

INTRO

- A. WHY do you want to protect OS? If you're not sure . . .
All Montco communities have a current OS Plan that tells you WHY you should want to protect open space.
Assume you're here—already convinced.
- full of goals for OS and natural resource protection:
- protect water resources (quality and quantity)
 - protect wildlife, habitat, forests and ecological systems
 - protect the scenic beauty of the community
 - increase property values
 - promote the economy
 - provide recreation for people of all ages
 - foster health and wellness
 - connect people with nature
- B. And OS Plans are full of ways for HOW to protect OS.
Mention 6 common ways:
1. Purchase of land outright (fee simple)—lots of money (public)
 2. Purchase of dev rights—less money
– Montco Farmland Preservation Program
- 112 farms have been purchased, total 7,285 acres
 3. Transfer of dev rights (developer's money)
- MCLT study
- Session E after dinner
- most useful in four regional planning groups
 4. Overlay zoning districts - Eric
 5. Conservation subdivision design
 6. Donation by conservation-minded landowners
- C. All of these techniques for protecting open space have *advantages and disadvantages*.
Eric just told you all about overlay zoning districts.
Overlays have certain advantages:
- they're easy to understand

- they're easy to write
- you don't have to map them – automatically kick in when certain conditions exist. The *applicant* maps them on his development plans.

But there are downsides:

- they divide ecological systems into separate elements and protect each element individually: floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, streamside corridors, woodlands and so on . . .

I once worked with a community with 14 natural resource protection overlay districts.

Sometimes overlays are more a reflection of growing awareness on the part of local officials of different elements that should be protected, than they are of a holistic approach to environmental protection.

If you had an unusual preponderance of this blue woodland Iris in your community, would you have a Blue Woodland Iris Overlay? How many ways can we cut up our environment and protect it *piece by piece*?

Also,

- overlays protect these elements on a *lot by lot* basis. The resources are located on indiv lots, owned by many different people
- enforcement can be difficult or sketchy--prompted by complaints
- do you make them retroactive? If a homeowner has been mowing to the edge of the creek for the last 10 years, are you going to enforce a 25' of non-disturbance zone in a riparian buffer overlay district?

D. I'm going to talk about alternative to overlay districts-- conservation subdivision design.

- treats the environment as a whole system
- it doesn't divide it into individual elements.

Out of all the different ways to protect open space, I favor this form of natural resource protection for a number of reasons:

- it doesn't require large expenditures of public money as in PDR
- it doesn't require complicated regs for shifting dev rights to other parcels as in TDR
- it doesn't depend on landowner generosity for donations

- and, most importantly, it doesn't try to protect natural resources one by one on a lot by lot basis.

Don't get me wrong --

Nat Res Prot Overlays have an important role to play, but would suggest using them where cons des does NOT apply.

- *cons des applies* most aptly to RESIDENTIAL development in 2-ac, 1-ac and ½ ac zoning districts -- 80% of your land area.
- so *Nat Res Prot Overlays* most aptly apply in areas of NON-RESIDENTIAL development: commercial, industrial and institutional districts.

In those districts you typically get land development proposals, that is, individual buildings on individual lots, like a Wal-Mart or new industrial building.

The zoning officer enforces the resource protection on an individual building basis during construction.

E. Now let's take a look at how residential cons sub design works in the SLDO/ZO.

Identify the resources, both on plan and in the field -- ER/SA Plan

Site visit

Four- Step Design Process

Zoning choices

What do cons subdivisions look like?

Weatherstone

Wallace trio

W Vincent Birch Run

Rose Valley

F. CONCLUSION

All of the concepts I explained here today are described in this (GG) book, written by Randall Arendt, who is Sr. Conservation Advisor to Natural Lands Trust and who developed this program over 10 years ago. The program is funded state wide by DCNR under the name *Growing Greener: Conservation*

by Design. Additional funding in this region is provided by the Wm Penn Foundation, with additional funding from DCED.

The booklet you picked up in the back is a nice summary of the principles of conservation design. If you're interested in more information, give me a call and I can give you much more.

30 municipalities in 12 counties across PA have adopted GG: CBD standards. In Montco: Upper Salford, Whitemarsh, Worcester.