

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES***

The following natural features characterize the Upper Perkiomen Creek watershed and present very real planning implications for future development and conservation.

### ***Physiographic Region***

The Upper Perkiomen Creek valley forms the 144 square mile northern portion of the Perkiomen Creek watershed, which, at 362 square miles in area, is the largest subwatershed of the Schuylkill River watershed and a major headwaters area within the Delaware River basin. The streams of the Delaware drain much of the southeastern Pennsylvania portion of the Northern Piedmont province, a physiographic region extending from northern Virginia to southwestern Maine (The Nature Conservancy, 1996). The area is reminiscent of the Piedmont or foothill sections of southern Europe, and is named for the Italian Piemonte, meaning “foot of the mountain” (Godfrey, 1980). The Northern Piedmont is characterized by a gently rolling landscape of temperate deciduous forest underlain by crystalline bedrock and clayey soils on the eastern foothills of the Appalachian Mountains reaching eastward to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

The lower half of the Upper Perkiomen watershed (primarily the area within Bucks and Montgomery County) is a fine representative example of the Triassic Lowland section of the Northern Piedmont landscape. The Triassic Lowlands are generally underlain by softer sedimentary geology such as red shale and sandstone. The prominent ridges that define the Unami Creek and Deep Creek valleys are also in the Triassic Lowlands, but are defined by more erosion-resistant diabase bedrock.

The northern half of the Upper Perkiomen watershed is part of a physiographic formation known as the Reading Prong. This landform crosses through the watershed in a northeast-to-southwesterly direction, forming the ridges that constitute the headwaters area above Green Lane Reservoir. The Reading Prong is a landmass that originates in Connecticut, east of the Hudson River, includes the Highlands region of northwestern New Jersey, and terminates west of Reading, and is actually part of the much broader New England Highlands province extending north into Vermont. It is underlain by Precambrian and Cambrian geology such as Gneiss. (Shultz, 1999) The local place names of this ridge include Blackhead Hill, Furnace Hill, Carl Hill and South Mountain. The drier, thin soils and steep topography of these ridges support a more northern forest type and less intensive land use pattern than the deeper, moist soils of the rest of the watershed. **(See Figure 2: Physiographic Region)**