

Appendix B-1.

LAND PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY

To develop land prioritization maps indicating areas of the watershed recommended for protection, the USGS National Land Cover Data (version 5-27-99) and county natural areas inventory (CNAI) data, surface water hydrology, protected lands, and other GIS coverages were utilized. Tax parcel data (when available) was transposed on GIS coverages to eliminate developed parcels that have already disturbed habitat. Tax parcel data will continue to be used to narrow the focus in these larger priority areas to protect specific stream corridors, large forested areas, greenways, and CNAI sites. All stream corridors will continue to be considered for protection. Using the GIS data, stream corridors will continue to be delineated as having either forest, agricultural, or no riparian buffer. Lands containing stream corridors which lack quality riparian vegetative cover will continue to be identified as areas requiring riparian restoration and best management practices (BMPs). Potential greenway corridors and conservation connections will continue to be identified within the watershed. Agricultural lands to be protected will continue to be selected according to their clustering potential with other protected lands and farms and their possession of stream corridors.

In addition to the goal of protecting as these priority lands from development, lands that are already protected by public or private means will be targeted for a BMP assessment. This is essential because protecting land alone does not ensure that the ecological values of the area are being protected, especially where public access is allowed. A proactive program to promote the use of BMPs on these lands will be initiated and ongoing.

Goals of Land Protection

- Protect and maintain an adequate supply of high quality water
- Protect areas of rare or endangered species, high biodiversity and habitat values
- Protect areas of contiguous forest
- Protect agricultural lands
- Protect recreational areas and greenways

Land Protection Project Selection Guide

This ranking system reflects our preservation priorities:

- open lands adjacent to other protected lands
- lands possessing water resources, especially Exceptional Value (EV) and High Quality Cold Water Fisheries (HQCWF), wetlands, and streamside riparian areas
- natural areas inventory sites
- forested lands, mountain ridges and steep slopes
- farmlands
- greenway linkages
- important bird areas

Overall, the following will be considered when proactively targeting lands for preservation:

- natural resource value
- threat of development
- potential cost and funding availability
- feasibility and landowner interest

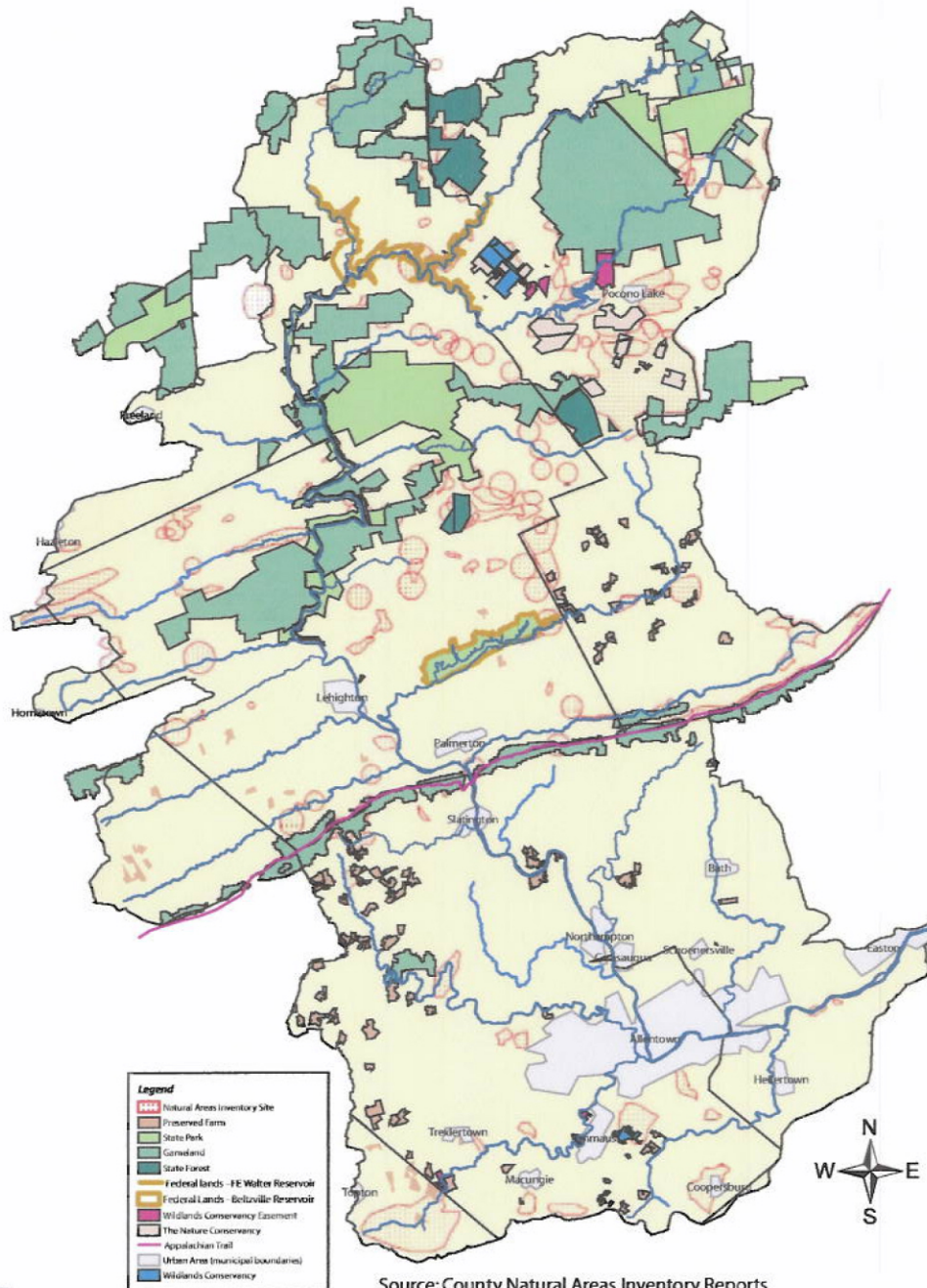
Action steps will be taken to protect as much of the priority lands as possible utilizing a variety of effective preservation options:

- acquisition by state or local municipalities
- acquisition by non-profit organizations
- conservation easements
- management agreements
- natural resource protection ordinances
- cluster and overlay zoning

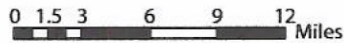
Wildlands Conservancy's current top priority lands for protection are illustrated in the following maps:

- Map 10 - 1. Exceptional Value (EV) Stream Basins
- Map 10 - 2. Unprotected EV Stream Basins
- Map 10 - 3. Unprotected Wetlands
- Map 10 - 4. Unprotected Natural Areas Inventory Sites
- Map 10 - 5. Unprotected Agricultural Basins
- Map 10 - 6. Unprotected Forest Lands

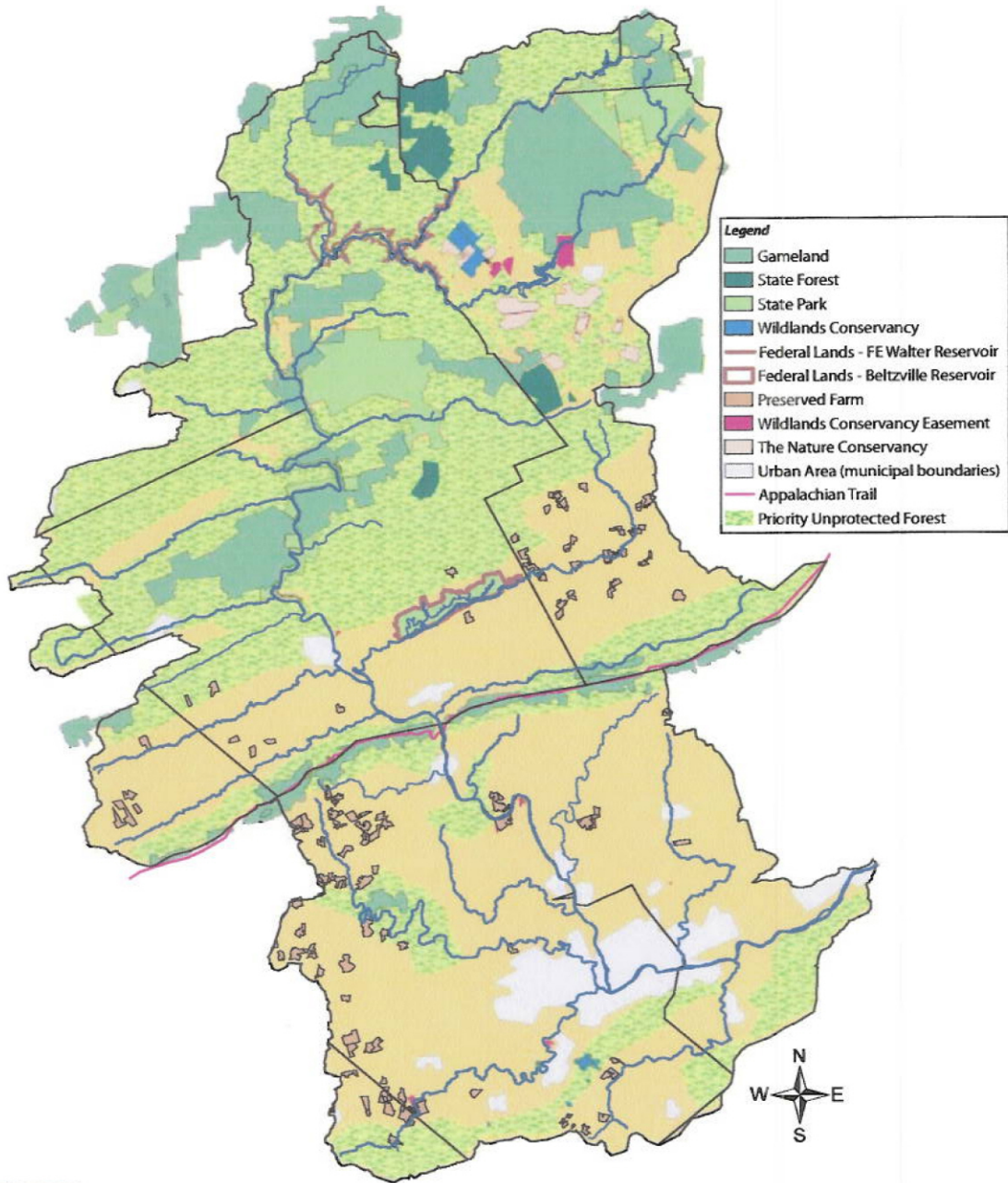
MAP 10-4 PRIORITY LANDS FOR PROTECTION – UNPROTECTED NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY SITES LEHIGH RIVER WATERSHED



Source: County Natural Areas Inventory Reports
Note: Carbon County field verification of NAIs in progress.



MAP 10-6 PRIORITY LANDS FOR PROTECTION – UNPROTECTED FOREST LANDS LEHIGH RIVER WATERSHED



0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles

