

Delaware County Water Quality, Natural Areas, and Wildlife Habitat Protection

On Your Ballot on November 3

Delaware County voters will have the opportunity to Vote YES for clean water and the protection of natural areas for future generations on the November 3, 2026 general election ballot. The measure would provide dedicated county funding for water quality protection, natural areas preservation, and parks throughout Delaware County.

Official Ballot Language, General Election Ballot

DELAWARE COUNTY WATER QUALITY, NATURAL AREAS, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION

Shall debt in the maximum principal amount of up to \$120 million be authorized for the purposes of financing land conservation, including protecting drinking water sources, water quality in rivers and creeks, and wildlife habitat, conserving trees to protect air quality, conserving wetlands to prevent flooding, providing greenways and parks, and protecting natural areas from development, to be incurred by the County as debt approved by the voters, requiring full public disclosure and annual independent audits of all project spending?

YES

NO

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What will the money be spent on?

A: Funds would be used to protect Delaware County's last remaining natural areas and wildlife habitat before they are lost forever to development. Funds can only be used to:

- protect drinking water sources,
- protect water quality in rivers and creeks,
- protect wildlife habitat,
- conserve trees to protect air quality,
- conserve wetlands to prevent flooding,
- providing greenways and parks,
- protect natural areas from development.

Q: What's the bottom line? How much will it cost me? If approved, how much will my taxes go up?

A: The average homeowner in Delaware County would pay \$24 per year. \$2.00 a month is a very small price to pay to protect our water quality, preserve natural areas, and protect our remaining natural areas.

Q: How will I know the money will be wisely spent? What kind of accountability is there to the taxpayers?

A: The ballot language requires full public disclosure of all project spending.

- This includes annual independent audits of all project spending.
- Funds can only be used for the purposes stated in the proposal and cannot be used for other purposes.
- Funds raised locally could be matched by funds from the state and federal governments and private sources.

Q: Would this bring additional resources to the county? Will the funds be leveraged?

A: Yes. water quality, natural area, and wildlife habitat protection funding would leverage two to three times that amount in matching funds from municipal, state, federal, and private sources. For every \$1 Delaware County provides we can expect to receive \$2-3 in additional funds from state, federal, and private sources.

Q: Will this money allow the county to restart the Delaware County Green Ways Grant Program?

A: Yes. The Green Ways Grant Program would again be able to provide grants to assist local municipalities and non-profit organizations to protect water quality, natural areas, and wildlife habitat throughout all parts of the county. Projects could include maintaining greenway corridors, parks, and trails that serve both the environment and the community.

Q: Can any of these funds go to Delco Woods?

A: Yes, if Delco Woods meets the requirements of **Delaware County Water Quality, Natural Areas, and Wildlife Habitat Protection** bond. Delco Woods is a county park, and these funds could be used for any Delaware County park.

Q: What are the benefits of county-level investments in green space?

A: Preserved open spaces, natural areas, forests, and wildlife habitat provide many benefits for residents of Delaware County. They include:

- Protecting and improving drinking water quality, keeping our rivers and streams clean;
- Protecting the county's last open spaces from new warehouse and data center development, keeping this new development from polluting and using all of our water and destroying our natural areas;
- Ensuring future generations have access to clean water and natural areas; and
- Reducing flood impacts.

Q: How do I know my part of Delaware County will get its fair share of the funds?

A: The intent of **Delaware County Water Quality, Natural Areas, and Wildlife Habitat Protection** bond is to provide funding for water quality protection, wildlife and natural area conservation, open space, and parks throughout the county. Projects will be selected by a committee of Delaware County residents based on objective criteria. Final decisions will be up to the County Council. The measure will also provide funding for the Green Ways Grant program, which has awarded grant to municipalities and nonprofit organizations in every part Delaware County.

Q: Do other Pennsylvania communities raise money to invest in land conservation?

A: Yes. Since 1988, over 150 county and municipal ballot measures that support the acquisition of land for water quality, wildlife, natural areas, and open space have been approved by Pennsylvania voters.

- Twelve county conservation finance measures have been on the ballot since 1988, including nearby Bucks, Chester, and Montgomery Counties, and eleven have passed.
- In Delaware County, Concord, Middletown, Upper Providence, and Radnor Townships voters have all approved dedicated funding for open space.

Q: How much money will be raised?

A: This referendum would give the county authority to borrow up to \$120 million for the purposes of

- protecting drinking water sources,
- protecting water quality in rivers and creeks,
- protecting wildlife habitat,
- conserving trees to protect air quality,
- conserving wetlands to prevent flooding,
- providing greenways and parks,
- and protecting natural areas from development.

The county will likely not issue all of the bond at once, but rather borrow in smaller amounts as projects are ready.

Q: Why can't the County pay for this some other way? Why do we need to have a referendum?

A: Delaware County has no dedicated source of funds to help protect water quality, preserve wildlife habitat, or protect natural areas from development. Placing this measure on the ballot gives Delaware County voters a chance to decide whether or not they want to preserve water quality and wildlife habitat.

Q: What will happen if the bond does not pass?

A: Delaware County does not have other dedicated funds to purchase the land if the citizens vote the bonds down in November. Many of our last remaining natural areas and wildlife habitat would likely be developed without permanent protection. There would be no funding for the Green Ways Grant program. The County would also be leaving millions of dollars on the table in local townships, Harrisburg, and Washington, DC, which require matching funds for their grants.

Q: Isn't there enough land and water already protected?

A: Much of the land you see as natural land across our county is privately owned and can legally be developed. In order to protect the water, wildlife, and natural areas that we enjoy today, the **Delaware County Water Quality, Natural Areas, and Wildlife Habitat Protection** measure would invest to protect land forever.

Currently, about 12% of the total land area in Delaware County is in permanent protected status. By comparison, Montgomery County has nearly 15% of its land protected and Chester County has over 30% of its land protected.

Q: How do I vote to approve the DELAWARE COUNTY WATER QUALITY, NATURAL AREAS, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION?

A: The **Delaware County Water Quality, Natural Areas, and Wildlife Habitat Protection** measure is on your November 3 General Election Ballot.

- Referendums are typically placed at the end of the ballot. Please be sure to vote the entire ballot.
- Vote YES

Important reminders:

- Make sure you are registered to vote. The last day to register is October 19, 2026.
- You can request a mail-in or absentee ballot. The last day to request a mail-in or absentee ballot: Oct. 27, 2026
- You can vote at your assigned polling place on November 3. Polls are open from 7:00 AM until 8:00 P.M.