

The Highlands Plan Conformance Process centers on a task-oriented approach. Financial assistance is provided through a \$100,000 Plan Conformance Grant which was awarded by the Highlands' Council to Washington Township. These monies are to be used for professional fees. Natural Systems Utilities, NJ, LLC was awarded a contract through a fair and open process to provide technical assistance toward Plan Conformance for the Township of Washington. Angela Clerico, Professional Planner (PP) is the project lead.

Washington Township Plan Conformance status can be tracked online, found on the Highlands' Council website at (http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/planconformance/wash_twp_warren.html).

For this entry we would like to focus on the following initiatives:

- Environmental Resource Inventory
- Agriculture Retention/Farmland Preservation
- Wastewater Management Plan

An **Environmental Resource Inventory**, ERI for short, is very important to a rural community like Washington Township. Why? It's a baseline document for resource inventory (Natural, Cultural, Economical, Historical, etc.) existing in the Township. By identifying these resources early in the Plan Conformance Process it helps to illustrate areas that might need extra attention. Washington Township has an ERI draft on file which was approved in December 2011. The draft was accompanied by 33 maps illustrating a visual understanding of the baseline resource inventory. The Environmental Commission (EC) made a consensus decision to take time and thoroughly review the ERI draft for any discrepancies and we're awaiting their feedback. Once received, a discussion is planned for the October 9th EC meeting. The ERI must be publicly-adopted by Washington Township's Land-Use Board. Document adoption, along with a public presentation, is scheduled for their November 14th meeting. All are encouraged to attend!

Agriculture Retention / Farmland Perseveration: One of the greatest economic assets of Washington Township is the abundance of prime farmland. Farming is and has been the foundation upon which many regional Warren County Towns were built. However, we view the relationship between our community and local farmers is not as strong as it can be. We have a viable local industry that can enter into a vested relationship with the Washington Township community. This is the basis for our **Ag Retention/Farmland Preservation** scope of work. Regional discussions are underway between the Highlands and local municipalities to develop a plan concerning sustainable farming. Maps of existing farmland in the Township can be found in PDF format below.

Wastewater management provides an overall view of Washington Township's infrastructure. The plan covers existing sewer service areas (SSA), future SSA's, public water systems, and septic areas. These are vital resources that could encourage or restrict development patterns in the Township. On June 28 of this year the Highlands Council, in conjunction with NJDEP, sent us the first draft of our Wastewater Management Plan (WMP). Township officials, project planner Angela Clerico and township engineer

Finelli Consulting were given a 30 day period to review the document. Comments and feedback were plentiful. A response was provided to the Highlands Council on August 2, 2012 outlining discrepancies and the lack of information in the WMP first draft. The amount of involvement on our end shows how important wastewater infrastructure is to the Township. Currently we're awaiting a revised WMP draft from the Highlands council. The document shall include our feedback and hopefully paint a clearer picture of Washington Township's wastewater capacity/availability.

Any whom want to review the first draft submitted by the Highlands, followed by our response letter, can refer to PDF documentation below.

If you would like to review progress and see an up-dated report stop back into http://71.6.170.26/revize/WashingtonTownship/highlands_plan_conformance/index.jsp at the end of September! To schedule a meeting or contribute any questions, opinions, ideas, concerns please contact:

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