Chapter 1
ABC's of the Greenway Plan
Chapter 1 - Approach: What is the Plan?

The 2008 Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan is an update to the 1994 Plan. This plan sets specific goals for the direction Berks County should take to provide future open space, greenways, and recreation for its citizens. The shortage of state and federal funds for recreation and preservation makes it imperative that municipalities and the County distribute their resources wisely. This plan is to be used as a guideline by municipal officials for how this can be achieved. The goals and recommendations set forth in the Plan are based on the year 2020. These goals and recommendations will change over time since recreational needs are dynamic. Changes in recreational trends will require development of new forms of preservation and recreational facilities and new strategies in the use of existing facilities. Berks County, and the rest of the nation, has seen a trend toward more individual recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and jogging during the last decade. Passive recreational activities such as walking and sightseeing are also popular past-times. Consequently, the development of greenways, or linear parks, has become more and more popular in most major cities and local municipalities. The recreational needs of Berks County’s citizens reflect this national trend, and therefore the recommendations in this plan are oriented toward regional greenways connecting parks and historic sites, with less reliance on traditional parks. Traditional parks still serve a vital purpose, because they are the major source of local, close-to-home recreational facilities.

This plan is a guide for municipal officials, quasi-public organizations, developers and private interests on the development of future recreational facilities, connections to existing trails and greenways and in the preservation of open space and historic resources throughout the County. It should also be used as reference by municipalities when writing their own Open Space, Greenway and Recreation Plans. Policies and recommendations of this plan are advisory rather than regulatory but will be used by the Berks County Planning Commission and the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Council as criteria in making recommendations on project priority and funding.

“A connected system of parks and pathways is manifestly far more complete and useful than a series of isolated parks.”

F. L. Olmstead
1.1 - Course of Action: Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to identify important natural and historical resources and describe the necessary measures to ensure their permanent preservation. The conceptual greenway network map, ecological importance map and historic section of the plan contain goals related to the preservation of important resources and the provision of outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the year 2020. The plan also provides an extensive inventory of all public, private, and school district recreational facilities in the County.

The goal of the Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan is to ensure the protection of important natural and historical resources, and provide adequate open space and parkland to the public. This can be done through an easily accessible system of interconnecting greenways and linear parks. To reach this goal, specific recommendations are established in later chapters. They are summarized below.

Acquisition The plan recommends the acquisition and preservation of important natural areas and stream corridors throughout the County. These corridors were chosen using criteria such as: quality of water; accessibility; Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index (PNDI) sites; feasibility; and importance to the overall system.

Protection The Plan recommends protection of critical and unique natural areas including:

- Schuylkill River Corridor
- Neversink Mountain
- Kittatiny Ridge
- High and exceptional quality waters
- PNDI sites
- Wetlands, floodplains, watersheds

The plan also recommends sensitive design techniques as a method to preserve open space and agricultural lands. Cluster development, when used in appropriate areas, can maintain the character of the landscape and provide recreational opportunities by developing the least sensitive portion of the site while leaving the rest as open space.

Historic Sites The plan recommends the protection and preservation of historic sites and districts on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Planning Commission staff with information provided by various state and local agencies has undertaken the task of updating the GIS database from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. Once complete, maps and forms will be provided to each municipality and information on zoning and historical districts will be provided. In the future, an accessible database should be created for use in research on historical features throughout the County. Another
project of this plan would be to provide municipal histories on the internet for download and to create a panel within the County to discuss and formulate a Historic Strategic Plan for the County. A number of other recommendations are brought up in the Historical chapter of this plan.

**Greenway System**  The plan recommends a system of interconnecting greenways along natural areas and stream corridors throughout the County. This system is shown on the *Greenways Network Map*. The greenways will connect major existing recreational facilities or “Hubs” with developed areas and can be used for hiking, biking, nature study, and other activities. These greenways are not only important for human use but also serve as ecological highway systems for the various animal species that travel throughout the County. The County must work with local municipalities, private and non-profit organizations and other counties to preserve these corridors. The Schuylkill River Corridor is a critical link to an inter-county trail system, and is of highest priority. The Schuylkill River corridor is basically the “spine” of the County. Further development of the Schuylkill River Trail system will provide connections to other recreational, historical and natural areas throughout the County. Ultimately this trail will stretch from Reading to Philadelphia.

**Ecological Element**  The 2007 Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan proposes an ecological network throughout the County. This network will promote biodiversity in Berks County and connect additional areas in the Northern Piedmont of Pennsylvania. Through the use of a Smart Conservation model and input from environmental experts and numerous datasets an ecological network consisting of hubs and corridors was created.

**Implementation**  Implementation of this Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Plan will require cooperation from the County, municipal officials, private interests, non-profit groups, and the public.

### 1.2 Planning Process

Berks County is divided into 73 distinct municipalities which include one city, 28 boroughs, and 44 townships. Each municipality carries out their daily operations and provides various community services according to their local needs and limitations. Some of these municipalities have formed cooperative agreements and work jointly with their neighboring municipalities to provide such services as police protection, fire and emergency response, solid waste disposal, recreational opportunities, wastewater treatment, infrastructure maintenance, and water supply management, while others choose to operate on their own. They vary in staff size, resource availability, fiscal status, service provision, constituent population and overall size.

In an effort to simplify the plan and make it more reader friendly the County was broken down into 5 distinct planning regions. Consequently, each region has its own characteristics and available opportunities for open space and recreation. A considerable amount of information regarding the type, size, and location of each open space, recreation, ecological and historic opportunity was compiled by staff into a database that could be studied to assess the needs of each region and the municipalities within. The following are the planning regions including their respective municipalities:

**Hawk Mountain Region:**  U. Tulpehocken Township, U. Bern Township, Centre Township, Tilden Township, Windsor Township, Perry Township, Maidencreek Township,
Richmond Township, Maxatawny Township, Greenwich Township, Albany Township, Strausstown Borough, Centerport Borough, Hamburg Borough, Shoemakersville Borough, Fleetwood Borough, Lyons Borough, Kutztown Borough, Lenhartsville Borough

**Tulpehocken Region:** Bethel Township, Tulpehocken Township, Marion Township, Jefferson Township, North Heidelberg Township, Heidelberg Township, South Heidelberg Township, Lower Heidelberg Township, Penn Township, Womelsdorf Borough, Robesonia Borough, Wernersville Borough, Bernville Borough

**Oley Hills Region:** Alsace Township, Ruscombmanor Township, Oley Township, Earl Township, Colebrookdale Township, Washington Township, Rockland Township, District Township, Pike Township, Longswamp Township, Hereford Township, Boyertown Borough, Bally Borough, Bechtelsville Borough, Topton Borough

**Southern Highlands Region:** Brecknock Township, Caernarvon Township, Robeson Township, Exeter Township, Amity Township, Union Township, Douglass Township, New Morgan Borough, St. Lawrence Borough, Birdsboro Borough

**Metro Region:** City of Reading, Spring Township, Cumru Township, Lower Alsace Township, Muhlenberg Township, Bern Township, Ontelaunee Township, Sinking Spring Borough, Mohnton Borough, Shillington Borough, Kenhorst Borough, Wyomissing Borough, West Reading Borough, Mt. Penn Borough, Laureldale Borough, Leesport Borough

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**Population** Berks County has been growing steadily since it was incorporated in 1752. In more recent decades, the County has seen increasing growth from the Philadelphia metropolitan area. It is notable that between 1990 and 2000, Berks’ growth rate was similar to those of our neighboring counties to the east that make-up the Philadelphia region. Of the counties directly adjacent to Berks, only Schuylkill to the north has been steadily losing population.
A concise analysis of population data is of paramount importance to any Comprehensive Plan since most of the plan’s recommendations and future goals are derived from population assumptions.

From 1900 to 2000, the County’s total population has more than doubled. During the early part of this century Reading’s industrial complex attracted a considerable amount of immigrant labor. With the end of World War II and the beginning of economic resurgence, the number of new families and births rose tremendously. This was the beginning of a period popularly referred to as the Baby Boom. During the decade of the 1970’s it became apparent that the children of the Baby Boom intended to postpone marriage, childbearing, or both in order to pursue educational and career goals. Demographically, the decade of the 1970’s is referred to as the Baby Bust and generated its own set of consequences such as anticipated labor shortages and concern for the growing percentage of elderly within the total population.

**Distribution and Density** Although the County’s population increased between 1990 and 2000 this growth was not evenly distributed among the County’s municipalities. An urbanized area, as defined by the Census Bureau, consists of a contiguous territory closely settled surrounding a central city that together must have a minimum population of 50,000 persons. The designation does not necessarily follow municipal boundaries. For the purposes of this plan we broke the County into 5 distinct regions; Metro, Hawk Mountain, Tulpehocken, Oley Hills, and Southern Highlands. Each region’s population was calculated and broken into specific age classes (see Appendix 5.4).

The Metropolitan Region consists of both the urbanized area and places located in close proximity to the urban area. This would include most of the rural boroughs and certain pockets of dense development located throughout what is commonly considered the suburban area. The suburban area of the County is considered to be the densely populated areas located around the City of Reading.

As assumed, the Metropolitan Region had the highest population because the urban core is situated in this region. The rest of the regions were fairly close to each other in their amount of population with the Tulpehocken region having the least population. Although there was a large difference between the most populated region and the least populated there were some interesting similarities. In each region the greatest percentage of the population is the 20-44 year old age group.

The information obtained through the use of population projections and age breakdowns is invaluable for greenway, parks and recreation planning. This information coupled with an inventory of available facilities in a region can help planners and local municipal officials decide where future facilities are needed and where to locate them.

**1.3 Public Health Needs**

Providing sufficient amounts of accessible recreational opportunities is one element in promoting healthy lifestyles within a community. Studies by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Health highlight the benefits of planning for recreation. Studies also indicate that the benefits of an active community extend beyond thinner waist lines and include less strain on the healthcare system, less dependence on medications for normal living, and lower insurance costs.

**Community Health and Activity** The CDC has found that poor diet and physical inactivity are associated with an increased risk of
chronic health conditions\textsuperscript{1} including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some cancers, high blood pressure, as well as obesity. The Berks County Health Needs Assessment, published by the Berks County Community Foundation in August of 2006 shows that sedentary life styles and poor eating habits are commonplace in Berks. The report points out that Berks County’s statistics for obesity and its related health problems parallels national and state trends. According to a Center for Disease Control Study completed in 2004, 61\% of Pennsylvanians are overweight or obese.

Recent statistics show that our nation’s obesity related health issues also impact children. According to the CDC, the number of overweight children within the age group of 6-19 has tripled since 1980 and now stands at 16\% of that total group (over 9 million children). Even more discomforting than the determination that more children are obese are the statistics that indicate an increase in diseases such as diabetes among children. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, in the 2002-03 school year more than 2\% of Berks County students had already been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease, or roughly 1,400 Berks County pupils.

\textbf{“These investments in parks, greenways, trails, will help keep families healthy and make our communities economically vibrant, great places to live, work and play.”}

\textit{Pennsylvania Governor Rendell}

The main factor contributing to childhood obesity is the fact that many children lead sedentary lives relying on television and computer games for entertainment. According to the countywide citizen survey that was conducted as part of this plan, children’s playgrounds came in as third highest on a survey polling facility needs. While changing behavior starts at home, providing easy and safe access to playgrounds may increase the likelihood that children will opt for physical activity. In addition, the American Obesity Society recommends that communities provide a range of developmentally appropriate sports and recreation programs that are attractive to all young people.

While park and recreation planning does not influence diet, it has positive health impacts on a community when amenities that promote physical activities are provided.

\textsuperscript{1} Diseases include but are not limited to the following: hypertension, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, some cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon). Source: CDC
1.4 Cost benefits of an active community

Increasing the activities that promote healthy lifestyles benefits the business community in a variety of ways. Increasing the physical reliability of the labor force and lowering health insurance costs makes a business more profitable. Many businesses, in collaboration with health care insurers, have developed programs for disease prevention centered on daily exercise and healthy activities. A community that provides more opportunities for recreation is actually helping the businesses that are located within that community. Dovetailing with business sector efforts, many communities that strive to attract new businesses have made the “recreation connection” and are now using these services to market their region.

The Role of Planning in Healthy Communities Many communities now require that open space and recreation provisions be included within large residential developments. Similarly, many communities have also become more proactive in design requirements that promote an active, attractive and livable community. New trends proactively address issues of community health. Below are some of the factors that community leaders have looked at when addressing community health:

- Recreation facilities should be designed for use by a broad portion of the population rather than facilities appealing to a narrow range of individuals.
- Recreation should be centrally located for easier access for all residents.
- To fully utilize trails, sidewalks and bike lanes, connectivity should be sought to destinations so that these routes can be used for both transportation as well as recreation.
- Strive for mixed use development that integrates and provides the use of trails, sidewalks and bike lanes by providing common destinations (i.e.- restaurants, stores, libraries, schools).
- Pedestrian friendly streets designed in a manner that includes park benches, narrower widths with low speed limits, sidewalks, street lamps, and pedestrian safe intersections.
- Trail route signage that includes mileage markers for those who exercise within a regimen.

In addition to setting aside areas for open space and providing recreational opportunities in new residential development, community leaders have begun retrofitting existing communities that lack recreation by identifying opportunities. Plans call for the marking of trail systems throughout existing communities by piecing together and using the existing sidewalk systems, open space easements and acquiring left over open space for connections and parks. All of these efforts on a regional scale combined with new trail systems provide recreational amenities and the potential for a more active and healthy community.

Economic Benefit The economic benefits of open space and recreation are often overlooked and not well understood by the public and municipal officials. The economic benefits are both direct and indirect. Recreation facilities can stimulate tourism and its associated economic benefits. Specialized activities can lead to the development of specialized business opportunities, such as the rental of bicycles or canoes. The development of restaurants and over-night accommodations are also examples of direct economic benefits.

Some communities have been able to use recreational opportunities as a key element in community revitalization. An excellent example is the town of Jim Thorpe, which has a well known rail trail. Even though it is located in a relatively remote
part of Pennsylvania it has a blossoming business community that includes restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and shops.

Although for most communities the direct economic benefits of open space and recreation are slight compared to the wider economy, an emerging economic development theory assigns new economic value to the overall quality of life in a given area. Adequate and well-located facilities contribute to a high quality of life and a growing body of research shows a direct correlation between quality of life issues and a community’s ability to attract a skilled labor force. This economic interpretation proposes that the most talented employees desire to live in areas that are vibrant and original with an unspoiled environment and diverse cultural and recreational opportunities. Businesses will tend to locate in these areas to help attract and retain a skilled workforce. While this point of view may apply to different degrees based upon the size and complexity of the community, it is clear that these often difficult to define quality of life factors contribute to an area’s ability to attract new businesses.

Here in Berks County, there are many communities that hold this potential. Whether located along the scenic Schuylkill River or tucked away among the scenic farmlands and rolling hills of Berks County, with vision and commitment by an energized local base many communities capitalize on their quality of life.

Finally, proximity to recreational facilities, including trails, and preserved open space increases the value of nearby property. While some residents adamantly oppose the development of nearby trails or parks the evidence is overwhelming that residential values benefit from these features and real estate advertisements frequently highlight distance to recreational facilities.

1.5 - Needs Assessment by Region

According to the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA), at a minimum, municipalities should provide 6.25 to 10.5 acres of open space/recreational opportunities per 1,000 population. For the purpose of this plan we used the 6.25 acre figure to calculate regional totals. Through our research we recognized the areas of the County that are deficient in providing recreational opportunities for its citizens. Because the whole County was broken down into the five distinct planning regions discussed earlier, three regions were deemed to have a deficiency in their recreational opportunities. However, when compared with one another and broken down by municipality it is more clear which municipalities do not provide adequate space for recreation. Within the region sections of Chapter 3, tables will show how some municipalities have very little, if any, recreational opportunities within them. Other municipalities are not deficient in providing recreational opportunities for its citizens. Each municipal government is encouraged to provide recreation opportunities for its citizens. The following parts of this chapter describe the findings in the regional analysis.

Metro Region  Not surprisingly the Metro Region is the most populated and is comprised of the urban core of municipalities surrounding the City of Reading. Only six municipalities within this region were not deficient in providing recreational opportunities. Muhlenberg Township, Spring Township, West Lawn Borough (merged with Spring Township), Laureldale Borough, Shillington Borough, and Leesport Borough all exceeded the recommended minimum acreage suggested by NRPA. The rest of the municipalities within the region were deficient with Lower Alsace Township, Mt. Penn Borough, and Ontelaunee Township having zero existing minimum municipal recreation acreage. The City of Reading, although it has the largest population of any other
municipality within the County ranked low in providing adequate acreage for recreational facilities according to NRPA. Although some totals for acreage were below the NRPA recommendations the overall total for municipal recreation acreage was above the NRPA recommended number.

**Hawk Mountain Region**  The Hawk Mountain Region is far less populated than the Metro Region and encompasses the northern municipalities in the County. The same is true for this region as it was for the Metro Region in that some municipalities have an abundant amount of recreation acreage where some do not have any. However, the overall total for recreational acreage in the region is below what is recommended by NRPA.

**Oley Hills Region**  The Oley Hills Region is a rural area that is made up predominately of farmland. This region also encompasses the majority of the County’s historical features such as old farmsteads and historic structures. The Oley Hills Region has the second lowest population of all the regions. The municipal recreation acreage spreadsheet indicates that this area is deficient in the amount of recreational acreage that is available for its citizens. Pike and Rockland Townships have zero recreational acreage for its citizens and the overall totals for the region show that it is 11 acres below the suggested number by NRPA. Although this region is rural in nature and its population density is not that of other regions there still is a need for recreational opportunities.

**Southern Highlands Region**  The Southern Highlands Region is comprised of the fewest amount of municipalities of all the regions, yet it is the fastest growing region. The population of this region is expected to grow dramatically over the next 10 to 20 years as development, especially within New Morgan Borough, takes place. According to NRPA the existing recreational acreage for this region is twice what is recommended for this region’s population. Amity Township, Birdsboro Borough, Caernarvon Township, Douglass Township and Union Township all have more acreage set aside for recreation than what is recommended by NRPA. These Townships practically contain all the recreational opportunities for the entire region. As the population in this region increases over the years the municipalities with less than the minimum recommended by NRPA should consider providing their citizens with more recreational opportunities.

**Tulpehocken Region**  The Tulpehocken Region is mainly a rural region much like the Oley Hills Region. This region has the lowest population out of all the regions discussed in this plan. Because of its rural character and low population, municipalities may not think much about providing recreational opportunities for their residents. According to the municipal recreation acreage spreadsheet (see section 3.6) the number of acres devoted to recreation is almost half of what is recommended by NRPA. Bernville Borough, Jefferson Township and Penn Township are the only municipalities with a surplus of municipal recreational acreage.

**1.6 - Public Participation**

Public participation and input were fundamental elements needed for the formation of the Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan. Staff concentrated efforts on public meetings, a citizen survey, municipal survey, school district survey and a short form survey. Additionally, individuals were amassed into three specialized stakeholder groups that dealt with recreation, green infrastructure/ecology, and heritage. These stakeholders were sought out and selected because they were recognized and in
many cases recommended due to their expertise within one or more of the previously mentioned subject matters.

**Public Meetings**  Public meetings were held on the following dates: October 6, 2004 at the Berks Co. Ag. Center, October 7, 2004 at the Amity Intermediate Center, and October 14, 2004 at the Hamburg Borough Hall. These meetings were specially designed to be interactive and enjoyable for the audience while allowing them the ability to directly contribute to the process.

The meetings began with a brief explanation as to the goals of the Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan and were followed by an interactive activity that solicited audience opinions with regards to individual and County needs for recreation, green infrastructure/ecology, or heritage resources. The polls were conducted by giving each individual in the audience a group of dot stickers which they affixed onto poster sized lists effectively ranking the items according to need. The audience was asked to first rank recreation, green infrastructure/ecology, or heritage resource needs with their own needs in mind and then asked to rank them again with what they perceived as County wide needs. The votes were compiled, the results of which helped our staff identify trends and needs for the County. The results are also an element supporting the findings and recommendations of this plan.

Public meetings were held in May and June of 2006 to maintain awareness and to update plan progress. For the most part these meetings were informative in nature but a great deal of feedback was received with regards to the final plan’s layout.

Stakeholder meetings were held to address progress and recommendations for the three main aspects of the plan those being recreation, ecology and historic. The input received enabled us to refine the scope of the plan as well as establish plan goals and recommendations.

Finally, public meetings were held in late 2007 allowing public comment on the findings and recommendations of the plan. Comments ranged from a regional scale to specific local significance.

**Surveys**

Four different surveys were used to obtain data from citizens and entities within Berks County. All of the survey questions were heavily scrutinized with regards to type and tone to ensure that the results would be useful in later analysis. All of the survey questions, results and any staff interpretation of the results can be found within the appendices of this plan.

Between November 29 and December 31, 2005 over 5000 citizen surveys were sent to Berks County households, of which 16%
were completed and returned. Questions varied and dealt with preferred/needed recreational activities, satisfaction with current facilities and the need to preserve heritage and ecological resources.

Another survey was developed and given directly to municipal officials which consisted of 19 in-depth questions. Municipal input was especially important as supervisors and borough/city council members are often very knowledgeable of the recreational needs for their municipalities. Other information collected dealt with exploring collaborative municipal ventures, opportunities for funding, development of parks, ecologic/heritage preservation needs, and the possibility for joint municipal open space/recreation plans.

A survey of school districts was conducted to update our recreation facility records as well as gain a better understanding of the adequacy of school district facilities and the unique needs of each. The survey also sampled the availability of district facilities for non-school activities and about current or predicted developmental pressures.

Finally, the Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan staff members developed a one page short survey consisting of 9 questions dealing with many of the same issues as the citizen survey. This survey was created to allow individuals that were unable to participate in the public meetings or did not receive a citizen survey to present what they felt were needs for recreation, green infrastructure/ecology, or heritage resources. These surveys often went to public meetings or were given to local organizations. Because this particular survey was not a random sample of the County, the results were used by our staff on an advisory level.

**Steering Committees**

Three groups of steering committee numbering approximately 15 individuals* each were assembled to provide a consultative element throughout the planning process. The individuals who were asked to participate in this capacity were selected due to their extensive knowledge of recreation, green infrastructure/ecology, and/or heritage resources. In many cases they included professors, scientists, engineers, and historians. It should be noted that all of the individuals were from Berks County which allowed a link of their local and professional knowledge to the overall planning process.

Early in the process, meetings occurred to brainstorm the planning approach to address recreation, green infrastructure/ecology, and heritage resources. Within these meetings general themes were discovered and clusters of resources designated. Midway through the planning process, the groups were periodically consulted with more specific issues relating uniquely to their subject matter. Finally, the draft plan was mailed to each of the stakeholders and special meetings were held to receive comments and discuss the findings and recommendations of the plan.

**1.7 – Review of Existing Documents**

Since the 1994 County Open Space and Recreation Plan was adopted there have been several park and open space planning related studies along with an abundance of other studies directly related to this Plan. The following are brief reviews of these studies so that their findings can be incorporated into the efforts to implement this Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan. The reviews are categorized by the region of the County that they are located within and by the type of study.
Countywide Planning Initiatives

**Berks County Comprehensive Plan: Vision 2020 – 2003**

Part of the “Vision” of the County Comprehensive Plan is to “protect its rich agricultural land and open spaces from suburbanization, expand its parks and trail systems and promote the settlement to fit burgeoning 21st Century population in a redesigned Reading and in boroughs and townships planned to emphasize higher density, more intimate walking-biking friendly living...recognize and celebrate the diversity of its population, a continuity of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural history...”

**Goals**

- Adhere to a logical, coordinated land use pattern that provides for a variety of appropriate types of development, while recognizing land and infrastructure capabilities in relation to natural features and environmental and physical factors.
- Preserve and protect important open space and provide adequate recreation opportunities for County residents.
- Use development techniques that will conserve natural resources while not conflicting with rural environments.
- Protect steep slopes greater than 25 percent, watercourses and their riparian buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifers, and to restore those already degraded.
- Improve existing stormwater management facilities, to develop Stormwater Management Plans for all watersheds located in Berks County and to protect water quality.
- Provide a balance of highway, public transportation, aviation, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian systems into a coordinated transportation system.
- Preserve and promote all community, cultural, and aesthetic elements that identify Berks County as a special place to live and work.
- Maintain and enhance the character of established villages, towns and boroughs, and to create new neighborhoods that have their own sense of community, while blending with surrounding development and open spaces.
- Promote and protect the people, places and things that make Berks County unique to its residents and visitors.
- Recognize historic preservation as a means of retaining community character, providing affordable housing, and assisting economic development.
- Maintain and enhance the visual character that defines places in Berks County as distinct and liveable.
- Develop and expand partnerships, communications, and coordination among municipal officials, the private sector, and citizens during the planning process.
- Take an intergovernmental approach to planning, zoning, and municipal projects.

**Accomplishments**

- Open Space and Recreation Advisory Council (OSRAC)and Grant Program
  - Neversink Mountain Preservation
  - Schuylkill River Trail system connections from Reading to the Berks/Montgomery/Chester County Lines and trail connections around Hamburg Borough to Schuylkill County.
  - Improvement of access to the Schuylkill River at various locations
  - Various small locally important projects
• Berks County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan
• Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan Update – currently underway
• Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning – coordinating new plans with MS4 permitting and intergovernmental cooperation among MS4 municipalities to implement certain aspects of the permits jointly.
  - Sacony Creek Stormwater Management Plan & Update
  - Tulpehocken Creek Stormwater Management Plan
  - Maiden Creek Stormwater Management Plan Draft
  - Schuylkill River Stormwater Management Plan Draft
  - Cocalico Creek Stormwater Management Plan
  - Conestoga River Stormwater Management Plan
  - Little Lehigh Creek Stormwater Management Plan & Updates
  - Swamp Creek Stormwater Management Plan Draft

• Natural Land, Farmland and Open Space Conservation Grant Program
• Part One – Conservation Zoning Incentive Program for Berks County Municipalities Adopted
• Part Two – Municipal Land Protection Plans (grant easement purchase program)
• Part Three – Private Conservation Organization Grants (easement or acquisition purchase program)
• RiverPlace
• Goggleworks

Berks County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan 2002

Vision Statement

“The region values the importance of walking, bicycling and other non-motorized methods for transportation, tourism, recreation, air quality, health and wellness. It will actively plan, encourage and provide for the integration and development of walking and bicycling into our transportation system that connects communities and regional assets.”

Goals

• Municipalities should actively plan for and encourage non-motorized modes of transportation
• Establish an education/enforcement safety campaign
• Develop funding mechanism and accountability in implementing the bicycle/pedestrian plan
• Provide and maintain bicycle and pedestrian facilities
• Identify unique urban and suburban pedestrian issues

Accomplishments

• Work on Schuylkill River Trail along with other partners, including: Complete bridge over Lancaster Avenue, complete sections of Bartram Trail (Hamburg Area), parking facilities at Brentwood and signage, complete segments east of Birdsboro, Wyomissing Creek Trail in West Reading
• Include Bicycle/Pedestrian comments in the subdivision and land development review process
• Continue progress on the Blue Marsh connector Trail
• Continue progress on the Hay Creek Trail
Natural Areas Inventory – Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index (PNDI) 1991

In order for communities to better identify areas in need of protection while balancing development this document identifies the critical natural areas of the County. This information is based upon the input from many sources including: field surveys, The Pennsylvania Science Office of the Nature Conservancy, Academy of Natural Sciences, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Albright College, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and other important contributors.

The Inventory contains reports and maps of the best know natural areas and natural communities located within the County “along with the locations of all known animal and plant species of special concern (endangered, threatened, or rare).”

Specific Recommendations

- Incorporate information from the study into all municipal comprehensive plans
- Incorporate regulations into municipal ordinances that will protect the natural areas and threatened communities
- Include targeted areas for acquisition as parkland and/or environmental education areas within municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans
- Educate landowners on the sensitivity of the threatened communities and encourage conservation easements

Accomplishments


Berks County Open Space and Recreation Plan 1994

This Plan is an update to the 1980 Open Space and Recreation Plan. It is intended for use as a guideline to the County and municipal officials in the strategic planning of recreational, historic and natural resources.

The overall goal of the Plan is to “ensure the protection of important natural and historical resources, and provide adequate open space and parkland to the public.” This is accomplished “through an easily accessible system of interconnecting greenways and linear parks.” Additional recommendations are found within the Plan.

Specific Recommendations

- Create a system of open space networks that interconnect greenways and parks. Highest priority areas include:
  - Hay Creek Corridor
  - Tulpehocken Creek Valley Park
  - Neversink Mountain
  - Allegheny Aqueduct Park
- High Priority areas include:
  - Schuylkill River Corridor
  - Maiden Creek/Pine Creek Corridor
  - Sacony Creek/Sacony Marsh
  - Northkill Creek Corridor
  - Six Penny Creek Corridor
  - Tulpehocken Creek Corridor
  - Wyomissing Creek Corridor
- Medium priority areas include:
  - Angelica Creek Corridor
  - Manatawny Creek Corridor
  - Pink Creek Corridor (Pike/Rockland Twps.)
- Perkiomen/West Swamp Creek Corridor
  - Protection of critical and unique natural areas:
    - Neversink Mountain
    - High and exceptional quality waters
    - Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index sites (PNDI)
    - Wetlands, floodplains, watersheds
  - The County should acquire land for future expansion of its
    park system
  - Sensitive design techniques to preserve open space and
    agricultural lands
  - Municipalities should adopt Open Space and Recreation
    Plans
  - Municipalities should form cooperative agreements with
    school districts for the joint use of facilities
  - The County should continue to maintain its existing facilities
    and programs
  - The municipalities should provide local recreation facilities
  - Regional recreation should involve joint responsibility with
    those affected
  - Use the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Council for
    long range planning of facilities
  - Protection and preservation of historic sites and districts on
    or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, including:
    - Tulpehocken Creek Valley Park
    - Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site
    - Daniel Boone Homestead
    - Completion of the Allegheny Aqueduct Park
  - Interconnecting greenway systems along natural areas and
    stream corridors throughout the County. These systems will
    provide a critical link between recreational, natural and
    historic sites.

Accomplishments

- Allegheny Aqueduct Park
- The Open Space and Recreation Advisory Council – grant
  programs
- Support and funding provided for continuation of the
  following projects;
  - Neversink Mountain
  - Thun Trail (Schuylkill River Trail)
  - Leesport Locks and water access to the Schuylkill
    River
  - Various municipal recreational projects
  - Additional trails in Wyomissing and West Reading
    Boro.
- Inclusion of detailed Open Space and Recreation
  components within Joint Comprehensive Plans
- Handicap trail and playground at the Youth Recreation
  Facility
- Purchase of Hunsinger’s Grove Park in Longswamp Twp.
- Handicap fishing facility along the Schuylkill River, West
  Reading Boro.

Schuylkill River Source Water Assessment

Schuylkill River Watershed Conservation Plan 2001

The Plan is designed as a guidebook for municipalities,
conservation groups, and citizens. The Plan focuses on an
analysis of watershed lands needed for ecosystem viability, broad
scale water quality and an assessment of public agencies and
nonprofit organizations. Recommendations are divided into three
sections; water quality, landscape sustainability and institutional
assessment.
Specific Recommendations

The Plan lists 25 recommendations in the category of water quality related to the following concerns:
- Need for water quality monitoring data
- Urban/suburban development and stormwater runoff
- Non-point source pollution
- Habitat quality
- Acid mine drainage

The Plan lists 22 recommendations in the category of landscape sustainability related to the following concerns:
- Identification and mapping of existing greenspace components
- Analysis and mapping of proposed greenspace components based on natural resource values
- Mapping population projections to establish potential “threat” to watershed resources
- Providing recommendations and implementation tools, focusing on the need for strategic planning and institutional capacity building to ensure implementation of these recommendations

The Plan lists 21 recommendations in the category of institutional assessment related to the following concerns:
- Improve coordination among organizations for watershed management
- Build capacity between public agencies and nonprofit organizations; especially in funding, citizen involvement, training and board development
- Increase education/outreach and public awareness of watershed issues

Accomplishments

- Schuylkill River Act 167 Plan
- Schuylkill Action Network, (SANS)
- Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Permits (MS4)
- Conservation Zoning Incentive Program
- Riparian Buffers – agency coordination

Tulpehocken Region

Joint Comprehensive Plans

Bernville-Jefferson Joint Comprehensive Plan 1995

This Joint Comprehensive Plan identifies both existing and proposed facilities along with recommendations for programs, administration, maintenance, communication based upon specified standards.

Specific Recommendations

- Establish mandatory dedication provisions in the subdivision and land development ordinance generally based upon NRPA guidelines and establish a fee in lieu of mandatory dedication based upon the same guidelines.
- Update existing facilities at the Borough’s Umbenhaer Park.
- Use fees in-lieu-of to establish a small neighborhood park and greenway in the northern portion of the Borough.
- Require setbacks and/or begin acquiring conservation easements to protect open space areas along the Borough’s major drainage ways.
- Provide recreation facilities, including baseball, soccer and tennis at the newly purchased 29-acre Jefferson Township Community Park. Use fees in-lieu-of to accomplish this.
• Use mandatory land dedication to preserve greenways along creeks.
• Support the Bernville Area Recreation Association and the Tulpehocken Soccer Club recreation programs and periodically evaluate the range and diversity of the recreation programs available.
• Establish written agreements with the Tulpehocken Area School District for the use of school recreation facilities by the residents.
• Conduct regular safety inspections for compliance with safety standards and ADA accessibility requirements.
• Prepare and distribute a brochure describing parks, recreation facilities and programs available to local residents. Encourage other local recreation providers to also communicate recreation information to residents.

Accomplishments

• Jefferson Township Community Park: soccer field, baseball
• Construction of a maintenance shed and township building
• Agreements with local recreation associations for maintenance of community park facilities
• Update the Joint Comprehensive Plan to include Penn Township

Southwestern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan 2000

This Joint Comprehensive Plan involves Lower Heidelberg Township, South Heidelberg Township and Wernersville Borough. In the Future Land Use Plan, an expanded Spring Meadows Park is indicated along with new recreation areas shown in the Rosewood Development off of Hill Road and off Lincoln Drive in Wernersville. In general Wernersville Borough and South Heidelberg Township will collect fees in-lieu-of to improve their existing facilities, while Lower Heidelberg Township, which does not own any facilities, will look at each new development on a case-by-case basis to determine the need for additional facilities within those developments. More emphasis has been placed in this Plan upon developing a conceptual trail and greenway system throughout the Southwestern Berks County region.

Specific Recommendations

• Provide recreation resources for bicycling and walking.
• Provide connections to the existing Blue Marsh and Union Canal Towpath trails and trails that interconnect with them.
• Provide an alternative circulation system throughout the area for access between business, jobs, community facilities and recreation facilities.

Accomplishments

• Joint Zoning Ordinance with Conservation Design Ordinance requirements

Western Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan 2000

This Joint Plan involves five municipalities; the Boroughs of Robesonia and Womelsdorf and the Townships of Heidelberg, Marion and North Heidelberg. The Plan identified a small deficiency in the amount of active recreation land within the area and encouraged the municipalities to look for additional land for facilities. This region of Berks County has a large amount of acreage in farmland. The Plan lists specific guidelines for protecting important natural features of the region. These features include; steep slopes, groundwater, floodplains, wooded areas, soils, waterways, natural drainage channels and hydric soils.

Specific Recommendations

• Maintain existing municipal parks.
• Add additional 2 acres of active parkland.
• Continue community use of school district properties.
• Establish a greenway segment along Tulpehocken Creek to connect Blue Marsh Lake with Womelsdorf and Lebanon County.
• Establish a greenway along Spring Creek to connect to the Tulpehocken Greenway.
• Promote the techniques specified to establish rights-of-ways for greenways.
• Initiate a greenways feasibility study in Western Berks area similar to Montgomery County’s Schuylkill River Greenway Stewardship Study.

Accomplishments
• Joint Zoning Ordinance – adopted by Robesonia, Womelsdorf, Heidelberg and North Heidelberg
• Tulpehocken Greenway Feasibility Study 2005
• Addition of Mill Springs Meadow Borough Park, 2.73 acres, Womelsdorf Borough
• Addition of walking trail and soccer field at Heidelberg Township Park.
• Addition of a Memorial Pocket Park in Robesonia Borough.

Open Space and Recreation Plans
Township of Spring Greenway Study, 2007
The Township, with the help of a DCNR grant, completed a comprehensive analysis of the need for a greenway system. The study identifies the cultural and physical benefits along with the existing system and gaps within that system. The system proposed is guided by six principles; including regional interconnection, connection of hubs, variety of recreational uses, use of existing and proposed linear infrastructure, strive for off-road connections, and respect for private property.

Specific Recommendations
• Three primary trail routes (22.78 miles)
• Ten secondary trail routes (33.97 miles)
• Four local trail routes for internal access
• Sidewalk improvements along specific roads
• Design guidelines

Accomplishments
• Plan adoption January, 2007

Related Studies
Western Berks Water Authority: Source Water Assessment Report 2002
Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Conservation Management Plan 2001
Tulpehocken Greenway Feasibility Study 2005

The Lebanon Valley and Berks County Conservancies coordinated the preparation of this study. The focus of the Study was the Tulpehocken Creek watershed upstream from its confluence with the Northkill Creek. The Study “proposes a network of greenways – linear corridors of open space – to conserve and protect the area’s streams, woodlands, and farmland.”

Also, both land and water recreational opportunities were investigated.
Specific Recommendations:
• Greenway Concept Plan that includes the following:
  • Natural resource conservation greenways
• Water Trail between Womelsdorf and Blue Marsh Lake with parking, access points, signage and guide map.
• Land Preservation greenbelts
• Six Land based trails in various locations
• Three auto and bike touring routes with signage and guide maps.
• Extension of the Tulpehocken Creek Historic District into Lebanon County.
• Restore a portion of the Union Canal within the study area, including the towpath, for historic purposes.
• Multi-County, municipal collaboration for regional interconnections to other important trail-greenway systems.

**Hawk Mountain Region**

**Joint Comprehensive Plans**

**Northern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan 2005**

The Joint Plan for the Northern Berks Region encompasses six municipalities: Hamburg and Strausstown Boroughs and the Townships of Tilden, Windsor, Upper Bern and Upper Tulpehocken.

This area contains large amounts of farmland, natural resources, major transportation connections to outside the County and pockets of higher density development. The Plan’s overall goal is to balance these resources to maintain the beauty of the Northern Berks area for future generations.

**Specific Recommendations**

• Update ordinances to include natural resource protection standards and net out provisions where appropriate

• Update ordinances to include Historic Resource Overlay along with additional protections and incentives
• Protect scenic road and view sheds
• Promote the use of development techniques that will conserve natural resources while not conflicting with rural environments.
• Protect and expand the character of the villages and boroughs
• Improve transportation coordination along major corridors
• Update SALDOs to reflect the above concerns and also:
  - Stormwater Management
  - Open Space preservation and dedication of land or fees in lieu thereof
  - Road design standards that will include bike and pedestrian considerations
  - Protection of existing trails and future trails and access
• Appoint a regional historic commission to help protect, coordinate and interconnect historic resources
• Encourage conservation easements
• Create municipal Environmental Advisory Committees
• Coordinate with the County and others to preserve riparian buffers
• Implement/Update/Adopt Open Space and Recreation Plans
• Create a trail planning commission and implement the conceptual trail system. Coordinate where needed with PennDot for shoulder improvements.
• Adopt municipal official maps to implement public projects proposed
• Coordinate with the school district on the availability of their recreational facilities to residents.

**Accomplishments**

• Beginning process of trail coordination
- Upper Bern and Windsor Townships are participating in the County CZIP
- Tilden Twp is coordinating with Blue Mountain Wildlife for the continued use and expansion of the Kernville Dam area as a recreational facility and environmental resource
- Hamburg Borough is improving its riverfront area
- Municipalities are in the process of updating their zoning ordinances to reflect the Joint Comp Plan

**Richmond Township-Fleetwood Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan 1997**

The Joint Plan discusses the ranges in landscape across the Borough and Township. This area encompasses excellent farmland, villages, higher density residential areas in and around the Borough, industrial re-use areas, Route 222 (a major highway bisecting the region), small business and commercial centers, environmentally sensitive and natural resource areas and a number of historic resources.

The background inventoried and analyzed the specific needs of the area for recreation. The Joint Plan identifies a deficiency of 24.8 acres of active recreation lands within the area and projects that with population growth this deficiency will rise to 37.2 acres by the year 2010.

**Specific Recommendations**

- Improve Township ordinances to protect natural resources
- Encourage preservation of open space through zoning techniques
- Compile a complete inventory of locally important historic resources
- Investigate funding for a historic facade improvement program
- Acquire conservation easements and historic facade easements
- Participate in Pennsylvania’s Blue Marker Program
- Establish special sign requirements for historic properties
- Install historic style welcome signs at Key entrances
- Create a pamphlet to encourage historic preservation and provide design guidelines to area residents
- Avoid demolition of historic buildings
- Retain historic character of existing areas by reflecting in new additions and improvements to buildings and areas
- Acquire land for a Township owned Community Park and apply to DCNR for funding purchase
- Require local athletic associations to financially contribute to the construction and maintenance of new fields at the Community Park
- Evaluate the need and cost to expand the Borough swimming pool
- Continue regular safety inspections of existing Borough parks
- Identify ADA needs in the Borough park areas
- Amend the Township SALDO to include land or fee-in-lieu of dedications and revise the Borough’s SALDO to strengthen these regulations
- Support and expand existing recreation programs
- Establish permanent duties and responsibilities for the Richmond Township Recreation Committee
- Work with Berks County Conservancy and other parties to establish greenways along specific corridors
- Establish a sidewalk replacement program in the Borough
- Establish pedestrian and bike trails along greenway corridors
Centre Township and Centerport Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan 1997

The Plan highlights that the distinctive scenic character of the Joint Area is derived from its rolling rural countryside, vistas of agricultural fields, farmsteads and small settlements. The area contains some significant historic resources especially within the Borough and two villages.

Specific Recommendations

- Develop portions of the Township owned land at Bucks Hill Road as a park
- Expand the existing open space area next to the Central Berks Fire Company in the Borough
- Create new parks along the Schuylkill River to the north and south of Mohrsville Bridge and westward to connect the Mohrsville Athletic and Playground Association open space area
- Preserve creeks and floodplains with buffers
- Preserve the agriculture and rural areas by limiting development outside of the growth areas

Accomplishments

- Expansion and development of the open space area next to the fire company in the Borough
- Establishment of a Township-County easement purchase program for both agricultural and conservation easements of development rights

Greenwich Township – Lenhartsville Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan 1996

The Plan states that there are no municipal owned parks in either Greenwich or Lenhartsville. A private resident owns and maintains the Lenhartsville 1.2 acre community park. There are a number of privately held campgrounds, a rod and gun club, and one neighborhood common open space. Recreational programs are offered through adjacent municipalities.

Specific Recommendations

- Lenhartsville should purchase the private playground to ensure future access to the facility
- Establish an open space network along the Maiden Creek and work in conjunction with adjacent municipalities
- Establish mandatory fee in-lieu of land dedication provisions
- Apply for grants for acquisition and development of parks, trails and open space
- Support the existing area recreation programs

Accomplishments

- Begin proceedings to complete a ten year update to Joint Comprehensive Plan

Open Space and Recreation Plans

Maidencreek Township Open Space and Recreation Plan 1999

Related Studies

Lake Ontelaunee – Watershed Assessment 1998

The Reading Water Authority contracted with the Cadmus Group, Inc. to complete an assessment of the City of Reading’s water supply, Lake Ontelaunee. This assessment included delineation of the watershed, review of potential and actual pollutant sources, analysis of the susceptibility of the watershed to the sources and a management plan consisting of a series of recommendations.

The study identified three key concerns: 1) bacterial contamination, 2) sediment delivery to the reservoir, and 3) algae
growth fueled by phosphorus. These concerns were based upon the identification of point source pollution from sewage treatment plants and malfunctioning septic systems and non-point source pollution from stormwater runoff particularly agricultural lands.

Specific Recommendations

- Management recommendations include development of a Watershed Coalition, short and long-term goals, focus on Key Issues, long-term sources of funding and in-kind services, long-term monitoring program and consideration of hiring a part-time watershed inspector.
- Work jointly with State and Local Officials to solve the problem of fecal contamination from septic systems and conduct sampling in support of this.
- Conduct a current reservoir volume study to determine the change in volume over the last 7 years.
- Conduct a sediment study to focus sediment reduction efforts.
- Investigate both long-term and short-term solutions to sedimentation problem.
- Actively promote protection of streamside buffer zones. Consideration should be given to lease or purchase of buffer zones.
- Work with various agencies to develop BMP demonstration projects.
- Educational outreach to users of toxic materials within the watershed.

Accomplishments:

- Formation of the Maiden Creek Watershed Association.
- Continued monitoring of Lake and Tributaries
- Completion of a Volume Study of Lake Ontelaunee
- Construction of the Lenhartsville Borough Sewage Treatment Plant
- Berks County Conservation District’s riparian buffer projects.

North Berks Land Utilization & Reconnections Planning Study 2000

This study, initiated by the Schuylkill River Greenway Associations, encompasses the Townships of Tilden, Upper Bern, Upper Tulpehocken, Winsor, Perry and the Boroughs of Hamburg, Shoemakersville and Strausstown along with the Village of Shartlesville. The Plan assesses the feasibility of extending the Schuylkill River Trail from Hamburg to Shoemakersville; linking the towns of Hamburg, Shartlesville, and Strausstown by establishing a pedestrian/bicycle and automobile touring route; and utilizing the state owned properties in and around the Kernsville impounding basin for recreational activities.

The Northern Berks Recreation Corporation formed to help coordinate the visioning process and implementation of the recommendations.

Recommendations

Hamburg to Shoemakersville Trail Connection

- An off-road route is recommended with coordination of several private property owners, most of the trail follows former roads or paths. The construction of the trail will be the greatest expense.

Hamburg to Strausstown Touring Route

- The existing Old Route 22 corridor with upgrades to shoulders, two bridges, sidewalk and safety improvements on State Street Bridge, safety and interpretive signage, and parking facilities will provide a great opportunity for an
interpretive trail for both pedestrian and bicyclists along with vehicles.

Kernsville Dam and Impounding Basin Area
- Hamburg to Through Truss Route – connects Hamburg to the Kernville Dam area using the existing Hamburg/Tilden pedestrian bridge along an existing trail with two options for final connection to the Dam area.
- Kernsville Impounding Basin improvements range from passive nature/wildlife preserve, play/picnic/fishing area, and new motor boat launch; to active sports and multi-purpose fields with parking, restrooms, concession area and storage facilities. Also, a native plant riparian buffer between the river and recreational fields.

Reconnect Main Street with the River
- Hamburg – improve the pedestrian connections within the town, signage, gateways and create a historic walking trail.
- Hamburg to Shoemakersville – improve visibility of the Miller Street Bridge, create a local interpretive trail, improve sidewalks and crossings and improve the public access to the Schuylkill River through acquiring additional waterfront property.
- Shartlesville – improve sidewalks and crosswalks, signage, and create a local interpretive trail and connect the adjacent businesses in the village with Roadside America.
- Strausstown – improve signage and create a local interpretive trail.

Accomplishments
- Formation of Blue Mountain Wildlife, non-profit group
- Hamburg Borough-riverfront projects and interconnections
- NBRC moves the active recreation sites to Kaercher Creek for the protection of the Kernsville Dam natural resources

Blue Mountain - Kittatinny Ridge Project
This is a collaborative effort amongst local, regional and state organizations and agencies to focus public attention on the importance of Blue Mountain and the Kittatinny Ridge; and to help foster good stewardship of the Ridge for future generations.

This region is not only one of Pennsylvania’s most prominent natural features, it is also valued highly for its; important bird migration, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, large blocks of unfragmented forest and natural areas for species habitat.

The goals of the project include a long-term vision for the Ridge and the development of tools and programs to implement this vision through local governments and agencies.

Oley Hills Region
Joint Comprehensive Plans
Hereford – Washington Township Joint Comprehensive Plan 2006
The Plan identifies the need to protect the rural character and environmental quality of the two Townships. Developmental pressures are increasing in this region and protection of the areas historic sites and village is a concern. Also, while the two Townships have about 600 acres of public/quasi public and private parkland, there are no bicycle-pedestrian trails in the region.

Specific Recommendations
- Expansion of existing recreation resources
• Protection and enhancement of open space, natural and cultural resources through regulations and coordination

**Eastern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan 2004**

District, Longswamp and Rockland Townships and Topton Borough participated in this Joint Comprehensive Plan. Generally accommodation of growth in and around the existing villages and Borough along with limiting impact of new development in the rural areas is the community vision.

The Joint Plan completed a fairly extensive review of existing park and recreation facilities. Of the four municipalities only Rockland Township is identified as being deficient by 11.2 acres in active recreation land. Improvements or additions are recommended for specific types of recreation activities due to limited availability within the region.

**Specific Recommendations**

- Protection of various water resources
- Provide riparian corridor buffers and education residents of their importance
- Protection of steep slopes
- Preservation of historic sites through adaptive re-use
- Promote Conservation by Design in new development
- Provide public facilities and services on a regional basis where practical
- Maintain current parks and recreation services within Borough
- Coordinate parks and access with the School District, formalize agreements, expand Rockland Elementary School Park
- Develop one centralized community park per Township and coordinate those facilities and services
- Create a Regional Recreation Board
- Apply to DCNR for funding of a Regional Park and Recreation Plan
- Adjust local ordinances to accept dedication of open space and/or fee-in-lieu thereof, use funds on a regional basis
- Explore a linear trail (possibly from Topton to Kutztown)
- Promote pedestrian travel and linkages, install sidewalks in all new planned neighborhoods
- Lobby BCPC and PennDot to widen designated bicycle routes and add proper striping

**Accomplishments**

- Meeting to discuss regional park and recreation aspects
- Longswamp Twp. updated their zoning ordinance to include Conservation by Design SALDO options

**Oley-Alsace Township Joint Comprehensive Plan 2002**

The Plan did a brief analysis of the existing open space and recreation opportunities within the two Townships. Based upon existing conditions the Townships are relying on the school district to make up their deficit of active recreational areas. The Plan states that the two Townships should have an additional 17.9 acres of active recreational land.

**Accomplishments**

- Updating the Joint Comprehensive Plan to include Ruscombmanor Township
Boyertown-Colebrookdale-Pike Joint Comprehensive Plan 2005

The Boyertown-Colebrookdale-Pike region as a whole has less than half of the recommended public active recreation acreage for an area of this size and population. Boyertown Borough owns and operates the only active recreation site in the three communities. This in turn creates a situation where the youth sports leagues rely heavily upon the availability of their respective school districts for facilities.

Specific Recommendations

- Continue to implement the feasibility study completed in 1996 for the creation of the Old Dutchman Trail; a 3.8 mile rail-to-trail.
- Continue community use of recreation facilities owned by the Boyertown and Oley School Districts.
- Establish a multi-use community park in Colebrookdale Township.

Accomplishments

- The three municipalities are continuing to meet and discuss implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Colebrookdale is investigating the feasibility of establishing a community park.

Related Studies

Upper Perkiomen Creek Watershed Conservation Plan 2001 *
Pine Creek Watershed Protection Plan 2002 *
Lehigh River Watershed Conservation Management Plan 2003

In 2000, through funding from DCNR and the William Penn Foundation, the Wildlands Conservancy and its partners began the three year process that would develop the Conservation Plan for the Lehigh River and give the Conservancy its guidance for the next ten years.

The study identified the cultural, natural, biological, historical and recreation resources of the Lehigh River and Watershed. It also listed the problems, solutions and prioritized recommendations for preservation, protection and enhancement of the identified natural resources.

Key Goals of the Plan are:

- Gain Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry Status – to increase funding opportunities.
- Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources.
- Improve Water Quality in the Lehigh River Watershed.
- Protect significant and valuable land components.
- Protect biological resources.
- Increase and enhance watershed recreational opportunities.
- Promote municipal watershed stewardship.
- Promote environmental awareness, knowledge, skills support, and stewardship commitment.
- Monitor and update watershed resource information on a continuing basis.

Accomplishments

- 2004 Lehigh River placed on the Pennsylvania River’s Registry.

Oley Hills Partnership – Berks County Conservancy

The Oley Valley contains beautiful scenic vistas, five state-designated exceptional value streams, significant woodlands, varying geology, and a rich assortment of cultural and historical resources. Oley Township holds the distinction of being the only
Township in the United States listed on the National Register of Historic Places, due to its Pennsylvania Dutch agriculture and architectural styles.

The Pennsylvania Highlands lists, in their conservation atlas, the Oley Hills as a threatened area due to the development pressures surrounding the region. The majority of the land within the Oley Hills is unprotected.

The Berks County Conservancy is working with other local, regional and state agencies to protect this important natural resource.

**Pennsylvania Highlands Region**

In 1990 Congress directed the USDA Forest Service to conduct a study of the Highlands in New York and New Jersey. An Update of this study occurred in 2002. A study is now currently underway for the Pennsylvania and Connecticut portions of the Highlands.

The Pennsylvania Highlands is a range of hills and low mountains stretching from Conewago Falls, on the Susquehanna River, to Easton, on the Delaware River. This area encompasses portions of ten counties. In Berks County, the Highlands encompass all of those municipalities within the Southern Highlands District, the Oley Hills District and portions of municipalities within the Tulpehocken District, the Metro District and the Hawk Mountain District. In general, the rugged and less fertile lands of the Highlands discouraged agriculture and despite repeated exploitation for timber and fuel, the area retains large tracts of forest.

The purpose of the Pennsylvania Highlands study is to identify areas of high conservation value and to study the implications of continued land use changes for the Highlands resources. The study is divided into two parts: part one is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2006 and part two completed in 2007.

Key issues of the study are to include;
- Conserving landscape character and existing land use activities
- Protection of surface and ground water quality
- Conserving the landscape for wildlife, rare plants, and environmental quality
- Retaining working forests and farms to ensure economic viability and livability
- Providing appropriate recreational opportunities near the urban corridor

**Metro Region**

**Joint Comprehensive Plans**

**Governor Mifflin Area Joint Comprehensive Plan 2005**

A study of the existing parks in the Plan shows that they have a good park system with a wide variety of facilities. Efforts are needed to rehabilitate older recreation areas to make sure that they meet modern safety standards. The area benefits from some larger municipal parks in Kenhorst, Shillington and Mohnton along with the Nolde Environmental Education Center and State Game Lands. With the population growth of the region cooperation amongst the municipalities is crucial to providing any future recreation facilities to make sure that they are located in the appropriate areas.

The Plan included recommendations from the 1999 Cumru Township Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

**Specific Recommendations**
- Create a Recreation Coordinating Council that includes representatives from each of the municipalities, school district and major non-profit groups
• The Council should analyze current programs, identify future needs and jointly provide recreation facilities and programs to meet these needs.
• Complete a system of bicycle, pedestrian trails and greenway system along the Angelica and Wyomissing Creeks that would connect the Schuylkill River with Mohnton area and Nolde Environmental Education Center.
• Improve access of the Thun Trail including a pedestrian bridge over Lancaster Avenue and extend the connections of the trail north.
• Require new developments to have pedestrian and bicycle interconnections with other developments and park systems.
• Work to maintain a passable Horse-Shoe Trail system through Brecknock Township.
• Neversink Mountain should be permanently preserved as a public recreation area.
• Preserve areas along the creeks in as natural condition as possible.
• Seek to maintain interconnected corridors for wildlife.

Leesport Borough-Ontelaunee Township-Perry Township Joint Comprehensive Plan 1996

This Plan includes a fairly detailed Recreation, Parks and Open Space element. The level of detail is such that it forms the legal basis for the three municipalities to require mandatory dedication of land as part of the local subdivision and land development process. The three municipalities, based upon size and population are deficient in the amount of parkland available. Also recommended in the Plan is the protection of critical and unique areas, the use of sensitive design techniques, protection and preservation of historic sites and districts, interconnection of greenways along natural areas and stream corridors that would connect major existing recreation facilities with developed areas and the continuation of the Schuylkill River Heritage Park Project along with the Ferdinand K. Thun Trail.

Specific Recommendations
• Protect the areas natural resources from sprawling development.
• Work with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association to develop greenways and trails along the river.
• Acquire parcels in both townships for community parks. Especially Ontelaunee Township, where there is no municipal parkland.
• Upgrade existing parks to meet standards.
• Create partnerships with adjoining municipalities, school districts, the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and the private sector to help expand/improve recreation facilities.
• Encourage the continuation of volunteers who are the backbone of the existing park facilities.

Accomplishments
• Ontelaunee Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2005

Suburban Berks West Joint Comprehensive Plan 2003

The Plan states that most of the Region is well served by existing parks that are well distributed. The Region’s park system contains a variety of facilities. Efforts are needed to upgrade some of the parks so that they meet modern safety standards.

Specific Recommendations
• Encourage Open Space Development methods to preserve the important natural, scenic and historic features of the area.
• Improve parks and playgrounds.
• Complete a system of bicycle and pedestrian trails with regional connections
• Develop a linear park along the Cacoosing Creek
• Develop the new Spring Township park next to Shiloh Hills Elementary School
• Develop a park on land being purchased by Spring Township near State Hill Road

Accomplishments
• Spring Township is in the final stages of completing a greenway study
• Wyomissing Borough has completed various upgrades to its park system
• West Reading has installed a walking trail along the Wyomissing Creek to connect the Wyomissing Borough Trail to the West Reading sidewalk system that leads to their fishing dock on the Schuylkill River.

Open Space and Recreation Plans
Muhlenberg Township Recreation and Open Space Plan “Pathways to Prosperity” 2006

The Township’s overall objectives for this Plan are to establish, maintain, and manage a park system that meets the needs of its citizens as well as protects the municipality’s natural resources. The Township currently has 325 acres of parkland in varying ranges of size and use. The Muhlenberg School District provides facilities for indoor activities while the Township offers organized programs and events throughout the year that serve all ages and interests. There are also a number of sport league associations that provide additional activities for varying age groups.

Specific Recommendations
• Play a significant role in the revitalization of the Township
• Continue to “Tune Up” existing facilities
• Focus on the Riverfront and Trails
• Provide a balance of facilities for community organizations and individuals
• Plan for an Indoor Recreation Center
• Institute strategic changes in refocusing recreation services
• Prepare for the increasing demand on park and recreation facility maintenance with the addition of the new parks and the rail trail
• Establish an operations function in the Parks and Recreation Department
• Continue to invest in Parks and Recreation at a level commensurate with responsibilities and resources

The above recommendations will require significant amounts of funding and the Township intends to approach this hurdle by establishing budgets, partnerships impact statements, seeking grants and sponsorships, and potentially a bond issue. The Township has also set up an implementation schedule for the Plan.

Accomplishments
• The Township submitted a grant application to DCNR for the Jim Dietrich Park
• Progression in the Rail Trail
City of Reading 10-Year Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2002

The City completed an extensive and very detailed Plan. The Plan's overall strategies are organized into five areas:

- Staffing and financing
- Park Areas and Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Programs
- Maintenance, Safety, and Security
- Communications and Public Involvement

Within each of these areas the Plan discusses the City's deficiencies, goals and recommendations for implementation. The Plan recognizes the City's financial constraints and offers a number of ways to maximize funding opportunities. See the Metro Region in Chapter 3 for many of the proposed projects, which are too vast to repeat here.

Accomplishments

- RiverPlace
- Interconnections with Neversink Mountain and the Schuylkill River (currently underway)
- ICGR
- Goggleworks
- Redevelopment along the Schuylkill River

Ontelaunee Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2005

The Township prepared this Plan due to the increase in both population and development pressures. This Plan was developed to implement the recommendations of the Leesport Borough-

Ontelaunee Township-Perry Township Joint Comprehensive Plan, plan for the development of park and recreation opportunities and protect the natural resources of the Township.

Specific Recommendations

- Create a Recreation and Parks Committee
- Develop a community park to serve all of the Township Residents
- Establish written policies on the use of public park facilities
- Develop neighborhood park to serve areas of the Township
- Develop a trail plan
- Develop the Schuylkill River Greenway
- Develop the Maiden Creek Corridor

Accomplishments

Cumru Township Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan 1999

This plan recommends that Cumru Township develop a number of new open space, park and recreation opportunities based upon the present and future population densities. Currently, based upon national standards, there is a deficit of park and recreational facilities.

Specific Recommendations

- The Township should develop a community-wide park at a previously dedicated 26-acre parcel along Abercarn Road. This park would be a multi-use park.
- Develop two new neighborhood parks
- Acquire control of the Gouglersville Fire Company playground
- Develop the Angelica Ice Dam Park for historic and recreation purposes
- Make improvements to existing parks throughout the Township
• Support the efforts of the Berks County Conservancy and the Neversink Mountain project
• Trail corridors are recommended for Angelica Creek, Wyomissing Creek, Schuylkill River Greenway/Heritage Park and Rails to Trails (abandoned Conrail line)
• Various regulatory updates that would help preserve open space and scenic road corridors
• Create a Township Parks and Recreation Department by year 2010 to administer the Township’s recreational system

Related Studies

Museum Development Study: Reading Railroad Heritage Museum 2004

The Reading Company Technical and Historical Society (RCT&HS) was incorporated in 1976 and has assembled one of the largest collections of memorabilia relating to a single railroad. The RCT&HS owns property in Hamburg and Schuylkill Haven, and lease facilities in Temple and Leesport, Pennsylvania. The goal of the RCT&HS is to create museum interpretive centers in Hamburg, Temple, Reading and Schuylkill Haven and operate a scenic rail excursion that would also create economic development opportunities. This study forms the preliminary schematic outline for the development of the proposed Museum System.

The primary interpretive center is slated for Hamburg at the former Pennsylvania Steel Foundry. This center will house exhibits, a turntable, and many of its rail cars, engines and other stock from the Reading Railroad. The center also hopes to resume train excursions from this site. Also, the site will contain a technical crafts center and guild for the promotion of education training and provision of an enterprise generating revenue to sustain it and provide support for the museum interpretive centers.

Accomplishments

• The RCT&HS is currently renovating their property in Hamburg to accommodate the primary interpretive center.

RIVERPLACE Master Plan 2005

RiverPlace Development Corporation formed to address the disconnection and deterioration of the Schuylkill River Waterfront through the urban areas of Greater Reading. The Vision of RiverPlace is to connect the Schuylkill River with the surrounding population. This Vision involves many partners in both the public and private sector. Projects that implement the following recommendations are listed according to timeframes along with policy initiatives.

Specific Recommendations

• New trails that will connect new and existing park systems
• Performances, festivals and other events that bring people down to the riverfront
• Economic Development (new housing and innovative business districts)
• Reading Area Community College (RACC) remains and expands as a central riverfront anchor
• Expand the City of Reading and West Reading Borough downtown uses closer to the river along the Penn Corridor
• Interconnection of the riverfront to Greater Reading and Berks County through the Schuylkill River Nation and State Heritage Area
• Expansion of the link between the three tributaries that link RiverPlace to major institutions: Penn State Berks on the Tulpehocken Creek; Reading Museum, Reading Hospital &
Medical Center and the Nursing School along the Wyomissing Creek; Alvernia College and Angelica Park on Angelica Creek
- Expand the existing trail system on Neversink Mountain to the Schuylkill River

Accomplishments
- Opening of the Goggleworks
- Completion of the Lancaster Avenue Trail Bridge (SRGA)
- Schmidt Training and Technology Center (RACC) under construction
- Redevelopment activities underway along areas on both sides of the riverfront

Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area Management Plan
The Schuylkill River Heritage Area stretches from Schuylkill County; the headwaters of the Schuylkill River, to the mouth of the Schuylkill River South of Philadelphia in Chester County encompassing over 3.2 million people in a five county region. In 1995, Pennsylvania designated the Schuylkill River Valley as a Heritage Corridor under the Heritage Parks Program. In 2000 the United States Congress followed through with the designation of the Schuylkill River Valley as the Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area.

The major goal of the National Heritage Area is to “conserve, interpret and develop the historical, cultural, natural and recreational resources related to the industrial and cultural heritage of the Schuylkill River Valley. The Schuylkill River Greenways Association (SRGA) is the designated management organization for the Heritage Area.

Specific Recommendations
- Resource Conservation and Enhancement
- Education and Interpretation
- Recreation
- Community Revitalization
- Heritage Tourism

Accomplishments
- Grants to various entities

Neversink Mountain Feasibility Study 1997
The study contains five major parts; background, regional considerations, conditions and resources, the long-range plan and financial considerations. It also contains two supplements: a butterfly study and a confidential plan for the acquisition of land rights tailored specifically to the Berks County Conservancy’s ongoing acquisition and easement program.

The partners involved in the preparation of the study were the City of Reading, Berks County Conservancy, DCNR through a Recreational Improvement and Rehabilitation Act grant and other stakeholders.

The overall goal and concept of the study is that Neversink Mountain remains as a green area. The hope is that one entity will oversee the stewardship of the mountain on behalf of the six municipalities that it lies within.

Specific Recommendations
- Preserve the green character of the mountain along with its natural, cultural, visual and historic resources
- Acquire and/or ease key parcels estimated acreage needed is 750 acres
- Develop and enhance the recreational opportunities
- Optimize the open space
Accomplishments

- Acquisition of about 500 acres of the mountain through fee-simle, easement and right-of-way agreements
- Installation and improvement of trails through certain areas and established maintenance programs
- Land swaps with various entities to improve access and protection
- Acquisition of properties to improve access to trail heads
- Educational programs

Greater Reading as a Recreation Hub

The plan and vision for the Greater Reading as a Greenway and Recreation Hub initiative is that through strategic partnerships the Berks County Conservancy will assist the County in implementing the County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan for the metro region of Berks County, including the “Greater Reading Area”. Through enhancement of greenways and recreational opportunities and influence and support from the economic development community coordinated by the Berks Economic partnership (BEP) this will improve greater use and appreciation of our natural resources, recreational assets by our citizens and improved stewardship of the community and environment.

Partners include: Berks County Conservancy, RiverPlace, Schuylkill River Greenway Association, Berks Economic Development Partnership, City of Reading, County of Berks, West Reading Main Street, and DCNR

Project focus includes: Angelica Park, Antietam Lake/Mt. Penn (Rose Cree), City Park, Confluence Point Park-RiverPlace North, Baer Park/Dana Memorial Park-RiverPlace North, RiverPlace-Central riverfront, Heritage Park-RiverPlace South, Neversink Mountain, West Reading/Wyomissing Creek-RiverPlace Central, Recreation Stewardship & Communication-Trail heads & signage

Accomplishments

- Coordination of grant applications and acquisition of key parcels has begun
- Acquisition of grant funds for various portions of projects

Berks Urban Greening (BUG) Community Gardening Program

This program through the work of the Berks County Conservancy and other interested stakeholders transforms vacant lots into healthy green community spaces and community gardens. The program provides the opportunity for local residents to grow their own vegetables, herbs and flowers which will engender economic self-sufficiency, health and nutritional benefits, resident cooperation, community spirit and is an attractive green space addition to the urban areas.

Accomplishments

- To date there are six BUG community garden sites established in the City of Reading
  - Amanda’s Garden 600 South 10th Street
  - Opportunity House Community Garden corner of Beech and Pear Streets
  - Eisenbrown Street Community Garden blocks 628-644
  - North 6th Street Community Garden blocks 718-720
  - 6th Ward Community Garden blocks 137-139 Buttonwood Street
  - Garden of Good Thoughts Schuylkill and Walnut Streets
Southern Highlands Region

Joint Comprehensive Plans

The Joint Comprehensive Plan; Amity Township, Exeter Township and St. Lawrence Borough 2005

The plan includes an inventory of existing park, open space and historic facilities. Many of the actions recommended in the plan are regional in nature and encourage cooperation amongst the municipalities and other entities.

Specific Recommendations

- Update local zoning ordinances to promote conservation of natural and historic resources, scenic roads and view sheds
- Update local SALDO ordinances to require trail, bikeway and greenway planning; resource identification and protection; open space and recreation; conservation of natural resources
- Plan for greenways and riparian buffers along the Monocacy, Antietam and other creeks and the Schuylkill River
- Active involvement of historic commissions
- Active involvement of Environmental Advisory Committees
- Implement the trail plan through a joint trail committee
- Work with the school districts to assure retention of existing facilities and availability
- Encourage development of trail systems that interconnect regional resources; Neversink Mountain, Antietam Lake; the City of Reading and Antietam Creek

Southern Berks Regional Comprehensive Plan 2004

The plan discusses recommendations for the preservation of natural features, public facilities and services, and parks and recreation. This plan also stresses the need for cooperation to accomplish many of these recommendations.

Specific Recommendations

- Adopt regulations that promote groundwater recharge, riparian buffers, and best management practices
- Consider preparation of a Watershed Management Plan in areas most vulnerable to development impacts
- Consider initiating plans under the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Program
- Adopt regulations for woodland preservation and replacement
- Monitor surface water quality
- Create a Regional Recreation Board
- Apply to PA DCNR to prepare a Regional Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan
- Locate a new community park in the Green Hills Area
- Add additional neighborhood parks in areas not currently served
- Apply to PA DCNR for a peer-to-peer review
- Improve the Robeson and Union Township community parks by adding additional programs and activities
- Protect the Horseshoe and Thun Trails
- Adopt/update mandatory dedication regulations in SALDO’s
- Revenue share mandatory dedication funds throughout the region

Open Space and Recreation Plans

Amity Township Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan 2001

The updated Township Plan identifies how Amity should address parks, recreation and open space needs – both currently and over the next ten years.
Specific Recommendations

- Finish developing Hill Road Recreation Area
- Upgrade selected facilities at Lake Drive Park and Recreation Area
- Make immediate improvements at Monocacy Hill Recreation Area
- Secure Clear Title to Monocacy Hill Recreation Area
- Plan for long range development of an environmental education center at Monocacy Hill Recreation Area
- Sell a portion of the Haas Farm site to Daniel Boone School District for a new Middle School
- Construct outdoor athletic facilities on the Haas Farm in cooperation with the Daniel Boone School District
- Construct additional outdoor recreation facilities at the Haas Farm for community use
- Continue policy of accepting fees in lieu of land for neighborhood parks
- Include multi-purpose community space in the new Birdsboro Library
- Connect the old Airport Road open space to the Township building property
- Establish a greenway along the Leaf Creek Interceptor
- Plan an additional greenway segment along the Schuylkill River
- Create more non-sports activities, especially for adults
- Offer more special events programming

- Consider professional programming assistance in future
- Strengthen and enact zoning regulations for
  - Steep slopes
  - Stream Corridors
  - Wooded areas
  - Consider adopting historic preservation regulations
- Encourage more agricultural preservation
- Track usage of Monocacy Hill Park
- Enhance regular safety inspections at Township Parks
- Enhance risk management policies
- Establish a gifts catalog of recreation items needed
- Establish a park endowment fund
- Distribute a brochure describing leisure opportunities in and around the Township

Accomplishments

- Amity Community Park – a joint effort of the Township and School District
- Monocacy Hill Recreation Area environmental education signage

Caernarvon Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan 2002

The Plan identifies that the Township lacks municipal level recreation programs and recreation facilities. Over the past few years the Township obtained several grants to support parkland acquisition and development. Various organizations provide recreation programming in the area. New developments within
the Township will provide future recreation facilities for the residents.

Specific Recommendations

General Park Facilities
- Prepare park master plans for all Township-owned parks
- Develop an annual maintenance schedule/budget
- ADA accessibility to all Township parks
- Redevelopment and Acquisitions identification
- Signage

Recreation Programs and Administration
- Design a recreation program
- Improve public awareness of Township parks program through a newsletter & website
- Equipment inventory matrix
- Risk management policy and procedures
- Recreation department and operations manual

Accomplishments
- Development of playground
- Grants for acquisition of additional parkland

Master Plan for Ironstone Park and Douglass Township Municipal Park, 2004

The Plan details the primary improvements that are recommended for the Township’s two existing parks; Ironstone Park and Douglass Township Municipal Park.

Specific Recommendations

Ironstone Park
- Create a one plus mile multiple use trail for walking, jogging and bicycling during the summer and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter.
- Install benches along the trail
- Add four picnic pavilions with parking
- Add a multipurpose field
- Install a large play area and three smaller ones
- Install a tricycle track
- Remove existing play areas
- Replace basketball court with a new court
- Install a portable ice rink for ice skating

Douglass Township Municipal Park
- Install a large play area and tricycle track
- Create a ½ mile multiple use trail for walking, jogging and bicycling
- Improve parking areas
- Install a new basketball court and new tennis courts
Overall

- Acquire land between Ironstone Creek and Ironstone Park
- Formalize agreements between Township and the Pine Forge Athletic Association

Related Studies

Hopewell Big Woods Landscape Conservation Plan 2003

The Hopewell Big Woods area is the last large unbroken forested area in South Eastern Pennsylvania, encompassing nearly 73,000 acres. With the threat of losing this environmental resource a number of State, Local and Non-profit groups came together to participate in the report prepared by the Natural Lands Trust. This report includes a threat analysis for conservations purposes and identifies key natural features, landscape ecology, land use, and ownership patterns. Based upon this information, the report identified landscape conservation short-term and long-term priorities for critical areas along with conservation and restoration activities.

Specific Recommendations

- Project goal of 15,000 acres of continuous forested areas
- Develop a community-based conservation presence to address the conservation issues identified
- Write a detailed land protection plan and protect land
- Write a stewardship plan for the management of Hopewell Big Woods conservation targets
- Assist municipalities and non-profits in helping to carry out these plans
- Develop quantitative baseline condition documentation for all conservation targets
- Implement the Hopewell Big Woods stewardship plan
- Monitor the Hopewell Big Woods conservation targets to evaluate the success of stewardship efforts
- Use adaptive management principle to modify management to better achieve conservation goals
- Use a variety of communication tools to promote the project
- Raise funds to support the above activities.

Morlatton Village Development Program 2004

The Morlatton Village contains the first European Settlement in Berks County. The Morlatton Village Development Plan proposes the concept of combining recreation activities with educational and cultural pursuits of this very historic area. The Plan designates the lands along the Schuylkill River as a passive recreation of the Amity Township Park and Recreation system. Within this park would be the historic Morlatton Village, which would be owned and operated as a museum by the Preservation Trust of Berks County.

Specific Recommendations

- Facilities for a riverfront recreation park, including the Thun Trail and other potential nature trails, fishing, picnicking, boat launch site for car-top watercraft and such.
- Continued improvements, preservation and enhancement of the Historic Morlatton Village that would further facilitate the Village as museum
- Creation of a Visitor’s Center Area for the Village that could include exhibit space and storage of historic artifacts
- Archaeological investigations to uncover more of the Village’s past
- Preservation of the nearby Village of Douglassville and integration of its functions with the Historic Morlatton Village. This would include significant traffic changes due to the
Route 422 Corridor. Also, connection of the Thun Trail through Douglassville to the Amity Township Park system.

- Economic Development related to these recommendations

**Birdsboro Municipal Water Authority: Source Water Assessment Report 2002**

**Birdsboro Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2006**

The Borough completed a comprehensive review of their recreation facilities and programs. Through this process they identified ecological, recreational, heritage and management goals in order to guide the future growth and development of the Borough’s park system.

The Plan identified and ranked many projects. Following are the Very High Priority Projects:

- Adopt an Official Map
- Develop Tucci House
- Require mandatory parkland dedication
- Acquire right-of-way within Armorcast Property
- Acquire right-of-way for Mountz Trail from F.M. Brown
- Improve recreation program coordination
- Coordinate with regional stakeholders

**Hay Creek Watershed Conservation Mgmt Plan 2004**

**Allegheny Creek Watershed Assessment 2005**

* All of these plans address water related resource issues as they pertain to these specific areas. The Plans are all fairly similar in their recommendations and goals. Each Plan identifies the main sources of potential contamination and pollution sources in that specific watershed and recommendations for correcting or preventing them. Please see the individual plans located in the planning office for further information.

**Neighboring Counties**

- Lehigh County
- Montgomery County
- Chester County
- Lancaster County
- Lebanon County
- Schuylkill County

Each of the counties that adjoin Berks County has Comprehensive Plans and either adopted Open Space and Recreation Plans or are in the process of adopting one. Berks County is committed to regional ideas and therefore during the process of creating the new Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan has reviewed and correlated our Plan recommendations and projects with ideas from adjoining Counties and beyond. All adjoining Counties have received copies of information in draft format for review and comment in order to correlate those areas that extend beyond Berks County borders.