

# Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Plainfield Township  
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## Clean Fill Regulations Ordinance (Awarded 2020)

### SUMMARY

Plainfield Township includes dozens of inactive quarries, which are mostly former slate quarries. A goal of this project was to promote returning former quarries to a productive use, but in a way that makes sure that the activity occurs in an environmentally safe manner that will protect groundwater, creeks and public health. The Township will now require a zoning permit for use of purported clean fill. As part of the permit, the owner of the property or the entity depositing the fill would provide a written statement describing the sources of the material. For larger fill operations, the Township has the authority to require periodic random testing of the materials by an independent laboratory, as a condition of zoning permit approval.

### FUNDING

**Grant Award:**  
**\$10,000.00**

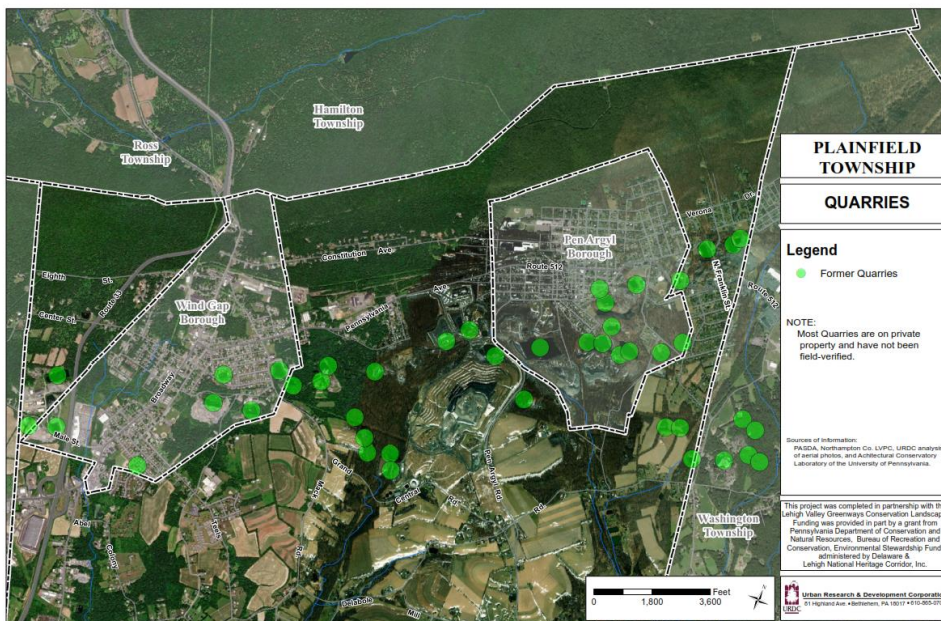
**Match:**  
**\$9,350.00**

**Total Project Cost:**  
**\$18,700.00**

### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

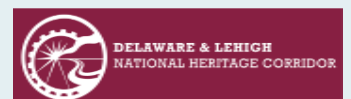
This project was completed with assistance provided by the following key partners:

- 1). Plainfield Township Environmental Advisory Council: Reviewed draft ordinance text and provided comments over several public meetings.
- 2). Urban Research and Development Corporation: Provided technical planning professional services to Plainfield Township.



### CHALLENGE

For many years, there was little real oversight of the fill that occurred in many quarries in Pennsylvania. As a result, in some cases, organized crime was involved in dumping contaminated materials, in order to avoid the costs of proper treatment. Fortunately, New Jersey recently passed a new state law that provides much more assertive oversight over the trucking operations involved with fill, including trucking across state lines. Large amounts of fill also occurred in Pennsylvania because Pennsylvania considered many materials to be clean fill that were not considered to be clean fill in New Jersey and New York. Pennsylvania's environmental standards for fill continue to be more lenient than the standards in place in New York and New Jersey. This disparity creates the economic incentive to transport fill to Pennsylvania. The contamination risks are particularly high in quarries that have water or that are close to the water table or where contaminants could reach groundwater or surface waters. It is much more difficult to address contamination after it occurs, and much more difficult to remove contaminated materials than to dump them. There also are concerns about the potential contamination of fill used in other projects, particularly residential developments, where there is a higher health risk.



## SOLUTION

Plainfield Township has developed a Clean Fill Regulations Ordinance which addresses and accomplishes the following:

- 1). Coordinates the local regulations with existing Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulations.
- 2). Requires additional testing of the fill materials and water quality, because that process would assist in carrying out the DEP standards.
- 3). Fill operations within a water-filled quarry would be required to obtain special exception approval from the Zoning Hearing Board. A special exception process would be mainly valuable if the Township felt that there may be a need to add site-specific conditions beyond what is appropriate in a Township-wide ordinance.
- 4). Requires water testing to be conducted in certain instances, where determined to be necessary.

## RESULTS

Project deliverables include the following:

- 1). Aerial Map of all Plainfield Township Quarries
- 2). Map of all Plainfield Township Quarries (without aerial)
- 3). Draft Clean Fill Regulations Ordinance (dated 11/30/2021)

### Contact



[www.LVgreenways.org](http://www.LVgreenways.org)

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