



MAIN OFFICE

Ashland Nature Center
P.O. Box 700, Hockessin, DE 19707
302.239.2334 • fax 302.239.2473
DNSinfo@DelNature.org • www.DelNature.org

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TO: John Schroeder, Public Hearing Officer

FROM: Brenna Goggin, Advocacy Manager
Brian Winslow, Executive Director

DATE: November 10, 2015

SUBJECT: Open Space Council Public Hearing on Standards and Criteria

The Delaware Nature Society is a private, non-profit, membership organization connecting people with the natural world to improve our environment through education, advocacy and conservation. Since its inception, one primary focus of the Delaware Nature Society's activities has been the preservation of ecologically significant areas and protection of Delaware's biodiversity. Moreover, the Nature Society was the first to identify with a team of scientists the state's unique ecological places worthy of preservation. In 1978, the organization published a book, *Delaware's Outstanding Natural Areas and Their Preservation*. Therefore, Delaware Nature Society fully supports the creation and implementation of the Standards and Criteria related to State Resource Areas.

The creation and implementation of the Standards and Criteria will ensure the protection of biological systems and are valued for: natural, cultural or geological significance; wildlife habitat; outdoor recreation; scenic beauty; conservation of water resources; buffering or connecting existing protected open spaces. Protection of these lands ensures the quality of life for present and future generations. When an ecosystem can be maintained with sound, principled, and rational land use policy and open space protection, local economies thrive because the quality of life is being protected and preserved.

- For every \$1.00 in tax revenue gained from residential development, the state of Delaware spends at minimum \$1.20 on services (roads, sewer, water, police, schools, etc.).
- The conservation of Natural Areas and State Resource Areas contributes millions of dollars to the Delaware economy each year through hunting, fishing, wildlife watching and tourism.
- The holistic approach taken in identifying and protecting these lands is essential in addressing cross-jurisdictional environmental issues, such as air and water quality improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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