

Spring Creek Canyon Alliance

Statement of Concern and Recommendations

We the undersigned hereby submit this Statement of Concern and Recommendations for the permanent conservation of 1,800 acres of Rockview Penitentiary property that includes the Spring Creek Canyon and surrounding uplands. We respectfully request the State of Pennsylvania transfer stewardship of these 1,800 acres to the Pennsylvania Game Commission for their management of the land for Pennsylvania's wildlife resources.

The following lists the reasons for our position:

- 1) Spring Creek is a world-class trout fishery, and the surrounding cliffs are habitat for nine State-listed species of plants and animals that are globally rare, or rare in Pennsylvania. Transferring this property to entities that do not have the expertise, funding, or mandate to protect this ecosystem in its natural state is not in the best interests of this resource or the surrounding community.
- 2) The 1,800 acres of land propose to be transferred includes land classified by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy as a Biological Diversity Area (BDA). A BDA is an area containing natural features that are important in the support of plants or animals of special concern at either state or federal levels that has exemplary natural communities, or exceptional native biodiversity. The BDA extends from the bottom to the canyon to the uplands surrounding the canyon. A substantial buffer is necessary to protect the unique and sensitive ecological features in the canyon.
- 3) The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's December 29, 2006, report entitled: *Ecological Assessment and Planning for the Spring Creek Biological Diversity Area* states that: "*The Spring Creek Valley is a truly exceptional resource because of its diversity and uniqueness, and in comparison to other remaining communities of its type, it is extensive in size and in good ecological health.*"
- 4) The *Pennsylvania* and the *Centre County Natural Heritage Inventories* states that the canyon requires exceptional protection.
- 5) Due to the special resources within the Canyon, and their sensitivity to disturbance and pollution, the Conservancy recommended that all 1,800 acres either remain or revert to forest or forest buffer lands to protect the Spring Creek Valley
- 6) Finally, we are concerned with the long term future of this property. This land lies halfway between Bellefonte and State College, adjacent to an I-99 interchange in a rapidly urbanizing environment. Due to its extraordinarily high potential for development potential, it is imperative this land be transferred to an entity that has the mandate, expertise, and funds to hold and manage this land in its natural state in perpetuity. The Pennsylvania Game Commission is the only entity that can meet those criteria.