

## Chapter 10: Open Space Resources

### Survey Results

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1. Please provide a checkmark in the box next to the five resources that you and your community regard as having the highest priority to be protected as open space:
  - 15 Farmland, productive cropland, and pasture
  - 13 Forests and woodlands
  - 13 Water resource protection areas (such as steep ridges along the Octoraro and Elk Creeks)
  - 11 Recreational facilities (parks, playgrounds, trails, sports fields, etc.)
  - 6 Locally significant properties
  - 6 Serpentine barrens
  - 4 Homeowner association open spaces
  - 3 Nature preserves/bog turtle habitat
  - 3 Plain sect owned farms
  - 1 Other: (Please describe) **Greenways**

**Summary:** Results are typical of most rural communities, emphasizing the protection of farms, forests, public parks and water resources.

2. Which of the following open space resources are currently addressed in your municipality's ordinances:

Forests and woodlands

11 Yes 4 No 2 Don't Know

Homeowner association open spaces

9 Yes 7 No 1 Don't Know

Locally significant properties

3 Yes 1 No 3 Don't Know

Nature preserves/bog turtle habitat

4 Yes 8 No 5 Don't Know

Plain sect farms

2 Yes 11 No 4 Don't Know

Farmland, productive cropland, and pasture

14 Yes 2 No 4 Don't Know

Recreational facilities (parks, playgrounds, trails, sports fields, etc.)

8 Yes 7 No 2 Don't Know

Serpentine barrens

3 Yes 10 No 3 Don't Know

Water resource protection areas (such as steep ridges along the Elk Creek)

8 Yes 8 No 1 Don't Know

1 Other: (Please describe) **Open space acquisition by the municipality.**

**Summary:** As with question one, farms, forests, public parks, and water resources have been identified. HOA open space is also commonly identified. However, natural resources are not so commonly identified, which is somewhat notable given the presence of the serpentine barrens, a state forest, a county park and the large Octoraro Valley.

3. Would you be willing to implement or enhance municipal ordinance regulations to further protect open space in your municipality?

7 Yes

9 Maybe

0 No

0 Undecided

**Summary:** It appears that there is moderately strong support for enhancing municipal regulations to protect open space.

4. Would you be willing to pursue increasing municipally generated revenue, such as a bond referendum or a dedication of local tax revenues, to finance the protection of open space in your municipality?

7 Yes

9 Maybe

1 No

0 Undecided

**Summary:** It appears that there is moderately strong support for addressing tax-based funding for open space protection in ordinances.

5. In general, the most pressing issue affecting the protection of open space is the rising cost of land, and difficulties in finding funds to pay for preservation. Aside from these funding issues, what are the greatest obstacles that must be overcome at the municipal level to protect open space in the Oxford Region?
- 5 responses dealt with educating and making the public aware of and better understand open space benefits or protection options.
  - 2 responses dealt with the farm community having a dilemma because they want protection, but they do not want to lose control of their land or risk reducing its value.
  - 2 responses dealt with restrictive zoning.
  - 2 responses dealt with addressing the perception that open space is “wasted land,” and does not warrant protection with public taxes.
  - 2 response dealt with taxes, either locally generated or possibilities for a significant break in school taxes for landowners who protect their land.

Other Comments:

- 1 response dealt with how protected open space might be used for wind or solar energy.

**Summary:** The overall focus of the comments deal with the need to improve public outreach, to find an effective open space program that will keep farming profitable, and to continue the support of municipal officials from throughout the farm community.

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