

# Natural Resources

## **Goal:**

**Preserve and protect the natural environment, including all significant natural features by minimizing the potential impact of human activity on our environment.**

Luray is defined by the health of its people and surrounding natural resources. These resources must be protected in order to maintain the rural character of the Town and surrounding region. It is vital that this character is preserved for the personal and business of the local populations. This plan intends to ensure this through the following objectives detailed below.

## **Objectives**

**Objective 1:** Minimize the impact of new development on natural systems by adopting low impact development standards and conservation subdivision techniques.

**Strategies:**

- a. Enhance landscaping of new parking lots and commercial areas as a means to aid stormwater management and beautification.



**An example of a parking lot with heavy landscaping.**

- b. Promote the protection of existing trees, particularly during the development process.

- c. Encourage new developments to place all utilities underground.

- d. Encourage the tree plantings along new streets, roads, and riparian areas.

- e. Encourage on-site water retention to reduce runoff and non-point source pollution.

**Objective 2:** Identify, preserve and protect land of significant agricultural, environmental, and scenic value located in and near the Town.

**Strategies:** a. Work with Page County and landowners to identify and preserve land adjacent to the Town with significant scenic view sheds and agricultural value. The Town and County are encouraged to consider land preservation techniques such as the purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and voluntary conservations easements.

b. Identify and protect riparian and other environmentally sensitive areas located within the Town.

**Objective 3:** Minimize outdoor lighting in order to reduce glare and impacts on the night sky.

**Strategies:** a. Consider adopting standards to ensure that exterior lighting is fully shielded and of minimal necessary height to prevent unnecessary off-site glare.

b. Create a brochure for the public with diagrams that explains the benefits of shielding lighting and shows suggested lighting fixtures that accomplish this objective.



**Well-placed recycling bins could be the first step in initiating a basic recycling program in Luray.**

**Objective 4:** Achieve energy savings by encouraging land use and site design practices that encourage energy-savings and efficiency.

**Strategies:** a. Encourage site design techniques that promote energy efficiency:

- Orient buildings north and south for passive solar gain.
- Plant deciduous trees to shade southern exposure in summer.
- Plant evergreen trees to shield northern and northwestern exposure from winter winds.
- Plant shade trees in parking lots to reduce summer temperatures.

b. Where appropriate encourage mixed-use walkable developments on vacant and redeveloped lands in order to reduce the necessity of vehicle trips.

**Objective 5:** Reduce the volume of solid waste taken to the Battle Creek Landfill.

- Strategies:**
- a. Take steps to implement a basic recycling program.
  - b. Review the steps taken by other small-to-mid-size towns and cities that have recently implemented a recycling program and identify the resources, issues, and potential cost needed to start such a program in Luray.

**Objective 6:** Protect streams that transverse the Town.

- Strategies:**
- a. Work with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to protect and preserve fishery resources.
  - b. Maintain the water quality below the Town's waster water treatment plant.