TOWNSHIP OF BLAIRSOWN
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

RESOLUTION 2024-115

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE FOODSHED ALLIANCE'S PAULINS KILL NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY RECONNAISSANCE

WHEREAS, the Paulins Kill flows approximately 7 miles through Blairstown Township in Warren County, extending downstream to Knowlton Township (river mile 4.42) and upstream from Hardwick Township (river mile 11.42), and features eight (8) direct tributaries:

- An unnamed creek from Lake Susquehanna/Sandhill Road -9.6 miles
- Jacksonburg Creek - 12.17 miles
- An unnamed creek from Lake Genevieve- 1.1 miles
- An unnamed Limestone Marsh Creek -10.04 miles
- Blair Creek, - 10.26 miles
- An unnamed creek from Hardwick Meadows - 10.51 miles
- An unnamed Mingle Road Creek -10.91 miles; and

WHEREAS, a 5.27-mile segment of Yards Creek flows through Blairstown Township, originating from the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Hardwick Township and entering Knowlton Township, where it confluences with the Paulins Kill; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Expansion Project Team (the "Project Team") in partnership with the Foodshed Alliance and their Paulins Kill Watershed Community, began evaluating potential Wild and Scenic River eligibility and suitability for the Paulins Kill, the second largest tributary to the Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River, to be potentially included in the existing Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Designation; and

WHEREAS, Knowlton Township, Blairstown Township, and Hardwick Township supported the inclusion of the portions of the Paulins Kill and associated tributaries running through their municipalities in such designation and adopted the following resolutions in support:

- Knowlton Township Resolution No. 2023-74, adopted on September 11, 2023
- Blairstown Township Resolution No. 2023-101, adopted on November 22, 2023
- Hardwick Township Resolution No. 2023-63, adopted on October 18, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Project Team researched Warren County's Paulins Kill resources and identified the following potential Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) (as defined in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act) in the Knowlton, Blairstown and Hardwick Paulins Kill Segment:

- Trout production waters, which are afforded a C1 designation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.4.
- Paulins Kill Valley Trail, which is historic and recreational value and is managed by NJDEP as part of the Kittatinny Valley State Park
- Habitat for, and known presence of, multiple state and federal threatened and endangered plants and animals
- Unique geological features, such as White Lake's marl deposits
- Multiple National Register of Historic Places Listed & Eligible Districts and Properties, such as the Blairstown Historic District and Footbridge; and

WHEREAS, in January 2024, with the support of the Project Team, the Foodshed Alliance (a 501(c)(3) organization) announced its intention to instead initiate the reconnaissance process to pursue full independent National Wild and Scenic River designation for the entire Paulins Kill and its associated tributaries; and

WHEREAS, the Foodshed Alliance felt compelled to champion this project as part of its ongoing commitment to fostering a healthy, resilient foodshed that supports farmers, nourishes people, respects the land, and strengthens communities; and

WHEREAS, this effort aims to protect and enhance the unique values of the Paulins Kill and associated tributaries, as well as to provide local communities with the many benefits that such national recognition and designation can offer; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service (NPS) publication: "Partnership Wild and Scenic River – A Primer", (a copy of which is on file with the Township Clerk) explains that a designated Wild and Scenic River ("WSR") must meet the following requirements:

1. Be "free-flowing," which means it must exist or flow "in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway." However, "the existence of low dams, diversion works, or other minor structures at the time any river is proposed for inclusion … shall not automatically bar its consideration".
2. Have at least one ORV: outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values (ORVs) that are located in the river or on its shorelands, contribute to the functioning of the river ecosystem, and / or owe their location or existence to the presence of the river.
3. Local support to create a local Management Council usually comprised of local municipal, county and state partner representatives with a national partner representatives liaison responsible to create a Memorandum of Understanding, and to develop and implement the Comprehensive Management Plan Local support for the designation, as expressed by a municipal resolution of the municipal governing body, A501(c)(3) organization, such as the Foodshed Alliance, that can establish a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service to pass through funds appropriated annually for the Partnership Wild and Scenic River Program; and

WHEREAS, Partnership WSR designation does not allow for federal land acquisition, cannot change local zoning ordinances and state laws, and cannot extinguish existing landowner rights; and

WHEREAS, the Project Team reports using NJDEP's GeoWeb and Northeast Regional Habitat Conservation Priorities GIS mapping to review over thirty miles of Blairstown Township's Paulins Kill and associated tributaries, identifying numerous potential ORVs at the national, regional or state level including

- Extremely high ecological values associated with climate resilience, ecoregion and state ranked biodiversity values, habitats for or known presence of multiple state listed, threatened, and endangered plants and animals including state threatened and of concerns mussels in the main stem Paulins Kill, some in areas protected as Natural Heritage Priority Sites such as: Limestone Ridge Marsh, Three Nest Cliff, cold waters supporting trout production, Vernal Pools and Habitats,
- Geologically unique features including areas with a Till Surficial Aquifer, A-ranked Ground Water Recharge Areas, and Wetlands and Open Waters, a rare Sand and Gravel Surficial Aquifer
- Multiple National Register of Historic Places listed and eligible Archeological/Cultural locations, structures and districts including Morgan Manor – listed, Blair Presbyterial Academy and Blairstown Historic Districts - listed
- Recreationally notable resources such as Ridge and Valley Conservancy's Limestone Ridge Preserve, Hemlock Ridge, New Jersey Natural Lands Trust Limestone Ridge and Beech Ridge, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey Yards Creek Preserve, multiple NJDEP Fishing Access Sites, the Paulins Kill Valley Trail (which is co-aligned with the September 11th National Memorial Trail); locations for hunting, fishing, hiking, boating and others; Blairstown Townshp-owned Footbridge Park; and

WHEREAS, Blairstown Township's 2020 Master Plan Re-Examination, January 2019 Open Space Plan, and the Blairstown Historic Preservation Commission website highlight the township's understanding of the inextricable connection between the Paulins Kill and its tributaries and their impact on Blairstown's history, as well as its past, present, and future agricultural value. These documents also underscore the township's

recognition of the importance of preserving its country and rural character, providing diverse and high-quality natural recreational opportunities, and fostering agritourism; and

WHEREAS, Blairstown Township has consistently demonstrated its commitment to protecting open space, farmland, and historic properties, all of which rely on a healthy watershed. This commitment is evident through the preservation of over 1,900 acres in collaboration with Warren County, the Ridge and Valley Conservancy, the Natural Land Trust, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and as well as showing support for The Nature Conservancy's initiative to remove the Paulina Dam These efforts have resulted in an extensive trail system, with access to lakes, streams, and creeks, and

WHEREAS much of this preserved land is part of The Nature Conservancy's Bobcat Alley, an ambitious initiative to build a protected wildlife corridor that provides state-endangered bobcats and other wildlife space to move between the Kittatinny and Highlands ridges within New Jersey's Appalachian Mountains; and

WHEREAS, it is understood, as explained by the Project Team, that this is a multi-year educational community partnership process, that at this time includes the follow plans:

1) The results of the municipal resolution reconnaissance support outreach effort phase will be shared with each municipality to consider a second resolution, one that demonstrates support for seeking a Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Study Bill.
2) The complete results of the municipal resolution outreach efforts, which will include the reconnaissance and bill support resolutions, shall be presented to each county and their state representatives seeking support for a Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Study Bill.
3) A final package that combines the support resolutions and legislator letters shall be provided to our Congressional Representatives for next steps.
4) If the Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Study Bill is signed into law, it would appropriate federal funds to establish a Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Task Force/Management Council to develop a Paulins Kill Management Plan, review and finalize eligibility and suitability requirements, and develop a formal NPS Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Study Report that must be completed within three years.
5) The NPS Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic River Study Report is required for congressional representatives to seek an amendment to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, that would establish the Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic Rivers Act designating the eligible and suitable segments of the Paulins Kill and associated tributaries as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Township of Blairstown, supports the reconnaissance phase of the Paulins Kill National Wild and Scenic River Project as described herein with the goal of seeking a full Congressional Paulins Kill Wild and Scenic Study Bill.

Date: December 26, 2024
Motion: Orcutt
Second: Lance
VOTE: Lance—yes, Lohman—yes, Makatura—yes, Orcutt—yes, Moorhead—yes

CERTIFICATION: It is hereby certified that this is a true and accurate copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Blairstown, Warren County, NJ at a Regular Meeting held on December 26, 2024.

Kristin Shipps

Kristin Shipps, RMC
Municipal Clerk