

## **Introduction**

*The characteristics of land and water can determine much of the economic and built character of a community. What are those characteristics for Woodford County and how will they constrain or sustain Woodford's future.*

This *Background Report for the Comprehensive Plan Update* provides a basic understanding of the natural land and water features of the County, the relationship of these features to Woodford's growth and development, and possible trends and issues regarding the use and disposition of Woodford's natural resources.

Woodford County's most significant heritage is its land and water resources. The **Kentucky River**, which connects to the Ohio River to the north, comprises the entire eastern boundary of Woodford County. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the river afforded a primary means of transportation for people and goods arriving and departing the area. Today, the importance of the river as a means of transportation has obviously declined but it now serves as a primary source of drinking water not only for Woodford but also for a growing population in the Bluegrass Region (see the People, Jobs and Housing and Regional Coordination Background Reports for a discussion of population characteristics of the Bluegrass Region).

Woodford's land has also been a contributing factor in its history, supporting a substantial agriculture based economy. Today, that agricultural base is changing from one dominated by tobacco to one supporting a growing equine industry. The title for this Background Report includes agriculture as a Woodford resource –although most would think of agriculture as an activity – not a natural resource. However, in Woodford the characteristics and use of the land are so inextricably tied together that we have simply chosen to include the term in our definition of “resource”.

In Chapters 1 and 2, the existing characteristics of land and water in Woodford are identified and described. Chapter 3 is devoted exclusively to the use and disposition of Woodford's natural resources. Chapter 4 provides an overview of trends, issues, opportunities and challenges and is provided as a basis for developing planning goals and objectives. These goals and objectives will be instrumental in shaping the direction of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update process, and provide guidance to a host of organizations involved in setting Woodford's agenda for the next generation.

Figure 1.1

