quality such as taking the bus, carpooling or vanpooling, riding a bike or rollerblading instead of driving, keeping vehicles maintained, combining trips or eliminating unnecessary vehicle trips, refueling after 6 p.m., and saving electricity.

Objective NS2: Conserve and protect current and projected water sources for both quality and quantity.

Policy NS2.1:

Work with the Butler County Health Department to monitor and replace household sewage treatment system (HSTS) that are failing.

Policy NS2.2:

Revisit and revise the zoning ordinance to ensure that site design for development encourages protection and improvement of water quality, including requirements for streets, parking lots, curbs and gutters, subdivision design, setbacks, sidewalks, driveways, rooftop runoff, riparian buffer systems, clearing and grading, landscaping, and stormwater outfalls.

Policy NS2.3:

Require use of best management practices for stormwater management such as maintaining vegetative buffers along streams, lakes and wetlands, instituting erosion control measures for new development, and planting native species, in consultation with the Butler County Department of Development, the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District, the County Engineer's office, and the County Storm Water District.

Policy NS2.4:

Work with the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District, the Butler County Storm Water District, the Miami Conservancy District, the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to reduce impairments in the Great Miami River and Four Mile Creek, and assist Ohio

¹ Toxic Substance: A chemical or mixture that may present an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment.

Hazardous Substance: 1. Any material that poses a threat to human health and/or the environment. Typical hazardous substances are toxic, corrosive, ignitable, explosive, or chemically reactive. 2. Any substance designated by EPA to be reported if a designated quantity of the substance is spilled in the waters of the United States or is otherwise released into the environment.

EPA in preparing and implementing “Total Maximum Daily Loads” of pollutants (TMDLs) for these water bodies, including consideration of future land use.

Policy NS2.5:

Work with the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District, the Butler County Storm Water District, the Miami Conservancy District, the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to maintain good water quality in Seven Mile Creek, Mutton Run and Cotton Run.

Policy NS2.6:

Along with other local, state and federal agencies, such as the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, work with agricultural land owners to institute agricultural water quality plans with best management practices for pesticides, fertilizers and erosion control to improve water quality.

Objective NS3: Provide for the appropriate use, conservation, and protection of soils, minerals, wildlife habitat, fisheries, unique native vegetative communities, forests, and wetlands.

Policy NS3.1:

Provide for identification of potentially unsuitable soils for development types through the development review process. Require a development project to demonstrate, through geo-technical studies or other means, that potential damage to properties will be minimized through appropriate construction techniques.

Policy NS3.2:

Establish local criteria for development on agricultural lands, including considerations such as impacts on prime and important soils, congruence with local development priorities, demand for and cost of increased community services.

Policy NS3.3:

Provide for landscaping regulations in the zoning ordinance including requirements for preservation of existing trees, planting manuals to ensure native plant use and design and installation requirements for the type and caliper of tree and shrub replacement.

Policy NS3.4:

Establish standards for the protection of wetlands and the natural functions of wetlands, including that land uses should be distributed in a manner that minimizes or mitigates the effect and impact on wetlands.

Policy NS3.5:

Provide for the identification and protection of locally determined environmentally sensitive areas as part of the development review process. Require identification of the extent to which any development or redevelopment project is proposed to alter the natural functions of such resources. Require modifications to the proposed development to ensure the protection, preservation or natural functions of the resource, such as specific setbacks, buffers, or clustering of development away from site resources.

Policy NS3.6:

Institute the use of buffers to separate incompatible land uses and to protect natural resources. Set forth the size, composition and location of such areas in land development regulations, based on the proposed land use or development activity, and consistent with the policies of this Comprehensive Plan. Preserve natural vegetative cover in areas designated as buffers, except where drainage-ways and access paths are approved to cross the buffer. Supplement buffers only with non-invasive trees, shrubs and ground covers.

Policy NS3.7:

Ensure that the natural function of fisheries and natural riverine systems will not be altered except to mitigate activities harmful to their continued natural function and productivity.

Objective NS4: Locate population concentrations away from areas known to flood.

Policy NS4.1:

Relocate, mitigate, or replace infrastructure and development within floodplains or areas with frequent flooding.

Policy NS4.2:

Ensure adequate preservation of floodways and floodplains through the development approval process using riparian corridor buffers.

Policy NS4.3:

Work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to remap floodplain boundaries that consider the cumulative and secondary impacts of development in the floodplain.

Policy NS4.4:

Require that all new development maintain the natural functions of the 100 year floodplain of all blue line streams so that the long-term environmental and economic impact and recreation value of these areas is maintained. Regulate the use or storage of hazardous materials or wastes within the 100-year floodplain.

Objective NS5: Make use of preservation strategies and environmentally sensitive development techniques to provide for appropriate and sufficient open space within proposed public and private developments.

Policy NS5.1:

Identify and designate environmentally sensitive lands for protection based on locally determined criteria.

Policy NS5.2:

Ensure that development in areas identified with steep slopes is adequately controlled through local land use regulations.

Policy NS5.3:

Identify areas for restoration or enhancement of disturbed or degraded natural resources, including riparian areas, wetlands, drainage systems, and sand and gravel mine reclamation.

Policy NS5.4:

Establish standards for the removal of sand, gravel and other minerals from the ground, and for the transportation of these materials within the Township. Ensure that at minimum such mining activities do not adversely affect adjacent land uses or groundwater quality or quantity, and address reclamation of mining areas.

Policy NS5.5:

Amend the zoning ordinance to permit and promote low impact development (use of bio-retention, reducing the amount of clearing and grading, reducing impervious surfaces, using permeable pavement, swales and other alternative approaches to storm water management) and conservation design techniques (clustering homes based on careful attention to unique, scenic, or significant natural features to be protected as open space).

Policy NS5.6:

Encourage the design of open space areas to reduce stormwater runoff, using techniques such as landscaping features that support infiltration and water retention, pervious pavers, bio-retention areas or planting boxes.

Policy NS5.7:

Encourage the use of water-saving landscaping techniques in the development approval process.

Objective NS6: Incorporate a greenways protection element into the recreation and open space master plan for the township.

Policy NS6.1:

Identify and evaluate areas for recreational linkages and greenways, including preservation of natural features.

Policy NS6.2:

Establish specific standards to prioritize the protection of lands with unique natural features.

Policy NS6.3:

Protect connections on the land where natural resources and recreational uses may be linked to create greenways, including scenic views.

Policy NS6.4:

Coordinate or cooperate with the public and private sectors in the designation and acquisition of appropriate natural preservation areas.

Policy NS6.5:

Protect lands designated as a part of the greenway system from incompatible land uses.

Policy NS6.6:

Determine appropriate land preservation techniques, such as easements or acquisition, to reserve land with unique natural characteristics and areas appropriate for greenway linkages. Determine the appropriate administering body for such techniques.