

# WILMINGTON TOWNSHIP

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<u>PNDI Rank</u>		<u>Legal Status</u>	
Global	State	Fed.	State

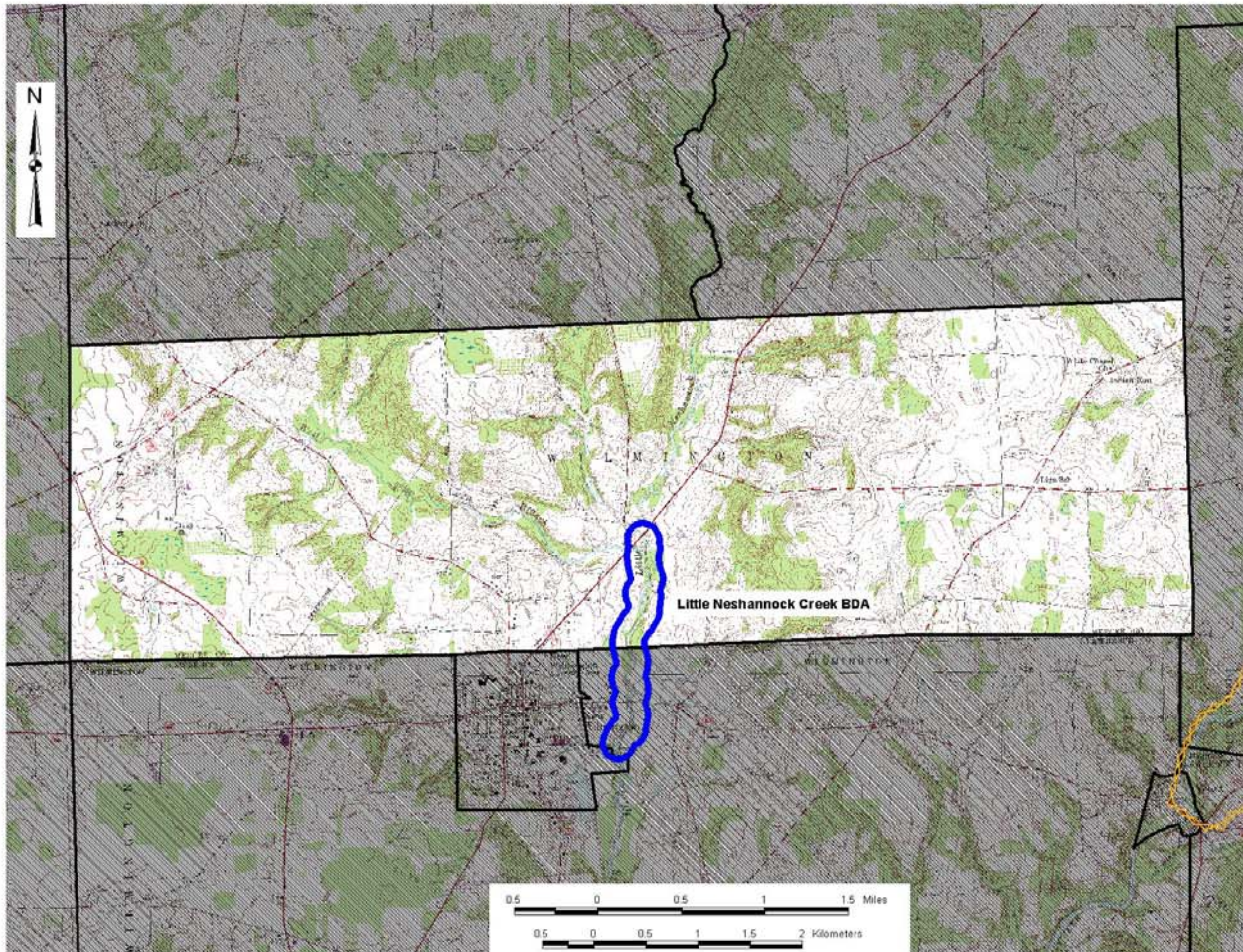
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*NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS:*

LITTLE NESHANNOCK CREEK BDA	<i>Notable Significance</i>	
Special Animal 1	G3G4 S2	PT

*MANAGED LANDS:* None

# Wilmington Township



## Wilmington Township Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory

### Biological Diversity Areas:

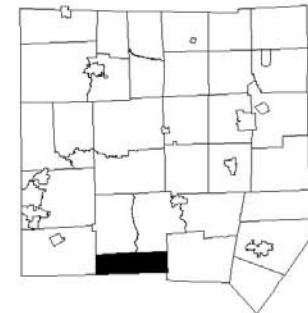
Little Neshannock Creek

### Landscape Conservation Areas:

None

### Managed Areas:

None



### Map Legend

-  Biological Diversity Area (BDA)
-  Landscape Conservation Area (LCA)
-  Audubon Society Important Bird Area (IBA)
-  Managed Area
-  Municipal Boundary

## WILMINGTON TOWNSHIP

Wilmington Township is located in southern Mercer County just to the north of New Wilmington in Lawrence County. There is one Natural Heritage Area and no managed lands located in Wilmington Township.

### Little Neshannock Creek BDA

Little Neshannock Creek at the Mercer - Lawrence County line and just south of PA Route 208 is the location of a Pennsylvania animal species of special concern (**Special Animal 1**). The creek flows through a landscape of fields and shrub swamps. In its upstream reaches, the creek receives considerable nutrient input from agricultural activities. Most of the creek within the BDA exhibits minimal vegetated riparian zones, especially upstream of the bridge crossing of Route 208. Downstream the creek holds well developed riparian buffers composed of shrubby thickets of black willow (*Salix nigra*), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*) and small sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*).

PA Route 208 crosses the creek in the middle of the BDA. Near to and upstream of the bridge the width of the vegetated riparian area decreases to 10 meters or less.

#### Threats and Stresses

During the survey of Little Neshannock Creek, heavy silt loads were observed in the creek. Heavy silts indicate that activities upstream may be contributing excessive silt to the creek. PA Route 208 crosses Little Neshannock Creek and may, along with the inputs from nearby New Wilmington, contribute road salt and various pollutants to the creek. High nutrient levels, increased concentration of organic and inorganic pollutants, and elevated salt concentrations can have acute negative effects on aquatic organisms. Additionally, some compounds can accumulate in creek sediments, creating long-term toxic environments for numerous groups of organisms.

#### Recommendations

Streambank fencing would be useful in helping to control upstream nutrient inputs from livestock. Farmers along the West Branch of Little Neshannock Creek and Little Neshannock Creek in Mercer County can take advantage of streambank fencing programs. The Watershed Assistance Program of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy as well as other organizations can supply information to assist those wishing to begin such an effort. Activities that add pollutants such as road salting and sewage discharges need to be carefully evaluated and the location and requirements of this species and the aquatic community taken into account.