

# NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY

## *An Implementation Framework*

Washington County and Washington Conservation District staff propose leading a process to develop a comprehensive, long-term, system wide planning approach to assure the resiliency of our natural resources. It is timely to conduct an assessment of current land protection and management needs as the Washington County 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the state's One Watershed One Plan are evolving to assure these critical assets are receiving the investment and attention needed for long-term health. The final result will be a framework that updates the Land and Water Legacy Program's high priority areas for land protection, identifies the network of protected lands and management efforts underway, articulates existing needs and challenges, and makes recommendations to assure current and long-term protection and management of our natural resources are prioritized, coordinated, effective and adequately funded.

### **Focus Areas**

This effort will focus on seven key areas involving County Parks, conservation easements, greenways, and other prioritized public and private lands:

- 1) Protection of high quality areas;
- 2) Restoration and enhancement of native plant communities;
- 3) Protection of groundwater and surface water;
- 4) Land use management around lakes, streams and the river;
- 5) Creation, enhancement, and management of wildlife habitat;
- 6) Development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for working lands including agroforestry, perennial crops, continuous living cover, and conservation grazing; and
- 7) Long-term management of County and Washington Conservation District project areas.

The final plan will align with County Comprehensive Plan goals, policies and strategies and serve as an implementation plan for which state grant funding can be sought. These implementation priorities will be the basis for developing future Washington Conservation District and County operational and capital improvement program budgets. It is anticipated this plan will need to be updated every five years.

### **Engagement**

A Leadership Team will provide high level structure and guidance for this process. Expertise will be provided by a Technical Advisory Committee. Community engagement will flow through the County Parks and Open Space Commission. The Washington County and Washington Conservation District boards will provide additional expertise, guidance and final support.

### **Mapping**

The project will develop data and maps focusing on the seven key areas, working lands and groundwater protection. This data will be used to update the Land and Water Legacy Program's Top Ten High Priority Areas map.