Green Space Conservation Program
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aesthetically pleasing and ecologically informed design
Design which protects existing or restored habitats by avoiding sensitive areas, by setting back construction and paved surfaces from streams, wetlands and other sensitive habitats, by landscaping in order to create balanced natural ecosystems, by constructing facilities and amenities which visually enhance the natural setting. The result of such design is a healthy environment and a superior recreational experience, which inform, educates and pleases participants.

Aquatic biological communities
Native plants and animals which reside in wetlands, streams and lakes. The potential diversity of aquatic communities is defined by the use designation of the stream and/or the classification of the wetland as defined by the OEPA and by the ODNR.

Areas of relatively high unemployment / distressed area
A municipal corporation that has a population of at least 50,000 or a county that meets two of the following criteria: 1) its average rate of unemployment, during the most recent five-year period for which data are available, is equal to at least 125% of the average rate of unemployment for the US for the same period; 2) its per capita income is equal to or below 80% of the median county per capita income of the US; 3) a municipal corporation in which at least 25% of the residents have a total income for the most recent census year that is below the official poverty line or a county, in intercensal years, with a ratio of transfer payment income to total county income equal to or greater than 25%. [Ref: ORC 122.16]

Balanced natural ecosystems
Ecological systems are dynamic assemblages of native plant and/or animal communities that (1) occur together on the landscape or in the water; and (2) are tied together by similar ecological processes (e.g., fire, hydrology), underlying environmental features (e.g., soils, geology) or environmental gradients (e.g., elevation).

Comprehensive open space planning
A plan adopted by a subdivision of the state that identifies community goals related to open space preservation and utilization. The plan may include recreational and environmental goals, zoning definitions and requirements for planned unit developments where applicable, maps that identify targeted resources, funding strategies and time lines.

Connecting corridor for natural areas
Corridors are an attempt to compensate for habitat fragmentation by connecting similar areas to allow species to migrate between suitable habitats. Corridors should be as wide as possible to avoid "edge effects". (The outer boundaries of any habitat consist of a zone of influences such as wind, sunlight, water tables that differ from the interior).

Conservation Easement
An incorporeal right or interest in land that is held for the public purpose of retaining land, water, or wetland areas predominantly in their natural, scenic, open, or wooded condition, including, without limitation, the use of land in agriculture when consistent with and in furtherance of the purpose of retaining those areas in such a condition, or retaining their use predominantly as suitable habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife; that imposes any limitations on the use or development of the areas that are appropriate at the time of creation of the conservation easement.
to achieve one or more of those purposes; and that includes appropriate provisions for the holder to enter the property subject to the easement at reasonable times to ensure compliance with its provisions. [Ref: ORC 5301.67 (A)] Easements are entered into on a volunteer basis, and are compensated at whatever rate is agreed to among the parties given the value of the restrictions. Easements are permanent in nature and are to be recorded as a deed restriction.

**Conservation organization**

Community and civic organizations which represent the interests of citizens who are concerned with the sustainability of the natural environment and the preservation of native natural habitats and communities including the air, water and land necessary to sustain them.

**Ecotourism**

Travel to natural areas that minimizes environmental impact, fosters environmental and cultural awareness, exhibits commitment to local conservation issues, and provides direct benefits to local people. Ecotourism operations that are owned and run by local people tend to offer the most authentic cultural immersion and provide the most significant local benefits.

**Endangered species**

According to U.S. Federal law, a species is endangered if it is in imminent danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. [Listings and occurrences for Ohio](#)

**Facilities**

Constructed features that are necessary to make an openspace area accessible and useable such as parking places at a canoe launch, restrooms at a natural area trailhead, or a boardwalk at a wetland. The preservation of the natural area or riparian corridor must be the main focus of the project, not the facility. Active recreation facilities such as tennis courts and rec centers are funded by other grant programs.

**Fee simple land acquisition**

A fee without limitation to any class of heirs or restrictions on transfer of ownership.

**Functioning floodplains**

Riparian lands adjacent to the stream which are accessible to stormwater and floodwaters. Functioning flood plains disperse and retain peak flows, minimize downstream flooding and provide a settling basin for sediment and other pollutants carried by stormwater. Any development in floodplains should accommodate these functions by avoidance and minimization, especially of impervious surfaces.

**Habitat for plant or animal species**

The [USGS Habitat Suitability Index](#) provides information for evaluating impacts on fish and wildlife habitat resulting from water or land use changes.

**Habitat protection**

Management focus that de-emphasizes individual species, focusing instead on maintaining habitat or ecosystem quality, including ecological processes important in maintaining the characteristic biodiversity of an area.

**Headwater streams**

Small swales, creeks and streams that are the origin of most rivers and with a watershed less than or equal to 20 square miles. These small streams join together to form larger streams and rivers or
run directly into larger streams and lakes. Many streams and drainage ways have a watershed of less than one square mile referred to as “primary headwater” streams.

**High quality wetlands**

Wetlands assigned to OEPA wetland category 3 are those that:
(a) support superior habitat, or hydrological or recreational functions as determined by an appropriate wetland evaluation methodology acceptable to the director or his authorized representative.
(b) may be typified by some or all of the following characteristics: high levels of diversity, a high proportion of native species, or high functional values.
(c) may include, but are not limited to: wetlands which contain or provide habitat for threatened or endangered species; high quality forested wetlands, including old growth forested wetlands, and mature forested riparian wetlands; vernal pools; and wetlands which are scarce regionally and/or statewide including, but not limited to, bogs and fens. [Ref: OAC 3745-1-54].

**Hydromodification**

Hydromodification activities are manmade or engineered modifications of natural drainage or streams, and are separated into categories: drainage systems, channelization and channel modification, dams, and streambank and shoreline erosion. [Ref: US EPA definition] Does not include restoring natural stream or drainage conditions.

**Natural areas**

An area of land or water which either retains to some degree or has re-established its natural character, although it need not be completely undisturbed, or has unusual flora, fauna, geological, archeological, scenic, or similar features of scientific or educational interest. [Ref: ORC 1517.01 (A)]

**Natural features**

A physical or biological feature of the landscape which has resulted from and is maintained by natural processes. Examples: waterfall, river oxbow, gorge, natural bridge, cave, etc.

**Natural heritage**

All the species, communities and physical features present in Ohio at the time of the first European settlement.

**Natural stream channels**

Provide for the normal fluvial morphology of a stream. The channel will allow for natural migration of stream sinuosity, pool and riffle formation and other instream habitat features, and banks which allow stormwater access to the floodplain.

**Nonnative, invasive species of plants or animals**

Non-native or exotic species are plants or animals that are introduced to a new area artificially, either deliberately or accidentally. A non-native species can become invasive if it reproduces so successfully in the new area that it dominates the native species present.

**Open space**

Any area of land the preservation of which would 1) maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources; 2) protect natural streams or water supply; 3) promote conservation of wetlands, marshes, bogs, fens, forests, prairies, lakes, streams or other naturally occurring communities; 4) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, stream
corridors, forests, wildlife areas, natural areas or other natural openspaces; 5) enhance passive public recreation opportunities.

**Reforestation**
To place a parcel of land back into forested condition.

**Restores streamside forests**
The process of using ecological principles and experience to return a degraded ecological system to its former or original state.

**Riparian corridors**
Ecosystems with a high water table because of proximity to a river, stream, lake, or other body of water. They usually occur as an ecozone between aquatic and upland ecosystems but have distinct vegetation and soil characteristics and are uniquely characterized by the combination of high species diversity, high species density, and high productivity. They serve a variety of functions including the preservation of water quality by filtering sediment, protection stream banks from erosion, and provide food and habitat for various species.

**State natural heritage inventory endangered/rare/threatened species**
Managed by ODNR’s Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, the Natural Heritage State Ranking system is as follows:
- **S1:** Critically imperiled in state (5 or fewer viable populations known)
- **S2:** Imperiled in state because of rarity or vulnerability (6-20 viable populations known)
- **S3:** Rare or uncommon in state (21-100 viable populations known)
- **S4:** Apparently secure in state
- **S5:** Demonstrably secure in state
- **SH:** Of historical occurrence throughout range
- **SU:** Possibly in peril range-wide but status uncertain

ODNR maintains the lists of Ohio’s endangered and threatened animal species and plant species.

**Streamside forest functions**
Those colonies of native shrubs and trees which protect water quality and instream and riparian habitat by allowing the succession of native plants. These forests provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals from upland species to aquatic communities. They also minimize sedimentation from bank erosion and pollutant migration from stormwater runoff. In addition, they provide shade to instream species which is especially critical to those species which are intolerant to heat extremes.

**Vegetative filters or buffers**
Vegetative filtration buffers and wetlands remove organic and inorganic nutrients and toxic materials in the following ways:
- A reduction in velocity causes sediments and chemicals attached to sediment particles to drop to the bottom and be trapped among the stems and roots;
- A variety of anaerobic and aerobic processes remove certain chemicals from the water;
- The high rate of production of many vegetative filters or wetlands can lead to high rates of mineral uptake by vegetation and subsequent burial in sediment when vegetation dies;
- A diversity of decomposers in wetland sediment (Mitsch, William J., *Wetlands*)

**Viable population** (of rare or endangered species)
Viability indicates the ability of a conservation target to persist for many generations or over long time periods.

**Waters of the state**
All streams, lakes, ponds, marshes, watercourses, waterways, wells, springs, irrigation systems, drainage systems, and other bodies or accumulations of water, surface and underground, natural or artificial, regardless of the depth of the strata in which underground water is located, that are situated wholly or partly within, or border upon, this state, or are within its jurisdiction, except those private waters that do not combine or effect a junction with natural surface or underground waters. [ORC 6111.01 (H)]

**Water quality**
The chemical, physical and biological condition of a wetland, stream or lake. Ohio sets criteria for water quality in OAC 3745-1-05 (Criteria as applicable to all waters).

**Watersheds**
A watershed is the total land area from which water drains into a single stream, lake, or ocean.

**Wetlands**
Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.