

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal Statement:

To support the development of a public system of open spaces which forever preserves the valued environmental, cultural, historic and scenic features of Camden County and provides sufficient lands to accommodate a variety of active and passive recreational activities.

Camden County should proceed in a thoughtful and deliberate manner to expand the public holdings of open space. In doing so, the County should work with municipal officials to develop options which strike a balance between future land development and the need to preserve additional open space and the significant environmental, cultural, historic, and scenic features of the County which represent it's past, present, and future.

Objectives:

1. *Acquire by the year 2010 not less than 2000 additional acres of developable land for both the preservation of areas of environmental, cultural, historic or scenic value and to meet regional recreational needs.*

A major public effort should be made to conserve not less than 2000 additional acres of land to protect the natural resources of Camden County including surface waters, groundwater recharge areas, endangered and threatened plant and animal species and scenic views. In addition, areas of cultural and historic significance must be preserved for the enjoyment and education of future generations of Camden County residents. Where necessary, additional acreage should be acquired and dedicated to recreational use so as to afford all Camden County residents convenient access to common recreational amenities not otherwise provided by local governments.

2. *Acquire additional lands through easement acquisition or other measures that effectively conserves prime farm areas.*

Areas of prime farmland should be protected to insure both the continued economic viability of the agricultural industry in Camden County and to preserve the valued rural and scenic features which these areas possess.

Such lands may be protected by easement purchases as authorized by the New Jersey Agriculture Retention and Development Act. As easement acquisitions are less costly than the outright purchase of full title to the farm property the realized savings can be put toward the purchase of additional land or other easements. Camden County should coordinate the farmland preservation component of this Open Space and Recreation Plan through the Camden County Agricultural Development Board.

3. *Establish a network of Greenways that interconnects public open space and contributes to the conservation and public enjoyment of the County's environment.*

Greenways are elongated, and in most instances, continuous corridors of land under some form of public control. They can follow a natural corridor such as a river or stream, or follow a manmade corridor such as a road or an abandoned railroad bed. Greenways provide recreational opportunities for pedestrians, and bicyclists while exposing them to significant features of the County including areas of scenic beauty, natural habitats, and historic or cultural sites. They help to maintain wildlife populations by extending their available habitats. Greenways can be established in rural, suburban, and urban areas to the benefit of all the residents of the County.

4. *Encourage efforts at all levels of government and coordinate with non profit organizations to preserve open space (and provide environmental and open space design standards to assist local land use planning)*

Camden County's financial resources are limited. In addition, it has little control over land use excepting those lands which it owns. Municipalities must be encouraged to preserve at least three percent (3%) of their developed and developable land area as open space in accordance with Balanced Land Use Guidelines and to provide recreational facilities to meet local needs. Municipalities, the County and the State, along with non-profit land trusts must work cooperatively to meet regional open space needs and to satisfy the goal and objectives of the County's Open Space and Recreation Plan.