



**Pike County**

is

**Growing ... Naturally**

***A Roadmap  
to Pike County's Planning Efforts  
and Future Growth Policy***

# Pike County is Growing ... Naturally

It is no surprise that Pike County is growing naturally. The pristine environment and exceptional quality of life that we enjoy has been attracting residents and visitors to Pike County for over a century. Many residents are unaware of the planning that occurs at the county and municipal level. Pike County is blessed with dedicated municipal and county officials and staff that strive to retain and enhance the exceptional quality of life that we all enjoy, and who aspire to achieve a balance between growth and development and to protect our natural resources. This "Roadmap to Pike County Planning Efforts and Future Growth Policy" summarizes the recent planning and conservation initiatives being undertaken by the Pike County Board of Commissioners, the Pike County Planning Commission, the Pike County Office of Community Planning and our local municipalities.

Pike County's history is very diverse. The Lenni-Lenape Indians called this area home and numerous villages were scattered throughout the territory. The seemingly endless timber and exceptional quality waters provided and continues to provide a desirable land in which to live. Bluestone, timber, tanneries, and even beer was processed and produced throughout the 1800's. The Erie Railroad brought a new enterprise to Pike County...the vacation industry. A 1906 guide book listed 140 hotels and boarding houses. One popular attraction, the Shohola Glen Amusement Park, the "Queen of Summer Resorts", attracted excursions from New York at one dollar a day, round trip, sometimes drawing up to ten thousand persons!

In the early 1900's, vacationing urbanites from New York, Philadelphia and beyond continued to visit and enjoy the natural environment. With the onset of World War II, transportation networks were improved and Pike County's vast wilderness became more easily accessible to the motoring public. The proximity of Pike County to the metropolitan area of New York continues to influence our growth. Not only is Pike County the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania and in the Northeastern United States, but it is among the top 100 fastest growing counties nationally. To protect our heritage and natural environment, planning at the local and county levels must address the balance that is needed to provide services to the public while preserving the quality of life and resources that has drawn people to our area for centuries.



## OUR VISION FOR PIKE COUNTY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

*"Pike County will be a community where social, ethnic, economic, intellectual and cultural diversity is cultivated; individual, family and community health is nurtured; the environment is protected; growth is managed; and individual dignity is revered.*

*"Pike County will continue to experience population growth, however that growth will not degrade the quality of life within the County. Infrastructure will be in place to meet the needs of the expanding population, and growth will be compatible with the need to conserve Pike County's natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources. The County will promote programs that will enable resident access to quality health care, educational services, historic and cultural resources, and quality, affordable housing. Systems will be in place to provide for clean water supply and pollution-free waste disposal in appropriate growth areas, and protect water quality and quantity. There will be appreciation for, protection of, and sustainable use of the County's resources for the social and economic benefits of the populace.*

*"Pike County will have a balanced economy and expanding tax base, including a County business park. Competitive paying jobs will be created within the County for local residents. Enhanced tourism opportunities and related service businesses will complement employment opportunities. Economic development will occur with recognition of the need to preserve the County's environmental, cultural, and historic resources.*

*"Pike County will see continued development of intergovernmental cooperation in planning and providing of services and programs to the County's residents. County government will encourage and foster such cooperation. Enhancement of the infrastructure in the County will be a result of mutually developed programs involving the owners of public lands, municipalities, the County, and committees within County task forces addressing those issues. Municipal officials in the County will continue to address the needs of their residents and cooperate with the County and other municipalities to assure that land use planning in the County will be compatible with the conservation of the County's resources."*

# Pike County Comprehensive Plan

Pike County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Pike County Board of Commissioners on November 1, 2006. The objectives of the County Comprehensive Plan include: managing growth; improving the quality of development; encouraging a sense of stewardship toward the County's resources; initiating actions to protect those resources; and encouraging municipal land use regulations which require development to recognize and protect the natural resources of Pike County.

The Comprehensive Plan contains policies and actions that guide how County government works with the municipalities to address growth issues. It indicates how the County should provide technical and financial assistance to municipalities, and it identifies sources of funding and supports and sets priorities for future planning efforts and grant applications which will benefit the municipalities.

The Pike County Commissioners are committed to working with the County's municipalities and state and federal governments to address the pressing issues facing all Pike County residents. The County will continue to develop, provide and enhance a program of financial and technical assistance to municipalities to help them plan for the future of their communities within in the context of the County Comprehensive Plan and other functional County plans. The Pike County Office of Community Planning and the Pike County Conservation District are spearheading efforts on behalf of the Commissioners.

The Pike County Comprehensive Plan is not an ordinance or regulation; it is a guideline for further development of municipal plans and regulations. The plan provides the basis for undertaking specific County functional plans designed to implement the policies set forth therein. The Plan encourages smart growth and growth within designated growth areas with consideration for the County's important natural resources.



## Pike County Future Development Principles

*As identified in the Pike County Comprehensive Plan*

- *Pike County will work together to conserve the unique character, open spaces, and beauty of the County in the face of continued development pressures*
- *Sprawl is not an acceptable development pattern*
- *County and municipal government should consider forging new partnerships to proactively plan for our future*
- *Growth should be managed and directed to designated growth areas in accordance with multi-municipal and municipal comprehensive plans and implementing land use regulations*
- *Natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources should be preserved by protection and integration into future developments*
- *Existing Boroughs, villages, and hamlets in the County should be enhanced and infilled when appropriate*
- *Pike County will work to achieve economic growth that preserves the quality of life that has made Pike County an attractive place for tourism and for residents to live and work*
- *Compact, mixed use development patterns will be encouraged. Public sewer and water systems should be provided to permit compact development*
- *Development will be attractive, well-planned, appropriately landscaped, with architecture characteristic of Pike County*
- *Major road corridors will be enhanced and managed to facilitate mobility and increased safety*
- *Greenways, trails, open space and recreation shall continually be provided and expanded commensurate with population growth*
- *Alternatives to automobile traffic, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes, should be encouraged and enhanced*

# Conceptual Growth Areas

As Pike County develops, planners analyze the growth patterns and project geographic areas within which development at higher densities is encouraged and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to serve such development is provided for, or planned. Outside of these growth areas, land is planned to remain predominantly rural. Growth areas are used to geographically indicate where more development is appropriate and public investment in infrastructure expansion and enhancement is most suitable.

The purpose of establishing Pike County's Conceptual Growth Areas was to identify logical areas for further growth in the County. These areas then help municipal planning efforts set priorities for road improvements and the provision of centralized sewer and water facilities. Higher densities of development are encouraged in growth areas in order to reduce development pressure on other more rural parts of the County.

The Conceptual Growth Areas designation is not a future land use plan and does not try to map future land uses throughout the County; that is a function of municipal and multi-municipal comprehensive plans. The Conceptual Growth Areas simply identify areas where development seems appropriate and should be encouraged.

Through the Pike County Comprehensive Plan, conceptual growth areas were created based on existing land use, settlement patterns, infrastructure, and natural resources limitations. Areas identified by the Pike County Natural Areas Inventory, or lands which contain severe natural limitations to development (e.g. steep slopes, wetlands), were excluded from these growth areas.

**Major Growth Area** – Major Growth Areas are regions that have been identified as appropriate for the development of a variety of land uses at high densities. Their proximity to the local workforce and infrastructure both available and potential, make these areas of prime value for both economic and residential growth.

**Minor Growth Area** – Minor Growth Areas are regions that have been identified as appropriate for growth, however, at a lesser intensity than Major Growth Areas. Development within Minor Growth Areas should be consistent in scale with existing development, and should not adversely impact natural areas or scenic resources.

**Infill/Corridor Growth** – Infill/Corridor Growth Areas refer to continued growth along corridors which already contain similar types of development.

**Village Development** – Village Development refers to smaller unincorporated communities with an existing nucleus of development. Infill and expansion of existing development is feasible when appropriate infrastructure is available.

**Hamlets** – Hamlets are unincorporated areas commonly identified by locals by name but which are part of a larger recognized region. Limited expansion of these areas could be feasible if there are no environmental or infrastructure restrictions.



# Land Use

Historically, Pike County's land use was predominately centered on the enjoyment of its natural features and the extraction of timber, bluestone and other natural resources. As Pike County developed throughout the 1960's and 1970's, residential housing became more prevalent in the forested landscape.

## PIKE COUNTY LAND DISTRIBUTION

Land Use Designation	Acreage	% of County
<b>Developed Lands</b>	<b>118,539</b>	<b>33%</b>
<i>Residential</i>	86,771	24.2%
<i>Commercial</i>	8,653	2.4%
<i>Industrial</i>	7,347	2.1%
<i>Road/Utilities</i>	8,986	2.5%
<b>Protected Lands</b>	<b>123,303</b>	<b>34.5%</b>
<i>Public Lands</i>	117,884	32.9%
<i>Easements</i>	5,418	1.5%
<b>Unprotected Land</b>	<b>116,348</b>	<b>32.5%</b>

*Source: Pike County Office of Community Planning and County GIS Department — November 2006 data*

*Acreages and percentages (rounded) are based upon GIS, assessment of Tax Maps & individual agency verification*

As the population of Pike County has grown, second homes have been converted to permanent residences and new permanent residences have been constructed. The percentage of seasonal homes according to the US Census Bureau declined from 59.5% seasonal in 1990 to only 44.3% in 2000.

Commercial establishments have recognized the growing market to serve the needs of residents and tourists. The nature of commercial uses within the County has changed with more retail and service establishments becoming year round businesses instead of seasonal businesses predominately serving the tourist trade. Several retail establishments are currently under construction, or are planned, to further serve the needs of the County's growing populace.

Subdivision & Land Development Ordinances and Zoning Ordinances are the most common land development tools utilized by municipalities in land use planning. Municipal planning and zoning currently regulate the use of land in every municipality.

As the County's population continues to grow, residential and commercial structures will dot the landscape. It is imperative that best planning practices be utilized to preserve what the residents and visitors have come to enjoy.



## PIKE COUNTY/MUNICIPAL PUBLIC LAND ACREAGE/PERCENTAGES

Municipality	Total Municipal Acres	Delaware State Forest*	State Game Lands	National Park Service	Total Public Lands	% Public Lands
Blooming Grove	48,192	13,553	7,924	-	21,477	44.6%
Delaware	28,288	2,169	-	7,601	9,770	34.5%
Dingman	37,248	5,489	2,453	3,800	11,741	31.5%
Greene	38,528	5,704	-	-	5,704	14.8%
Lackawaxen	50,304	2,759	5,072	-	7,831	15.6%

<b>Lehman</b>	31,296	3,865	-	7,819	<b>11,684</b>	<b>37.3%</b>
<b>Matamoras Borough</b>	448	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Milford Borough</b>	320	-	-	26	<b>26</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
<b>Milford Township</b>	8,000	858	-	209	<b>1,067</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
<b>Palmyra</b>	22,016	5,073	2,170	-	<b>7,243</b>	<b>32.9%</b>
<b>Porter</b>	37,504	22,899	-	-	<b>22,899</b>	<b>61.1%</b>
<b>Shohola</b>	28,608	1,164	7,643	-	<b>8,807</b>	<b>30.8%</b>
<b>Westfall</b>	19,456	4,246	165	308	<b>4,719</b>	<b>24.3%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>350,208</b>	<b>67,778</b>	<b>25,427</b>	<b>19,763</b>	<b>112,968</b>	<b>32.3%</b>

Source: DCNR, NPS, and Pike County GIS as of 5/24/06

\* includes Promised Land State Park

## Pike County Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Plan Growing ... *Naturally*

The Pike County Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Plan is a component of the Pike County Comprehensive Plan. The Open Space Plan identifies the resources that define Pike County's exceptional quality and unique experiences and recommends strategies for coordinating open space and natural resource protection and facilitating the development of recreational facilities as an integral part of its community and economic development. "Growing ... *Naturally*" provides a planning framework and recommendations for Pike County and its municipalities. The Plan should serve as a guide and offer direction to help the County achieve a healthy balance between preservation and development. "Growing ... *Naturally*" identifies the key features of the County and suggests management strategies and policies to protect our natural resources and provide quality recreation opportunities for people who live, work and visit Pike County.

Similar to the Pike County Comprehensive Plan, the Plan does not supersede local planning initiatives or zoning and land development ordinances. The Plan should serve as a reference for municipalities and a foundation for their own planning initiatives.

### Open Space Strategies for Implementation

Promote the identification and protection of critical open space land areas of environmental, scenic, and recreational value, through acquisition and easement.

Encourage conservation of our natural resources and rural character through best planning practices and sustainable development in accord with the integrity of our rural environment.

Identify linkages in critical open space areas and develop methods to create, restore and conserve the connections.

Establish a countywide system of parks and recreation areas through the collaboration of state, county, regional, municipal, and private parks and recreation opportunities in Pike County for present and future generations.

Build stewardship for Pike County's land, water and natural resources through public outreach and education.

Position Pike County as a premiere tourism destination in the United States and internationally for outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, heritage tourism and agri-tourism through the protection and promotion of county resources.

Plan, organize and manage open space conservation, greenways, parks and recreation through partnerships for the greatest public benefit and responsible use of resources.

Invest in open space, parks and recreation to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the citizens and contribute to the economic vitality of Pike County.

# SCENIC RURAL CHARACTER PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Steady population growth has presented Pike County with an urgent need to protect, preserve and enhance its scenic rural character, its water and critical natural resources, and to guide land development in ways that will sustain its natural character. In 2005, a Pike County citizen group, the Alliance to Keep Pike Green, worked with the Pike County Commissioners to place a bond referendum on the November 2005 electoral ballot. The bond referendum asked the citizens in the County to aid in protecting our scenic rural character and quality of life by authorizing the issuance of public debt up to \$10 million over ten (10) years for increased municipal planning and for the purchase of land and conservation easements on land from willing sellers. In many cases, the **Pike County Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program** funds would be used as matching funds to leverage millions of dollars in state, federal, and other funds for planning and land preservation efforts.

With guidance from the County Commissioners, a nine-member Ad-Hoc Committee developed an initial program framework and funding guidelines for this Preservation Program. When the bond passed with 68% voter approval, this framework became a reality. The Ad-Hoc Committee suggested appointment of a Scenic Rural Character Preservation Board to administer the program. In March 2006, the nine-member Board was appointed by the Commissioners and began development of the program.

The Pike County Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program provides financial assistance to municipalities to develop and/or update Municipal or Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans and to develop Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Plans. Project funding is



available for ordinance updates, and for developing innovative conservation-minded practices. Local planning efforts will establish the vision and framework, helping municipalities identify critical lands in their communities and develop strategies for future protection. Financial assistance is available for open space preservation through the purchase of property or conservation easements from willing sellers. Connectivity of open space and preservation of critical resources and habitats will maintain the scenic rural character of Pike County while increasing the quality of life for its residents.



## Agricultural Land Preservation Program

Farming in Pike County may not play a significant part in the State's agricultural economy, but it remains a productive resource that contributes to the local economy and plays a significant role in the scenic rural character of our local communities. The small family farms, including pastureland, croplands, orchards and similar agriculture areas, provide scenic open space areas which have a proven value to residents and visitors to the County.



Pike County's agricultural community has been faced with monumental impediments to their continued operation. Rising costs of farm operation, steadily increasing real estate taxes and the continued pressure from development provide difficult hurdles for small farmers in the County who want to continue their operations and keep the "family farms" in the family. Pike County prime agricultural soils are areas increasingly sought after for residential development. The reduction in our small farm community corresponds directly to these impediments

our small farm community corresponds directly to these impediments and the increase in the amount of residential development in the County. The farming areas that do exist in the County are becoming even more fragmented.

The Pike County Commissioners acknowledge the great importance of preserving and maintaining the County's prime agricultural lands and have established the *Pike County Agricultural Land Preservation Program* to work toward this goal. To implement this program, the Commissioners established the *Pike County Agricultural Land Preservation Board*. The main purpose of this board is to assist property owners in the preservation of their farmlands.

The *Pike County Agricultural Land Preservation Program* protects and promotes the continued agricultural use of valuable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements on actively farmed lands within Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's). The purchase of these easements from willing and interested landowners helps farmers retain their agricultural operations and enhance the rural character of our communities.



## Upper Delaware Council

This "Roadmap to Pike County's Planning Efforts and Future Growth Policy" was funded, in part, by a grant through the Upper Delaware Council. The Upper Delaware Council (UDC) was incorporated in 1988 as the oversight body responsible for the coordinated implementation of the River Management Plan for the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

As the driving force behind the River Management Plan, the UDC provides a mechanism to address actions by local, state, and federal agencies which affect the river valley. Services to members include reviews of development projects, ordinances, and governmental initiatives. The Council administers a Technical Assistance Grants program, a quarterly newsletter, sponsors educational programs, and recognizes river valley contributors through an awards program.

The Upper Delaware Council, located in Narrowsburg, NY, includes representation from New York, Pennsylvania and the Delaware River Basin Commission and 12 of the 15 local governments which border on the Upper Delaware River. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Upper Delaware Council partners with the National Park Service and local governments to work towards implementation of the River Management Plan.

For further information, contact:

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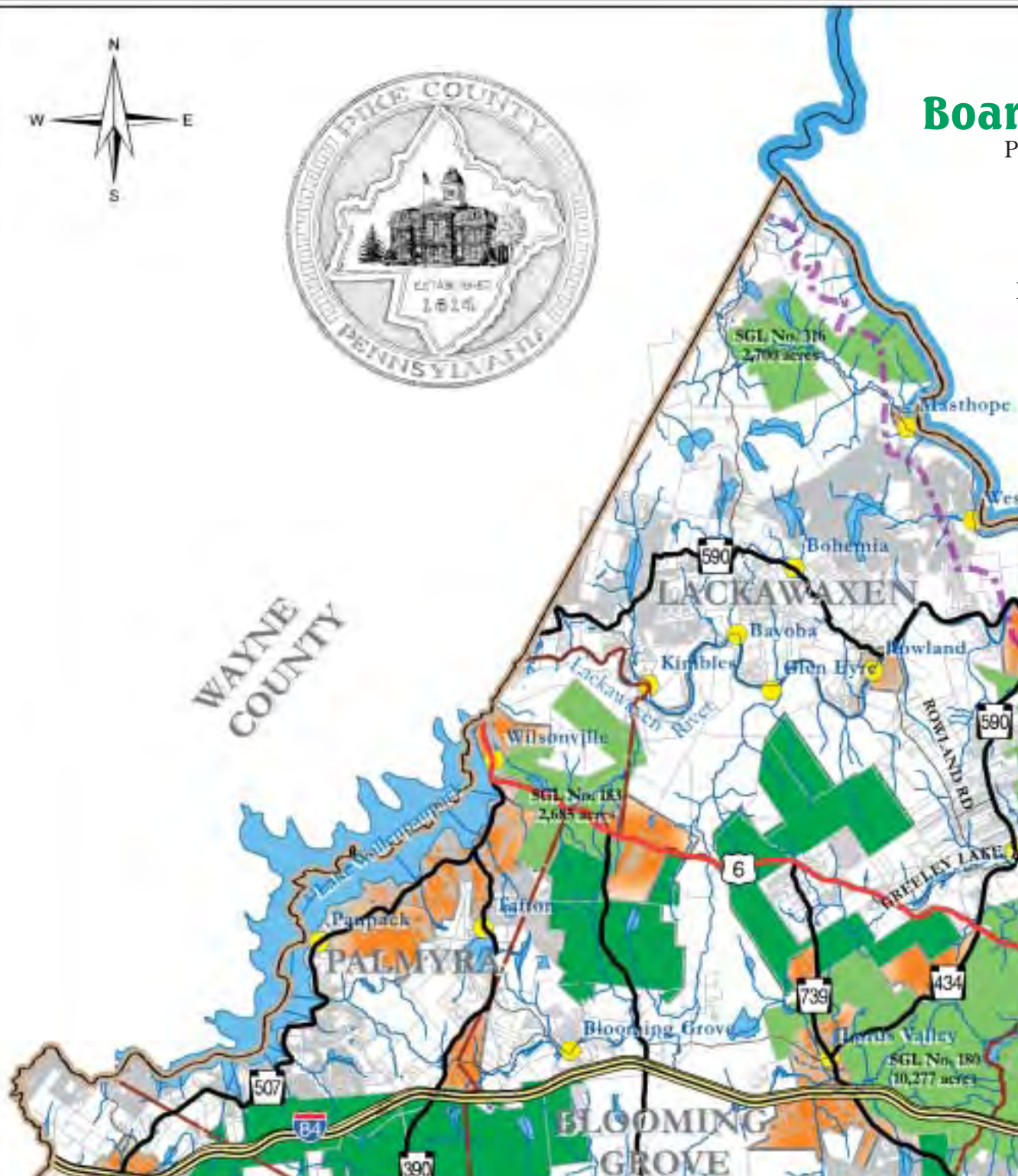
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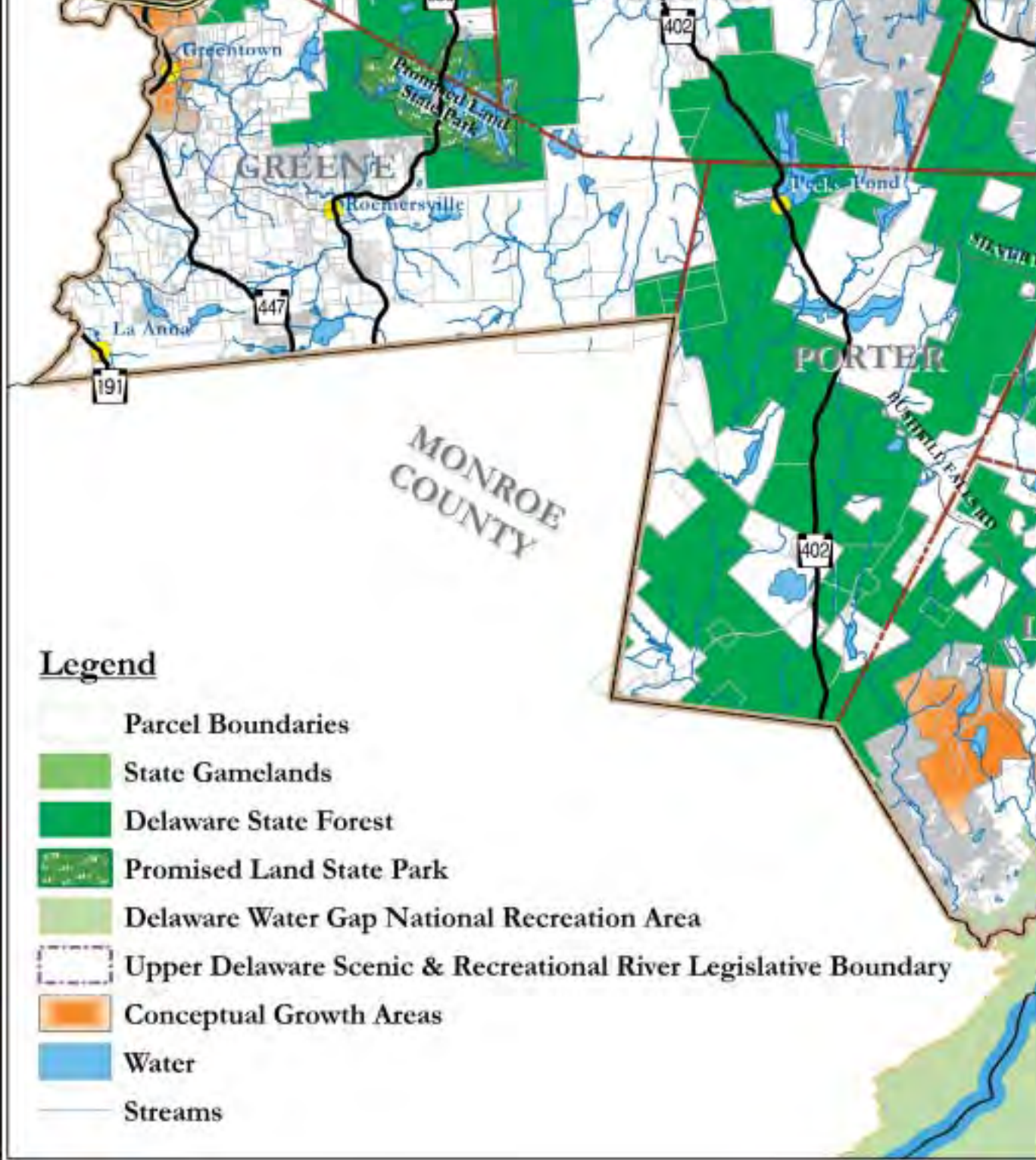
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## Legend

- Parcel Boundaries
- State Gamelands
- Delaware State Forest
- Promised Land State Park
- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
- Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River Legislative Boundary
- Conceptual Growth Areas
- Water
- Streams

# Pike County Board of Commissioners

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