

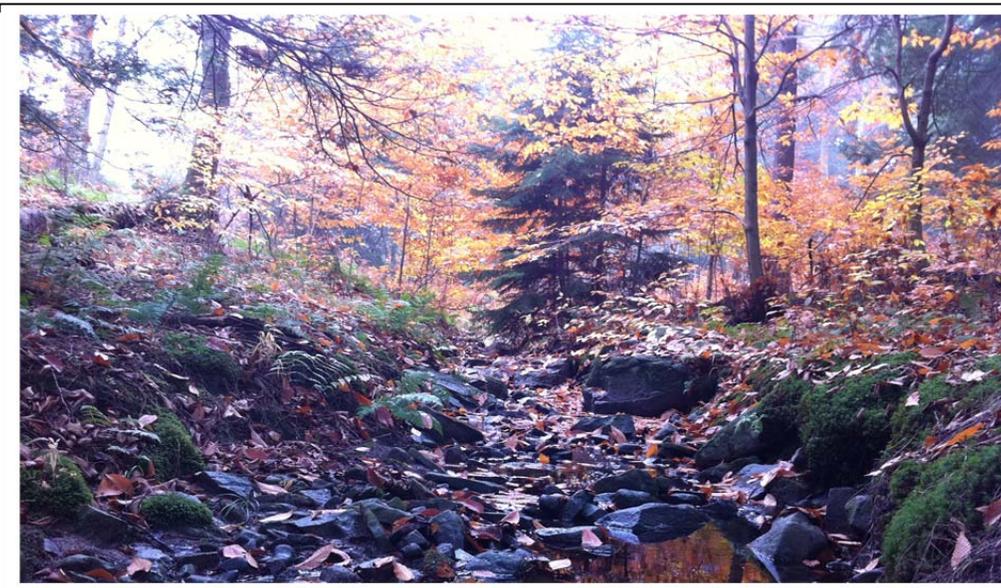
Pocono Forest & Waters Conservation Landscape **SUCCESS STORY**

By: Wildlands Conservancy

Maple Preserve Conservation and Access Plan

SUMMARY

Conservation and Public Access planning for over 1000 acres in the heart of the Pocono Plateau. With convenient access to major highways and other Pocono attractions, Wildlands Conservancy's Maple Tract and adjacent Fern Ridge Bog is the focus of natural resource inventory and study as is planning for sustainable access to some of the region's most significant natural Gems.



CHALLENGE

Newly acquired natural open space adjacent to hundreds of acres of protected bog/wetland communities requires solutions to manage trespass and provide for sustainable public access while protecting and enhancing the natural resources originally identified for protection.

With DCNR support, Wildlands Conservancy purchased approximately 180 acres adjacent to the existing Maple Preserve that is part of the local Fern Ridge Bog (headwaters of Tunkhannock Creek). This new property provides road access to the previously land locked Maple Preserve but came with it, significant trespass issues that impact some of the sensitive natural resources found there and across adjoining lands.

The initial need was to identify existing access, understand its impact, locate sensitive natural areas and ensure their protection, plan for more sustainable public access and address and solve trespass issues.

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

Tunkhannock Township –
Planning partner, supplying
access data and direction on
phased implementation.

The Nature Conservancy –
Planning partner, providing
natural resource data and
direction on access planning
through TNC property.

Hanover Engineering –
Contractor and Partner,
supplying contract services
and volunteer services in
support of planning and access
project.



Tunkhannock Township



SOLUTION

The project began with an inventory of the newly acquired land and adjacent Maple Preserve. Wildlands and our partners spent several weeks on the ground mapping access and collecting natural resource data. With support from our partners it quickly became apparent that our project scope needed to expand to take advantage of nearby access opportunities that would double the area for planned access. The data we continue to gather is being used to plan access closures, identify where access development needs to occur, locate areas of interest to lead public for passive educational opportunities and were to isolate sensitive natural resources and restrict access. The planning also speaks to the protection and enhancement of existing natural resources through management and stewardship of the Preserve.

RESULTS

Initial scope was for planning and inventory across 660 acres – through partnerships with TNC and Tunkhannock Twp., access planning now sees potential for a near doubling of the area and a through trail running east to west connecting two trail heads with parking. Potential for a highly visible, easily accessible, multi-use trail network, connecting over 10 miles of nature trails can result in a destination property if developed as such.

Over half a dozen areas with unsustainable access slated for closure.

New areas of the Maple Preserve identified for sustainable access to supplement existing trail network.

Buffer with sensitive natural areas identified and stewardship recommendations made for critical natural areas.

Wetland protection study directs necessary trail improvements and guides future permitting where required.

Contact

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