

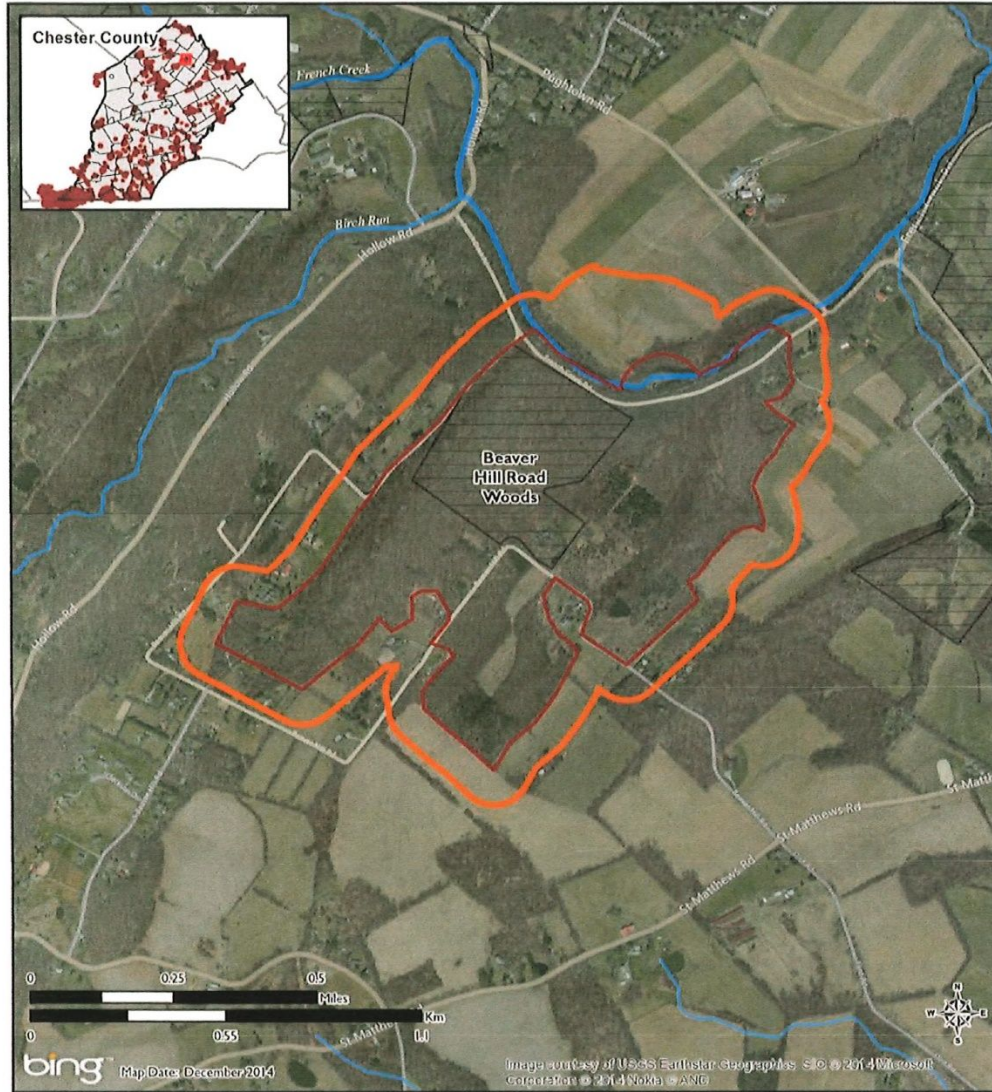
ZONING

390 Attachment 12

Township of West Vincent

Appendix L

West Vincent Township Natural Heritage Areas
[Added 10-17-2022 by Ord. No. 202]



**Beaver Hill Road Woods
Natural Heritage Area**

Forest habitat supports a population of spring coralroot, a critically imperiled plant species in Pennsylvania, and a population of a sensitive species of concern.

Significance Rank:
STATE



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Areas
Core Habitat
Supporting Landscape
Other Supporting Landscape
Conservation Lands

WEST VINCENT CODE


Beaver Hill Road Woods NHA

PNHP Significance Rank: *State*

Site Description

Beaver Hill Road Woods NHA is a wooded area dominated by tulip poplar and silver maple near Wilsons Corner. This NHA is more than 200 acres in size, including a few residences. The surrounding area has been fragmented by agriculture and residential development. The steep bank south of French Creek and two tributaries are included in this NHA, which provides habitat for **spring coral root**, a plant species of concern. Beaver Hill Road Woods NHA also supports a **sensitive species of concern**, not named at the request of the jurisdictional agency overseeing its protection.

Species or natural communities of concern that can be found in this NHA include the following:

Species or Natural Community Name	PNHP Rank ¹		PA Legal Status ¹	Last Seen	Quality ²
	Global	State			
Spring Coral-root (<i>Corallorhiza wisteriana</i>) 	G5	SI	TU (PE)	5/22/1999	BC
Sensitive species of concern A ³	---	---	---	5/6/2009	B

¹See the PNHP website (<http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/RankStatusDef.aspx>) for an explanation of PNHP ranks and legal status. A legal status in parentheses is a status change recommended by the Pennsylvania Biological Survey.

²See NatureServe website (<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/lorankguide.htm>) for an explanation of quality ranks.

³This species is not named by request of the jurisdictional agency responsible for its protection.

Spring coral-root has been documented from Pennsylvania west to Oregon and south to Arizona and Florida. It is found through much of the United States, but is at the northern edge of its range in Pennsylvania and has been found in several southern counties. This orchid is saprophytic, meaning that it gets its nutrients from organic material instead of photosynthesis. Spring coral root may not flower every year, and flowers only last a short time, making surveys for this species difficult.

Threats and Stresses

Disturbances to the forest, such as logging and development, may eliminate the existing habitat. Invasive species would also likely colonize any newly disturbed areas.

Specific threats and stresses to the elements present at this site include the following:

- Logging may disturb the small amount of remaining habitat, as well as cause changes in hydrology and allow for the introduction of additional invasive species.
- Invasive species are present in this site and may displace native vegetation and alter the habitat required by the species of concern.
- Over-browsing by white-tailed deer impacts all of the native vegetation and structure of the habitat.

Conservation Recommendations

All of Beaver Hill Road Woods NHA is privately owned, with a portion protected by a conservation easement. The steep hillsides along the streams should limit development opportunities. Avoid logging any additional areas and maintain a forested buffer along the streams to protect the water quality and minimize erosion.

ZONING

The following steps are recommended to ensure the persistence of these species at this site:

- Protect the existing forested areas from logging and disturbance along the forest edge. Maintaining as many intact habitats as possible, given the location within a residential area, will help to preserve habitat for as many species as possible.
- Attempt to control the introduction and spread of invasive species. Remove invasives when possible, especially species that have not yet established a stronghold, which will be easier and more effective than targeting established populations. Further disturbance within this habitat will create additional opening for the establishment and spread of invasive species.
- Monitor deer density and maintain it at a level that is able to be supported by the landscape.

Location

Municipalities: *West Vincent Township, East Vincent Township*

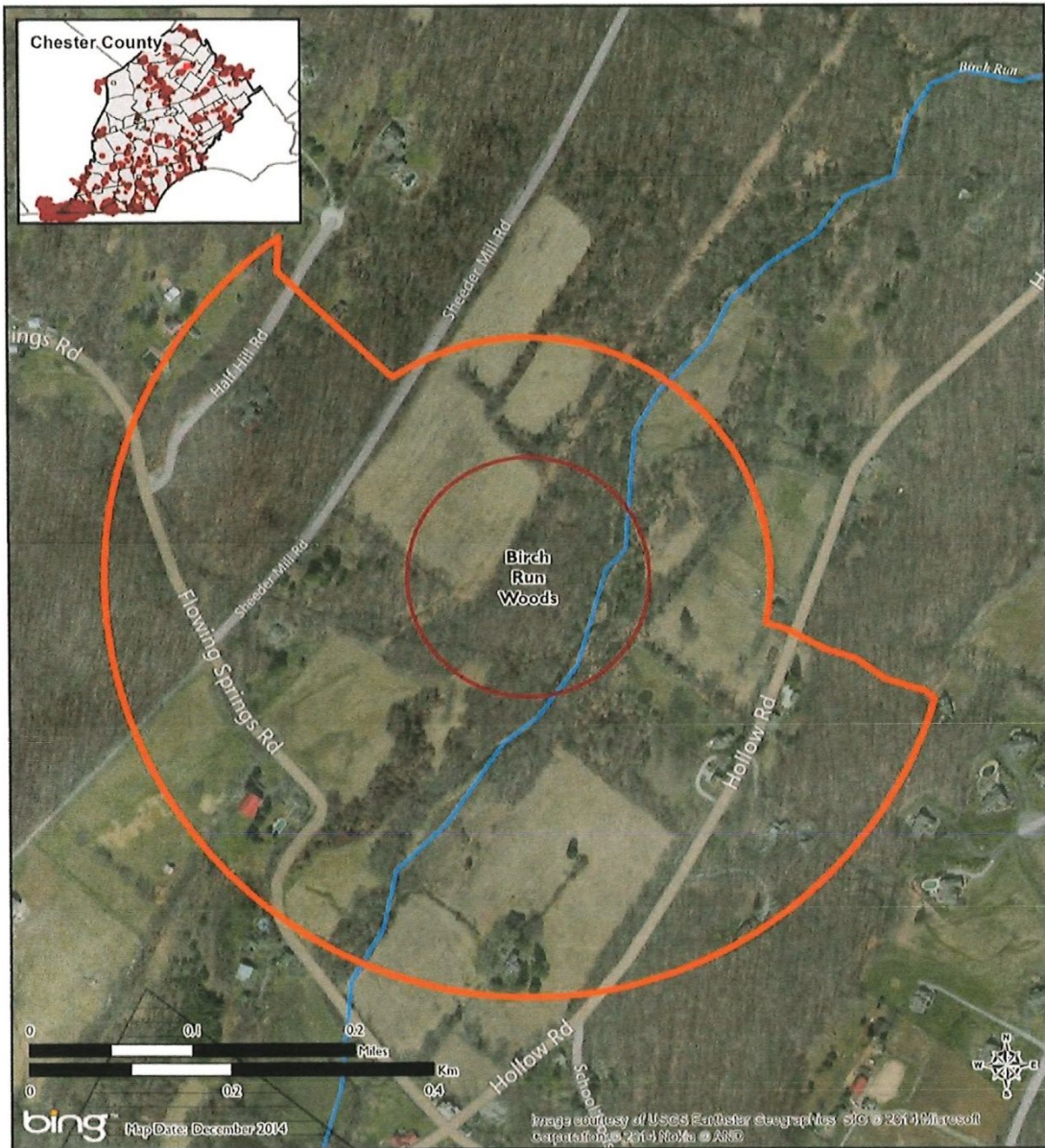
USGS quads: *Phoenixville, Pottstown*

Previous CNHI reference: *French Creek-East-Chester Co*

Associated NHAs: *None*

Overlapping Protected Lands: *French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust Conservation Easement*

WEST VINCENT CODE



**Birch Run Woods
Natural Heritage Area**

Disturbed upland forest supports a population of wild kidney bean, a plant species of concern.

Significance Rank:
STATE



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Areas	
	Core Habitat
	Supporting Landscape
	Other Supporting Landscape
	Conservation Lands

ZONING


Birch Run Woods NHA

PNHP Significance Rank: *State*

Site Description

This NHA is located along a forested hillside above Birch Run. A power line right-of-way cuts through the NHA along the edge of the forested habitat. Agricultural fields make up the northern end of the NHA and surrounding habitat. The disturbed forest along the right-of-way is dominated by a number of invasive shrub species, including multiflora rose, Oriental bittersweet, and Japanese honeysuckle. This habitat also supports a small population of **wild kidney bean**, a plant species of concern.

Species or natural communities of concern that can be found in this NHA include the following:

Species or Natural Community Name	PNHP Rank ¹		PA Legal Status ¹	Last Seen	Quality ²
	Global	State			
Wild Kidney Bean (<i>Phaseolus polystachios</i>) 	G5	S1S2	N (PE)	10/7/2001	C
Sensitive species of concern A ³	S	---	---	6/2/2000	E
Sensitive species of concern B ³	S	---	---	6/2/2000	E

¹See the PNHP website (<http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/RankStatusDef.aspx>) for an explanation of PNHP ranks and legal status. A legal status in parentheses is a status change recommended by the Pennsylvania Biological Survey.

²See NatureServe website (<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/eorankguide.htm>) for an explanation of quality ranks.

³This species is not named by request of the jurisdictional agency responsible for its protection.

Wild kidney bean is distributed across most of the eastern United States. Its range stretches from New York west to Michigan and south to Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania it has a scattered distribution, with the majority of occurrences in the southeastern counties. Wild kidney bean can be found in a variety of habitats, including open woods, thickets, banks, and slopes.

Threats and Stresses

A large number of invasive species occupy this habitat and may continue to spread and change the overall species composition. Maintenance along the right-of-way may disturb natural habitats with mowing or herbicide spraying. Excessive deer browse may hamper the growth of native species.

Specific threats and stresses to the elements present at this site include the following:

- Invasive species are present in many areas of this site and may displace native vegetation, including species of concern.
- Herbicide and fertilizer used along right-of-ways, roads, and fields may wash into the forested area and degrade the habitat or cause direct mortality.
- Succession of the shrubby habitat may shade the area too much for the wild kidney bean to persist.
- Over-browsing by white-tailed deer impacts all of the native vegetation and structure of the habitat.

Conservation Recommendations

Attempt to remove invasive species, while taking care to not open large gaps that may cause an increase in other invasive species. Minimize disturbance along the right-of-way and other portions of the NHA that will fragment the existing habitat.

WEST VINCENT CODE

The following steps are recommended to ensure the persistence of these species at this site:

- Attempt to control the introduction and spread of invasive species. Remove invasives when possible, especially species that have not yet established a stronghold, which will be easier and more effective than targeting established populations.
- Limit the application of chemicals within the NHA and surrounding areas in order to protect the quality of the habitat.
- Periodically cut woody vegetation to maintain the current habitat conditions. Time maintenance with consideration to limit disturbance of wild kidney bean.
- Monitor deer density and maintain it at a level that is able to be supported by the landscape.

Location

Municipalities: *West Vincent Township*

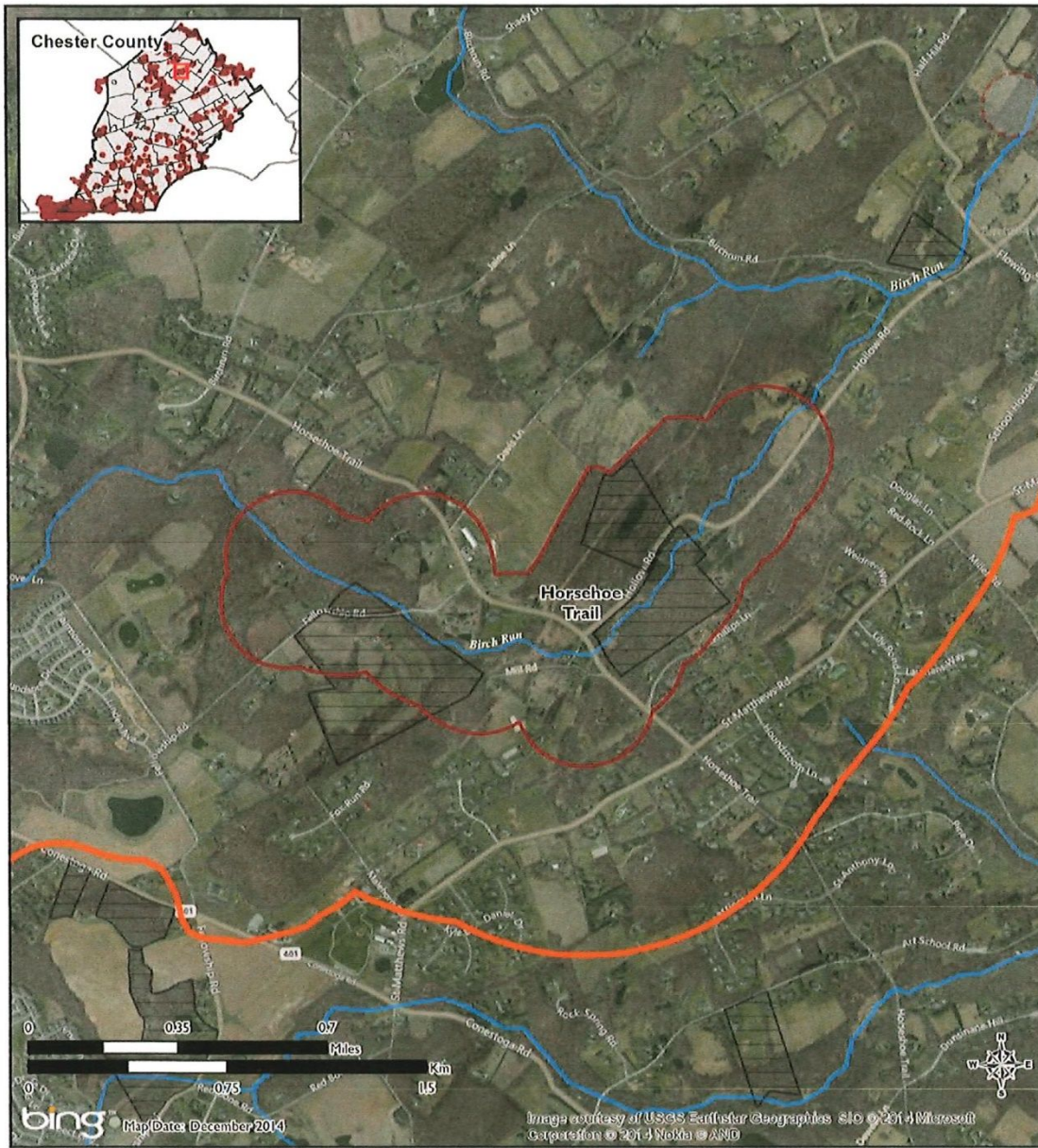
USGS quads: *Pottstown*

Previous CNHI reference: *None*

Associated NHAs: *None*

Overlapping Protected Lands: *None*

ZONING



Horseshoe Trail Natural Heritage Area

Wetlands at this site support a population of a sensitive species of concern.

Significance Rank:
STATE



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Areas

- Core Habitat
- Supporting Landscape
- Other Core Habitat
- Other Supporting Landscape
- Conservation Lands

WEST VINCENT CODE

Horseshoe Trail NHA

PNHP Significance Rank: *State*

Site Description

The Horseshoe Trail NHA encompasses a mostly forested landscape surrounding Birch Run. Residential housing is spread intermittently throughout the NHA, which is bordered by active agricultural operations. Birch Run and the adjacent forested landscape found within Horseshoe Trail NHA provide suitable habitat for a **sensitive species of concern** that is not named at the request of the jurisdictional agency overseeing its protection.

Species or natural communities of concern that can be found in this NHA include the following:

Species or Natural Community Name	PNHP Rank ¹		PA Legal Status ¹	Last Seen	Quality ²
	Global	State			
Sensitive species of concern A ³	S	---	---	4/16/2007	E

¹See the PNHP website (<http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/RankStatusDef.aspx>) for an explanation of PNHP ranks and legal status. A legal status in parentheses is a status change recommended by the Pennsylvania Biological Survey.

²See NatureServe website (<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/eorankguide.htm>) for an explanation of quality ranks.

³This species is not named by request of the jurisdictional agency responsible for its protection.

Threats and Stresses

The riparian zone and adjacent forest within this NHA are surrounded by active agricultural fields and encroaching residential development.

Specific threats and stresses to the elements present at this site include the following:

- Degradation of water quality or quantity can have a negative impact on the habitat supporting the species of concern found at this location. The storm water runoff from roadways, suburban development and agriculture should be considered a potential source of significant contamination. Runoff from these sources has significantly higher levels of sediment, nutrients, pesticides, herbicides, and other pollutants than runoff filtered through a natural habitat.
- Fragmentation due to development or infrastructure activities can result in habitat loss and degradation of the site.
- Exotic invasive plant species threaten to compete with and displace native species.
- Over-browsing by white-tailed deer is a serious threat to the overall plant diversity and forest regeneration. An overabundance of deer can create the effect of park-like forests in which the native plant understory and vertical stratification are greatly reduced.

Conservation Recommendations

This site will be best protected by maintaining the integrity of vegetative buffers along Birch Run and assuring a consistent hydrologic regime.

The following steps are recommended to ensure the persistence of these species at this site:

- Protect the riparian zone and repair others that have been degraded by encouraging the growth of native vegetation. Careful determination is needed to avoid planting trees in floodplains that should remain as open canopied herbaceous wetland habitats. These habitats should be

ZONING

maintained in their current open condition, with tree plantings to occur uphill of areas containing hydric soils.

- Avoid fragmenting the existing forests and wetlands with additional buildings or infrastructure. The primary conservation concern for this habitat should be to focus on safeguarding the quality and expanse of the natural landscape. While providing the primary habitat for the populations of species of concern, the natural landscape also helps to protect water quality of the streams that drain through this NHA.
- Control invasive species of plants to prevent native species from being crowded out by introduced species. Target pioneer populations of invasive plants for immediate and continued removal. It is much easier and more effective to keep a place invasive-free than to try and repair a heavily infested habitat. Invasive species management should be coordinated by individuals familiar with the native species as well as the invasive species present. Continual invasive species monitoring and control will be necessary.
- Reduce the deer density in the area. Uncommon species of native plants are particularly susceptible to deer herbivory.

Location

Municipalities: *West Vincent Township*

USGS quads: *Pottstown, Downingtown*

Previous CNHI reference: *None*

Associated NHAs: *None*

Overlapping Protected Lands: *French And Pickering Creek Trust Property, Agricultural Easement*