



EXPERIENCE Lawrence County

Greenways Plan Update

Adopted June 2017



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In particular, the following persons deserve recognition for dedicating their time and efforts:

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Resolution

Resolution R-2017- 055

WHEREAS, the County of Lawrence has received a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program grant under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC), under contract number BRC-TAG-20-72 to complete an update to the Lawrence County Greenways and Trail Plan that was adopted in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Lawrence County Greenways Plan Update "Experience Lawrence County" was completed in accordance with the Grant Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of Lawrence County is the official advisory agent to the Board of Commissioners of Lawrence County on matters pertaining to the general planning of land use; and

WHEREAS, the Lawrence County Planning Commission recommended at the April 12, 2017 Planning Commission meeting that the Board of Commissioners approve the Lawrence County Greenways Plan Update "Experience Lawrence County" as an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan "Focus Lawrence County" that was adopted in October of 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Plan and related materials were acceptable and will be used to guide future recreation and conservation decisions; and

WHEREAS, all project expenditures have been made and were in accordance with the Grant Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Lawrence County Planning Commission will submit all necessary documents to DCNR to close-out the BRC-TAG-20-72 contract.

NOW, THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS; that the Commissioners adopt and approve the Lawrence County Greenways plan "Experience Lawrence County" as an amendment to the Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan "Focus Lawrence County".

Adopted this 6th day of June, 2017

Vote: 3 YEAS 0 NAYS

Certified this 6th day of June, 2017



James Gagliano, Jr. Chief Clerk/County Administrator



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Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

In 1998, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge established the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission to prepare the Commonwealth's first ever greenways plan - the *Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections*, published in 2001. The Plan established a strategy for creating a comprehensive, statewide greenway network by the year 2020. The Governor appointed the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to oversee the Commonwealth's greenways program. DCNR partners with County and municipal officials to support greenways planning and implementation through education, technical assistance and grant making programs.

The State Greenways Plan also identified 12 strategies for implementation, one of which was for all 67 counties in Pennsylvania to complete and adopt a countywide greenways plan. As a result, Lawrence County completed and adopted *Connections: Linking Lawrence County's Resources Through Greenways* in 2008.

Since the adoption of the Plan in 2008, Lawrence County has been working hard to implement the Plan. Implementation projects include the employment of a shared greenways coordinator (with Beaver County) from 2008 to 2015; renovated the Stavich Bicycle Trail; constructed and opened the Neshannock Trail; partnered with the City of New Castle to prepare the Riverwalk Plan; and constructed numerous public boat launches along its waterways. With so many priority projects implemented, it was time to update the Plan.

While all 67 of Pennsylvania's counties have adopted a greenways plan, Lawrence is the first to update their plan. The County continues to demonstrate its commitment to sound land use planning, conservation and preservation and providing and improving access to outdoor recreation throughout the County.

A **greenway** is a

corridor of open space, varying greatly in scale and incorporating or **linking diverse natural, cultural and scenic resources**.

Some greenways are **recreational corridors or scenic byways** accommodating pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle traffic on both land and water; while others function almost exclusively for **environmental protection** and are not designed for human passage.

— Lawrence County
Greenways Plan
2008 (adapted from
Pennsylvania's
Greenways Plan)

A History of Greenways in Lawrence County

Although officially, greenways *planning* did not occur in Pennsylvania until the late 1990's and in Lawrence County until the 2000's, the first greenways were *established* long before. The history of Lawrence County's greenways is entwined with not only that of Pennsylvania, but also with the United States.

Preserving public land dates back to the 1800's, with Yosemite becoming the first state park nationally in 1865 and Yellowstone

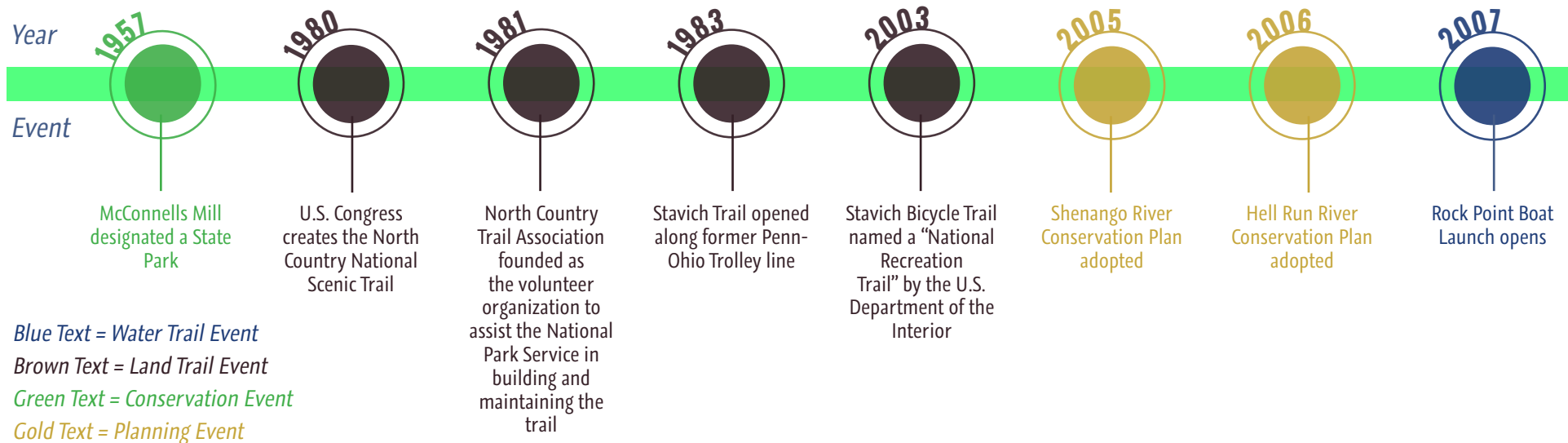
designated as the first national park in 1872. Valley Forge became Pennsylvania's first state park in 1893. By the 1950's, Pennsylvania continued to acquire park land with a goal to build a state park "within 25 miles of every resident."¹ Originally preserved by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in 1946, McConnells Mill became a state park in 1957. McConnells Mill

¹ "History of PA State Parks." Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Retrieved online October 2016. www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/thinkstoknow/history/thefirstpark/index.htm.

encompasses 2,546 acres in southeastern Lawrence County, including the 930-acre Slippery Rock Gorge, which was created by the draining of glacial lakes thousands of years ago. The Gorge was designated a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1974 and a State Park Natural Area in 1998.²

Capitalizing on the country's growing

² "A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for McConnells Mill State Park." PA DCNR, 2011. Retrieved online: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_003640.pdf



momentum in conservation and outdoor recreation, in the 1960's, the focus shifted towards long distance hiking trails. The National Trails System Act of 1968 was passed, establishing the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails (NST's) and recommended they study of 14 similar projects, including the North Country Trail. A federal-state task force was assembled in 1971 to study the feasibility, culminating in the authorization of the North Country National Scenic Trail on March 5, 1980.³

³ North Country Trail Association History. Retrieved online October 2016. <https://northcountrytrail.org/trail/history/> Retrieved online October 2016.

With the foundation for trails established, the Stavich Bicycle Trail was constructed on the former Youngstown-New Castle streetcar line, along the Mahoning River and dedicated in June of 1983. The trail was one of 23 National Recreation Trails designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2003, celebrating "Healthy Trails, Healthy People."⁴

With parks and trails of statewide and national significance established in Lawrence County, conservation planning became a

⁴ "National Recreation Trails," National Park Service. Retrieved online October 2016: <http://www.americantrails.org/NRTDatabase/trailDetail.php?recordID=3375>

priority in the early 2000's. The County began developing and adopting river conservation plans for six of their major waterways and watersheds and in 2008, adopted their first ever countywide greenways plan. With a Plan in place, the County began expanding its greenway network with the opening of several public boat launches along its rivers, improving existing trails and opening new trails. By 2015, it was time to plan again.



Planning Framework

Preserving and enhancing Lawrence County's character and quality of life is the main goal of the Greenway Plan and the 2008 Plan identifies the following objectives:

- Protect existing natural areas primarily for ecological health and preservation of wildlife habitat;
- Promote the preservation of agricultural land;
- Provide recreational opportunities for County residents through preservation and connection of existing open spaces;
- Promote economic growth via recreational or eco-tourism;
- Encourage local municipalities to work in unison to help protect their various resources by adopting open space and land use regulations;

- Educate County residents on the aspects and benefits of Greenways Planning.

Coinciding with a need to update its Greenways Plan, Lawrence County's Comprehensive Plan was also in need of an update. In 2014, the Lawrence County Board of Commissioners tasked their Planning Commission and Department of Planning and Community Development with the process of updating both plans. Focus: Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted in October 2016 and is organized around four main themes: Core Communities, Connecting Communities, Healthy Communities and Complete Communities. The County felt that these same four themes can and should apply to their countywide vision for greenways.

Core Communities focuses on the urbanized town centers within the County that are faced with a unique set of issues that are not affecting most suburban and rural areas.

Connecting Communities is two-fold: the physical transportation connections and the social connections that cross political boundaries.

Healthy Communities examines the relationship between the built environment and the natural environment to the overall health of residents.

Complete Communities analyzes the impact of land use choices on the sustainability of communities.

Since this Plan is an update of the 2008 Plan, much of the background information on existing resources was taken directly from the 2008 Greenways Plan and the 2016 Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan Update. All information was reviewed with the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development (LCDPCD) and updated as necessary.

Additional information was gathered by reviewing other planning studies and reports and through the public participation process, as well as through field observation.

Greenways can serve many functions. When determining the guiding principles used to designate greenways for Lawrence County, we considered the objectives established in the early part of the planning process. The following goals and objectives offer insight into the function of the greenways to be developed in the county:

These goals and objectives support the two general functions that define proposed Greenways in Lawrence County:

- 1) Conservation Greenways are corridors whose primary function is preservation of sensitive environmental features and habitats, such as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, exceptional value water-quality

streams, high-value natural areas identified by the Lawrence County Natural Heritage Inventory, outstanding geologic or scenic features and land surrounding the county's drinking water sources. They are linear tracts of essentially undeveloped open space. Some low-impact activity, like hiking or wildlife observation, is acceptable in these corridors, but intense development and motorized vehicle use are not recommended.

- 2) Recreational and Transportation Greenways are corridors in which trail development is recommended. These greenways connect population centers and points of interest. They bring people into contact with the outdoors and cultivate an appreciation of the natural world. These trails also provide alternative, environmentally-friendly transportation options for commuters and visitors.



In some cases, recreational trails overlay areas where conservation of natural assets is also an objective. To avoid conflicts, recreational uses should be planned to minimize impacts. For example, a biking trail along a river or stream corridor should be designed to preserve steep slopes, wetlands and other sensitive areas.

Engaging the Public

Lawrence County used several methods to gather public and ensure that the Greenways Plan Update is representative of the desired vision and goals of its residents.

A steering committee comprised of community leaders and representatives of stakeholder organizations (particularly the cycling and paddling community, see the full list in the Acknowledgments section at the beginning of this document) directed the planning process, participating in quarterly work sessions to review progress and provide input on specific topics.

The planning process involved meetings with a wide variety of stakeholders to conduct and verify background research and collect input to guide the plan. These groups included, but were not limited to, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania Game Commission

(PGC), Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency, New Castle Area Transit Authority, Lawrence County Cycling Club, the Lawrence County Conservation District, Neshannock Trout Unlimited, local school district superintendents and members of the Amish community.

A special event, called Experience Lawrence County, was held on Saturday, September 2015 at the Butler County Community College - Lawrence Crossing campus. The event was designed to engage the public with regards to the County's efforts in developing trails and greenways. Events included:

- Bike ride on the Stavich Trail (with a police escort to and from BC3);
- Mountain bike trail ride, bird watching and a guided walk at West Park Nature Center on rain gardens, wetlands and invasive species;

- Paddle on the Shenango River and demonstration by the Lawrence County Department of Public Safety about river rescue;
- Educational sessions by Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), Jameson Health Systems, Penn State Extension, the North Country Trail Association and the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation.

In conjunction with the County's Comprehensive Plan process, input was collected on the plan's vision and recommendations from the 27 municipalities via meetings and mailings. Additional public outreach took place via public meetings held in conjunction with the master site plans that were developed for parks in New Castle and Ellwood City as part of this project and the publication of plan information on the County's website and Facebook page.

FIND YOUR FOCUS **LAWRENCE** County

EXPERIENCE LAWRENCE COUNTY

You are invited to experience a day of outdoor adventure and education in Lawrence County and learn about what is being planned for the future. The event will include scheduled outdoor activities at various locations as well as indoor public input sessions at Butler County Community College, Lawrence Crossing Campus.

More details regarding the activities will be coming, but for now,

SAVE THE DATE

Get on the trail. Walk, run or bike the Stavich Trail.

Get connected. See and hear proposed County plans and initiatives.

Get in the river. Paddle the Shenango River.

Get out in nature. Learn about the West Park Nature Center.

Get healthy. Meet some of your local farmers and food sources.

Get involved. Provide input into your County's future.

Comprehensive Plan outreach was coordinated with other community events, such as Summer 2015's Experience Lawrence County.



Experience Lawrence County was an event held on Saturday, September 19, 2015 at the Butler County Community College - Lawrence Crossing, hosted by the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development, as part of the Greenways Plan. The event offered a bike ride on the Stavich Bicycle Trail, a canoe/kayak trip on the Shenango River, bird watching and a guided walk at West park Nature Center and educational sessions hosted by Jameson Health System and the North Country Trail Association.



Core Communities

[kawr, kohr]
noun

the central, innermost
or most essential part of
anything¹

¹ "Core." Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary.reference.com/browse/core).

The Comp Plan says...

“Targeted reinvestment in the county’s core communities will reinforce their status as prosperous, inviting and livable activity hubs that offer a complete range of well-connected neighborhood elements, regional amenities and opportunities for business development.”

The prosperity of Lawrence County as a whole is rooted in the ability of core communities to attract potential residents and business activity. These places are functional focal points, local hubs built with the capacity to accommodate industrial innovation and population expansion. Their full systems of existing public infrastructure represent an efficient alternative to the cost of laying new roads and pipes into currently undeveloped outlying areas. And their dense integration of different types of neighborhood elements along pedestrian-scale streets positions them to meet the lifestyle preferences of a new generation of households.

Restoring vitality to the county’s core communities will require stabilizing tipping-point areas, re-energizing and empowering local stakeholders and elevating the appeal of public spaces. It will require addressing social problems far larger than local government has the capacity to solve. As challenging as these prospects are, core communities are uniquely positioned to implement some of the strategies most important to ensuring that the county can meet the demands of demographic and social change, such as affordable housing options suited to smaller senior and millennial households, multi-modal transportation connections and access to a full range of recreational opportunities.

The 2016 Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan defines **Core Communities** as those that serve as **destinations** for employment and/or tourism and feature a Main Street / downtown and are **densely developed** older municipalities where a long history means both a **rich local character** and the need for investment in revitalization.

As such, Core Communities include the greater New Castle area, Ellwood City, New Wilmington, Wampum, Volant and also in smaller pockets elsewhere.

Greenway Hubs

The 2008 Greenways Plan identified major and minor hubs as part of the recreational and transportation greenways. The Plan defines “major hubs” as those that were regionally significant destinations, while others that had less significance but exhibited potential for connectivity to other hubs were defined as “minor hubs.”

Major hubs included the City of New Castle, the Borough of New Wilmington, the Borough of Volant, the Borough of Ellwood City and McConnells Mill State Park. Minor hubs included the villages of Pulaski, Edinburg and Lowellville (Ohio) and the Borough of Wampum.

This plan seeks to build upon the concept of the Core Communities as greenways hubs and offer recommendations as to how to better capitalize on greenways within the communities themselves. Urban hubs and recreational hubs are shown in relation to the existing greenway network on “Figure 1: Greenway Hubs” on page 19.

Urban Hubs

Three of the Core Communities (the City of New Castle, Ellwood City Borough and New Wilmington) are classified as urban hubs. As such, they are the most heavily populated amongst the Core Communities and are home to the largest downtown business districts. These hubs may or may not be already connected to the overall County greenway network.

The City of New Castle is the most populated municipality in Lawrence County. Its status as County Seat and concentration of employers brings in thousands of workers on a daily basis. As an urban hub, New Castle offers a downtown business district, UPMC Jameson Hospital, historic districts and sites and many cultural destinations. In addition, it is home to the Neshannock Trail, the Riverwalk, Cascade Park, multiple waterways and is close to the Stavich Bicycle Trail.

Ellwood City is the County’s most populated Borough and similar to New Castle, offers a

downtown business district and employment centers. The community, home to Ewing Park and Connoquenessing Creek, is looking to expand its park trail network (Ewing and Stiefel) as well as conduct a feasibility study to connect to Ellport Borough and Wampum.

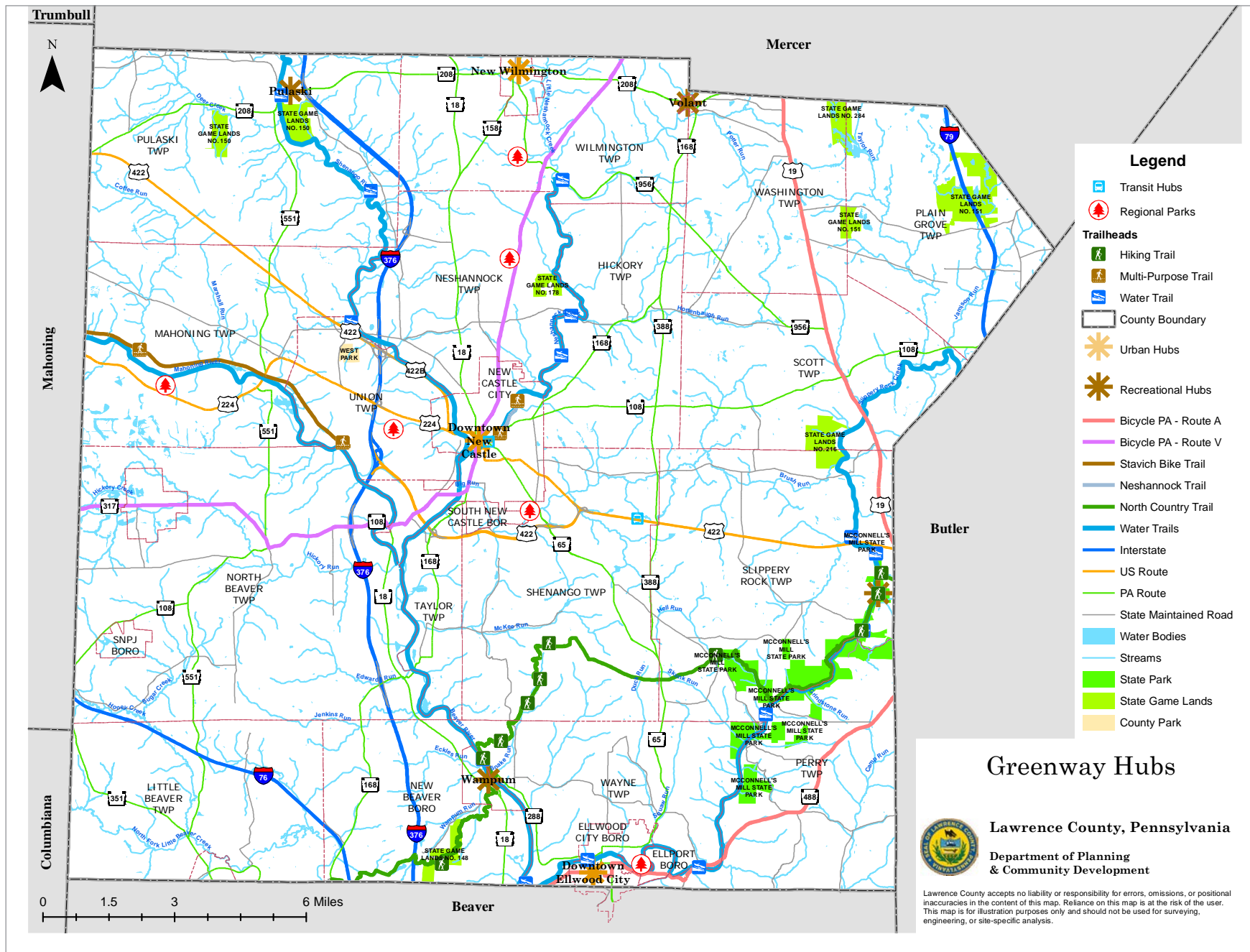
With a population of just 2,233 (2015 estimate), New Wilmington Borough is not a large community. However, it is home to Westminster College and, as the hub of the Amish community in Lawrence County, is a major tourist destination.

Recreation Hubs

Recreation hubs include the smaller Core Communities (Volant and Wampum), the villages of Pulaski and McConnells Mill State Park. These are classified as recreation hubs as a result of offering either trailheads and/or river access sites.

Volant Borough, while smaller than New Wilmington, is still a major tourist destination and offers public access to Neshannock Creek.

Figure 1: Greenway Hubs



Wampum Borough is a designated North Country National Scenic Trail Town, providing access to the hiking trail and the Beaver River.

The Village of Pulaski provides public river access to the Shenango River and abandoned railroad alignments following the Shenango River provide potential connections southward to New Castle and northward to Sharon in Mercer County. In addition, Pulaski is a stop along the North Country Scenic Byway driving route and is home to tourist destinations (winery/brewery).

Recreation Facilities

Though the various recreation facilities in Lawrence County, including community parks in municipalities throughout the county, are too numerous to describe in detail here, this section describes of the most significant recreational assets that are relevant to the Greenways Plan.

State Parks

The 2,546-acre McConnells Mill State Park is the only State Park that is located within the boundaries of Lawrence County. The park contains the scenic Slippery Rock Creek Gorge, a historic 19th-century grist mill and wooden covered bridge (tours offered) and offers park amenities such as picnic areas, hiking trails and guided nature walks. In addition, outdoor recreation opportunities such as climbing / rappelling from the Gorge's cliffs, fishing, hunting during regular seasons, wildlife observation and whitewater rafting or kayaking are possible although programming is not provided.

County Parks

West Park Nature Center is a 108-acre county-owned park, located in Union Township. Facilities include a mountain bike trail, walking trails, a 25-acre certified Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuary, pavilions and picnic areas, restrooms and a variety of interpretive and educational areas.

The County's only other park is Henry Bazzichi Park, a community playground (approximately 1 acre) maintained by Wayne Township, in which the park is located. This park consists of an open lawn area used as a ballfield, several pieces of playground equipment, swings, a small basketball court and a small picnic pavilion.

Community Parks

Among the largest community parks in Lawrence County are Cascade Park (72 acres, New Castle), Ewing Park (58 acres, Ellwood City) and the 81-acre Pearson Park (Neshannock Township).

Cascade Park boasts spectacular views of the 40' Big Run Falls, fishing, public swimming, a dance hall, a historic carousel building used as a pavilion and is host to several community events, including the annual Back to the 50's Festival.

Ewing Park offers hiking trails along the side of the scenic Connoquenessing Creek Gorge, as well as picnic opportunities, a

public swimming pool, playgrounds and historic buildings. Ewing Park also plays host to several community events, including the Ellwood City Arts, Crafts and Food Festival and an Earth Day Celebration.

Pearson Park offers a private swimming pool, tennis courts, baseball fields, picnic opportunities, basketball, sand volleyball and a fitness trail. These three parks receive a large amount of use from residents not only in their respective municipalities but from surrounding areas as well and are major destinations within the County.

State Game Lands

Hunting is very popular among residents of Lawrence County. More than 4,100 acres are designated State Game Lands in Lawrence County and are thus managed by the State Game Commission for wildlife conservation, hunting and trapping. These activities remain paramount to any other proposed activities on these lands. Proposals for other uses are reviewed by the Game Commission to determine if they are compatible with primary uses. The six State Game Lands that are located at least partially in Lawrence County are SGL #148, 150, 151, 178, 216 and 284.

Transit Hubs

The headquarters of the New Castle Area Transit Authority (NCATA) is located on Mahoning Avenue in the City of New Castle. The NCATA offers public transportation to several destinations within the city limits, to points in Union and Neshannock Townships, as well as Wampum, Volant and Ellwood City Boroughs. Bus lines also extend outside the county to Grove City (Mercer County), Iron Mountain Document Storage in Boyers area (Butler County) and to Pittsburgh (Allegheny County). A bus transfer station was recently completed at the corner of Washington Street and Croton Avenue in the City of New Castle. The other locations listed above are bus stops only.

One park-and-ride lot is located in Lawrence County, on U.S. Route 422, approximately 3 miles west of the I-79 interchange. Two other park-and-ride lots are located just outside county lines: one near the U.S. 422 interchange with Interstate 79 and another on State Route 488 at the I-79 Interchange near Portersville.

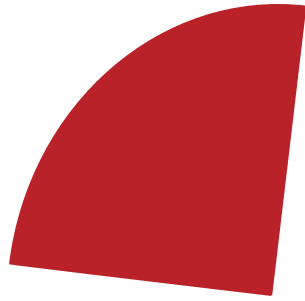


core communities greenways vision

“

Capitalize on outdoor recreation
to spur economic revitalization
in Core Communities.

”



core communities ~ guiding principle #1

Encourage Core Communities to become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

The push to make Lawrence County's Core Communities more pedestrian and bicycle friendly is evident in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan; many of the recommendations offered in the Greenways Plan build upon the vision and concepts presented in the Comprehensive Plan.

1.1: Encourage Core Communities to adopt Complete Streets policies.

Complete Streets policies “formalize a community’s intent to plan, design and maintain streets so they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities.”¹ These policies can be implemented through updated ordinances and resolutions, inclusion into comprehensive plans and adopted policies by the governing body.

¹ “Complete Streets.” Smart Growth America. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>. Retrieved online October 2016.

According to Smart Growth America, there are ten elements of a comprehensive Complete Streets policy:

- Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets
- Specifies that ‘all users’ includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance and operations, for the entire right of way
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes
- Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.



City of New Castle recently installed signage for their Riverwalk Trail throughout the Downtown.

- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
- Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

Reading, Pennsylvania was ranked as the top model nationwide for communities that adopted comprehensive Complete Streets policies in 2015. Core Communities looking to adopt Complete Streets policies should look to the City of Reading as a best practice model.

1.2: Help communities prepare pedestrian and bicycle master plans.

Core Communities are prime locations to encourage a robust network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, because the density of development is more conducive to

short trips. Once a Core Community adopts a Complete Streets policy, the next logical step would be to develop a municipal pedestrian and bicycle master plan. Such plans would lay the foundation for multimodal transportation improvements, with particular attention to improving pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

SPC has dedicated a portion of its Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding for a Livability Through Smart Transportation initiative to encourage projects that incorporate Complete Streets goals and strategies. Core Communities who adopt Complete Streets policies and bicycle and pedestrian master plans can then work with the County to apply for STP funding to implement projects.

1.3: Develop WalkWorks routes and groups in each Core Community.

WalkWorks is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health Center for Public Health Practice, whose mission is to “create a network of fun, fact-filled, community-based

walking routes and walking groups.”²

WalkWorks can identify and promote safe walking routes; offer social support through community-based walking groups; help schools develop walk-to-school programs; and address local policies to increase safe walking routes.

The County and Core Communities should partner to develop WalkWorks routes within each of the communities. Several counties in Pennsylvania, including Indiana County, have established programs and routes vary in length and type (locations include business/ industrial parks, hospital and health centers, downtowns, historic neighborhoods, trail networks, etc.).

1.4: Encourage Core Communities to apply for Bicycle Friendly Community status through Bicycle Friendly America.

Bicycle Friendly America is a program offered by the League of American Bicyclists that is designed to be a tool for communities to “make bicycling a real transportation and recreation option for all people.”³

² “WalkWorks.” Pennsylvania Department of Health. www.health.pa.gov/WalkWorks Retrieved online October 2016.

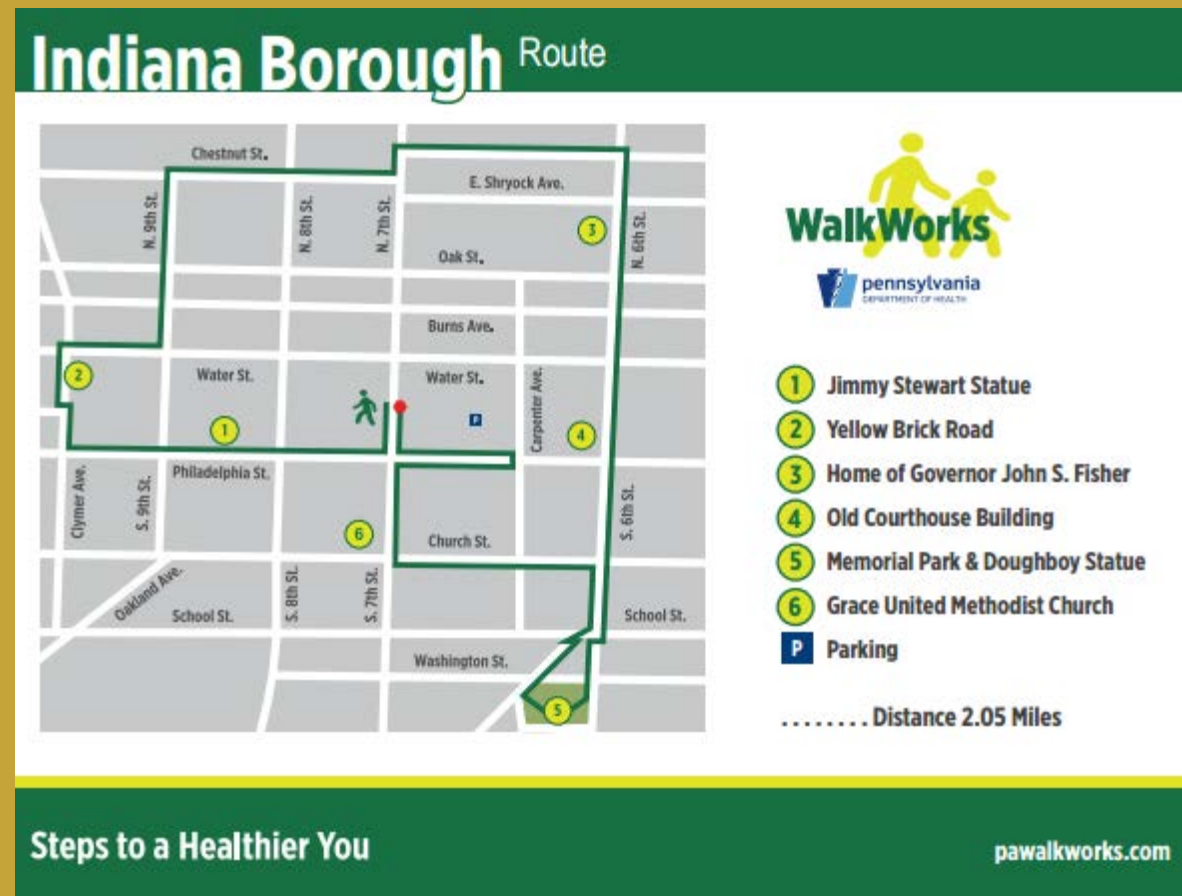
³ “Bicycle Friendly America.” The League of American Bicyclists.

Communities can apply to the League for assessments, which collect data on activities within the following areas:

- Engineering: physical infrastructure and hardware to support cycling.
- Education: programs that ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of cyclists and fellow road users.
- Encouragement: incentives, promotions and opportunities that inspire and enable people to ride.
- Enforcement: equitable laws and programs that ensure motorists and cyclists are held accountable.
- Evaluation: processes that demonstrate a commitment to measuring results and planning for the future.

Core Communities should complete the Community Scorecard (as shown on page 25) to determine their current score and what their next step should be (either apply for a free feedback report or apply for designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community).

<http://www.bikeleague.org/bfa>. Retrieved online November 2016.



Example of a WalkWorks Walking Route Map for Indiana Borough. The Borough was selected to participate in the WalkWorks program in 2015 and the Indiana County Office of Planning & Development worked with its municipalities to establish WalkWorks Routes in Blairsville, Ernest, Glen Campbell, Indiana Borough, Homer City, Indiana/Getty Heights, Penns Manor and the Indiana Regional Medical Center. Each of the WalkWorks routes have brochures that provide a map of the route and a description of the various sites and attractions along the route. The County's website also provides additional information related to WalkWorks, walking safely, health benefits of walking and other resources. Source: <http://www.icopd.org/indiana-county-walkworks-program.html>.

In addition to communities, Bicycle Friendly America also has programs for Bicycle Friendly Businesses and Universities. Core Communities should encourage businesses and Westminster College to apply for status as well.

1.5: Support the City of New Castle's efforts to implement the Riverwalk Plan and improve connections to the regional trail system.

The City of New Castle adopted a Riverwalk Plan in 2015 that detailed recommendations to improve connectivity from the downtown to the Neshannock Trail and Riverwalk. The first implementation phase was funded through the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's Livability Through Smart Transportation Program, which created a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment along North Croton Avenue and North Street Bridge by completing a missing link between the County's Neshannock Trail system and downtown New Castle.

The second phase was funded through SPC's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and includes the construction of a continuous system of safe and secure multimodal connections through new sidewalks and curbs, crosswalks, ADA accessible ramps, public transportation stops and kiosks, bicycle racks, electrical upgrades, designated bicycle lanes and gutters and driveway aprons per ADA standards.

The City is also the link between connecting the Stavich Bicycle Trail and the Neshannock Trail, which are the County's two main trail systems (not including the North Country Trail, which is a hiking trail). Improving the visibility, usability and safety of bicycle and pedestrian connections within the City needs to be an ongoing priority.

1.6: Determine the feasibility of creating a Bike Share Program in the City of New Castle.

Bike Share Programs offer bicycles to rent at a variety of locations within a community. While historically, only major cities have

operated bike share systems, smaller cities have been developing them in recent years.

As the most densely populated region in the County, the Greater New Castle area offers the best opportunity to develop a bike share program. Potential partnerships could be developed with UPMC Jameson as well as local large employers.

Locally, the City of Pittsburgh began a bike share program a few years ago called Healthy Ride, partnering with Highmark and the Allegheny Health Network.

Smaller cities that have instituted bike share systems have used different companies, such as Zagster and Social Bikes, which cater to smaller cities, towns and universities. Zagster offers feasibility analyses as a complimentary service for cities and towns that are considering bike share. The feasibility analysis includes a bike share overview, demand analysis, comparative analysis, scope and phasing plan.⁴

⁴ "Get a Bike Share Feasibility Analysis." Zagster. <http://www.zagster.com/feasibility>. Retrieved online October 2016.



BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY SCORECARD

ENGINEERING

- ☐ Y ☐ N Does your community have a comprehensive, connected and well-maintained bicycling network?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Is bike parking readily available throughout the community?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Is there a Complete Streets ordinance or another policy that mandates the accommodation of cyclists on all road projects?

EDUCATION

- ☐ Y ☐ N Is there a community-wide Safe routes to School program that includes bicycling education?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Are there bicycling education courses available for adults in the community?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Does your community educate motorists and cyclists on their rights and responsibilities as road users?

ENCOURAGEMENT

- ☐ Y ☐ N Does your community have an up-to-date bicycle map?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Does the community celebrate bicycling during national Bike month with community rides, Bike to Work Day or media outreach?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Does the community host any major community cycling events or rides?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Is there an active bicycle advocacy group in the community?

ENFORCEMENT

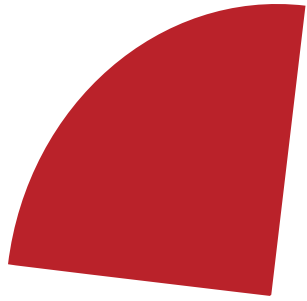
- ☐ Y ☐ N Do law enforcement officers receive training on the rights and responsibilities of all road users?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Does your community have law enforcement or other public safety officers on bikes?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Do local ordinances treat bicyclists equitably?

EVALUATION

- ☐ Y ☐ N Is there a specific plan or program to reduce cyclist/motor vehicle crashes?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Does your community have a current comprehensive bicycle plan?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Is there a Bicycle advisory Committee that meets regularly?
- ☐ Y ☐ N Does your community have a bicycle program manager?

SCORING (GIVE YOURSELF ONE POINT FOR EVERY "YES.") Score 0-8: Your community probably has some improvements to make before becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community – apply now to receive a free feedback report that will guide your community in becoming more bicycle-friendly! Score 9-17: You've already got a good start – apply now and we'll tell you what you've done well and how you can improve.

Start working with local officials to fill out the Bicycle Friendly Community application and contact us to help you through the process at 202-822-1333 or bfa@bikeleague.org.



core communities ~ guiding principle #2

Encourage Core Communities to promote economic development through the Trail and River Town programs.

Trail Towns. River Towns. Canal Towns. The name is different, but the objective is the same: connect towns to outdoor recreational assets and encourage sustainable economic growth as a result. The Trail Town Program is an initiative of The Progress Fund working in small rural towns across western Pennsylvania and western Maryland, focusing on community and economic development around trail tourism and outdoor recreation.¹ Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) initiated a River Town Program, modeled after the Trail Town Program, along the Allegheny River, Monongahela River, Schuylkill River and French Creek.

Within Lawrence County, Wampum is a designated North Country Trail Association Trail Town. As the county grows its greenways and blueways network, the goal is to better position the Core Communities to capitalize on the trails from an economic perspective.

¹ "Trail Town Program." *The Progress Fund*. <https://www.trailtowns.org/>. Retrieved online November 2016.

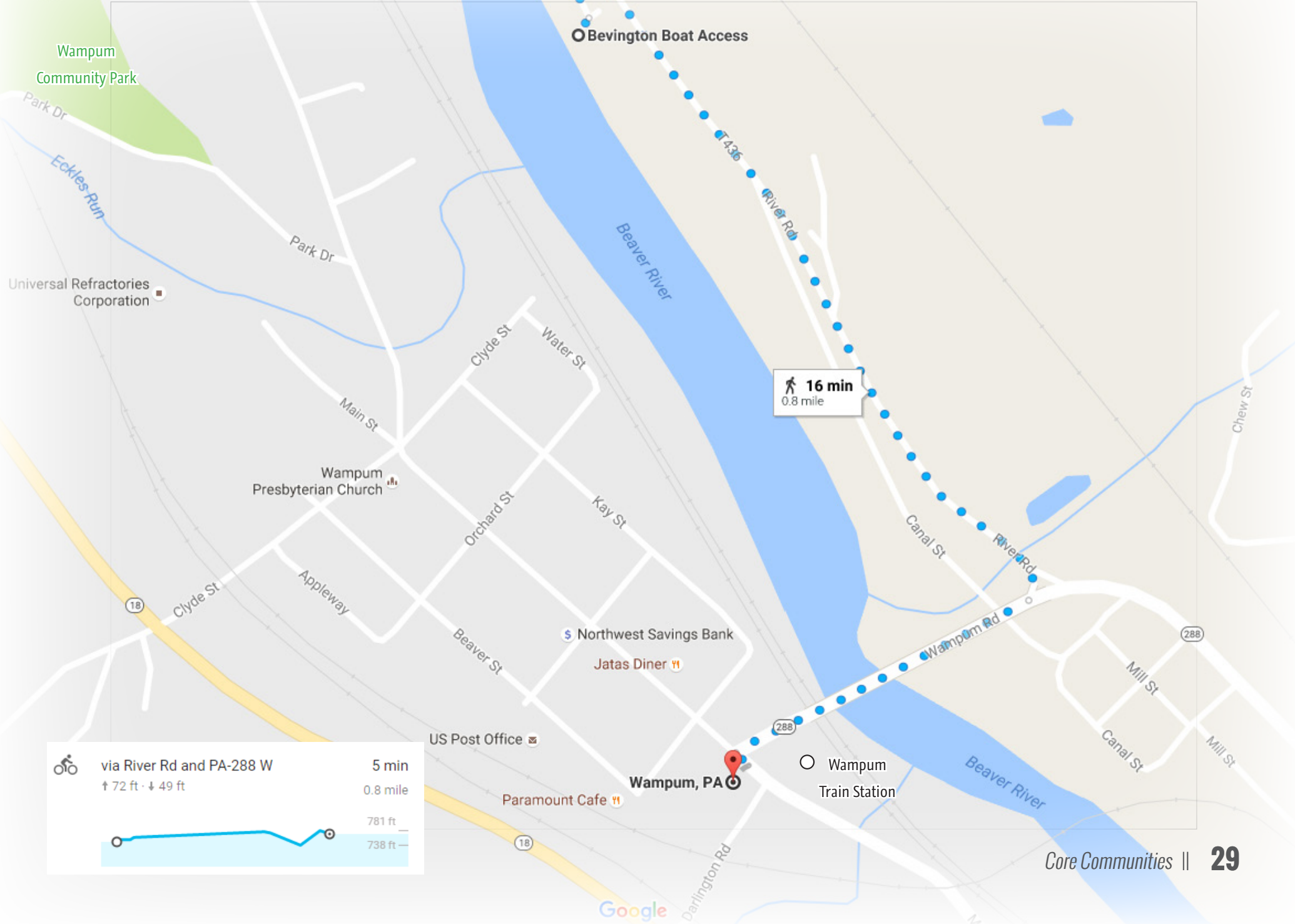
2.1: Connect downtown Wampum to the Bevington Boat Access and promote as a River Town along with the Trail Town.

As mentioned previously, the Borough of Wampum was designated by the North Country Trail Association as the first Trail Town along the North Country National Scenic Trail in 2013. It was chosen as the trail passes through the Borough and amenities include a market, laundromat, bank and restaurants. Following its designation, the NCTA Wampum Chapter installed two informational kiosks near the Wampum Bridge at the intersection of North Main and Clyde streets.

Across the Beaver River from Wampum is the Bevington Boat Access along River Road in Wayne Township. As shown on "Figure 2: Bevington Boat Access Connection to Downtown Wampum" on page 29, the Boat



Figure 2: Bevington Boat Access Connection to Downtown Wampum



Access is only 0.8 miles from downtown; a 16 minute walk or 5 minute bicycle ride. Kiosks should be installed at the Boat Access that publicize the amenities available in Wampum. The Wampum Bridge (SR 288) does have a sidewalk on the south side of the bridge, although consideration should be given to improving River Road as a multimodal corridor to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The Borough should continue to promote itself as not only a Trail Town, but also a River Town. Future amenities to consider may include bike racks, wayfinding signage that direct people to the North Country Trail, Bevington Boat Access and the downtown, public art and public restrooms.

The Borough did receive a grant for a new tennis court in their Park (to be constructed in the summer of 2017) and is currently working on a canoe/kayak launch at the Train Station site.

2.2: Install kiosks with maps of community amenities at all trailheads and river access areas to direct users to downtown businesses.

Similar to the recommendations for Wampum, all of the County's river access areas should feature kiosks and mapping that detail connections to nearby towns (safe walking and biking routes) and promote local amenities and businesses.

2.3: Conduct a regional Trail/River Town assessment for the Core Communities.

Trail Town and River Town programs are community revitalization and economic development initiatives. The concept is to position the communities as visitor destinations and drive individualized business attraction strategies to fill service gaps with businesses with the greatest chance of growth and sustainability. In order for the

Core Communities to capitalize economically on the land and water trails, a sound first step would be to conduct an assessment of the towns' amenities.

The assessment would evaluate the communities' strengths and weaknesses to prioritize where to invest time and energy first. Short-term strategies tend to deal with signage, minor infrastructure, facilities, storefronts, community readiness and small events. Longer-term strategies often deal with major infrastructure, business development and attraction, branding and major events. The assessment will help to identify existing businesses for possible expansion; identify a process for effectively attracting new businesses to fill gaps; and outline an approach to effectively market available buildings.



Conducting the assessment at the regional level would allow the County to determine which of the communities are best positioned to capitalize on nearby trails and identify priorities for both short-term and long-term investments.

2.4: Develop a regional “main street program” for the Core Communities.

The Main Street Program is a community-based revitalization program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Center. Within Pennsylvania, the program is overseen by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) and funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The overall goal of the program is to help core communities revitalize their downtowns and central business districts.

The Main Street Approach is based on four-points: Design, Promotion, Organization and Economic Vitality. Main Street programs are typically independent, nonprofit organizations that have a full-time Main Street director, create volunteer committees and a board of directors to implement the plan/projects.

The PDC can provide training and technical assistance to the communities and they offer forms on their website to help communities who are just getting started to organize a Main Street Program. Communities should complete a Downtown Profile, which provides the PDC and DCED with information necessary to help make decisions regarding the community’s potential as a candidate for the Main Street Program.

To ease the financial burden, it is recommended that the Core Communities in Lawrence County come together and form a regional Main Street program that would share a Director/Manager. To be eligible for Main Street designation, the communities would need to prepare and adopt a formal revitalization plan that addresses all aspects of the Four-Point Approach.

Outdoor Recreation BY THE NUMBERS



Nationally...

- Active outdoor recreation employs five times more Americans than Walmart, the world's largest private employer and accounts for \$821 billion in revenue and 6.5 million jobs.
- Overnight trail users spend on average \$98/day; day trippers spend on average \$13/day
- Local paddlers spend on average \$5/day; non-local paddlers spend on average \$46/day.

Regionally...

- A 2013 study by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) of six trails in the Oil Heritage Region of Pennsylvania along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail found:
 - » **Total economic impact of approximately \$7.5 million**
 - » **Annual hard good purchases (bicycle, shoes/gear, clothing) = \$337.50**
 - » **Consumable purchases per trip = \$21.62**

— "Erie to Pittsburgh Trail 2013 User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis." Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. 2013 (Retrieved online http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20029188.pdf)

One of the most thoroughly researched trails in the country is the **Great Allegheny Passage (GAP)**, a 138-mile rail trail from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD where it joins the C&O Canal Towpath, a 182-mile trail to Washington D.C. A market research study credited the GAP Trail with over **\$40 million in direct spending by trail-users** and \$7.2 million in employee wages at trail-related businesses for the 2008-2009 seasons. The **eight small rural towns** along the GAP have noted over **50 new businesses**, resulting in more than **80 new jobs**. Business owners indicated 25% of gross revenue is **directly attributed to trail users** and 2/3 of owners reported some increase in revenue **due to the proximity of the trail.**

— "Economic Benefits of Outdoor Recreation." Pennsylvania Environmental Council. (Retrieved online http://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Economic_Impacts_of_Outdoor_Recreation.pdf)



core communities ~ guiding principle #3

Promote greenway-related tourism within the Core Communities.

Recent trends in the Pennsylvania travel and tourism economy show continued expansion, with traveler spending increasing. The number of travelers visiting Pennsylvania increased slightly, with growth largely in the day-trip segment and per trip spending increased slightly. Overall, traveler spending generated an estimated \$68.4 billion in total economic activity throughout all industries in Pennsylvania in 2013.¹

3.1: Partner with other County agencies and organizations to promote trails and greenways.

In order to fully capitalize on greenways and recreation economically, all County departments and organizations need to be on the same page.

The Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development needs to partner with the Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency, the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce and the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation to ensure that all agencies are capitalizing on greenways to promote tourism and business development, expansion and attraction. All of these agencies, along with local community and business organizations, should be involved while developing a Trail Town and/or River Town program so that they understand the value and benefits of trails and greenways from an economic perspective.

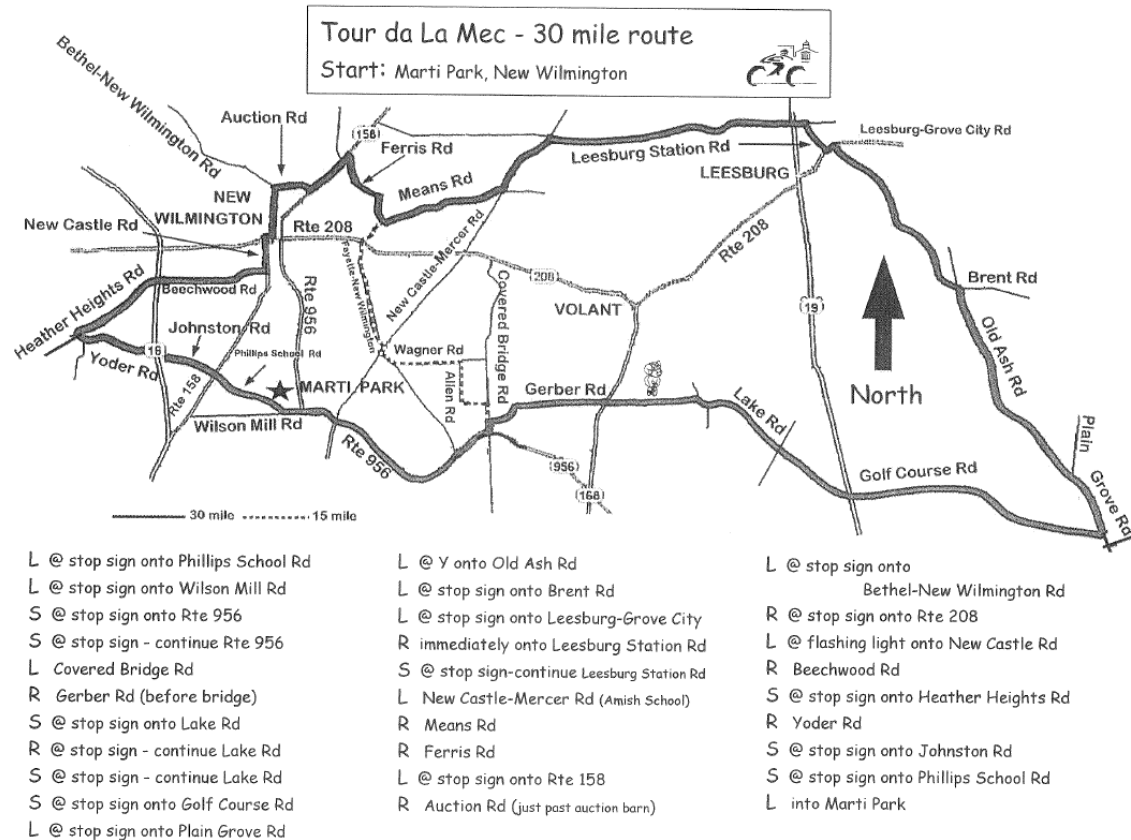


¹ "The Economic Impact of Tourism in Pennsylvania." *Tourism Economics*. January 2015. Retrieved online <http://www.visitpa.com/sites/default/master/files/pdfs/PAVisitorEconomicImpact2013FINAL.pdf>

3.2: Develop partnerships with local and regional organizations to expand or develop greenway events.

Hosting events on greenways not only serves to attract tourists, but also to promote the use of the greenways themselves. The more that people use the greenways, the more the towns along them can capitalize financially. There are a number of greenway-related events that take place within the region. As the County expands their greenway network, they will also create new opportunities for events. The following is not meant to be an exhaustive list of events, but to serve as examples that could be expanded, either through increased promotion or into Lawrence County.

- Tour de LaMec is an on-road cycling event through northern Lawrence County and southern Mercer County, hosted by the Lawrence County Cycling Club.
- Tour de Donut Bike Tour had its inaugural event in 2016, which consisted of on-road cycling with a voluntary donut-eating challenge in New Wilmington.



Map of Tour de LaMec - 30 mile route (source: Lawrence County Cycling Club)

- A number of wineries and now breweries, have opened in the County, particularly along SR 208 between Volant and Pulaski. The County Tourist Promotion Agency has begun marketing 208 as a Wine Trail and the wineries host a variety of events.
- The Amish countryside is a big tourism draw into the County. Private guided tours are available along with maps for self-guided driving tours. These routes could be expanded to provide self-guided cycling tours of the Amish countryside.
- Upper Shenango River Water Trail Paddlefest is an annual paddling event in Mercer County hosted by the Shenango River Watchers. There is an opportunity to partner with them to expand this event into Lawrence County.
- The North Country Trail Wampum Chapter hosts monthly weekend hikes as well as a variety of other events. Increased promotion of these events could help to increase trail users, potential volunteers and could be used to promote local businesses along the trail.
- Trumbull Canoe Trails is a paddling club in Trumbull County Ohio that hosts semi-annual meetings, picnics, paddling excursions, etc. along the Mahoning River. The club has a lot of members who live in Lawrence County; there is potential to create a local chapter and begin hosting events in Pennsylvania.
- Friends of the Mahoning River (FOMR) is based in Youngstown Ohio and hosts an annual RiverFest at the B&O Station on the Mahoning River. Similar to Trumbull Canoe Trails, FOMR presents an opportunity to establish a local paddling group and/or event in Lawrence County.

3.3: Conduct a feasibility study to determine the best use for abandoned train stations throughout the County.

The County is home to several abandoned train stations. The one in Wampum has been restored by the Wampum Community Revitalization and is a venue for concerts and events. The Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is also located in a train station along the Shenango River in the City of New Castle.

Similar efforts could be replicated for other train stations in Leesburg and West Pittsburg; however, a feasibility study is recommended to determine the highest and best use.



Connecting Communities

[kuh-nekt]

verb

1. to join, link or fasten together; unite or bind

2. to establish communication between; put in communication

¹ "Connect." Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary.reference.com/browse/connect).

The Comp Plan says...

“Develop a network that connects communities both physically via transportation corridors and abstractly via collaborations and partnerships.”

The future of the County’s economic health relates clearly to the ability of the transportation system to meet the needs of existing and future employers and workers. A less obvious, but equally important issue, is equity. The transportation system impacts the ability of residents and workers to access jobs, services and amenities. Suburban development patterns typically favor households with a vehicle, which causes access problems for senior citizens, lower-income households and others who may rely on transit, walking or other options. The County can advance equity in access by ensuring that development decisions respect alternatives to driving.

“Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops and bicycle to work.”¹

Many of the major corridors in Lawrence County are used by a variety of travelers, including vehicles, public transit (buses and vans), commercial truck traffic, Amish buggies and cyclists.

By encouraging and promoting a complete streets policy, Lawrence County can commit to working with PennDOT, SPC and its municipalities to ensure that the design and operations of roadways take into account all potential users and improve safety for everyone.

Pedestrian and cycling connections to and within many areas of the County are limited. The feasibility of walking or biking to work depends not only on distance and weather, but also on the safety and comfort of the route, which varies drastically depending on origin and destination within the County.

¹ Complete Streets definition. Smart Growth America. Retrieved online March 2016. (www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq).

Built Resources

Greenways also take advantage of elements in the human-made, or “built” environment. An often used example is that of abandoned rail lines being reborn as recreational rail trails. But sound greenways planning also require an understanding of a diversity of built resources. There are those that facilitate a greenway corridor, like old canal beds or utility corridors. Others present challenges to greenway development, like major highways and active industrial sites.

Land-Based Trails

The existing land-based trail network in Lawrence County is depicted in “Figure 3: Existing Trail Network” on page 39.

North Country National Scenic Trail

An approximately 20-mile long section of the North Country National Scenic Trail traverses the southern portion of Lawrence County, through both public and private land. The trail traverses McConnells Mill State Park, where it follows the park’s Slippery



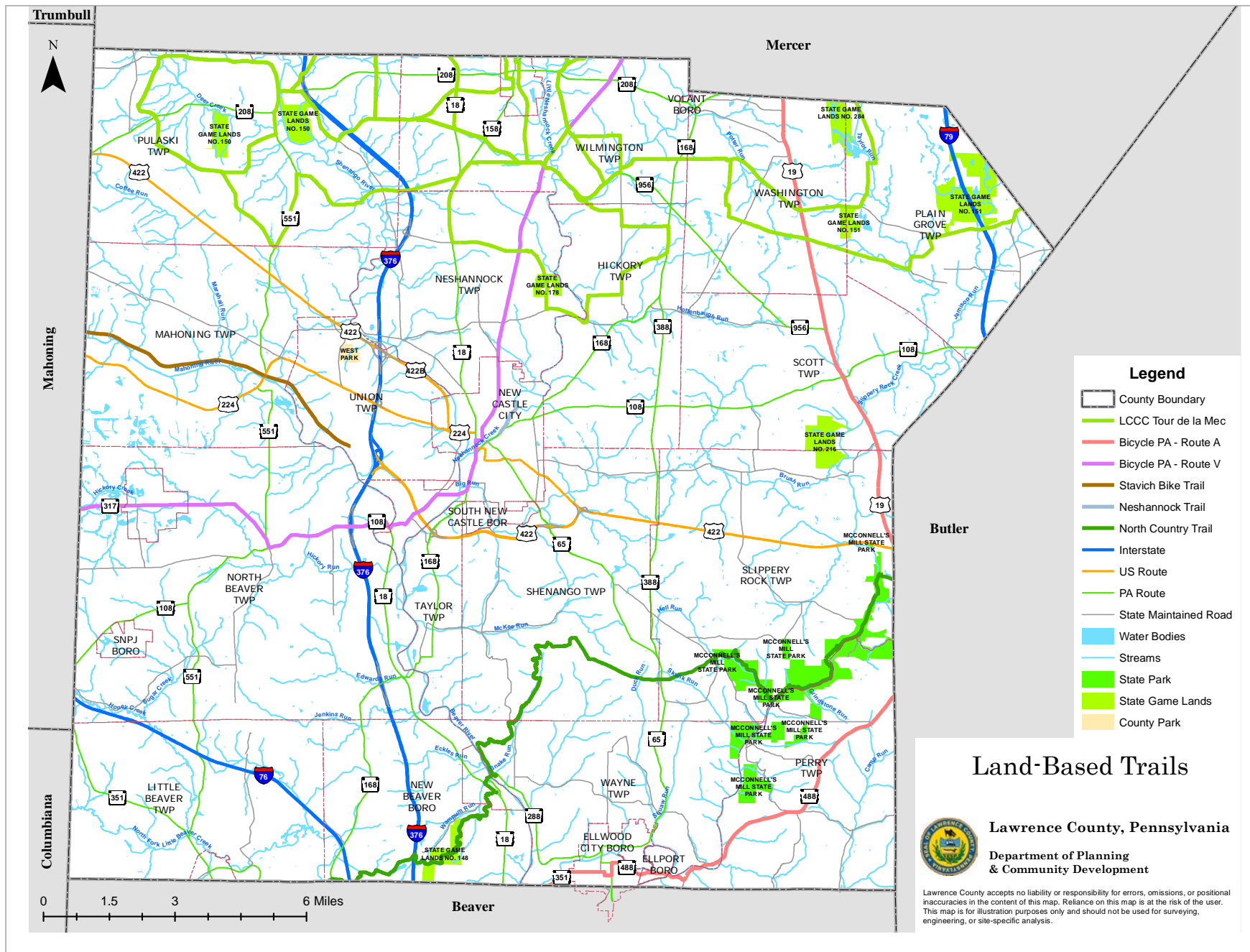
Rock Gorge Trail, then heads westward on private ground, passes north of Ellwood City Borough, then through State Game Lands #148 in New Beaver Borough near Wampum and southwestward into Beaver County. Approximately 14 of these 20 miles have been completed. The North Country Trail is among the most-famous footpaths in the United States, traversing forests, communities and prairies across seven northern states: New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota. To

date, 1,700 miles of trail have been certified off-road, with other portions following shared-use trails or roads. The trail serves as a main spine of connectivity for other regional trails in Pennsylvania and elsewhere and thus is an opportunity for greenway connections to areas outside Lawrence County. Although a general trail alignment has been proposed across these states, the trail is not yet completed in its entirety. While most segments of the trail (on both public and private land) are hikable and open to the public, many segments have yet to be developed. Such is the case in Lawrence County: most segments on both public and private land are open to the public while a few require road walks to circumvent private property. Wampum is a designated Trail Town, the first along the North Country Trail.

Stavich Bicycle Trail

The Stavich Bicycle Trail stretches westward from New Castle, across the state border, through the village of Lowellville and on

Figure 3: Existing Trail Network



to Struthers, Ohio. This trail follows a former trolley track alignment through rolling farmland and tiny communities. Several areas along the trail also boast colorful wildflowers and the beaver pond near the trail offers opportunities for watching birds and wildlife (turtles, beavers, snakes, fish, herons, ducks and more). In 2003, the Stavich Trail was designated a National Recreational Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Most of the trail is on level or gently-sloping grades, with a few very short steeper sections. The trolley track tolerated much steeper grades than conventional railroad lines. To date, ten miles of paved trail have been completed and the trail utilizes streets in some of the small communities it passes through. A trailhead is located on West Washington Street near Covert Road in Union Township.

Neshannock Creek Trail

The Neshannock Creek Trail opened in 2015 and is a 0.7-mile rail-trail located in the City of New Castle along Neshannock Creek. The County is working with the City of New Castle to connect the trail to the City's Riverwalk.

Park Harbor Trail

The Park-Harbor Trail opened in 2010 as a two-mile biking and hiking trail at West Park Nature Center in Union Township. If connected to the



Stavich Bike Trail, West Park could serve as a trailhead.

New Castle Riverwalk Trail

The Riverwalk is a linear park along Neshannock Creek in downtown New Castle. The park hosts a variety of events and festivals. The City of New Castle completed a Riverwalk Plan in 2015, which proposes routes to connect the trail to the downtown. The City has added bike lanes to the North Street Bridge as part of ongoing efforts to implement the Riverwalk project.

On-Road Bike Routes

Pennsylvania's bike routes are laid out to allow bicyclists to experience the State's scenic, cultural and historic places. These routes often do not contain bike lanes or other facilities designed specifically for bicyclists and are depicted solely by signage.

Pennsylvania Bike Route "A", which stretches nearly 200 miles from Erie to Greene County, PA just north of Morgantown, WV. Bike Route "A" enters Lawrence County from the north along US Route 19 into Washington Township, then heads south through Scott Township and Slippery Rock Township, then along SR 488 through Perry Township and Ellport Borough into Ellwood City, leaving the County along SR 351 into Beaver County.



N. CROTON AVE. (SR108): ADT - 8,100; POSTED SPEED - 30MPH
ROADWAY WIDTH, CURB TO CURB - 30'; 6' WIDE CONCRETE SIDEWALKS (BOTH SIDES OF ROAD)
8' DISTANCE FROM STONE WALL TO FACE OF CURB, SOUTHBOUND

New Castle Riverwalk Project Connection to Neshannock Trail

Mackin
Mackin Engineering Company
RDC Park West
117 Industry Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275
(412) 788-0472
www.mackinengineering.com

Pennsylvania Bike Route “V” was designated during the 2008 Greenways Plan. The State’s newest Bike Route traverses Pennsylvania east-west from Ohio to New Jersey through 17 counties. Route V enters Lawrence County from Ohio along SR 317 through North Beaver Township and Bessemer Borough, then along SR 108 into the City of New Castle. Route “V” then heads north along several different roads before ultimately following SR 1005 through Neshannock Township and Wilmington Township, where it leaves the County heading into Mercer County.

Lawrence County Cycling Club Tour de La-Mec is an on-road cycling event held along various routes in northern Lawrence County and southern Mercer County. Although these are not formally designated on-road bike routes, they are included on the trail map.

Water Trails

While there are no officially designated water trails, there are currently public river access areas in Lawrence County as shown in “Figure 4: Existing Public River Access Areas” on page 43 and described below.

Beaver River Public Access Areas

- Bevington Boat Launch (Lawrence County) River Road, Wayne Township

Mahoning River Public Access Areas

- None

Shenango River Public Access Areas

- State Game Lands #150 canoe/kayak put-in, (Pennsylvania Game Commission) Shenango Street, Village of Pulaski
- McQuiston Boat Launch (Lawrence County) Nashua Road, Pulaski Township
- Millennium Access Boat Launch (Lawrence County) King Chapel Road, Mahoning Township

Connoquenessing Creek

- Ellwood City Access Canoe/Kayak Put-in (Ellwood City Borough) Wampum Avenue
- Rock Point Boat Launch (Wild Waters Conservancy) Rock Point Road, Wayne Township

Neshannock Creek

- Alduk Access (Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission [PFBC]) Canoe/Kayak Put-In, SR 956, Wilmington Township
- Geason Camp Access (PFBC) Canoe/Kayak

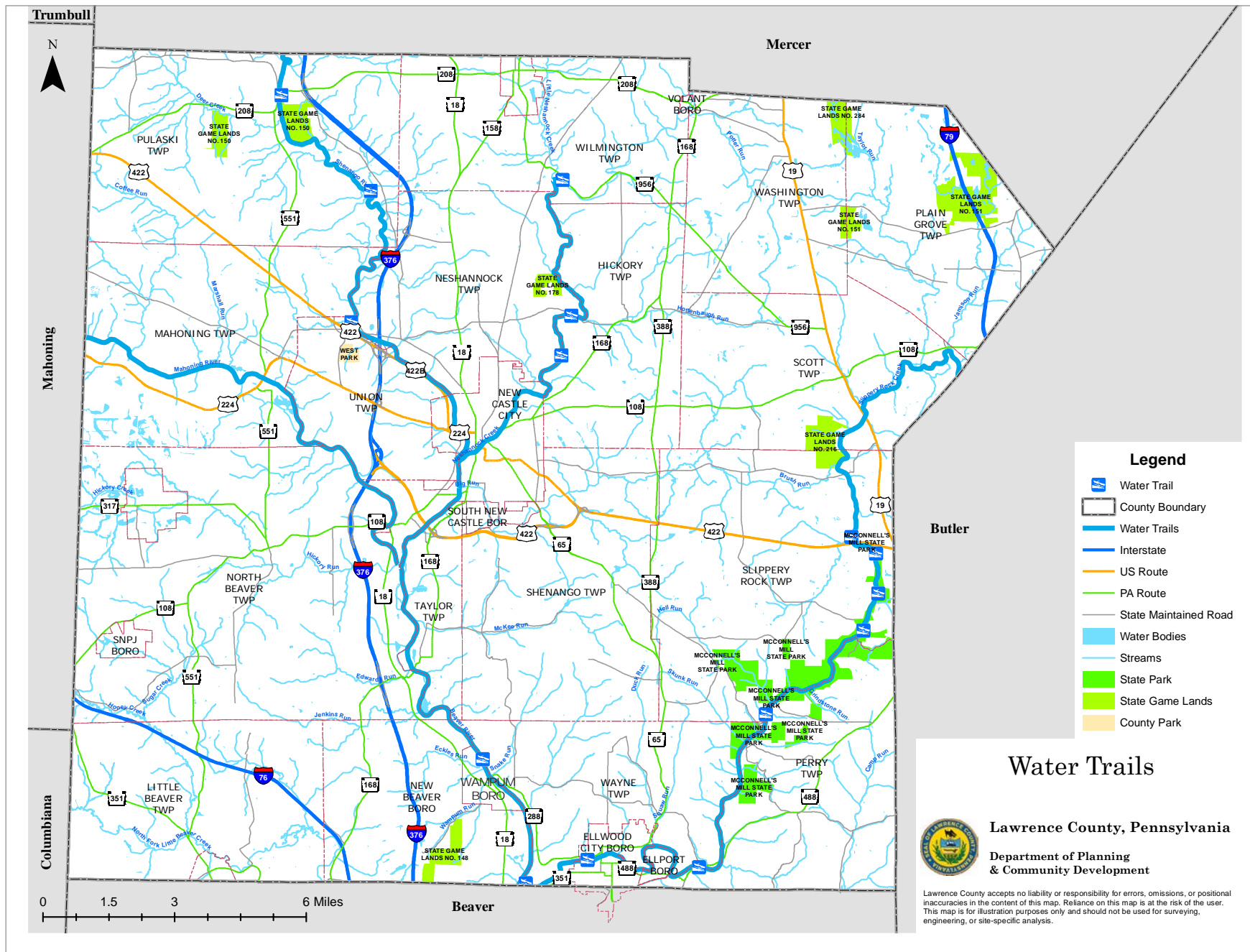
Put-In, East Maitland Lane, Hickory Township

- Peluso Camp Access (PFBC) Canoe/Kayak Put-In, McKee Fording Road, Hickory Township

Slippery Rock Creek

- Rose Point Campground Canoe/Kayak Put-In and although privately owned, is open to the public for use; Old Route 422, Slippery Rock Township
- Alpha Pass Access (McConnells Mill State Park) McConnells Mill Road, Slippery Rock Township
- McConnells Mill Access (McConnells Mill State Park) McConnells Mill Road, Slippery Rock Township
- Eckert Bridge Access (McConnells Mill State Park) Breakneck Bridge Road, Slippery Rock Township
- Harris Bridge Access (McConnells Mill State Park) Mountville Road, Slippery Rock Township
- Kids Trout Derby Access (PFBC) SR 488, Wayne Township

Figure 4: Existing Public River Access Areas





connecting
communities

greenways vision

“

Develop a network of greenways and blueways that provide multimodal connections throughout the County.

”

connecting communities ~ guiding principle #1

Expand the County's network of land trails.

Since the 2008 Greenways Plan, Lawrence County has constructed the Neshannock Trail within the City of New Castle, the West Park Trail at the West Park Nature Center, completed major improvements to the Stavich Bicycle Trail and the North Country Trail has constructed several miles of additional off-road trail. The focus for the County continues to be on expanding its network of land trails, as shown on “Figure 6: Proposed Trail Connections” on page 55; this plan identifies new opportunities as well as obstacles to the viability of proposed trails in the 2008 Plan.

1.1: Extend the Stavich Trail into Core Communities.

The Stavich Bicycle Trail is the County's premiere trail, featuring seven miles of paved trail from Covert Road (Union Township), just west of the City of New Castle, to the County

line. The trail then continues another three miles into Lowellville, Ohio. A trailhead is located along West Washington Street in Union Township, approximately 1/4 mile east of the intersection with Covert Road. The 2008 Plan recommended a major rehabilitation of the trail (resurfacing and drainage improvements), which the County completed in 2009. The Plan identified other recommendations, which are discussed below.

- 1.1a. Improve the trail connection from the Stavich Trailhead to the City of New Castle.
 - The trailhead is just three miles from downtown New Castle. The original trolley track alignment into the City is now West Washington Street. Since the 2008 Plan, the County installed “Share the Road” signs along West Washington Street between the trailhead and Winter Road (New Castle), the BC3 Campus and West Park Nature Center. In the summer of 2016, the City of New



Castle (as discussed on page 24) installed Riverwalk Trail signs along East and West Washington Street throughout the downtown, as part of implementing their Riverwalk Plan.

→ However, during the planning process, many cyclists have expressed safety concerns regarding the “Share the Road.” To address these concerns, the following improvements are recommended:

» **Identify West Washington Street (SR 3010) as a high priority for multimodal connections from the Stavich Bicycle Trailhead to the Riverwalk Trail in the City of New Castle.**

› The County will need to partner with the City of New Castle and Union Township to identify this roadway as a high priority for multimodal connections. In doing so, the County and the municipalities can partner with PennDOT for future improvements, which could include bike lanes or painted sharrows along the road to increase visibility of the road as a biking connection. Share-the-Road signs and/or sharrows should be placed approximately every 50’ along the roadway. See page 47 for a map of the proposed connection.

- › Within the City of New Castle, West Washington Street is just under a mile (0.9 miles) from the City line to North Columbus Interbelt.
- › Within Union Township, West Washington Street is approximately 2.0 miles from the Township/City border to the trailhead.

» **Partner with Penn Power to pursue a trail extension within their right-of-way.**

› Ideally, the best option would be to have a separated trail connection into the City. Penn Power owns some right-of-way alongside West Washington Street, offering an opportunity to extend the trail further towards New Castle.

» **Improve the intersection of Covert Road with the Stavich Trail.**

› Cyclists have identified this intersection as the most dangerous crossing due to limited sight distance. There are stop signs and bollards along the trail and there are bicycle signs on Covert Road approaching the intersection. However, the signs on Covert Road are not very visible. Examples of possible improvements are shown on page 45.

- › One of the issues is that the intersection is at an off-angle, which reduces visibility and safety. The County should consider redesigning the intersection so that the trail crosses Covert Road at a 90-degree angle. Fencing or bollards may need to be installed along the trail approaching the crossing to force trail users to cross at the proper location.
- › Advanced trail crossing signs should be posted along Covert Road approximately 250 feet from the intersection (both directions) and a trail crossing sign with an arrow should be installed at the intersection.
- › Another option is to install transverse markings on Covert Road approaching the intersection. Transverse markings are a series of lines or bars (typically white) which are perpendicular to the path of travel and are placed across the road like rumble strips. They are the most commonly used form of pavement markings in speed reduction.
- › In addition, the trees and brush near the signs on Covert Road need to be trimmed regularly for increased visibility.

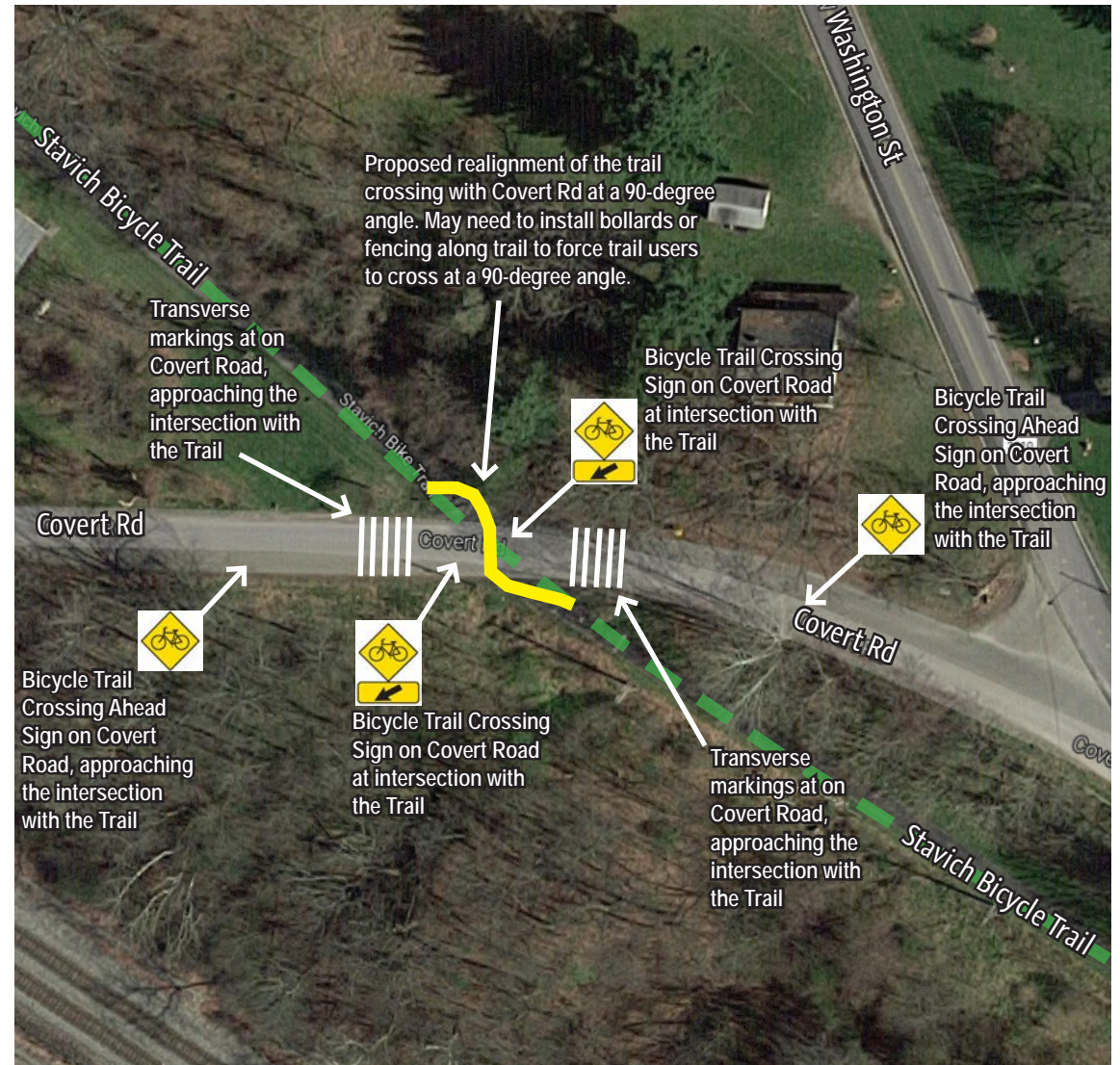
Stavich Bicycle Trail: improve trail crossing with Covert Road



Existing Covert Road & Stavich Trail intersection
(source: Google Street View)



Transverse Markings (source: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/ety/15030/images/figure-149.jpg>)



» **Improve the safety of the connection to US 224.**

- › West Washington Street is also signed as Share-the-Road from the trailhead to US 224 / West State Street, which provides a connection to Butler County Community College (BC3) at Lawrence Crossing, hotels and retail establishments. While the grade is fairly steep, it is only 1.4 miles and improving the safety of the on-road connection would make it more usable.
- › As shown on page 48, short-term improvements include improved signage. Advanced bike crossing signs should be posted along West State Street / US 224 approximately 565 feet from the intersection (both directions) and a trail crossing sign with an arrow should be installed at the intersection.
- › Long-term, the County should investigate the feasibility of creating bike lanes along West Washington Street, which may then require additional improvements to the intersection, such as flashing beacons at the crossing on US 224, as shown on page 49. This would require coordination with PennDOT and Union Township for installation and maintenance.

1.1b. Pursue the extension of the Stavich Trail to SR 18 in Mahoningtown, via the 2008 Plan Pilot Project.

- The 2008 Plan contained recommendations to extend the trail into New Castle, via a combination of an on-road bike lane and a rail-with-trail along the active Norfolk Southern Railway line. This would extend the trail along the Mahoning River into the Mahoningtown section of New Castle (south of downtown).

» **On-road Bike Lane Segment**

- › The 2008 Plan recommended an on-road bike lane along a stretch of Covert Road approximately 1/2 mile in length. Although Covert Road is not a heavily traveled road, sight distances at the trail's westernmost intersection with Covert Road are not optimal. Thus, sharing the road with vehicular traffic may create an unsafe situation for bicyclists. Implementing a separate bike lane would require widening the narrowest portions of the existing asphalt road surface (19 feet wide) by 5 feet to provide a bike lane and related line striping.
- › Near the Covert Road bridge over the Mahoning River, the asphalt roadway widens to 29 feet, including 5-foot wide

shoulders on each side. These shoulders provide space for the aforementioned bike lane. Ample room is also available for riding on the wide road shoulders on the bridge.

- › Additional signage should be provided at the existing trail's westernmost intersection with Covert Road and at the existing trailhead parking area. This signage should include mapping of the new trail extension. Signage should also be provided along the proposed on-road bike lane segment. These signs will provide warning for motorists and direction for bicyclists.
- › A nonmotorized boat launch (canoes/kayaks) is planned at Covert Road and will be constructed in 2017. This offers an opportunity for a peddle/paddle trip. As such, the County may want to install bike racks at the river access site and kayak racks at the Stavich Trailhead.
- › Assuming the on-road portion of this project is possible within the existing Covert Road right-of-way (ROW), the County will need to negotiate with Mahoning, North Beaver and Union Townships. Covert Road passes through portions of each municipality.

Stavich Bicycle Trail: improve connections to...

The Riverwalk Trail in the City of New Castle



via Stavich Bicycle Trail - Pa and W
Washington St

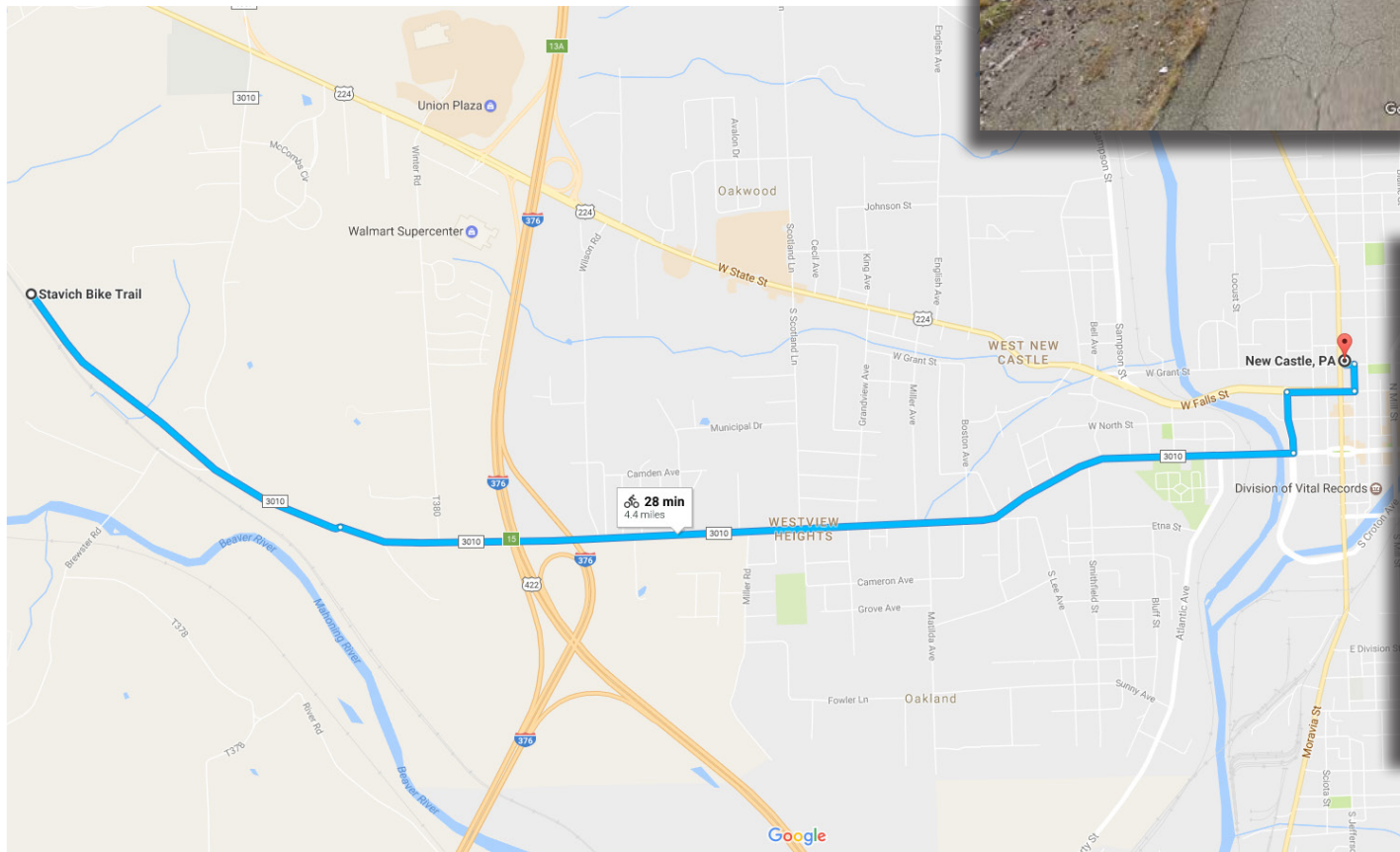
↑ 338 ft · ↓ 344 ft

25 min

3.9 miles

1,096 ft

804 ft



Stavich Bicycle Trail: improve connections to...



Stavich Bicycle Trail: improve connections to...



» **Rail-with-Trail Segment**

- › The 2008 Plan recommended that the County begin discussions with Norfolk Southern Railway Company to create a rail-with-trail. The ROW contains one active rail line and ample room used for vehicular maintenance access on both sides of the rail line. The ROW width near its intersection with Covert Road would potentially allow 15 to 20 feet of separation between the trail and the active rail line. Although ROW width may vary, separation of trail and active rail line is still possible.
- › The section of rail in this ROW crosses the Mahoning River just northwest of State Route 18. The railroad bridge contains space for two rail lines and only one is in use. The trail could cross the bridge in the space provided for the unused rail line.
- › At the southeastern terminus of the proposed rail-with-trail is at State Route 18 in the Mahoningtown neighborhood of New Castle. An unpaved parking area is located on the southern side of Route 18. This space could accommodate several cars and with improvements and signage could be used as a trailhead parking area if acquired.

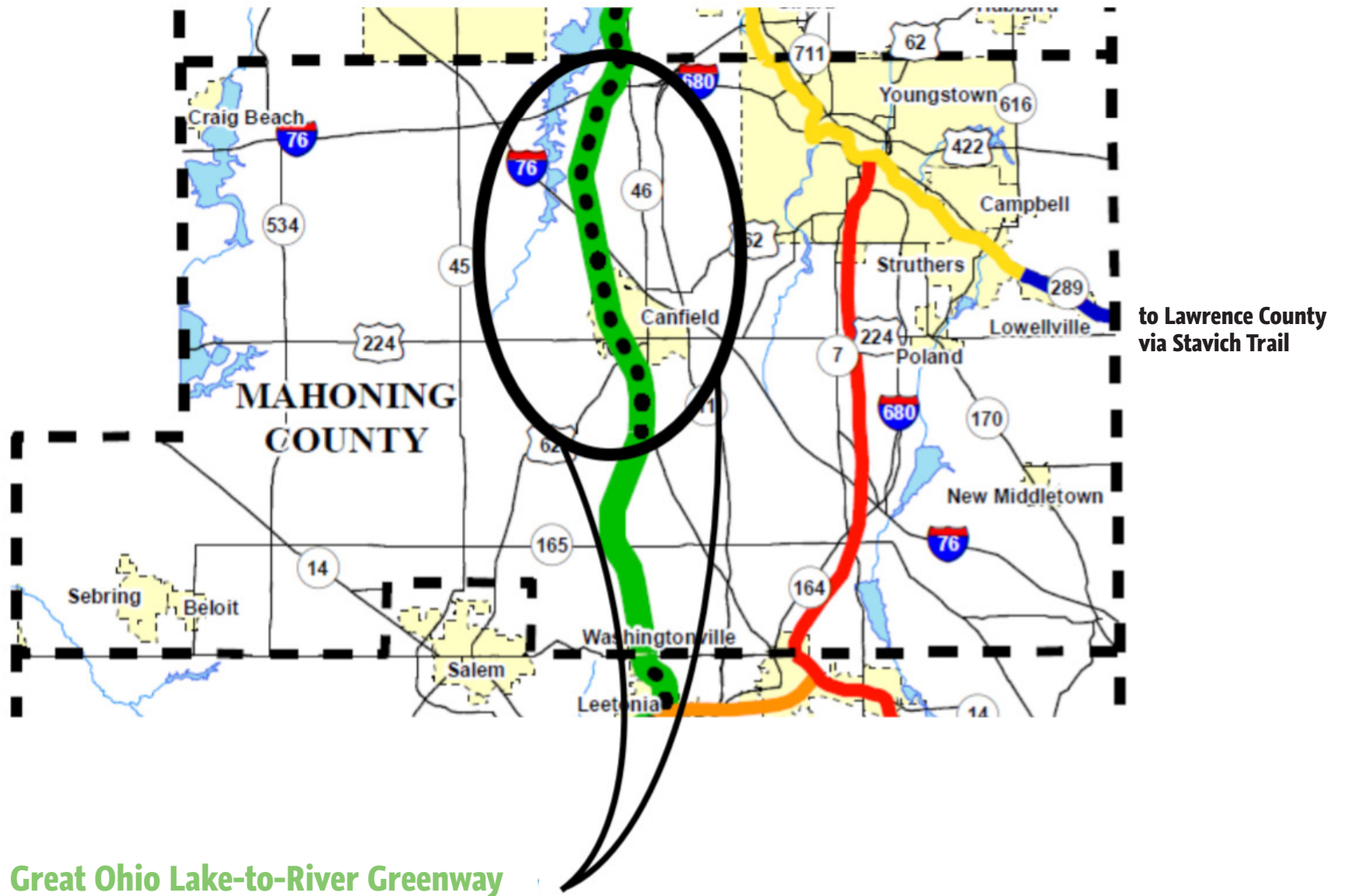
1.1c. Conduct a feasibility study to identify feasible alignments to connect the Stavich Trail south to Wampum and to the Beaver Falls Rail-Trail.

- The 2008 Plan recommended a feasibility study to connect the Stavich Trail south to Wampum and ultimately, to the existing Beaver Falls Rail-Trail in Beaver County. In order to maintain an off-road trail, an extension of the trail is proposed along various railroad alignments and local roads southward along the Mahoning and Beaver Rivers. Since a feasibility study has not yet been completed, this is still a recommended action.
- One of the issues is that there is currently no organization to spearhead this effort. An opportunity may exist to partner with Shell to include plans for trails in their land development plans for the Cracker Plant that is going to be built in Beaver County along SR 18.

1.1d. Coordinate with Mahoning County, Ohio to support future extensions of the Stavich Trail to connect to the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway (GOLRG).

- In addition to being an asset to County residents, the Stavich Trail is a potential link to a vast planned trail system in Eastern Ohio.
- The Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway is a 110-mile proposed bikeway that stretches from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. As shown in “Figure 5: Map of GOLRG and connection to Lawrence County” on page 53, a potential connection to the GOLRG (shown in green) is via the conceptual Mahoning River corridor bikeway (shown in yellow, which connects to the Stavich Trail (shown in blue).
- In addition, there is potential to connect the GOLRG to the Ohio River Trail in Beaver County, ultimately linking with the Great Allegheny Passage. This would create an uninterrupted bike route from Cleveland to Washington, D.C.

Figure 5: Map of GOLRG and connection to Lawrence County



1.2: Extend the Neshannock Creek Trail.

The 2008 Plan identified the Neshannock Rail-Trail as a high priority trail, along an abandoned railroad alignment from the City of New Castle to Volant Borough, with a spur connection to New Wilmington Borough. Since the Plan, the County has constructed and opened just under 1.0 miles of trail between Croton Avenue and Dillworth Avenue.

1.2a. Connect the Neshannock Creek Trail to the City of New Castle.

- The Lawrence County Conservation District is currently improving the Neshannock Creek Extension through the Dirt and Gravel Road Program, which will provide a safe share-the-road connection to the Neshannock Creek Trail via Croton Avenue, the North Street Bridge (recently reconstructed to include bike lanes) and Dillworth Avenue, which will create a two-mile walking/biking loop. It will also provide a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the trail to Neshannock Village, a multi-family housing development owned by the Lawrence County Housing Authority (LCHA).
- Add “Share-the-Road” signs along the corridor, approximately every 250 feet.

1.2b. Continue communication with property owners to acquire right-of-way to extend the trail into Volant and New Wilmington.

- Ownership issues have prevented the County from extending the trail north towards Volant and New Wilmington Borough. The former right-of-way reverted back to the original property owners, which have been subdivided many times over, resulting in over 900 separate property owners.
- Although current property owners have not been willing to work with the County to extend the trail along the former railroad right-of-way, the County should continue to reach out to the owners regularly, or as property changes ownership, as this status may change in the future.

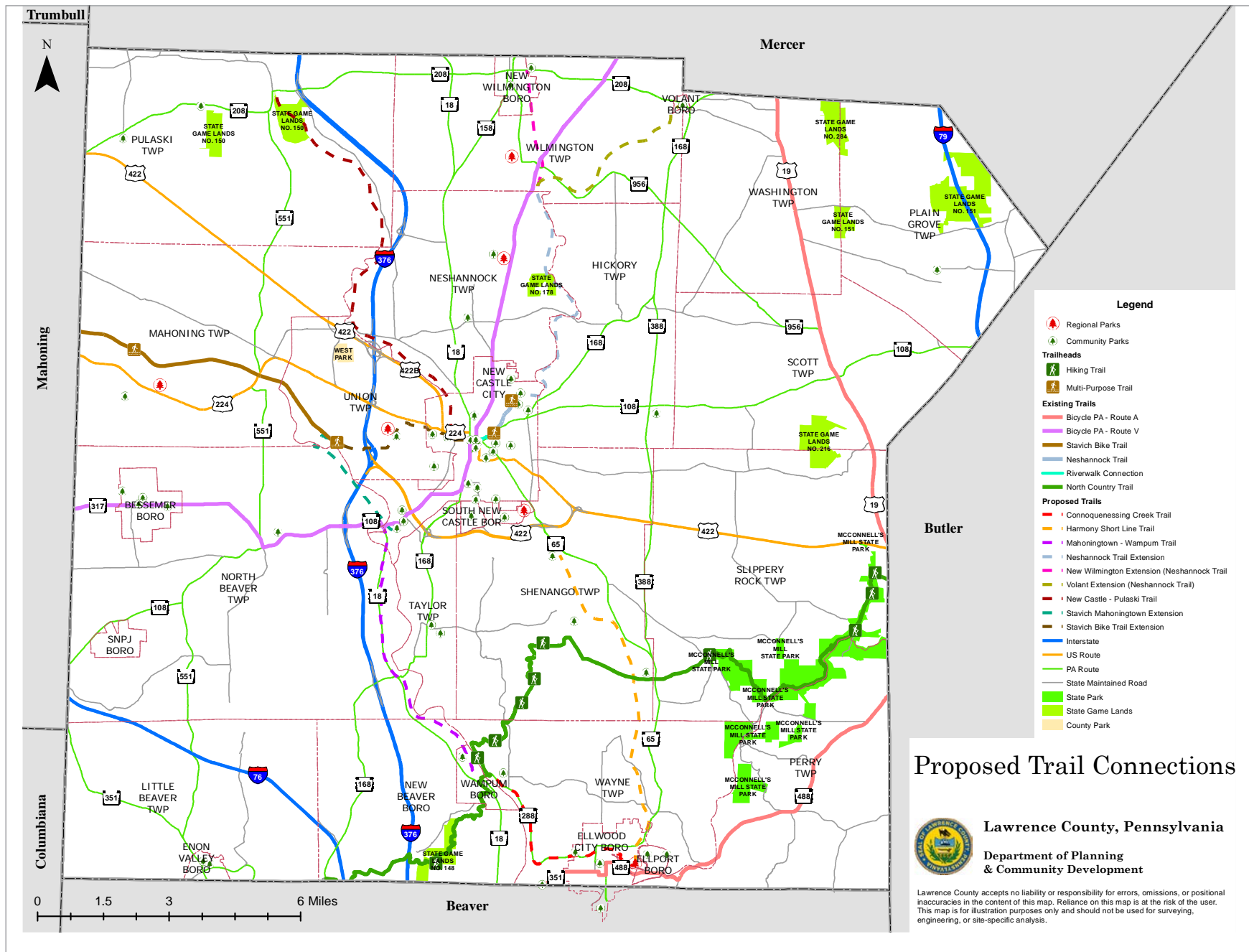
1.3: Prepare a feasibility study for the Shenango River Rail-Trail.

The 2008 Plan identified the Shenango River Rail-Trail as a second-priority trail. The County should conduct a feasibility study to identify potential alignments, determine interest of property owners, costs.

This proposed shared-use trail utilizes at least one of the two abandoned rail alignments located along opposite banks of the Shenango River. The trail could connect the City of New Castle with points northward along the Shenango River, including the Village of Pulaski, where other planned and proposed trails intersect and Sharon, PA. With careful planning, this trail may also connect to the Neshannock Trail via the New Castle Riverwalk Trail. Possible uses could include hiking, biking and equestrian use. In certain areas, uses could be separated if abandoned rail lines on both sides of the river are acquired for trails.

If this trail is constructed, it presents a great opportunity for the County to promote and market this trail with the Shenango River Water Trail as a peddle-paddle.

Figure 6: Proposed Trail Connections



1.4: Support and assist North Country National Scenic Trail efforts to build the trail entirely off-road through the County.

One of the North Country Trail Association's (NCTA's) most active local chapters is located in Wampum (www.northcountrytrail.org/wam) and is responsible for construction, promotion and maintenance of the trail in Lawrence and Beaver Counties. Within Lawrence County, the NCT is an off-road trail from State Game Lands #285 to the Ohio border; however, there is still approximately 10 miles of trail in the County on-road.

Former Consol property in Wayne Township (209 acres) is supposed to be SGL property under court order but has not been transferred yet. This property is an opportunity for the North Country Trail to extend off-road and could also be used as an herbicide project area to control invasive species.

The County can provide assistance to the NCTA Wampum Chapter with contacting property owners, acquiring property and/or easements and grant writing to construct the remaining trail sections off-road.

1.5: Develop the Ewing Park - Ellport Trail per the 2011 Feasibility Study.

The 2008 Plan identified a potential trail connection between Ewing Park in Ellwood City Borough and Ellport Park in Ellport Borough, via a proposed pedestrian bridge over Connoquenessing Creek. In 2011, the County prepared a Connoquenessing Creek Trail and River Access Study for Ellwood City and Wampum Boroughs. The study determined that the most feasible route was to follow existing streets and install a bike lane. On and off road connections that could be installed in the long term were also identified (see "Figure 7: Connoquenessing Creek Trail - Proposed Routes" on page 57).

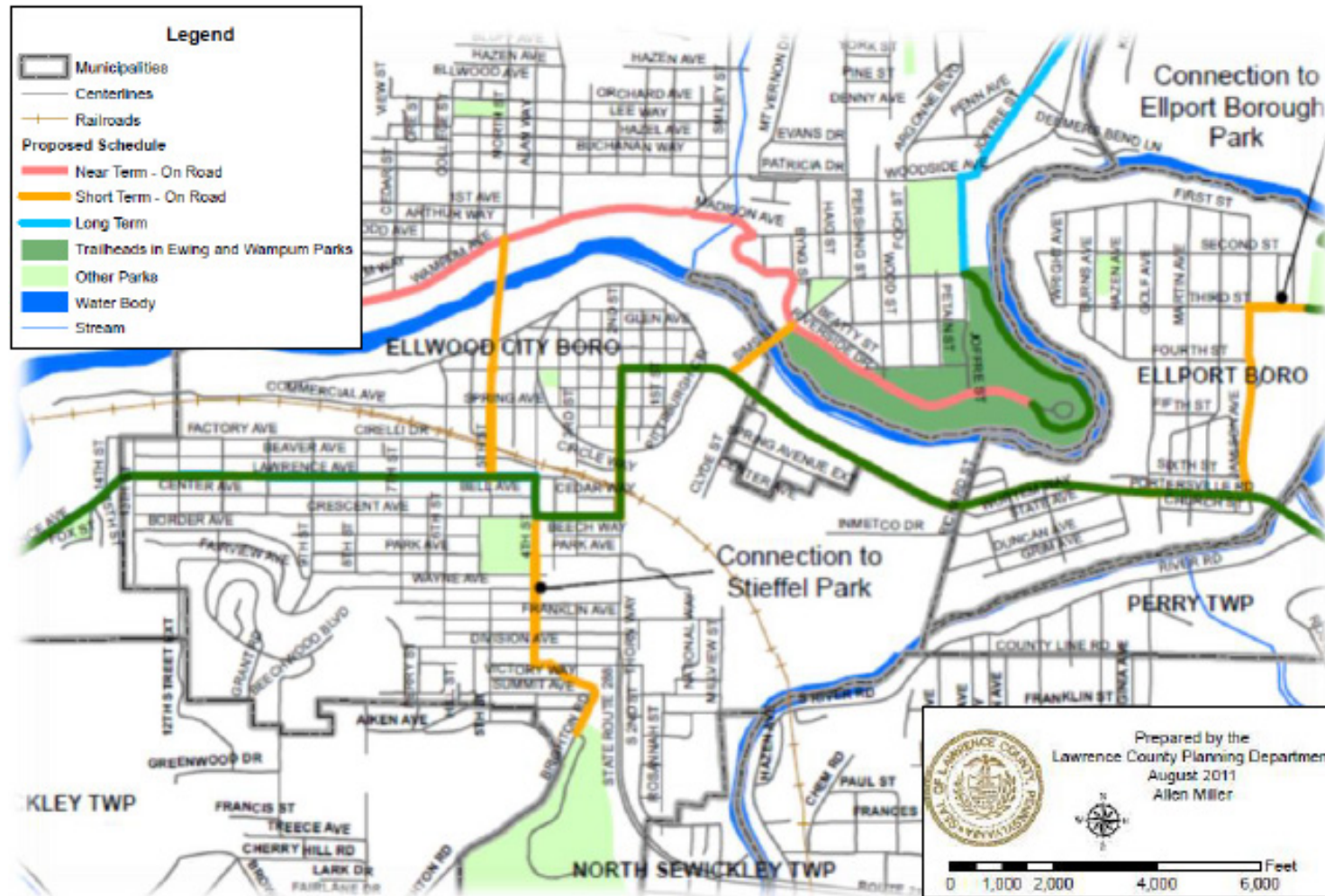
- Sims Street Trail Spur would connect the proposed trail to the existing PA Bike Route A near the Pittsburgh Circle area of Ellwood City and would be utilized to provide direct access between Ewing Park and Stiefel Park.
- 5th Street Spur would once again connect the proposed trail to the existing PA Bike Route A, on Lawrence Avenue with direct access to downtown Ellwood City and Stiefel Park.

- Ewing Park – Ellport Bridge is a proposed pedestrian swinging bridge over the Connoquenessing Creek to connect the Ewing Park Nature Trail in Ellwood City with Ellport Borough. Identified concerns that would need to be addressed include flooding, natural habitat / sensitive area disturbance; and constructibility / financing of the bridge. The borough should conduct preliminary engineering and design, with cost estimates, to determine the feasibility of this connection.
- Clear and re-open the walking trail along Stiefel Park. This trail could become a connector to the Beaver River Rails to Trails network as an alternate route.

1.6: Maintain communication with companies for possible ownership of abandoned rights-of-way.

Railroad and utility companies present a unique opportunity to obtain abandoned rights-of-way that could be utilized as future trail connections. The County should ensure that they are in contact regularly with these companies so that they have the initial opportunity to acquire the property for trail development.

Figure 7: Connoquenessing Creek Trail - Proposed Routes



connecting communities ~ guiding principle #2

Expand the County's network of water trails.

Similar to the land trails, water trails connect people to places. They provide public access for river-based recreational activities, such as paddling and fishing and as a community resource and can also help stimulate the local economy. The 2008 Plan recommended that the County develop water trails along their three rivers and since then, the County has been developing public river access sites along its waterways.

2.1: Seek state designation of the Beaver River with Mahoning and Shenango Rivers as a water trail system.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) works with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the National Park Service (NPS) to direct the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program.

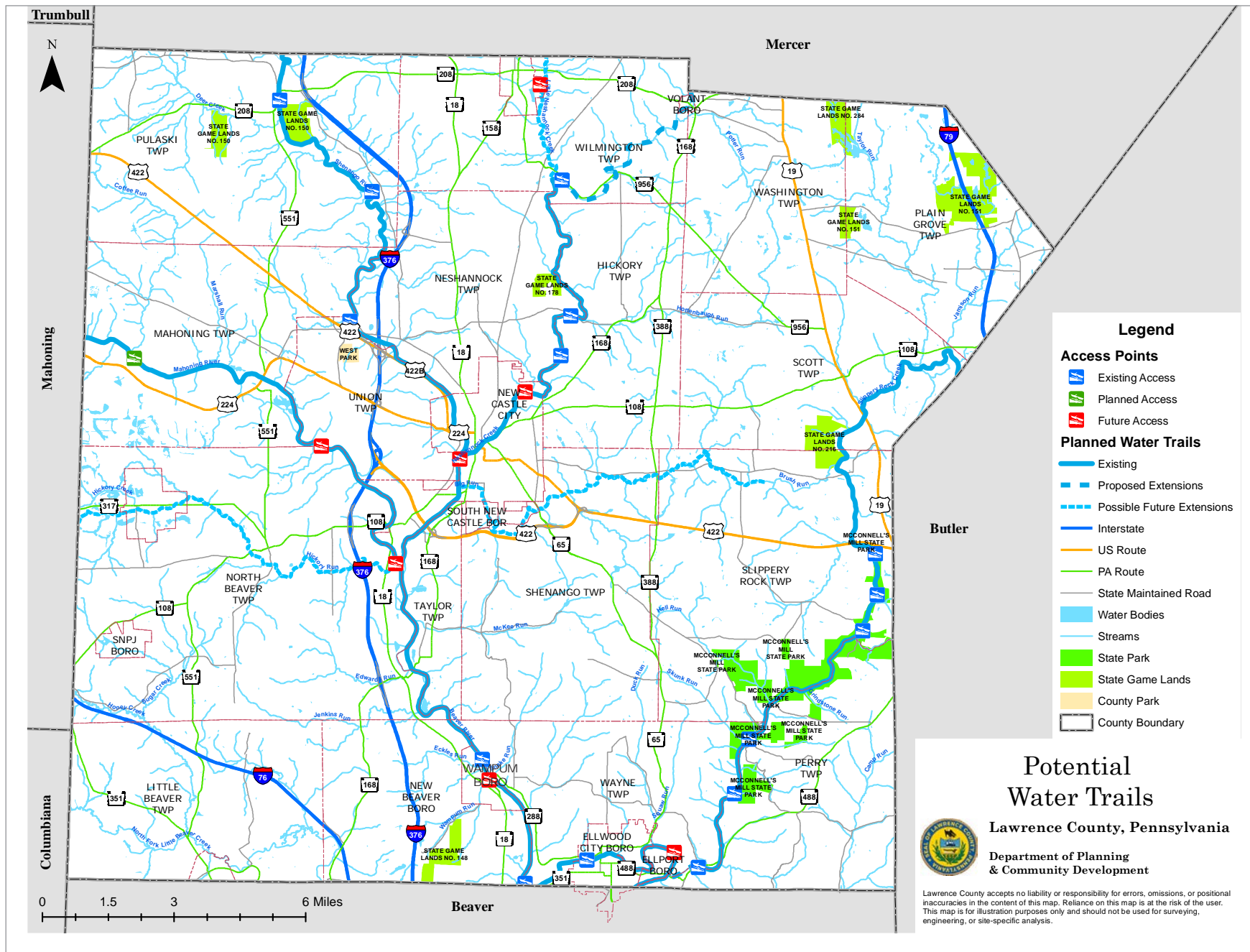
There are approximately 27 waterways in Pennsylvania that are designated water trails. Regionally, these waterways include the Upper Shenango River Water Trail (23 miles - Pymatuning State Park Launch to Big Bend) and the Ohio River Water Trail, which is comprised of four sections covering 69 miles, including a three-mile portion of the Beaver River (from New Brighton south to the confluence with the Ohio River).

Per the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program, every water trail MUST have:

- A local managing organization.
- A part in the statewide water trail system with state designation by the PFBC.
- Public involvement by the local community.
- A map providing information for using the trail.



Figure 8: Proposed Water Trails and Public Access Sites



- Free information provided to users on the Internet and/or printed materials.
- Water trail feasibility study or plan to determine if the waterway can be a water trail.
- Active volunteers who will participate in the management of the trail.
- Signage to direct users, interpret the resource, provide safety and orientation information.
- Maintenance of existing and new amenities (boat access points, signage, information provided).

Establishing a formal water trail for the Shenango-Mahoning-Beaver Rivers within Lawrence County, as shown on “Figure 8: Proposed Water Trails and Public Access Sites” on page 59, would provide a connection to the Upper Shenango River Water Trail to the north and the Ohio River - Beaver River section Water Trails to the south.

The Shenango River flows southward from the Shenango Reservoir in Mercer County, through the Village of Pulaski. The river forms the southwestern boundary of the City of New Castle before joining the Beaver River,

which flows further south through Beaver County to the Ohio River. While beginner paddlers should have no problem navigating the length of this water trail, motorized craft may only be able to navigate select parts of the river. Rapids of note are located at a railroad bridge in Wampum (known as Irish Ripple) and two miles north of Wampum (known as Hardscrabble). These areas make upstream travel extremely difficult if not impossible without portaging. These rapids do not pose problems during normal water conditions, but may prove challenging during period of high water.

The Mahoning River joins the Shenango River to form the Beaver River in the extreme southwestern corner of the City of New Castle. The Mahoning River section offers canoe and kayak access at several points in the western portion of the county and extends upstream into Ohio. Paddlers would theoretically be able to paddle between Mercer, Lawrence and Beaver Counties in PA as well across the state line into Ohio.

2.1a. Develop a water trail map and guide.

- Water trail guides show “trail heads” (boat launch and take-out points) and provide background about the scenic, historic and

geologic points of interest along the way. An example of a water trail map and guide is shown on page 59 which was prepared for the Beaver River section of the Ohio River Water Trail, managed by the Ohio River Trail Council. Lawrence County has many of these points already mapped, it’s just a matter of pulling them together into a map and guide.

- In addition, every water trail has a logo that is based on the Pennsylvania Water Trail design.

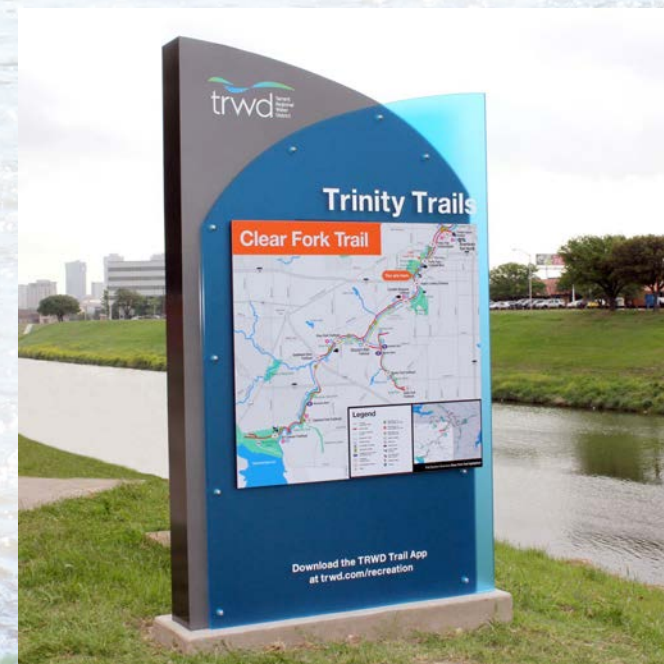
2.1b. Prepare the water trail application.

- With Lawrence County poised to serve as the water trail manager, the County should submit the application for the Beaver-Mahoning-Shenango Rivers designation as a Pennsylvania Water Trail. However, it is recommended that the County partner with local watershed groups to assist with maintenance and other efforts.

2.1c. Identify priority projects for additional amenities.

- River mile markers should be installed at all public access sites at a minimum (see photo examples on page 59 of signage). Additional signs could be posted along the water trail itself; however, the County would need to work with private landowners. Coordination with PennDOT is recommended to ensure that all state bridges over the creek include water trail

Water Trails: examples of map & guide and signage...



Sources (clockwise from left): Ohio River Water Trail Map - Beaver River Section & Logo (<http://www.water.ohiorivertrail.org/index.php/en/>); Three Rivers Water Trail Access Point and Trail Sign (<http://www.threeriverswatertrail.org/>); Trinity Trails Signage (<http://www.trinityrivervision.org/testpost/trinity-river-vision-blog/2013/04/23/signs-of-improvement-on-the-trinity-trails-from-trwd>)

signage as they are rehabbed.

- Kiosks should also be installed at all public access sites that show a map of the water trail system, distance to the next access site, local amenities, emergency contact information and contact information for water trail manager to report hazards.
- Public restrooms should be considered at or near public access sites. Some water trail organizations develop agreements with local businesses to allow water trail users to use their restroom facilities, others provide facilities (either full facilities or port-a-johns) on site.
- Kayak/canoe lockers could also be considered. This would allow water trail users to leave their canoe or kayak on-site while they visited local attractions.
- Emergency stations could be provided at the remote access locations to improve safety.
- The County may also consider contacting cellular providers in the area to see if they would be interested in installing mini-cell towers at these locations, which would improve safety as well as provide financial assistance to use for maintenance.



Source: Little blue Trace Trail Emergency Station (<http://jbk-corridors-addendum1.blogspot.com/2013/04/little-blue-trace-trail-emergency.html>)

2.1d. Construct additional river access sites along the water trail system, as shown on “Figure 8: Proposed Water Trails and Public Access Sites” on page 59.

- The following sites have been identified as potential locations to develop public river access; however, the County will need to conduct further review of these sites and work with private property owners in some cases to obtain permission/easement.

» **Beaver River**

- › Halltown Road
- › S&S Processing

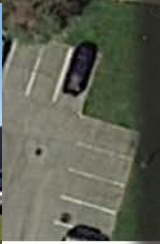
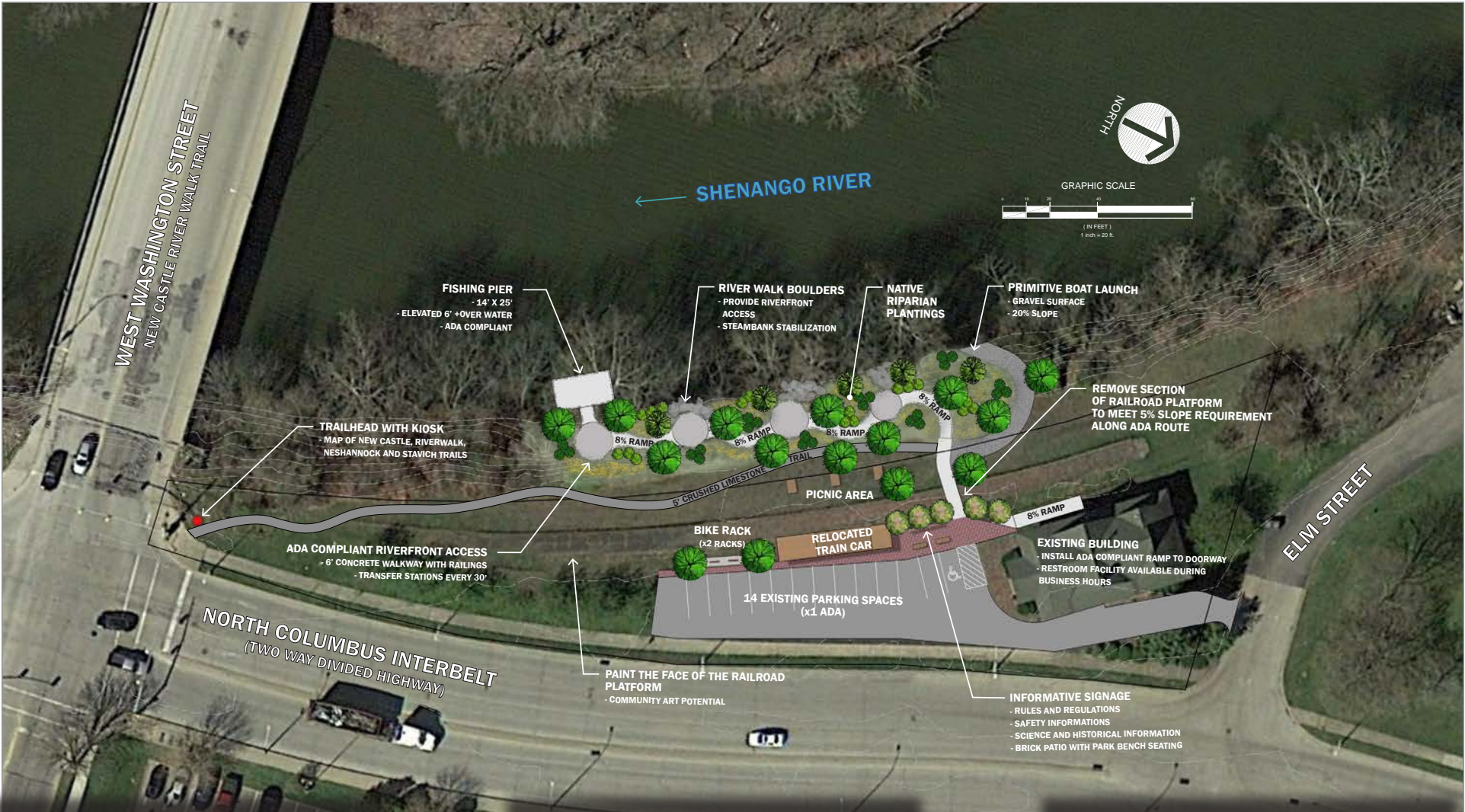
» **Mahoning River**

- › The County is currently developing a canoe/kayak put-in at Covert Crossing in Mahoning Township. The County received a grant through the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) primitive canoe access fund and construction is scheduled for 2017.
- › A potential site that the County should research further is the Wartenburg Bridge, which has been closed to traffic.

» **Shenango River**

- › A new site is proposed along the Shenango River in the City of New Castle at the current Chamber of Commerce site, located at the corner of West Washington Street and Columbia Boulevard. A conceptual rendering of the site was prepared as part of this plan, see “Figure 9: Proposed Public River Access at the Former Train Station in the City of New Castle” on page 63. Recommended site improvements include:
 - ◇ A primitive canoe/kayak launch
 - ◇ ADA-accessible ramp to a fishing pier
 - ◇ Boulders along the river’s edge to provide riverfront access and stabilize the streambank
 - ◇ Native riparian plantings along the riverfront
 - ◇ Trail connection from the New Castle

Figure 9: Proposed Public River Access at the Former Train Station in the City of New Castle



Riverwalk Trail (share-the-road) to the site with bike racks

◇ Trailhead signage at the corner of West Washington Street and North Columbus that is visible to motorists driving by. The kiosk should include a large map of the overall trail network (the trailhead's location along the Beaver-Shenango-Mahoning River Water Trail, Stavich Bicycle Trail, Neshannock Creek Trail and the Riverwalk Trail). A photo example of what this could look like is included on page 55.

› The County is exploring the need for additional launches on the Shenango prior to the confluence. Through this planning process, the County became aware of "ideal locations," including near Rundle Road; however, further research into property ownership and access is required.

2.1e. Develop formal partnerships for maintenance of access areas.

→ The cost of maintaining facilities is always a concern. While the County-owned river access sites are relatively new, they do have associated costs with regular maintenance. To assist with the costs, it is recommended that the County pursue partnerships with outside organizations to provide either financial assistance or resources to help with maintenance costs.

→ One option could be to launch an "Adopt a Launch Program" where people and organizations can donate funds to assist with the maintenance of a particular site.

2.2: Develop and promote the other waterways in the County as unique paddling experiences.

2.2a. Develop and promote the Connoquenessing Creek Water Trail for experienced paddlers.

→ Lawrence County's portion would accommodate experienced paddlers only, as the Connoquenessing Creek in and around Ellwood City Borough contains several substantial rapids. Existing access points are located in Ellwood City at the wastewater treatment plant and near Ewing Park, along Route 488 in Wurtemburg Village and at Rock Point near the creek's confluence with the Beaver River.

→ The Connoquenessing drops 110 feet in elevation over its last six miles and includes difficult rapids. These areas require skills possessed by experienced paddlers. During high water, these rapids become hazardous, reaching class 4 status and should only be attempted by those with expert skills and experience.

→ There is an opportunity for the County to work with Ellport Borough to develop an access at Ellport Borough Park.

2.2b. Develop and promote the Neshannock Creek for experienced paddlers.

→ The Neshannock Creek Gorge section of the Neshannock Creek (Covered Bridge Road to Sipe Road) is two miles long and is a class I-II section of whitewater, according to American Whitewater.

→ The Big Run section of the Neshannock Creek (Savannah Road to Shenango River) is 1.5 miles long and is a class III-IV section of whitewater.

→ Local paddlers noted that there are two main issues with paddling Neshannock Creek: the water level and lack of public access in the City of New Castle.

» **Install a water level gage on Neshannock Creek.**

› USGS has gages at the following sites in Lawrence County: Shenango River at New Castle; Mahoning River at North Edinburg; Beaver River at Wampum; and Slippery Rock Creek at Wurtemburg (Wayne Twp).

› The County should partner with local organizations (Trumbull Canoe Trails, other local paddling groups, local businesses) to sponsor a gage and webcam.

» **Develop a public river access site in the City of New Castle.**

- › Potential sites include El Rio Beach, the former Days Inn hotel which is now owned by the County, near Beer for Less (the old town mall).

» **Develop a formal river access site in Volant.**

- › Currently, there is public river access in Volant, near the Neshannock Creek Fly Shop; however, there is no signage nor a developed launch site.



Neshannock Creek in Volant

2.2c. Develop and promote the Slippery Rock Creek Water Trail for experienced paddlers.

- The 2008 Plan noted that consideration was given to a water trail along the Slippery Rock Creek from U.S. Route 19 downstream through McConnell's Mill State Park and onward to the confluence with the Connoquenessing Creek near Ellport Borough. This stretch has been popular for whitewater kayaking at times; however, problems have been documented with landowners near Kennedy Mill (where the creek crosses U.S. Route 19). In addition, seasonal water level changes can make the creek either dangerously fast or too low to be navigable. According to the Canoeing Guide to Western Pennsylvania and Northern Virginia (1991) by the Pittsburgh Council of American Youth Hostels, Inc., prime kayak / canoe seasons on the creek are from November to January and from May to early July only and is recommended for experienced paddlers only.
- Rose Point Park, located on Slippery Rock Creek in Slippery Rock Township, is a privately-owned campground that offers a wide range of rental units and campsites (tents and RV's) and a variety of recreation facilities and activities. In addition, Rose Point allows the public to use their canoe/kayak put-in along Slippery Rock Creek and provides shuttle service to paddlers (<http://rosepointpark.com/>).

2.2d. Promote Bessemer Lake as outdoor recreation area.

- Bessemer Lake, located in Bessemer Borough, is stocked with trout and fingerling sauger; has a launch for boats with small electric motors and unmotorized boats with a small parking area (owned by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission). The lake is a great place to promote for beginner paddlers.
- Bessemer Borough received \$10,000 as part of the PA DCNR Small Communities Pilot Program to implement a planning effort that will lead to the rehabilitation of the 18-acre Bessemer Borough Park.

connecting communities ~ guiding principle #3

Improve key roadways within the County as multimodal corridors.

The Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan (2016) identified a need to improve roadways within the County as multimodal corridors, which would accommodate cyclists as well as Amish buggies.

3.1: Establish Countywide on-road bike routes.

The 2008 Plan identified several on-road bike routes as third-priority trails:

- Scenic Byway Bike Lane - a 59 mile loop with proposed on-road bike lane, which follows a broad circle through most parts of Lawrence County (this was also proposed as a scenic byway driving route). The Bike Lane would be separate from existing traffic lanes and would follow the road shoulder along State Routes 208, 551, 108, 18, 288 and 488, as well as a portion of U.S. Route 19. This route would provide
- long-distance bicyclists the opportunity to visit the Amish countryside and many of the quaint villages scattered across Lawrence County's pastoral landscape.
- New Castle-Shenango Bike Trail - a 1.5 mile proposed trail that includes off-road segments between Gaston, Cunningham and Cascade Parks in New Castle; as well as on-road connection to Shenango Township Park and Shenango School District facilities via Route 65 and/or Old Pittsburgh Road and Gardner Center Road.
- New Wilmington-Neshannock Bike Route - a 5.5 mile along State Route 956, Mercer Road and Mitchell Road. The route connects Neshannock Township School District facilities and Pearson Park with Marti Park in Wilmington Township and New Wilmington Borough. The portion of the route along Mitchell Road near Neshannock Township School District is an existing share-the-road bike route and



SR 208 in Volant (looking west)

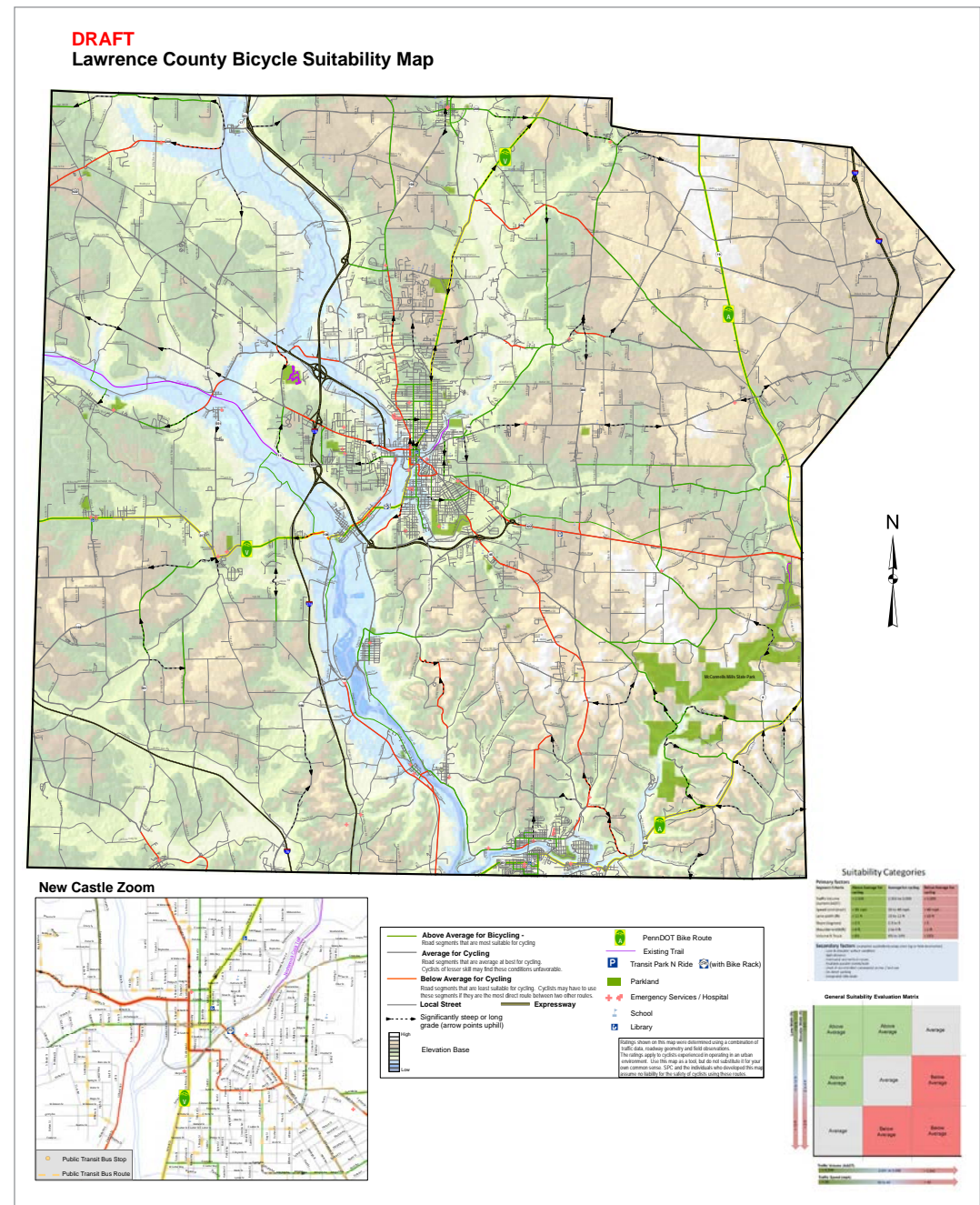
Figure 10: SPC Bike Suitability Map for Lawrence County (2016 Draft)

portions of this route are utilized by the Lawrence County Cycling Club as part of their “Tour de La-Mec,” an on-road cycling tour in Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

- Old Youngstown Road Bike Route - a 3.0 mile route connecting the existing Stavich Trail with the proposed Shenango River Rail-Trail and to West Park Nature Center.
- Volant-Laurel Bike Route - a 7.5 mile route from Volant southward along State Routes 168/388, connecting to the Laurel School District recreational facilities, the Lawrence County Fairgrounds and C.J. Long Spartan Park.

3.1a: Identify and prioritize road corridors for multimodal improvements on an annual basis.

→ Partner with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to identify and map recommended state roadways that are safe for cyclists. SPC prepared bicycle suitability maps for several counties in the 10-county region; however, Lawrence County was never completed. During this planning process, the County and SPC partnered to create maps for Lawrence County that rate state roads for suitability as above average, average or below average for cycling based on lane width, shoulder width, traffic volume and traffic speed, as shown on “Figure 10: SPC



Bike Suitability Map for Lawrence County (2016 Draft)” on page 67

- Partner with the Lawrence County Cycling Club and users to identify suitable local roads for cycling, using similar criteria as what SPC did for state roads.
- 3.1b: Develop corridor plans for major thoroughfares to address multimodal improvements, access management, traffic signalization, aesthetics and signage.
- Lawrence County applied for and received funding from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to conduct a multimodal corridor study on several roads in the northern part of the County that connect the City of New Castle to the Amish countryside. Based on the outcome of this study, which will begin in 2017, the County should take steps to implement the recommendations to improve priority corridors.
 - The County should conduct a similar study on key corridors in the southern part of the County.
 - As these priority roadways and improvements are identified, the County will need to ensure that these multimodal improvements are included in future road improvement plans and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).



connecting communities ~ guiding principle #4

Capitalize on the opportunities to provide legal riding areas for off-highway vehicle riding.

Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort is located in Wampum and New Beaver Boroughs in Lawrence County.

Mines and Meadows offers over 75 miles of recreational trails (ATV and single track-dirt bike only) on 657 acres of land. It offers underground riding through abandoned limestone mines, complete with underground lakes and total darkness. In addition, it offers primitive tent camping and RV's with electric hookups.

In 2016 the Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort attracted over 17,000 visitors. This number continues to grow, through an active marketing campaign being undertaken by the resort. There is a tremendous opportunity for Lawrence County to realize the economic development potential that can be generated from off-highway riding opportunities.

4.1: Support Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort in their efforts to expand and enhance their riding area to become an overnight/vacation destination.

In 2017, the resort will be adding an additional 222 acres to their existing 877 acre riding area. Ideally, a vacation destination OHV resort would consist of over 2,500 acres and 150 miles of trails. Such a facility would attract visitors within a three hour radius.

Source: Mines and Meadows ATV/RV Resort website at: <https://www.minesandmeadows.com/home.html>

Photo credit: <https://www.minesandmeadows.com/home.html>



4.2: Continue to support Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort in applying for funding maintenance equipment and in applying for grants for facility development.

In the Spring of 2016, Lawrence County provided Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort with grant writing assistance. The application was successful and Mines & Meadows will be receiving approximately \$120,000 in state and federal funding to purchase equipment to maintain their trails.

4.3: Support and encourage local municipalities to open municipal roads for OHV use.

This would allow residents to access legal off-road vehicle (OHV) riding opportunities and would connect legal OHV riding opportunities to local amenities that offer goods and services and natural resources (such as the Beaver River) to OHV riders.

Municipalities to initiate discussions with include:

- Little Beaver Township
- New Beaver Borough
- North Beaver Township
- Bessemer Borough
- Mahoning Township
- SNPJ Borough
- Taylor Township
- Wampum Borough

4.4: Explore opportunities with local foundations and philanthropic organizations to obtain funding for youth ATV safety training classes.

In Northumberland County a local healthcare foundation provides funding to offset the costs associated with providing youth ATV safety training.

4.5: Support private sector businesses in developing OHV riding areas and businesses which support them.

Currently there are over 45,000 ATVs registered with PA DCNR in southwestern Pennsylvania, 169,000 registered ATVs state-wide. Southwestern PA represents 26% of the total number of ATV registered state-wide and it the highest ranking DCNR region of the six regions that make up the state.

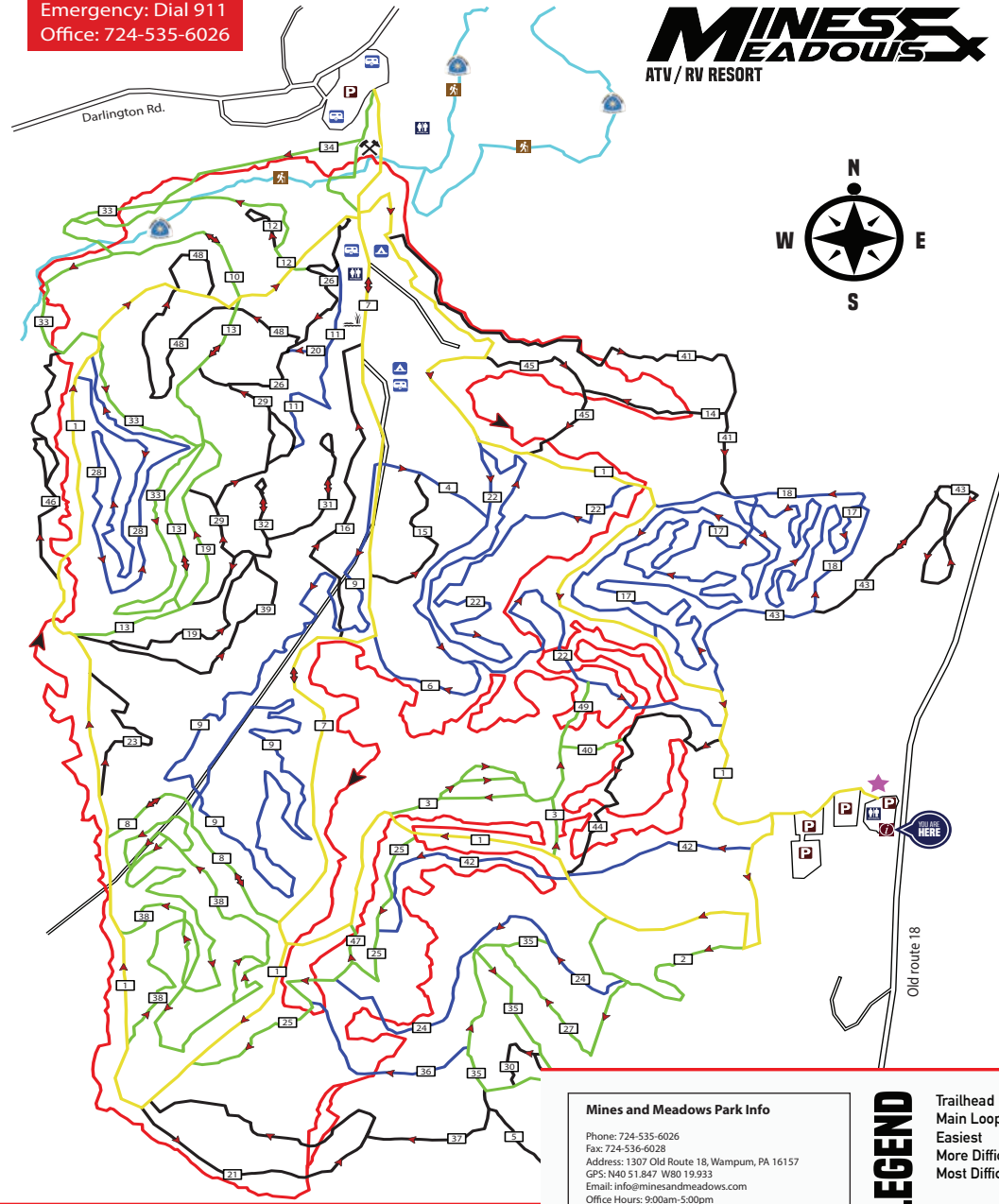
4.6: Educate local municipalities on the benefits of having legal off-highway vehicle riding areas in their municipalities.

Identify and explore the potential of converting illegal OHV riding areas to legal OHV riding areas.

Emergency: Dial 911
Office: 724-535-6026

MINES & MEADOWS

ATV / RV RESORT



Mines and Meadows Park Info
Phone: 724-535-6026
Fax: 724-536-6028
Address: 1307 Old Route 18, Wampum, PA 16157
GPS: N40 51.847 W80 19.933
Email: info@minesandmeadows.com
Office Hours: 9:00am-5:00pm

LEGEND

Trailhead
Main Loop (Easy)
Easiest
More Difficult
Most Difficult



North Country Trail
(Foot Traffic Only)
Single Track
(Dirt Bike Only)
Parking
Mine Tour
(Waiting Area)



Restrooms
Tent Camping
RV Camping
Pond
Office/Information
Map Scale



Healthy Communities

[hel-thee]
adjective

1. conducive to good health, healthful
2. prosperous or sound¹

¹ "Healthy." Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary.reference.com/browse/healthy).

The Comp Plan says...

“Provide the highest quality of life by preserving the agricultural and natural resources characteristic of Lawrence County and promoting a healthy lifestyle through recreation and local food source options.”

It has long been understood that the design and land development patterns of a community are directly tied to the overall health of its citizens. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines a healthy community as “one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments, helping people to support one another in aspects of daily life and to develop to their fullest potential.”¹ So what makes a community healthy? In the physical sense, a healthy community provides accessible parks, recreational facilities, active transportation options (pedestrian and bike access), healthy food systems, preserved agricultural lands, high air quality and safety. If a community is adequately providing these items, then

its residents are more likely to lead longer, healthier and more productive lives.

Lawrence County is known for its scenic countryside and farmland, abundance of natural resources and major outdoor recreation areas. Why then, did it rank among the worst in Pennsylvania in 2015 for Health Outcomes (61st out of 67 counties) and 50th in Health Factors?²

In terms of Health Outcomes, Lawrence County ranks particularly low (59th for length of life and 63rd for quality of life). According to the rankings, Lawrence County has a higher rate of premature deaths (before age 75) and lower rates of quality of life.

Residents reported a higher number of poor physical health days and overall poor or fair health than other counties in Pennsylvania. Also contributing to its low ranking is a higher percentage of babies born with a low birthweight.

The core issue to improving the health of Lawrence County involves improving access to and use of the resources that already exist to support sustainable lifestyles. This means continued attention to development of a green infrastructure network, coordinated investment in land protection, expansion of the reach of resources and empowering the public to live well.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2010 report.

² County Health Rankings and Roadmaps: Lawrence County. 2015. (www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/pennsylvania/2015/rankings/lawrence/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot).

A Healthier Lawrence County

Per the Pennsylvania County Health Rankings, identified areas of concern for Lawrence County include:

- Adult obesity (33% in Lawrence County compared to 29% in Pennsylvania)
- Physical inactivity (27% compared to 24%)
- Access to exercise opportunities (77% compared to 85%)

Lawrence County is certainly not alone; these concerns are plaguing communities across the United States.

YMCA of the USA and Stanford University's Health Improvement Program at the Stanford Prevention Research Center, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, created Making the Case to Stakeholders: Linking Policy and Environmental Strategies to Health Outcomes, to demonstrate, with a handful of strategies, the connection that can be made between policy and environmental

strategies and longer term outcomes. This guide was designed to assist communities to better understand potential outcomes of the policy and environmental change objectives targeting healthy eating and active living.

These initiatives, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), strive to create sustainable improvements in the health and well-being of community members through policy and environmental change strategies. Communities that are currently involved in these initiatives have successfully made changes that have resulted in increased access to physical activity opportunities and/or increased access to healthy foods.¹

¹ "Making the Case to Stakeholders: Linking Policy and Environmental Strategies to Health Outcome" YMCA. Retrieved online: <http://www.ymca.net/healthier-communities-guide/>



The Guide identifies 18 Active Living Strategies that communities can implement in an effort to improve health.

1. Increase mixed land use.
2. Increase access to recreational facilities and sites.
3. Improve built environment to support walking.
4. Improve built environment to support biking.
5. Locate schools within easy walking distance of residential areas.
6. Require physical education in schools.
7. Increase physical activity in physical education.
8. Increase opportunities for physical activity outside of physical education.
9. Increase active commuting to school.
10. Improve access to public transportation.

11. Improve traffic safety through traffic calming measures.
12. Provide safe places to be physically active.
13. Provide opportunities for physical activity at the worksite.
14. Improve worksite built environment to support physical activity.
15. Use point-of-decisions prompts to promote stair use.
16. Reduce screen time.
17. Implement campaigns on physical activity across many venues of the community.

So, how can the Lawrence County Greenways Plan address these concerns? The first two plan components (Core Communities and Connecting Communities) focus primarily on active transportation corridors. Active transportation is any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling. These include all of the existing and proposed trails and greenways covered under the Connecting Communities sections. The recommendations in the Core Communities section (Complete Streets policies, Bicycle Friendly Communities, pedestrian and bicycle master plans, WalkWorks routes) will also help to encourage more people to become healthier.

The Healthy Communities section focuses on the Active Living Strategies that the County can take action - primarily increased access to recreational facilities, increased active commuting to schools/parks and implementing campaigns on physical activity.



healthy
communities

greenways vision

“

Promote a healthy lifestyle through recreation
and conservation.

”

healthy communities ~ guiding principle #1

Educate the public about the importance of healthy communities and active lifestyles.

The 2008 Greenways Plan recommended the following: “Develop a detailed public marketing and education program to inform county residents about the many benefits of greenway development (economic, environmental, health, etc.) and promote the many attractions of the greenway network (eco-tourism, recreation, cultural, historic, etc.).”

1.1: Develop a public health campaign to encourage residents to be more physically active.

There are several efforts that other counties in Pennsylvania have engaged in to improve public health through recreation. A local example is the Live Well Allegheny Campaign, which aims to improve the health and well-being of Allegheny County (PA) residents. Communities, schools and businesses can gain “Live Well status” by pledging to work

with the campaign to accomplish its goals and identify specific action steps that will help accomplish these goals.¹

Lawrence County could develop a program that is modeled after Live Well Allegheny, specifically, focusing on encouraging its communities to take steps to improve public health. Actions steps may include the following:

- Promote participation in a voluntary wellness campaign for the community’s employees.
- Share information on wellness campaign events with the broader community to encourage the voluntary participation of residents.
- Plan, promote and implement an event in cooperation with the campaign that encourages active living.

¹ Live Well Allegheny. <http://www.livewellallegheny.com/>



- Develop indoor and outdoor wellness trails accessible to residents of all abilities.
- Develop walking maps; measure the distances mapped and encourage residents to meet goals.
- Offer incentives for employees who walk or bike to work.
- Encourage multi-modal transportation of residents by providing facilities or policies that encourage walking and bike riding.
- Ask vending machine companies to add healthy foods and work with the company to post calories and nutrient contents and amounts for the foods offered.
- Promote and support farmers' markets.
- Encourage involvement with community volunteer activities.
- Promote smoke-free buildings and perimeters.
- Provide health information focused on monthly or seasonal events.
- Utilize web sites and social media to provide information on physical activity, nutrition, stress management, tobacco cessation and other health and wellness related initiatives.



connecting communities ~ guiding principle #2

Promote healthy communities through active transportation corridors.

If you build it...they will come. But not unless they know about it! Lawrence County has made great strides over the last 10+ years to develop a countywide network of greenways - land and water trails alike. A priority for the County now is to ensure that the network is well-marketed and publicized so that residents and visitors alike are aware of all of the recreational opportunities available within the County!

2.1: Develop a countywide wayfinding program for the greenways network.

Wayfinding can be defined “as spatial problem solving. It is knowing where you are in a building or an environment, knowing where your desired location is and knowing how to get there from your present location.”¹

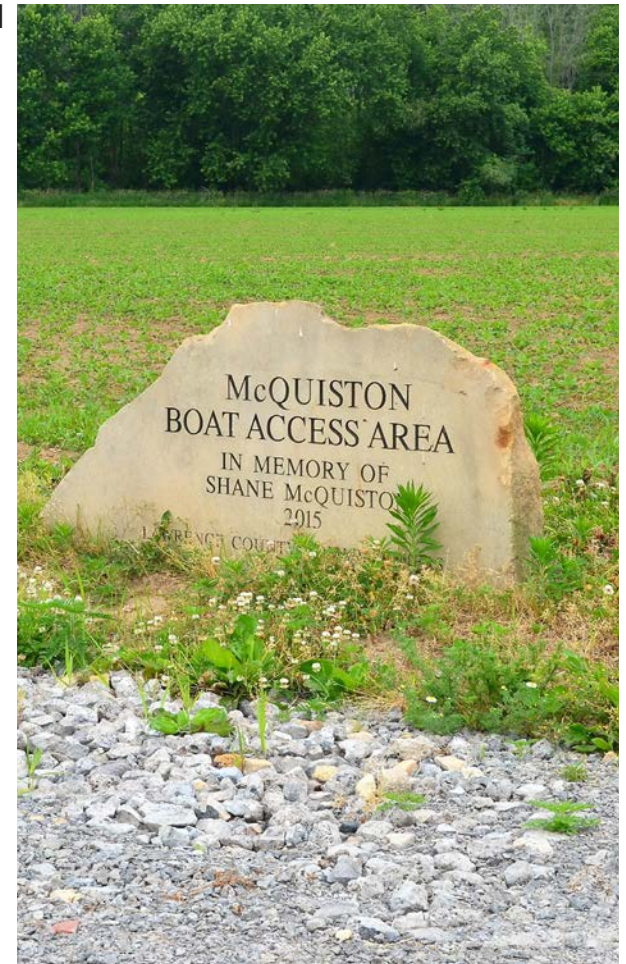
2.1a. Develop a logo and theme for the Countywide greenways network.

¹ <http://www.umich.edu/~wayfind/supplements/moreinfo/main.htm>

→ Wayfinding is not just signage. Architectural clues are also part of it. The County has installed large stones at their river access points (see photo to the right). It is recommended that the County build upon this theme and develop a logo and thematic plan to use for all county-owned parks and greenways. It will help to clearly identify the site and orient the user as to being part of the greenways network.

2.1b. Develop a signage plan.

- Directional—signage should be installed to direct users to the public access areas from main roads as well as along the creek itself to direct water trail users to take out points and local amenities. Coordination with PennDOT is recommended to ensure that all state bridges over the creek include water trail signage as they are rehabbed.
- Orientation and Safety—signage should be installed at all public and private access points that includes the name of the site and location (river mile markers) along with boating safety rules and regulations



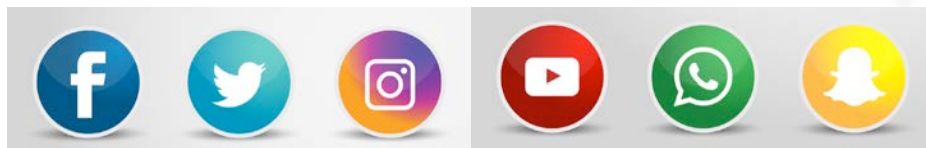
- Interpretive—interpretive signs can be installed along the trail to identify historic sites, natural areas and features.

2.2: Develop a coordinated public outreach campaign to promote the greenways network.

During the planning process, many residents noted concerns that the greenways and corresponding opportunities are not well-publicized and known throughout the County. Part of the overall tourism/business development strategy needs to be a coordinated public outreach campaign.

2.2b. Launch a social media campaign that publicizes and promotes Lawrence County's greenways.

- Social media outlets include Facebook (the LCDPCD has a page), Twitter, Instagram, etc. Options may include creating a hashtag, i.e. “#experiencelawrenceco” for visitors to use when checking in or using the trails and creating a “selfie poster” to take to greenways events to promote the County's greenways.



2.1c. Develop maps and brochures for all County-owned parks and trails.

- Provide trails and greenways maps to local businesses, particularly those located along a greenway and which cater to outdoor recreation tourists (i.e. Rose Point Campground, which offers public access to Slippery Rock Creek and will transport paddlers; Moraine Trails Council's Camp Agawam, which hosts conferences, meetings, camping; and Camp Allegheny-Salvation Army property.)
- Provide the maps and other brochures to hospitals and healthcare providers in the County to encourage people to use the trails and attractions to get healthy.

2.1c. Develop an interactive map on the County's website of the greenways and trails network.

- An interactive map of the greenways network (both land and water trails) would help to promote the use of the existing trail network. The map should include, at a minimum:
 - › Existing land trails and water trails
 - › GPS coordinates and directions to trailheads and public river access areas
 - › Locations of known hazards (dams, rapids, etc.)

- › Areas of interest (historic, public restrooms, places to eat/drink, etc.)
- › River access: type of launch (motorized or nonmotorized); ownership; permit information (if required)
- › Information on public access area (trailhead / launch) such as the number of parking spots, photos of the site
- › Water flow data on the rivers and creeks
- › American Whitewater river classifications

- The County is working with SPC and the LCCC to identify suitable on-road bicycle routes. The county should include these on-road routes as well.

2.1e. Partner with regional efforts to connect the Lawrence County trail network to the larger regional network.

- The Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (I Heart Trails) is collaborating to complete and connect a system of 1,400+ miles of shared use trails. The goal is to connect the trail network so that local and visiting trail users can walk and bike from trail to trail, city to city and town to town.² However, the proposed trail system does not connect to Lawrence County. As the County expands their network of land trails, they should continue to work with the I Heart Trails Coalition to show connections to the County.

² <http://ihearttrails.org/about/about/>

- Ensure that online trail websites have updated trail information for the County's trails (Google maps, gototrails.com, explorepatrails.com, etc.).
- Partner with Ohio to extend the Stavich Trail to connect to their regional network.

2.3. Develop partnerships to promote the use of active transportation corridors.

2.2a. Partner with hospitals and healthcare providers to:

- Sponsor trails (signage, etc.)
- Host events / programs on trails (i.e. walk with a doc, 5K run/walk events)
- Write patients "recreation prescriptions," i.e. get out, get healthy

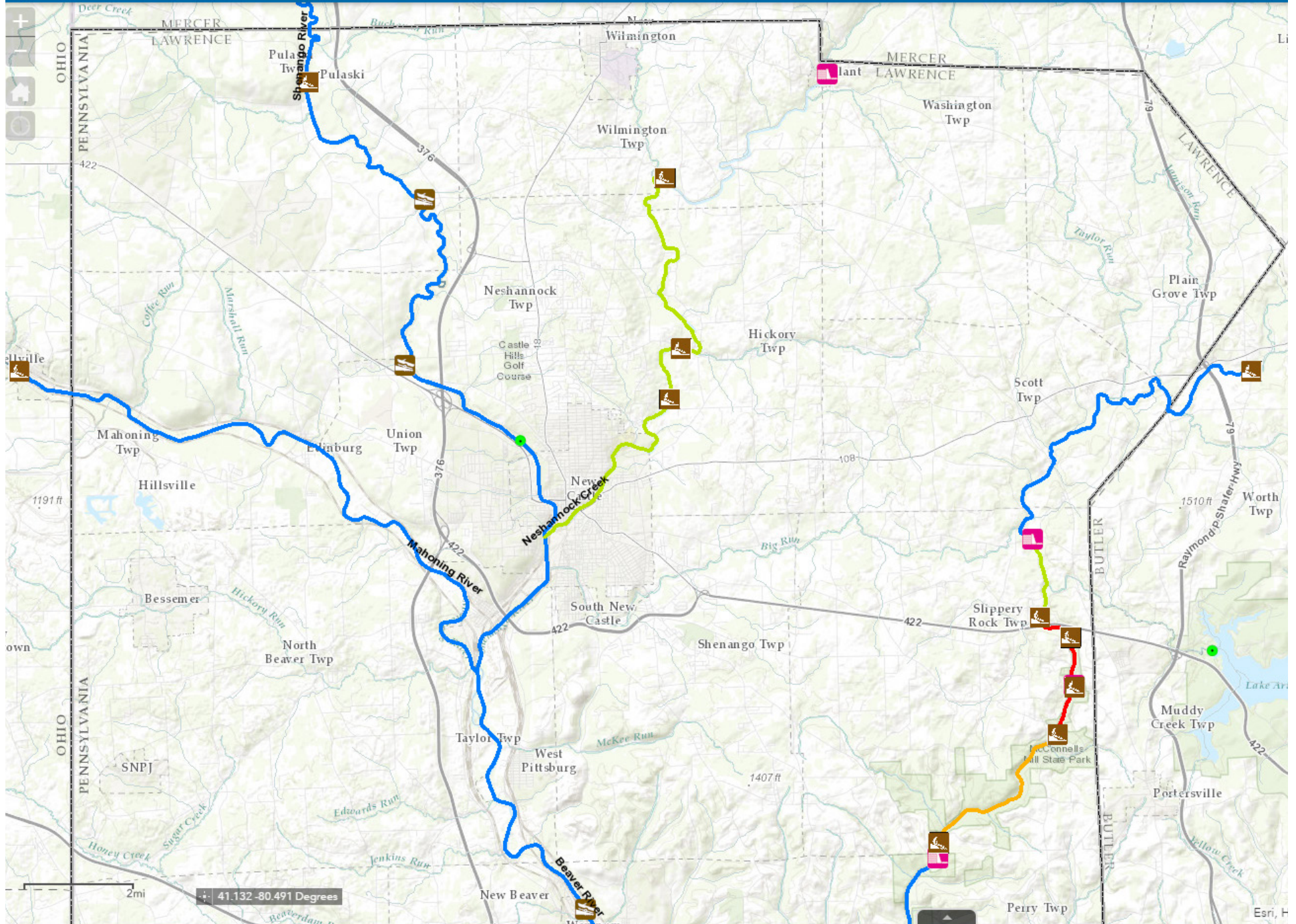
2.2b. Partner with County School Districts to:

- Develop Safe Routes to School to encourage more walking/biking to school
- Utilize facilities (i.e. McConnells Mill, West Park, Neshannock Trail) as outdoor classrooms



Lawrence County Water Trails

Department of Planning & Community Development



2.2c. Partner with Municipalities to:

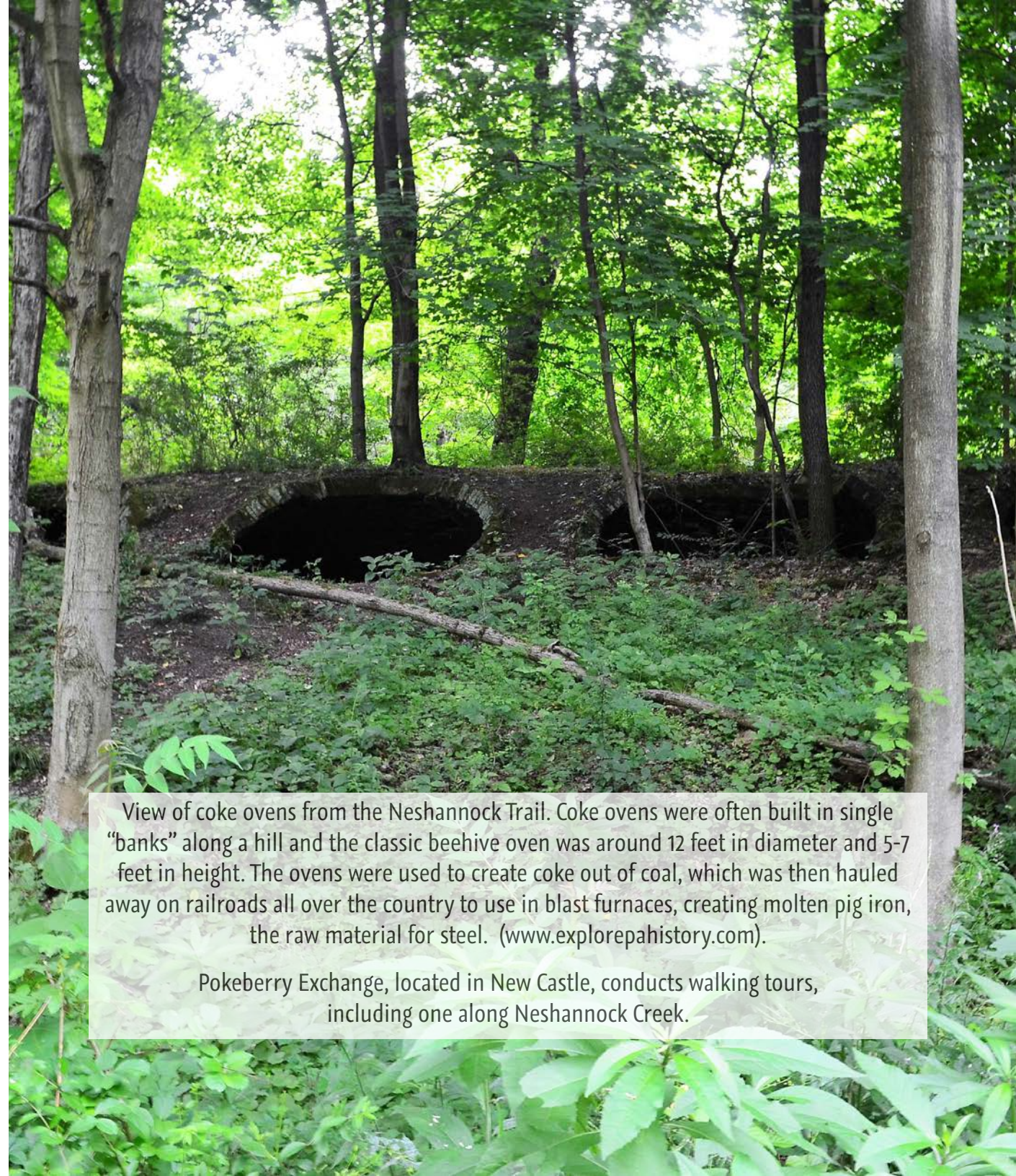
- Develop Safe Routes to Parks to encourage more walking/biking to local parks

2.2d. Partner with organizations to:

- BC3 (Learn to paddle)
- State agencies to promote land-based and water-based trails within McConnells Mill State Park and utilize for educational purposes (i.e. outdoor classrooms)
- Pennsylvania Game Commission to promote ADA-accessible trails and extend trails within their properties

2.2e. Partner with historic organizations to develop historic and interpretive sites along trails and greenways.

- Recreation is not the only reason that people use trails and greenways. Often, these sites provide access to historic, cultural, environmental and other attractions, which can be used to encourage more residents to use these trails and greenways.
- An existing opportunity exists along the Neshannock Trail, which provides a great view of abandoned coke ovens, that could be developed into an interpretive site to tell the history of the City of New Castle and its role in the industrial age.



View of coke ovens from the Neshannock Trail. Coke ovens were often built in single “banks” along a hill and the classic beehive oven was around 12 feet in diameter and 5-7 feet in height. The ovens were used to create coke out of coal, which was then hauled away on railroads all over the country to use in blast furnaces, creating molten pig iron, the raw material for steel. (www.explorepahistory.com).

Pokeberry Exchange, located in New Castle, conducts walking tours, including one along Neshannock Creek.

connecting communities ~ guiding principle #3

Improve access to greenways and outdoor recreation facilities.

When people have access to local playgrounds, pools and trails, they are more likely to choose physical activity and less likely to be obese.¹¹ While Lawrence County is home to a large number of major outdoor recreation destinations as well as local parks and recreation facilities, one of the overall goals of the plan is to increase access to these facilities.

3.1: Improve public transportation service for underserved areas in Core Communities (New Castle / Ellwood City) to major outdoor recreation areas.

The use of public transportation is one way to achieve the recommended level of daily physical activity for youth and adults.

Improving access to public transportation is likely to increase opportunities for physical activity.

The NCATA does offer bicycle racks on all of their buses, which helps to promote bicycling.

The County should partner with the NCATA to determine the feasibility of offering service to major outdoor recreation areas, such as McConnells Mills State Park, Stavich Bicycle Trail and public river access sites.

For areas that are already served, the County should promote and publicize these connections to encourage more users to access these parks and facilities.



¹¹ "Making the Case to Stakeholders: Linking Policy and Environmental Strategies to Health Outcome" YMCA. Retrieved online: <http://www.ymca.net/healthier-communities-guide/active-2.html>

3.2: Ensure that ADA-accessible facilities are well-publicized.

There are a large number of ADA-accessible recreation facilities available in Lawrence County. These facilities should be well-publicized and promoted as such. In addition, facilities should include signs that note areas that may not be ADA-accessible.


- Publicize and promote the ADA-accessible trail in the state game lands.
- Improve ADA access to / within West Park Nature Center.

3.3: Encourage schools, municipal governments and nonprofit organizations to develop joint use agreements to increase access to places for physical activity in underserved areas.

Financial concerns often limit local municipalities with providing public parks and recreation facilities to meet the growing needs of their residents. One way to meet this need without building new facilities is to open play spaces (school district fields, playgrounds, etc.) to the public after school hours.



Complete Communities

West park nature trail 

[kuh m-pleet]

adjective

Having all parts or elements; lacking nothing; whole; entire; full¹

¹ "Complete" Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary.reference.com/browse/complete).

The Comp Plan says...

“Offer “complete” urban, suburban and rural communities that provide a variety of housing choices, employment opportunities and transportation options to foster a healthy environment and lifestyle.”

A complete community is one that anticipates and efficiently accommodates the needs of all who live, work, relax or do business within its borders. Its infrastructure systems and development patterns maximize public value and support equal access to a high quality of life. Comprised of 27 municipalities, Lawrence County offers a diverse mix of urban, suburban and rural communities. The goal is for Lawrence County to be a complete community, where it offers a broad range of agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial development to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Land use regulation (or lack thereof) occurs at the local level in Pennsylvania. Municipal comprehensive plans serve to establish a community vision and identify growth

areas that support land use regulations, such as zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances. Only 14 of the County’s 27 municipalities have adopted comprehensive plans. Zoning ordinances, which regulate how land can be developed, have been enacted in all but eight municipalities. However, of the four growing rural townships, only Wayne Township has a comprehensive plan and a zoning ordinance to regulate land use. The continued consumption of rural lands begins to raise questions of sustainability.

The need to consider land use planning at a regional and County level is more important than ever. The overall goal of this County Comprehensive Plan Update is to provide broad goals and criteria for

municipalities to use in the preparation of their comprehensive plan and land use regulations.

Many issues of planning and community development transcend municipal boundaries: transportation networks, environmental resources, housing market trends and the spread of poverty, among others. Communities that view themselves as partners in promoting the prosperity of the entire region are better positioned for long-term positive outcomes than communities that compete with their neighbors for investment. Making Lawrence County a more complete community will involve collaboration that allows communities to make smarter land use choices that promote long-term sustainability.

Natural Resources

A complete understanding of the natural resources of Lawrence County is essential to developing a greenways plan. For example, sensitive riparian or steep slope habitats are candidates for conservation corridors, while rivers and lakes provide opportunities for water trail development. Unique natural features may also become important greenway destinations.

Important Bird Areas

Lawrence County's dense forests, thickets, wetlands, streams, lakes and vernal pools provide habitat for a diversity of plants and animals, including birds. Some areas provide critical habitat for certain species of birds and thus merit special recognition. The Pennsylvania Chapter of the Audubon Society (Audubon Pennsylvania) has designated three (3) Important Bird Areas (IBAs) at least partially located in Lawrence County -- the McConnells Mill State Park IBA; Pennsy, Black and Celery Swamps IBA; and the Moraine State Park and Jennings Environmental Education Center IBA. According to Audubon

Pennsylvania, "to qualify as an IBA, a site must meet at least one of four criteria, each associated with a different type of vulnerability. It must support endangered or threatened species; species that are not widely distributed; species that are restricted to a single extensive habitat or biome; or high densities of congregating species, such as waterfowl or shorebirds."

Sites that are important flyways for migrating birds in Spring and Fall may also qualify as IBAs. Over 80 IBAs have been identified by Audubon Pennsylvania. Information on each, including interactive mapping, is available at <http://pa.audubon.org/iba>.

McConnells Mill State Park IBA

The McConnells Mill State Park IBA, according to Audubon Pennsylvania's description, boasts what is perhaps the highest species diversity of breeding wood-warblers in all of Western Pennsylvania. The area is also has an "exceptional concentration of diversity of

spring and autumn migratory birds, specially vireos and warblers" and is "a critical breeding area for northern and southern interior forest landbirds." The site contains a diverse array of habitats such as deciduous and coniferous forests, mixed woodlands, shrublands, grasslands, open-water swamp, marshes, riparian forests and of course the whitewater of the Slippery Rock Creek. The steep slopes of the Slippery Rock Creek Gorge have created a moist forest habitat, including dense old-growth hemlock and mixed-forest habitats that are far removed from their natural range. Consequently, this microclimate "accounts for unusual breeding records" of bird species usually found in forests far to the north of this area. This area was approved as an IBA in 2001 by Pennsylvania's Ornithological Technical Committee.

Pennsy, Black and Celery Swamps IBA

The Pennsy, Black and Celery Swamps IBA consists of several parcels of land, including State Game Lands 284 (in Washington

Township), also known as Schollard's Run Wetlands and locally as Pennsy Swamp in Mercer County and Black Swamp in Lawrence County. The IBA also contains State Game Lands 151 (in Plain Grove Township), which include Celery Swamp. Less than one mile of land separates any two of the five parcels that constitute the IBA. High-quality emergent wetlands, including open water, spatterdock marsh and shrub swamp in this IBA help to support a high diversity of breeding and migratory bird species. Breeding birds include Piedbilled Grebe, American Coot, Common Moorhen, Virginia Rail, Sora and Marsh Wren. Nesting migratory birds such as the King Rail and Sandhill Crane have been documented at this site regularly.

Development is the biggest threat to this IBA. The Prime Outlets mall at Grove City, the fourth largest in the U.S., is less than three miles to the east of the IBA and is spurring nearby development. Residential housing, agricultural expansion, a landfill and several gravel strip mines all pose potential threats

to water quality that is vital to the Pennsy, Black and Celery Swamps.

Moraine State Park and Jennings Environmental Education Center IBA

Moraine State Park and Jennings Environmental Education Center IBA consists of the 16,000-acre Moraine State Park, whose crown jewel is the 3,225-acre Lake Arthur. Wetlands, deciduous forest and shrubland surround the lake, which is used heavily for recreation. The 300-acre Jennings Environmental Education Center borders the park to the northwest and includes riparian and deciduous forests in addition to its rare relic prairie environment. Lake Arthur has been an essential migratory stopping point for 31 recorded waterfowl species and two pairs of nesting osprey at the lake are the pride of a reintroduction effort. The park's woodlands support 19 breeding species of warblers and vireos, as well as a recent program for the reintroduction of barn owls. The largest threat to this IBA is heavy development pressure on parcels adjacent

to the park caused by expansion of the park's recreational facilities. Disturbance of nesting birds by recreational overuse and water quality problems caused by pollution of feeder streams off of the park property may result in degradation of the IBA. Only the extreme western tip of this IBA is located within Lawrence County, but this IBA's size and quality make it important to conservation efforts throughout the region.

The County's IBAs are shown on "Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources" on page 95.

Natural Areas

Another essential source of information about important habitat areas is the Lawrence County Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI), which provides maps and information on the known outstanding floral, faunal, geologic and scenic features in Lawrence County. These sites may be examples of the county's best natural communities and the locations of animal and plant species of

concern (endangered, threatened, or rare). The NHI classifies natural areas within the county as either Biodiversity Areas (BDAs), Landscape Conservation Areas (LCAs), or other Managed Lands. The definitions of these classifications, as given in the NHI, are:

- A BDA is an area containing: 1) one or more locations of plants, animals, or natural communities recognized as a state or federal species (or natural community) of concern; or 2) high quality examples of natural communities or areas supporting exceptional native diversity.
- An LCA is a large contiguous area which is important because of its size, open space, habitats and/or the inclusion of one or more BDAs. Although an LCA may include many different land uses, it typically has not been heavily disturbed and thus retains much of its natural character.
- Managed Lands are owned or leased properties with importance or potential importance to the overall maintenance and protection of ecological resources in Lawrence County. Managed Lands fall into three categories: 1) public land; 2) private land; and 3) Dedicated Areas (DAs), which

are public or private properties for which the owner's stated objective is to protect and maintain the property's ecological integrity and biodiversity, usually through a "hands-off" management approach. These lands are usually specific parcels included within BDAs or LCAs.

Natural areas, or "areas of significance" as they are deemed by the NHI, are ranked according to their significance to the protection of the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the region. Three significance ratings were given: exceptional (of highest significance), high and notable. Thirty-five (35) Areas of Significance were identified by the NHI: thirty-three (33) were BDAs and two were LCAs.

Exceptional Areas

The six (6) Areas of Significance given an "exceptional" and therefore seen as the most significant of any in the county by the NHI report, are described briefly:

- **Slippery Rock Gorge LCA** (Perry, Slippery Rock, Shenango, Scott and Wayne Townships and portions of Beaver and Butler Counties) -- A watershed containing

an amazing ten (10) different natural communities that support several plant and animal species of special concern in one relatively contiguous area of land. These natural communities include:

- » *Hemlock-red oak-mixed hardwood forest,*
- » *Skunk cabbage-gold saxifrage forest seep,*
- » *Tuliptree-beech-maple forest,*
- » *Hemlock-tuliptree-birch forest,*
- » *Sugar maple-basswood forest,*
- » *Rich hemlock-mesic hardwood forest,*
- » *Red maple-elm-willow floodplain swamp,*
- » *River birch-sycamore floodplain scrub,*
- » *Red oak mixed hardwood forest and*
- » *Red maple terrestrial forest.*

The LCA also encompasses the McConnells Mill State Park's Natural Area DA, which is managed by DCNR for its ecological attributes. Also included in the Slippery Rock Gorge LCA are four (4) BDAs: Grindstone Confluence BDA, Hell Run BDA, Muddy Creek Falls BDA and Harris Slopes BDA, as well as the managed lands at McConnells Mill State Park and State Game Lands #216.

Threats to the Slippery Rock Gorge LCA include strip-mining, timbering and agricultural activities on parcels immediately adjacent to McConnells Mill State Park. These activities minimize buffer zones and infringe into the LCA's interior, creating opportunities for invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) to spread into sensitive habitats.

- **Plain Grove Wetlands BDA** (Plain Grove and Scott Townships)-- This wetland boasts a diversity of fens, springs and seeps that are home to fourteen (14) plant species of special concern, including a globally-rare plant species. These plants are found in some of the noted different plant communities within the BDA: ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) thickets, skunkcabbage bogs, calcareous wetlands, open-sedge fens and forested wetlands. Most of these natural communities thrive due to the groundwater seepage through glacial till soil, which contains significant amounts of limestone, which increases the water's pH making it more calcareous (alkaline) and less acidic. The fen is a DA that is owned and managed by the

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy for its ecological value.

- **Fringed Gentian Fen BDA** (Shenango and Hickory Townships) -- An open-sedge fen containing eleven (11) plant species of special concern, along with one animal species of special concern in Pennsylvania. Other portions of this BDA include a shrub swamp and neighboring young woodland with a diverse shrub and herbaceous understory. The Fringed Gentian Fen BDA is an alkaline wet meadow that takes its name from the plant species fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*), which grows in abundance within this BDA's wetlands. Because the BDA is relatively isolated, surrounded by mainly pasture and fragments of forested areas, it is mainly undisturbed. Most threats to the fen's biodiversity come from invasive species and from natural forest succession, but the fen is also very sensitive to even the smallest disturbances. A portion of the fen is a DA and it is also owned and managed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

- **CS&M Mine BDA** (Wayne Township) -- The CS&M mine is home to two Pennsylvania animal species of special concern. The mine is a suitable bat hibernaculum (roosting / hibernating site) due to its cool temperatures (slightly less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit) in the winter and continued cool temperatures in the summer months. The main threats to this BDA are the lack of awareness of the presence of the aforementioned animal species and the fact that the BDA is situated on private property. Any alteration to air temperature or air flow within the mine, removal of canopy trees surrounding the mine entrance or visitation by humans may make the mine unsuitable to the animals species of concern. This site was also designated an Important Mammal Area (IMA) as part of the Important Mammal Areas Project created by the Mammal Technical Committee of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey. Only 45 sites in the state have received the IMA designation.

- **Grange Hall Fen BDA** (Plain Grove Township) -- This site contains a population of the Pennsylvania endangered plant American Globeflower (*Trollius laxus*) and a plant community of concern, the open sedge fen, which is dominated by three species of sedge (*Carex* species). This BDA is situated in the floodplain of Taylor Run and threats to the fen include changes in local hydrology, on which the condition of the fen depends. A permit to mine the fen was denied in the 1980s by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) after an evaluation of the fen and surrounding area indicated the presence of the aforementioned species of concern.
- **Hell Run BDA** (Slippery Rock Township) -- The Hell Run BDA contains two natural communities of state concern, the Rich hemlock-mesic hardwood forest, along with the aquatic habitat found in the waters of Hell Run, the only stream in the county to receive an “exceptional-value” PA DEP Chapter 93 water quality classification. The rich hemlock-mesic hardwood forests within the Hell Run

gorge are dominated by mature hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), basswood (*Tilia americana*) and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*). The stands of this and the other forest communities found near Hell Run are the most mature in the entire Slippery Rock Gorge area and may be virgin / old-growth timber. Most of this BDA is protected from development because it is within McConnells Mill State Park. However, the upper reaches of its watershed are threatened by abandoned mine drainage (AMD), aging septic systems, deer browsing, an invasion by exotic plant species.

The NHI recommends that these sites be given top priority and are proposed for “quick, strong and complete protection” in any conservation planning effort, as they contain high-quality natural habitats and may be more vulnerable to disturbances than most other natural areas in Lawrence County.

This Greenways Plan will also focus on the sites receiving a “high” significance rank, which the NHI suggests should receive “strong protection” in the future. These

sites are too numerous to list in detail in this report, but both exceptional- and high-significance natural areas are depicted on “Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources” on page 95.

Forests and Woodlands

Agriculture, Logging and urban or suburban development have resulted in the clearing of much of the forests in Lawrence County, but large tracts of intact forest still remain. Some are located along stream corridors, while others are sandwiched between areas of urban or suburban development and still others are surrounded by open crop fields or pastures. These forests vary from dry, upland forest communities dominated by oak trees (*Quercus* species); to palustrine (forested) wetlands containing pin oak, red maple and a variety of shrubs; to an array of lower-lying forests associated with riparian corridors containing sugar maple, black beech, birch, slippery elm, white ash, basswood, cucumber tree, hemlock, yellow birch, tuliptree and rosebay. The conservation of some of these areas is recommended in the Lawrence County NHI, as well as in

the County's Comprehensive Plan, which promote protection of forested areas through sound land use policies and smart planning for development. Some municipal comprehensive plans also address the protection of forested and other natural areas and express the desire to guide development to avoid these areas. Forested areas within the county are depicted in "Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources" on page 95.

Soils and Geologic Features

Key soil types for the purposes of greenways planning include hydric (wetland indicator) soils. Hydric soils are depicted on Map 1: Outstanding Environmental Features.

The Lawrence County Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI), which focuses mainly on ecological resources, does not address significant geological features other than acknowledging them as natural history references. According to the NHI, one of the most outstanding geological features in the county is Harlansburg Cave, near the village of Harlansburg in Scott Township. This feature

is noteworthy because it is the longest mapped cave in Pennsylvania. Additional outstanding geologic features were identified during the greenways inventory process: Muddy Creek Falls in Scott Township just north of small community of Rose Point and the Slippery Rock Creek Gorge.

The NHI does discuss general geology of the county, which it divides into four categories:

- **Pocono Group:** hard gray sandstone and conglomerate rock;
- **Pottsville Group:** sandstone and conglomerate interbedded with thin strata of shale;
- **Allegheny Group:** layers of sandstone, siltstone, shale, limestone and coal;
- **Conemaugh Formation:** red and gray shale, siltstone with strata of limestone and coal.

These geologic groups constitute the entire county, but do not significantly differ from each other in terms related to greenway planning. Therefore, these groups

are acknowledged but are not depicted on inventory mapping for this project. Outstanding geologic features such as Harlansburg Cave are shown on "Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources" on page 95.

Public and Other Protected Open Space

The 2,546-acre McConnells Mill State Park is the only State Park that is located within the boundaries of Lawrence County. The park contains the scenic Slippery Rock Creek Gorge, a historic 19th-century grist mill and wooden covered bridge (tours offered) and offers park amenities such as picnic areas, hiking trails and guided nature walks. In addition, outdoor recreation opportunities such as climbing / rappelling from the Gorge's cliffs, fishing, hunting during regular seasons, wildlife observation and whitewater rafting or kayaking are possible although programming is not provided.

The only county-owned Park is West Park, located in Union Township. This mostly-wooded, 108-acre park contains a newly

developed walking / hiking trail, a small parking area, a human-built wetland for environmental study and natural areas for wildlife observation. Due to increased park visitation, hunting is prohibited on park property.

Rock Point is an 87-acre forested area, formerly an amusement park, located in Wayne Township at the confluence of the Connoquenessing Creek and the Beaver River. Wild Waterways Conservancy (WWC) purchased the property in 2007 with funding from a Growing Greener 2 grant, Lawrence County and the Heinz Endowment. It is home to one of the most biologically diverse areas in the County's NHI; miles of permanently protected riparian corridors; habitat for the Indiana Bat (an endangered species); scenic steep sandstone cliffs along the Connoquenessing Creek; white water rapids; and spring wildflowers (specifically large White Trillium).

In addition to the aforementioned parks, over 4,100 acres in Lawrence County are protected as State Game Lands (SGL). These lands are managed by the State Game Commission for

wildlife conservation, hunting and trapping. These activities remain tantamount to any other proposed activities on these lands. Proposals for other uses are reviewed by the Game Commission to determine if they are compatible with primary uses. The six SGL that are located at least partially in Lawrence County are SGL #148, 150, 151, 178, 216 and 284. Public Lands are shown on "Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources" on page 95.

Steep Slopes

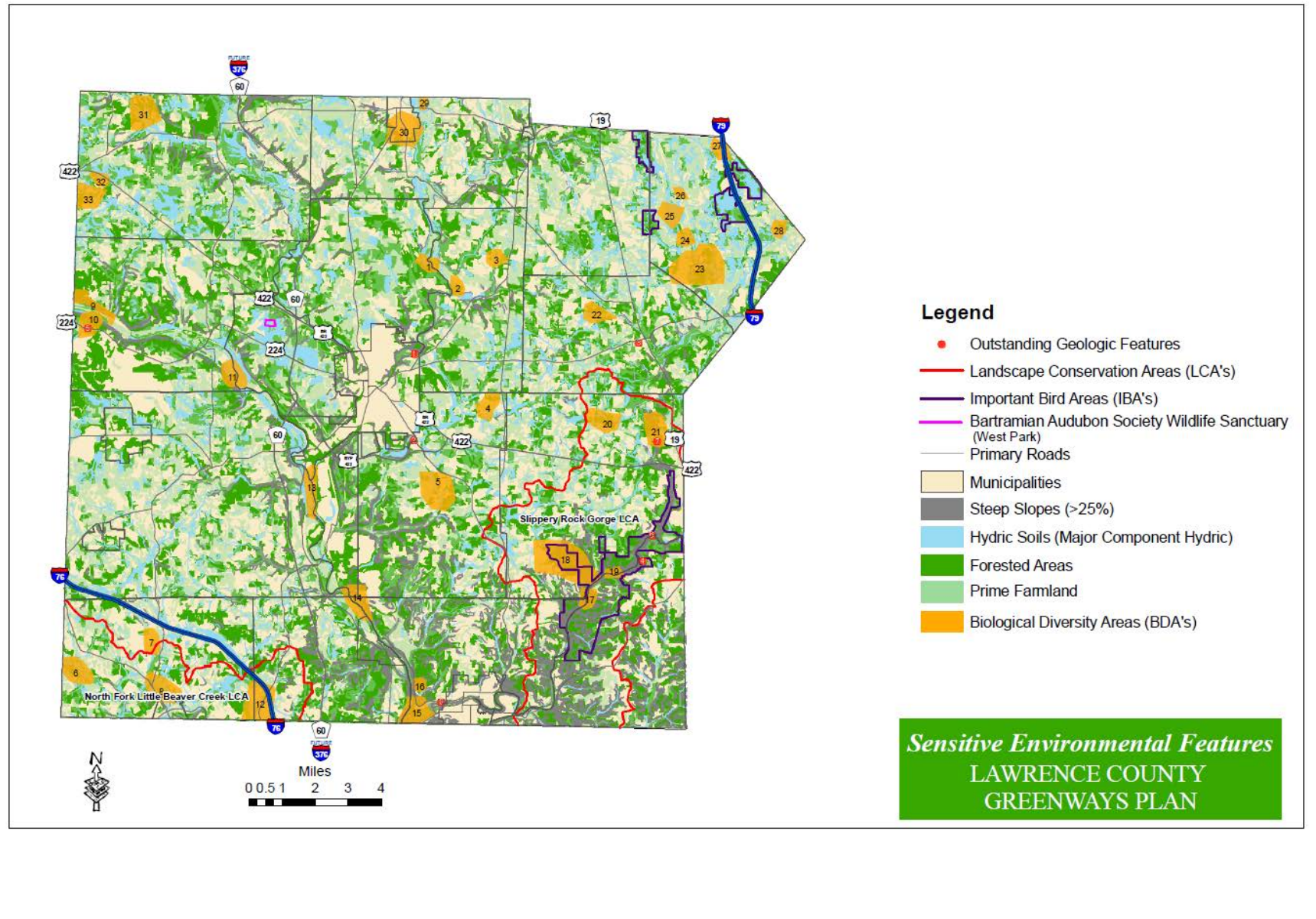
Land with slopes exceeding 25% is generally considered environmentally sensitive and in need of protection. In Lawrence County, most steeply sloped land is also forested, providing significant wildlife habitat. Conservation of steep slopes is also important for purposes of erosion control. Most of the county's steep slopes can be found along the Mahoning River, the Beaver River, Connoquenessing Creek and Slippery Rock Creek and as part of the Allegheny Plateau physiological province (noted in Lawrence County NHI), Lawrence County is characterized by many relatively small rolling hills that may contain

other isolated steeply sloping areas. In addition, steep slopes may exist due to past mining, road construction, or other human development involving earthmoving activities. They are shown in "Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources" on page 95. The Beaver River Conservation and Management Plan recommend steep slope ordinances be adopted by the municipalities to limit land disturbance.

Scenic Areas / Viewsheds

Due to the county's rolling topography, only a handful of long, uninterrupted views of the surrounding urban areas or countryside are possible. These few opportunities for such views merit attention and preservation. Scenic viewsheds in Lawrence County may allow one to enjoy a panoramic view over a quaint farm valley or gaze into the Slippery Rock Gorge and ponder the power and constancy of the natural forces that created it. Although there is no known source of mapping for such places, they were made part of the inventory for this plan through accounts of direct observation offered by Study Committee members.

Figure 11: Sensitive Environmental Resources



Water Resources

Lawrence County has a variety of water resources. Primary among these are its main streams: the Shenango, Mahoning and Beaver Rivers; the Neshannock, Slippery Rock and Connoquenessing Creeks; and their associated floodplains and wetlands. The entire county lies within the Ohio River watershed, which drains southwestward and forms the state border between West Virginia and Ohio.

One Lawrence County stream basin, Hell Run, has been given an exceptional-value classification by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and also supports a naturally reproducing brown trout population. This stream has also been classified as a Wilderness Trout Stream by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). Designed to protect native trout fisheries, this designation is, according to the PFBC, “based upon the provision of a wild trout fishing experience in a remote, natural and unspoiled environment where man’s disruptive activities are minimized.”

In addition, 11 other streams in the county are listed on the PFBC’s 2006 Trout Stocking List, having been proven to support stocked trout populations. This not only shows that the stream waters are of good quality for fish habitat, but makes them an important recreation asset as well.

Although the Slippery Rock Creek Gorge was designated a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service (part of the U.S. Department of the Interior) in 1974 and other rivers in the county are home to very scenic areas, none of Lawrence County’s rivers are federally- or state-designated Wild & Scenic Rivers.

The North Fork Little Beaver Creek watershed merits attention in greenways planning as well. It has been designated a high-quality cold water fishery by DEP and is listed in DEP’s Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report. This report describes a tributary to the North Fork Little Beaver

Creek as “impaired” from urban runoff/storm sewers. Listed pollutants include nutrients and siltation. The North Fork Little Beaver Creek in Ohio (upstream) is designated as a Wild & Scenic River by Ohio’s Environmental Protection Agency. The watershed is threatened by both urban and agricultural runoff and drainage from nearby strip mines.

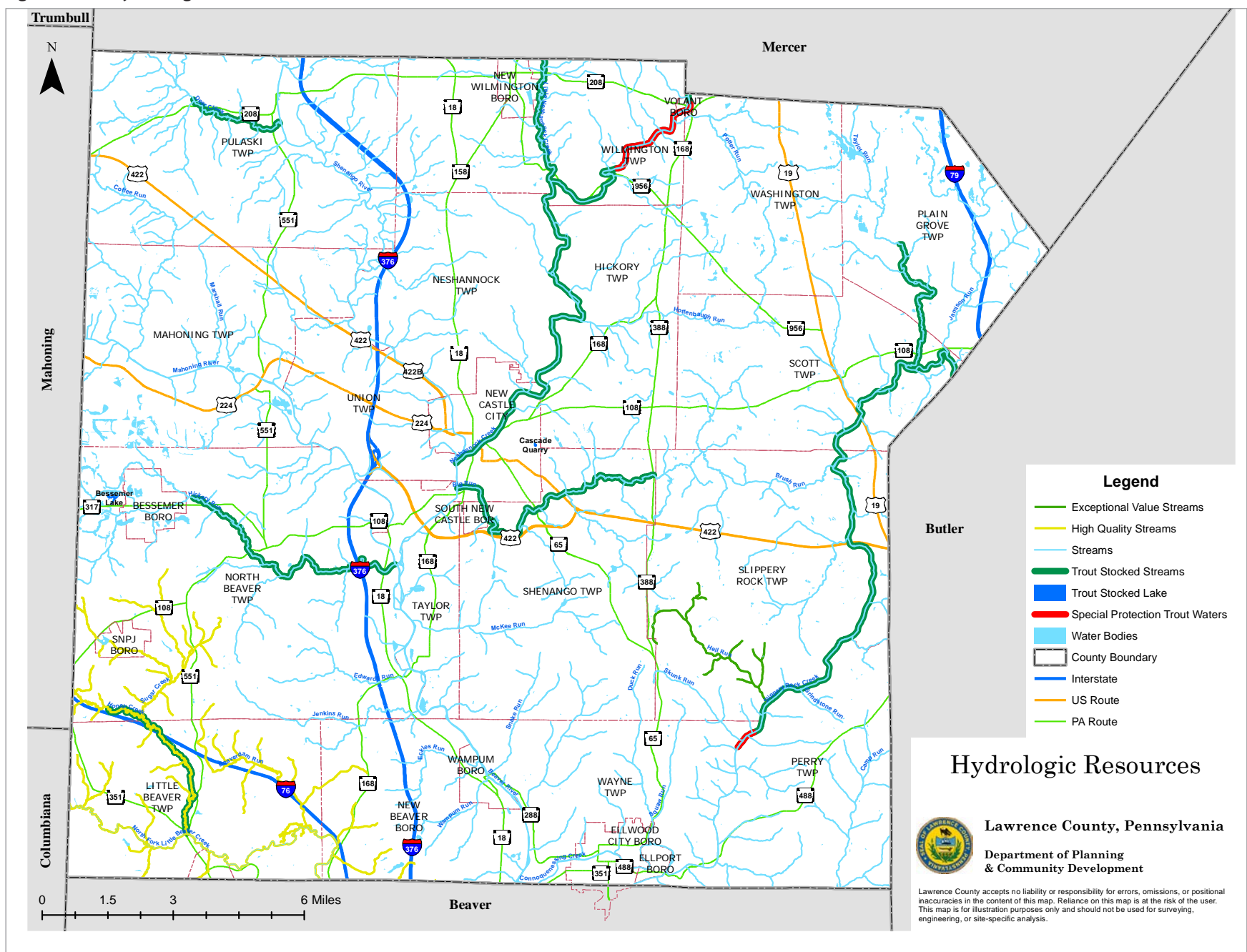
Fishing

Fishing is another popular outdoor recreational activity among county residents. Waterways in Lawrence County offer many opportunities for the pursuit of trout, as well as several warmwater game fish species like large- and small-mouth bass, catfish, northern pike and panfish. In 2006, nine of Lawrence County’s streams, in addition to Bessemer Lake and Cascade Quarry were on the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission’s (PFBC’s) list of trout-stocked waterways.



Photo credit: Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency

Figure 12: Hydrologic Resources



Trout-stocked streams within Lawrence County included:

- » *North Fork of Little Beaver Creek*
- » *Big Run*
- » *Deer Creek*
- » *Hickory Run*
- » *Honey Creek*
- » *Neshannock Creek*
- » *West Branch of Little Neshannock Creek*
- » *Slippery Rock Creek*
- » *Taylor Run*

There are two special-protection trout waters or “special regulation” areas, as designated by the PFBC, in Lawrence County. A 2.7-mile portion of the Neshannock Creek, from the Borough of Volant downstream to the Covered Bridge on T-476 (Covered Bridge Road) is a delayed harvest area, in which anglers may only remove fish from the stream between July and December (traditional trout season opens in April each year). This stretch of stream is open year-round for catch-and-release trout fishing with artificial lures only.

The second special-protection trout fishing area is a part of the Slippery Rock Creek, from the southern property line of Heinz Camp downstream to the State Route 2022 (Armstrong Road) Bridge in the extreme southern portion of the county. This half-mile stretch of stream is open only to fly fisherman and only for catch-and-release fishing, but is open year-round.

One of the most important fishing resources in Lawrence County is Hell Run, which is the county’s only stream supporting a wild trout population - in this case, wild brown trout. Hell Run is located in the western reaches of McConnell’s Mill State Park. The gorge containing Slippery Rock Creek Gorge. The stream is the County’s only stream that received an exceptional value water-quality classification (highest possible rating) from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Hell Run is also classified as a Wilderness Trout Stream by the PFBC. Designed to protect native trout fisheries, this designation is, according to the PFBC, “based upon the provision of a wild trout

fishing experience in a remote, natural and unspoiled environment where man’s disruptive activities are minimized.”

Floodplains and wetlands correlate directly with the intricate stream system that covers Lawrence County, draining southward toward the Ohio River valley. The soft limestone and other bedrock types found throughout the County are also important as they allow recharge of the underlying aquifers, which in some cases are used for drinking water.

The County also boasts several small lakes, such as Bessemer Lake, which is a former limestone quarry that is now a trout-stocked recreational fishery. This lake, along with the County’s various other surface water resources and underground aquifers, are depicted on “Figure 12: Hydrologic Resources” on page 98.



complete
communities

greenways vision

“

Offer “complete” communities that incorporate greenways and connections into sustainable land use practices to foster a healthy environment.

”

complete communities ~ guiding principle #1

Protect natural features and environmentally sensitive areas of countywide significance.

Conservation Greenways were established using a system of weighted values given to natural resources. Each type of natural resource was then mapped individually and all natural resources were overlaid onto each other and depicted on the Conservation Corridors Criteria map. When more than one natural resource overlapped, their respective values were added. Areas with the highest total values included the most natural resources and thus merited inclusion in the conservation greenways network.

Weighted values given to the county's various natural resources in order to prioritize locations within the County for conservation and preservation efforts.

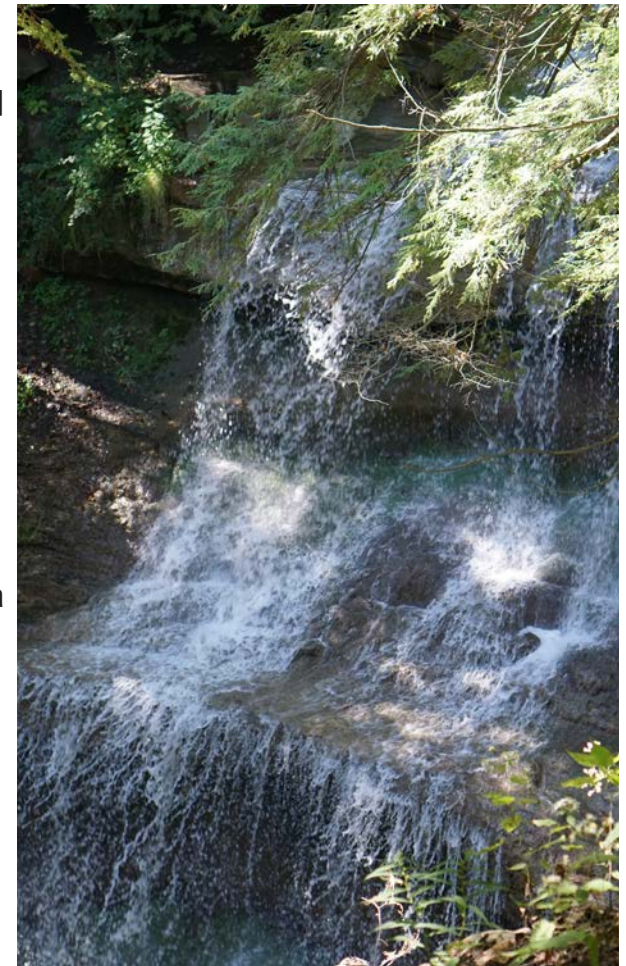
This process was completed first as part of the 2008 Plan and then updated as part of this Plan, based on changing philosophies and priorities for the County moving forward.

Table 1 depicts the weighted values for both plans (see page 100) and an updated conservation corridor criteria map is depicted in "Figure 13: Updated Conservation Corridor Criteria Map" on page 103.

1.1. Identify priority areas for conservation and preservation for areas of significant value as shown on the conservation greenways corridor map.

The basis for some of the changes was to help the County really target conservation and preservation efforts. The conservation criteria corridor map can be used as follows:

- Priority conservation areas should be considered for acquisition or permanent conservation measures (county, municipality, private organization).
- Best management practices and low-impact development options should be



pursued when any of these areas are potentially impacted.

- Municipalities should incorporate these areas into zoning ordinances for development restrictions, conservation subdivision policies, etc.

1.2. Prepare and adopt an Official Map of priority areas for greenway connections.

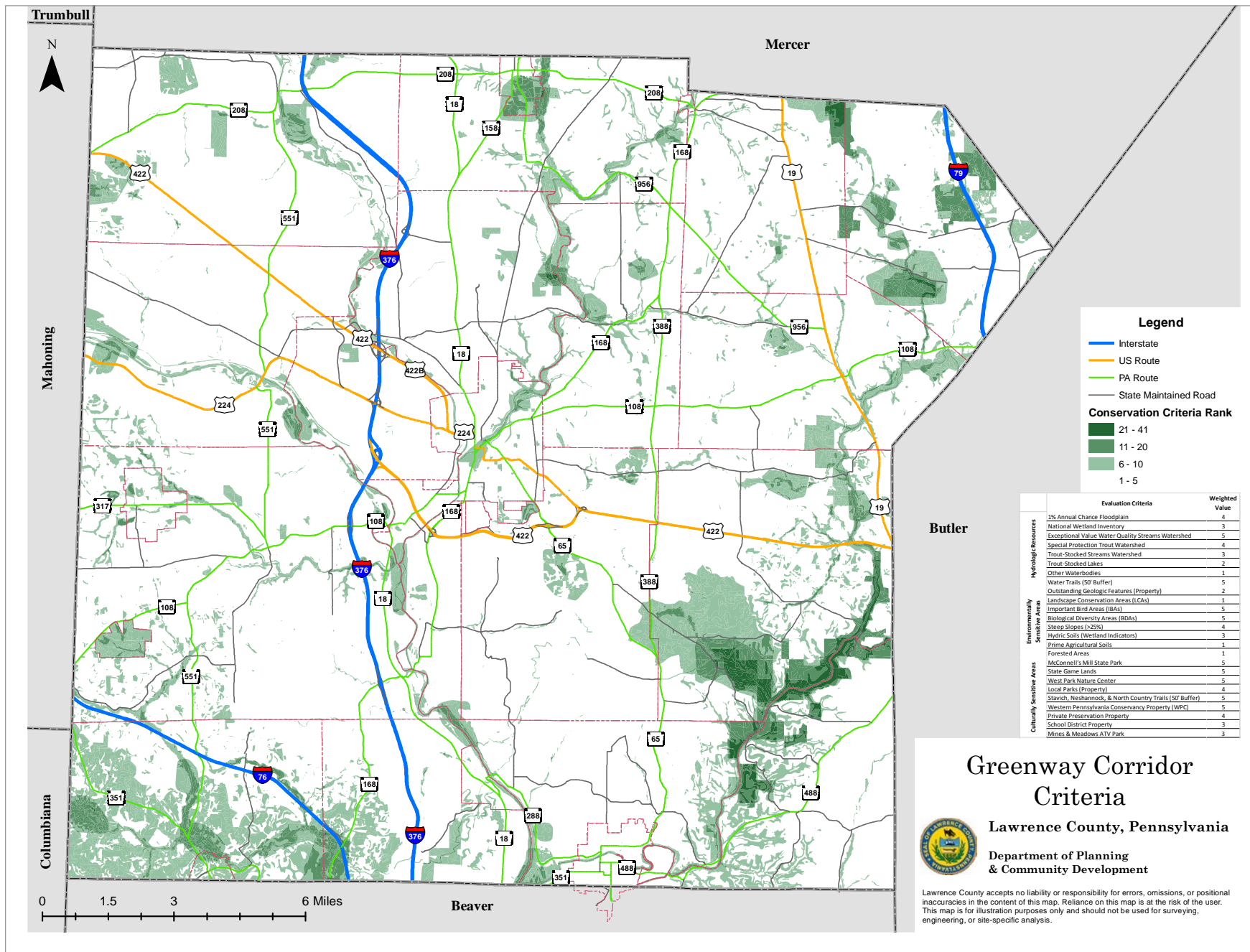
A municipality can adopt an “official map” that designates public or private land as a current or future public need. This can be land for roads or other infrastructure, as well as open space for conservation or recreation. Making this map available to the public notifies landowners and developers about land that the municipality is planning to use for public purposes.

The Official Map is a very powerful tool for municipalities planning for conservation and recreation. It gives municipalities time to assemble funds to purchase identified lands through First Right of Refusal. Of importance in Lawrence County is the fact that a municipality is not required to enact ordinances to create and adopt an Official Map.

Table 1. Conservation Corridors Criteria Ranking

	<i>Resource Type</i>	<i>2008 Value</i>	<i>2016 Value</i>
Hydrologic Resources:	Exceptional Value Water Quality Streams Watershed	5	5
	Special Protection Trout Watershed	3	3
	Trout-Stocked Streams Watershed	3	4
	Trout-Stocked Lakes	2	2
	Water Trails	N/A	5
	Other Waterbodies	1	1
	National Wetland Inventory	2	3
	1% Annual Chance Floodplains	2	4
Sensitive Environmental Features	Important Bird Areas (IBA's)	5	5
	Biological Diversity Areas (BDA's)	5	5
	Landscape Conservation Areas (LCA's)	1	1
	Steep Slopes (>25%)	3	4
	Hydric Soils (wetland indicators)	1	3
	Prime Agricultural Soils	1	1
	Forested Areas	2	1
	Outstanding Geologic Features (property)	2	2
Culturally Sensitive Areas	McConnells Mill State Park	N/A	5
	State Game Lands	N/A	5
	West Park Nature Center (County-owned)	N/A	5
	Local Parks	N/A	4
	Existing Trails (50' buffer)	N/A	5
	Property owned by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy	N/A	5
	Private Property under Preservation	N/A	4
	School District Property	N/A	3
	Mines & Meadows ATV Park	N/A	3

Figure 13: Updated Conservation Corridor Criteria Map



The Official Map does NOT result in taking of land, but simply gives the municipality right of first refusal to purchase the land or obtain an easement. The municipality has one year to make an offer to the landowner should the property be made available for sale. After one year, the landowner can sell the property to any other interested buyer.

Municipalities wanting to establish an Official Map should only do so after they have identified lands needed for conservation or recreation through a comprehensive planning process. Such lands must be identified on a parcel-by-parcel basis, with greater detail than is given in this greenways plan. If lands are to be reserved in an official map, the municipality should have a reasonable prospect of obtaining the funds necessary to purchase the property of interest.

The Official Map is a tool of great importance in Lawrence County because a municipality can implement an official map with or without a zoning ordinance. Nearly half of the county's municipalities lack local zoning. If established in the near future, the official map will allow municipalities within the county to plan ways to meet recreation

needs and protect natural resources while development pressures are low. Then, if development pressures increase in the future, municipalities can take immediate action to acquire identified lands for public use.

1.3. Acquire Quaker Falls and develop as a County Park.

Quakertown Falls is a fifty-foot waterfall on Falling Spring Creek located just west/northwest of the town of Hillsville in Mahoning Township and is located in a high priority conservation area (see "Figure 13: Updated Conservation Corridor Criteria Map" on page 103).

The following description of Quaker Falls is from the Lawrence County Memoirs (<http://www.lawrencecountymemoirs.com/lcmpages/481/quakertown-falls-hillsville-pa>):

"The waterfall, also known as Quaker Falls or Poland Falls, is located in a deep gorge just north of Route 224 and about a half mile east of the Ohio border. Falling Spring Creek is supplied by runoff from the various mining operations around Hillsville and flows northward into the Mahoning River.

The falls got its name from a small group of Quakers, members of the religious order known more formally as the Society of Friends, who settled the area in about 1800. The Quakers initially set up mills along the Mahoning River, but soon relocated just south to the area around the falls. At this location they set up mills and other businesses along the creek and established Quakertown, which later became a thriving little village of 200 people. The settlement slowly transformed into a farming community and by the early 1900's, as its residents migrated to find work in the coal and steel industries, all traces of its existence were but a memory.

Spanning the creek just above Quakertown Falls is an old railroad bridge. That small bridge, originally built in 1894 and reworked over the years, was utilized by the Pennsylvania & Lake Erie Railroad (P&LE) for many years until abandoned in the late 1970's. It was part of a branch road off the P&LE mainline, starting near Lowellville, Ohio and reaching down into Hillsville and Bessemer.

The area overlooking the falls is accessible via a dirt road turnoff from Route 224, but is not necessarily easy to find. The turnoff and the falls are not designated or distinguished by any sign or marker. The falls itself, which can be reached by a steep trail, is unfortunately not part of any park or nature area and has probably never been seen by the vast majority of the motorists who pass by on the highway above.”

A newspaper article from the Pittsburgh Press on June 5, 1983 provides the following information (source: goo.gl/rOSoga):

In addition to the Falls, the site includes an old settlement called Quakertown. Quakertown was settled in 1799-80 by Septimus Cadwallader, a Quaker from Brownsville, Fayette County and later by Quakers Benjamin Sharpless and Talbat Townsend. It is believed to be the first Quakers to settle west of the Alleghenies. They settled at Quaker Falls due to the steady flow of natural energy; built linseed mills, sawmills, comb factory and other modest industries. It reached a population of 200 (originally 24 – 3 families), had a schoolhouse but traveled to Columbiana Ohio for Sunday prayer service.

The Welsh and other Europeans arrived at Quakertown in the mid-1800’s and turned the land into a farm community. After 1900, the iron and steel industries lured away the inhabitants and it became a ghost town.

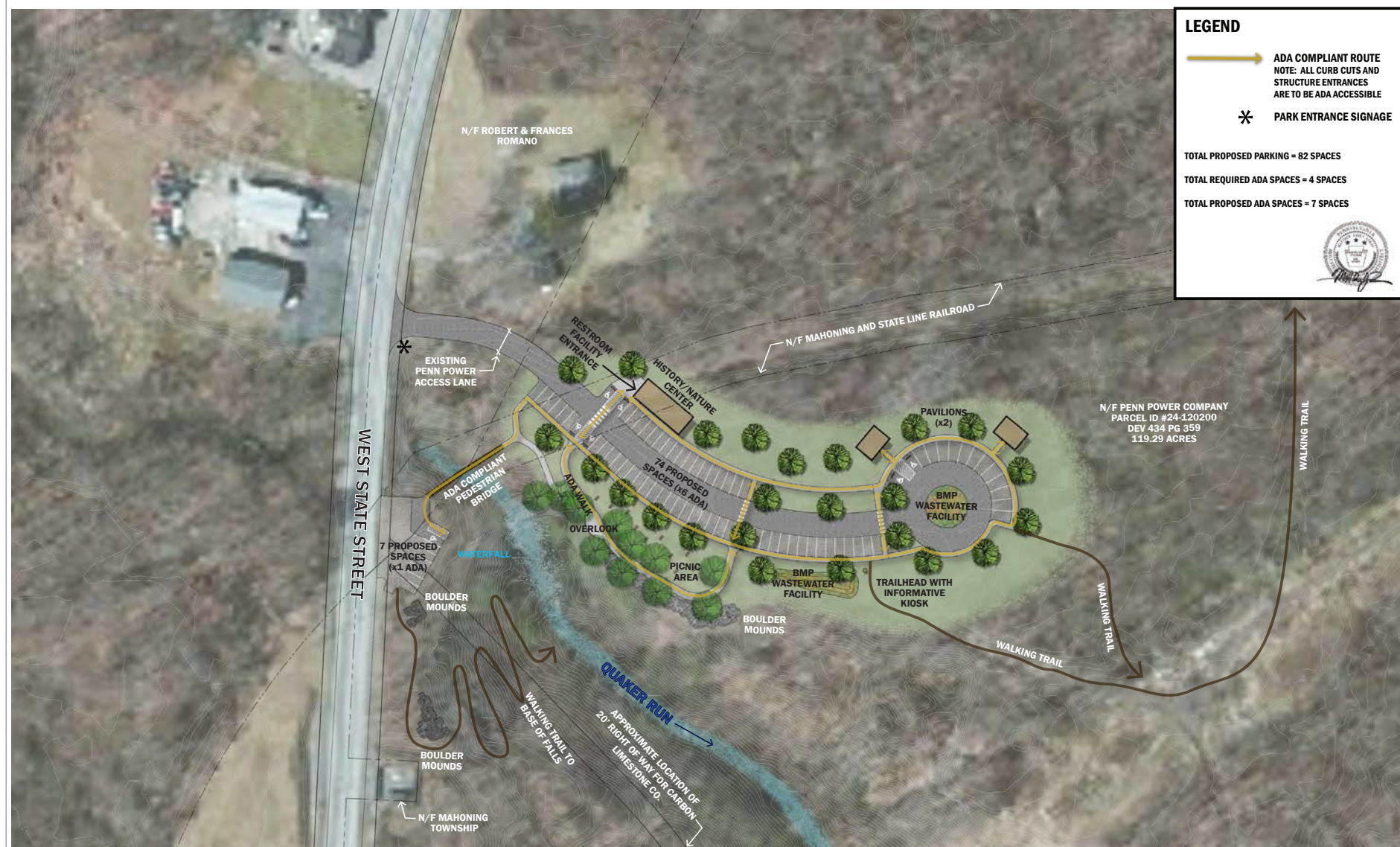
Pennsylvania Power Company (Penn Power) gave permission to Dr. John White, Anthropologist at Youngstown State University, to excavate on its 214 acres in 1979. Quakertown proper covered about 128 of the 214 acres; the rest was farmland. His findings unearthed homes, mills, barns, schools, carriage houses, a store, powder manufacturing facilities and a railroad. He noted that there is an opportunity to protect the historic integrity of the site and recommended interpretive signing (general store foundation) and an educational resource (laboratories on site to study objects).

In late 2016, Penn Power approached Lawrence County to see if they would be interested in accepting 119 acres of property, which contains Quaker Falls. After viewing the property, the County Commissioners determined that this site presented an exciting opportunity to develop a County Park.

As part of the Greenways Plan, a conceptual rendering of proposed improvements to the site was prepared and is included on “Figure 14: Quaker Falls Master Plan” on page 106. As shown, proposed improvements include:

- Main parking area (74 spaces) with shade trees and rain garden plantings
- Waterfall overlook with picnic tables, railings, boulders, shade trees and signage
- Pavilion area with two pavilions and pedestrian pathways
- History / Nature Center with restrooms
- West State Street parking area (7 spaces) with shade trees and an ADA-accessible bridge and path to the main area
- Trail network of three-foot (3’) hiking trails throughout the site, connecting to the former Quaker Settlement site

Figure 14: Quaker Falls Master Plan



complete communities ~ guiding principle #2

Ensure that comprehensive plans and ordinances implement the Countywide Greenway Plan.

Implementation of many concepts related to greenways will need to be implemented at the municipal level, since the local municipalities have the power to develop their own comprehensive plans and regulate land use through zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances. That said, it is up to the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development (LCDPCD) to provide the municipalities with the leadership and technical assistance to implement their overall greenways vision and ensure that the municipal plans and ordinances are consistent with that vision.

2.1. Update the County's subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) and encourage municipalities to include provisions for pedestrian and bicycle networks where appropriate.

The Lawrence County subdivision and land development regulates subdivision and land development procedures for nine (9) of their 27 municipalities, while the remainder regulate it at the local level. The County should update its SALDO and encourage its municipalities to update theirs, to incorporate the following regulations:

- Require sidewalks in major land developments / subdivisions or if connect to adjacent properties / network.
- Allow alternative pedestrian / bicycle pathways to sidewalks.
- Require easements for future connections to adjacent properties if no connections currently exist.



2.2. Create a plan review checklist to ensure consistency with the County's Greenways Plan Guiding Principles.

While the County does not have the authority to regulate development for most of the municipalities within the County, it does have the responsibility to review all subdivision and land development applications for all of their municipalities and the ability to provide recommendations. The County should develop a plan review checklist that outlines the guiding principles and measures for consistency between the plans and the County Greenway Plan. The checklist may include the following measures:

- Require applicants to demonstrate how subdivision/land development plan is incorporating and implementing each of the vision areas of the Greenways Plan.
- Provide recommendations on ways to improve circulation and/or multimodal connections.
- Requires municipalities to incorporate into comprehensive plans, etc.

- Provide recommendations on ways to include best management practices and green design.

2.3. Encourage municipalities to update their zoning ordinances to encourage trail-related amenities.

As discussed under the Core Communities section of this Plan, trails and greenways can have a positive economic benefit on their local communities, particularly those with trailheads and/or access to these facilities. The County should work with their municipalities to ensure that their zoning ordinances (for communities that have enacted ordinances) are capitalizing on these opportunities. Possible updates should address:

- Riverfront areas should allow and encourage outdoor cafes and public spaces, riverfront trails, public river access areas. Site design should be encouraged to orient buildings towards the river.

- Areas surrounding trailheads and public access areas (river and trails) should permit low-intensity commercial development to support trail-related activities.

2.4. Encourage municipalities (particularly those with development occurring) to include a mandatory dedication and fee-in-lieu of provision in their subdivision and land development ordinances.

Municipal officials can require developers to dedicate a portion of the undeveloped land on a development parcel for open space preservation purposes. The amount of open space dedication is often reflective of the type, amount and intensity of development to occur on the site.

Fees in-lieu-of dedication are required of the owner or developer as a substitute for dedication of land. Fees are usually calculated in dollars per lot and referred to as “in-lieu fees.” The municipality then uses these funds to purchase new park or conservation land.

Public dedication ensures that open space will be preserved as a municipality develops. With careful planning by municipal officials, these areas of open space can be aligned to create greenway corridors. However, many municipalities prefer payment of in-lieu fees because they allow the municipality to combine funds from several developments and purchase large tracts of recreation or conservation land. It is important to note that public dedication ordinances can include specific clauses requiring the dedication of land that includes environmentally-sensitive features such as wetlands, floodplains, etc. Ordinances can also require negotiation with municipal officials so that other lands desired by the municipality can be identified for dedication.

Provisions requiring public dedication or in-lieu fees can be added to municipal zoning ordinances by amendment. The Municipal Planning Code requires that “the land to be dedicated or the fees to be paid shall bear a reasonable relationship to the use of the park or recreational facilities [developed

on that land] by future inhabitants of the development....”. The municipality is also required to expend any fees collected within three years of payment by the owner / developer.

Priority municipalities to consider adopting such a provision, due to development opportunities available, include (but are not limited to) Mahoning Township, North Beaver Borough, Neshannock Township, Shenango Township and Union Township.

Note: municipalities must have an adopted parks and recreation plan (or could be a component of an adopted comprehensive plan).

complete communities ~ guiding principle #3

Incorporate and encourage best management practices and green design.

Best management practices (BMPs) describe ways to manage land or activities to reduce or prevent pollution of surface and groundwater. These practices protect overall health, but also help protect the other uses of our water such as recreation, animal habitat, fisheries and agricultural uses such as irrigation or stock watering. Best management practices are usually simple and low tech and benefit everybody.¹

3.1. Encourage municipalities to include conservation best management practices in conservation greenways.

The County's Comprehensive Plan Implementation Toolbox provides both best management practices resources as well as model ordinances (available on the County's website).

1.2a. Educate municipalities on the benefits of encouraging best management practices.

→ The toolbox includes information on these practices and ordinances; however, the County will need to work with their municipalities to educate them on the benefits and value of incorporating these practices into their local land use ordinances and regulations. Sample workshops could address topics including:

- › Conservation by design subdivisions
- › Steep slope ordinances
- › Source water protection buffers
- › Riparian buffers

1.2a. Partner with municipalities and organizations to promote existing and encourage new projects that implement best management practices.

→ There are numerous examples of projects that have been completed within Lawrence County that have improved community health. Engaging the public to publicize and promote these projects will not only



¹ <http://extension.usu.edu/waterquality/bmps/>

Demonstration Projects of BMPs...



West Park Nature Center - Rain Garden



Neshannock Creek Trail - Stormwater Runoff & Littering



Westminster College Pervious Pavers



McClure Run Restoration (Westminster College)

increase the benefits of these activities but also the overall awareness of the importance of these practices.

- Projects include Hickory Run and Deer Creek Streambank Restoration; Enon Valley (North Fork Little Beaver) vegetated buffer along streambank in park; Slippery Rock Creek & Hell Run reforestation of steep slopes in McConnells Mill ; Westminster College - restoration of McClure Run and the installation of pervious pavers.

1.2b: Utilize County-owned property to educate and encourage environmental stewardship.

- County-owned property presents a unique opportunity to utilize for educational purposes to demonstrate the real-life consequences of issues (such as stormwater management, littering, illegal dumping, etc.) and the benefits to addressing these through the use of best management practices (rain gardens, native plantings, etc.). The County has already implemented some projects at West Park Nature Center, but there is an opportunity to expand these efforts to offer educational programs. In addition, the Neshannock Creek Trail offers an opportunity to utilize as a demonstration project to show the effects of stormwater runoff and littering/dumping.

3.2. Assist municipalities with incorporating green design into public projects.

The County provides technical assistance to their municipalities now in relation to grant writing, planning efforts and implementation projects. There is an opportunity to increase this partnership to encourage municipalities to incorporate green design into their public improvement projects, such as:

- Pervious pavers for parking lots
- Rain gardens and bioswales in public spaces

complete communities ~ guiding principle #4

Increase the County's capacity to implement the greenways plan.

Capacity is one of the key factors in measuring a plan's success. As the 2008 Plan states, "Making this Greenway Plan a reality will require leadership at the county level and formation of strong partnerships with local municipalities and key organizations, both public and private. Another essential is a strong commitment by the county and its municipalities to carry out the plan." The Lawrence County Board of Commissioners has demonstrated over the years a very strong commitment to developing and implementing plans.

4.1. Hire an additional staff person within the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development.

The 2008 Plan recommended that the County hire a greenways coordinator, which they implemented as a shared position with Beaver County from 2008 through 2016.

That staff position allowed Lawrence County to implement their greenways plan, ultimately leading to a need to update the plan.

At this time, it is recommended that the County consider hiring a new staff person with a background in parks and recreation that can take on the following responsibilities:

- Management of water trails
- Management of County parks, trails and other recreation facilities
- Develop partnerships with outside organizations to develop and offer programs at County facilities
- Implementation of Greenways Plan

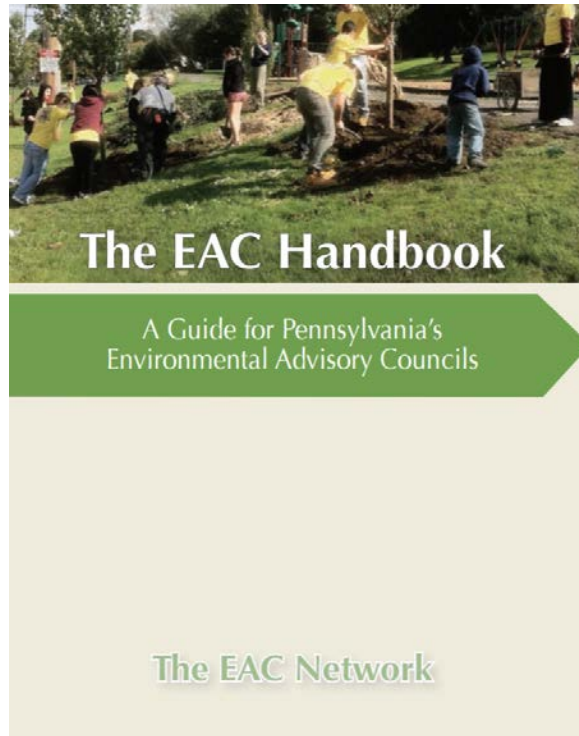


4.2. Form a countywide Environmental Advisory Council.

An Environmental Advocacy Council (EAC) can provide independent advice and counsel to the LCDPCD on environmental issues such as:

- Identifying environmental issues and recommending plans to appropriate agencies for promotion and conservation of natural resources.
- Protecting and improving the quality of the environment within the County.
- Making recommendations as to the possible use of open land areas.
- Promoting a community environmental program.
- Advising the appropriate County and municipal agencies, including but not limited to, the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners.
- Assists the County with providing opportunities of education and outreach to residents.

Act 148 gives municipalities the authority to establish EACs by ordinance. These ordinances must be consistent with Act 148 and should include details on subjects such as officers, budget and duties. More information on EACs can be found online at: <http://eacnetwork.org>.



4.3. Develop a maintenance plan (short-term and long-term activities) for all county-owned facilities.

The 2008 Plan recommended rehabilitation of the Stavich Bicycle Trail to address surfacing and drainage concerns. As a result, the County resurfaced the entire trail and completed drainage improvements in 2009. However, the trail continues to experience overall maintenance and drainage issues.

It is recommended that the County prepare both short-term and long-term maintenance plans to address these concerns for not only the Stavich Bicycle Trail, but also for all county-owned parks and recreation facilities (trails, trailheads, river access locations, etc.).

A sample trail maintenance schedule for asphalt trails is provided in “Figure 15: Sample Trail Maintenance Schedule (asphalt trails)” on page 115. The County should prepare similar maintenance schedules and plans, along with agreements for any outside organizations who provide assistance with maintenance, for all County-owned property.

Figure 15: Sample Trail Maintenance Schedule (asphalt trails)

SAMPLE OPERATIONAL TRAIL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE								
Maintenance Activity	Optimal Frequency							
	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Spring/Fall	After Storm	Other	Notes
General								
1. Safety inspection	X					X		
2. General debris and trash pickup	X					X		
3. Vandalism inspection	X							
4. Encroachments							Ongoing	
Pavement								
1. Pavement survey					X			Conduct Spring and Fall surveys
2. Crack sealing							Reactionary	
3. Patching							As needed	
4. Fog seal							As needed	Lifespan approximately 4-6 years
5. Sealcoat							As needed	Lifespan approximately 6-10 years
6. Slurry seal							As needed	Lifespan approximately 8-10 years
7. Overlay							As needed	Lifespan approximately 15 years
8. Reconstruct							As needed	
9. Inspect pavement markings				X				
10. Repaint pavement markings							As needed	
Vegetation								
1. Mowing- clear zones, trailhead areas	X	X						
2. Brush trimming/overhead trimming				X				Spring activity
3. Clear zone weed control							As needed	Noxious weed spraying/removal
4. Sight line trimming at intersections		X						Roads, other trails, driveways, etc.
5. Tree removal						X	As needed	Storm cleanup
6. Rain garden maintenance		X				X		
7. Trail sweeping/blowing					X	X	As needed	Up to weekly frequency in Fall
8. Seeding				X	X			Spring activity
9. Root cutting							As needed	Monitor root activity along trail
Drainage								
1. Erosion Repair			X		X	X		After Spring snowmelt, storm cleanup
2. Culvert/catch basin clearing			X			X		Storm cleanup
3. Ditches (clear debris, trash, branches)				X		X		Spring activity
4. Standing water repair				X		X		



Implementation Plan

Now what?

Once the visions, guiding principles and recommendations were developed for each of the four plan components, an implementation plan was developed to help guide the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development.

Priority Level

Each recommendation was assigned a priority level, based upon input received from the County Staff, the Steering Committee and the general public.

High Priority = immediate action should be taken to begin implementation and is considered essential for plan success.

Medium Priority = action should be taken in the short-term to address implementation and is considered important for plan success.

Low Priority = action should be taken in the long-term as time and funding allows.

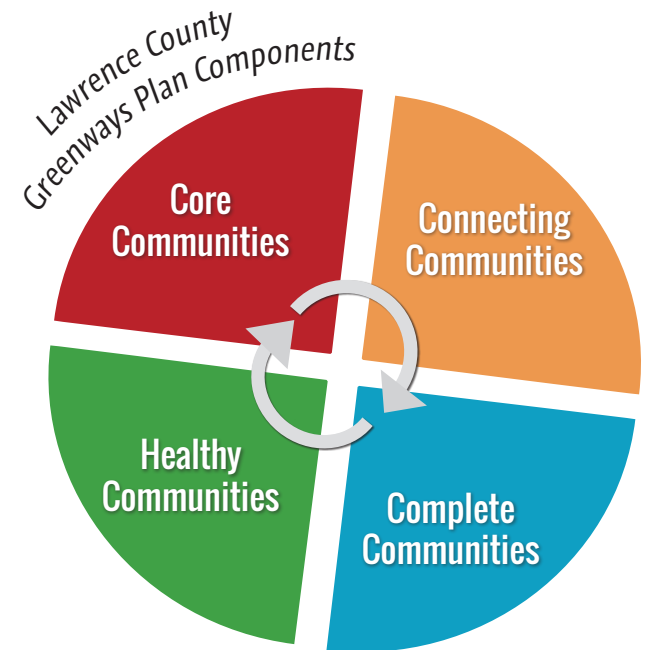
County's Role

For each of the recommendations, the County's role in implementation was identified.

Administer = action to be taken by the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development (LCDPCD) to lead implementation.

Assist = LCDPCD can provide technical and/or financial assistance to municipalities and/or organizations, who must take local action to implement the project.

Advise = LCDPCD can provide support to municipalities and/or organizations for implementation.



Core Communities Guiding Principles and Recommendations

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
#1: Encourage Core Communities to become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.				
1.1: Encourage Core Communities to adopt Complete Streets policies.	H		X	X
1.2: Help communities prepare pedestrian and bicycle master plans.	H	X	X	
1.3: Develop WalkWorks routes and groups in each Core Community.	H	X	X	X
1.4: Encourage Core Communities to apply for Bicycle Friendly Community status through Bicycle Friendly America.	M		X	X
1.5: Support the City of New Castle’s efforts to implement the Riverwalk Plan and improve connections to the regional trail system.	M		X	X
1.6: Determine the feasibility of creating a Bike Share Program in the City of New Castle.	L	X	X	X
#2: Encourage Core Communities to promote economic development through the Trail and River Town programs.				
2.1: Connect downtown Wampum to the Bevington Boat Access and promote as a River Town along with the Trail Town.	H	X	X	X
2.2: Install kiosks with maps of community amenities at all trailheads and river access areas to direct users to downtown businesses.	H	X	X	
2.4: Develop a regional “main street program” for the Core Communities.	M		X	X
#3: Promote greenway-related tourism within the Core Communities.				
3.1: Partner with other County agencies and organizations to promote trails and greenways.	H	X		
3.2: Develop partnerships with local and regional organizations to expand or develop greenway events.	H	X	X	
3.3: Conduct a feasibility study to determine the best use for abandoned train stations throughout the County.	L		X	X

Connecting Communities Guiding Principles and Recommendations

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
#1: Expand the County’s network of land trails.				
1.1: Extend the Stavich Trail into Core Communities.	H	X	X	
1.2: Extend the Neshannock Creek Trail.	H	X		
1.3: Prepare a feasibility study for the Shenango River Rail-Trail.	H	X		
1.4: Support and assist North Country National Scenic Trail efforts to build the trail entirely off-road through the County.	M		X	X
1.5: Develop the Ewing Park – Ellport Trail per the 2011 Feasibility Study.	L		X	X
1.6: Maintain communication with companies for possible ownership of abandoned rights-of-way.	H	X		
#2: Expand the County’s network of water trails.				
2.1: Seek state designation of the Beaver River with Mahoning and Shenango Rivers as a water trail system.	H	X		
2.2: Develop and promote the other waterways in the County as unique paddling experiences.	M	X	X	
#3: Improve key roadways within the County as multimodal corridors.				
3.1: Establish Countywide on-road bike routes.	H	X	X	
#4: Develop an ATV park in Lawrence County to provide a safe place for off-road vehicles.				
4.1: Support Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort in their efforts to expand and enhance their riding area to become an overnight/vacation destination.	H		X	X
4.2: Continue to support Mines & Meadows ATV/RV Resort in applying for funding maintenance equipment and in applying for grants for facility development.	H		X	X
4.3: Support and encourage local municipalities to open municipal roads for OHV use.	H		X	X
4.4: Explore opportunities with local foundations and philanthropic organizations to obtain funding for youth ATV safety training classes.	M		X	X
4.5: Support private sector businesses in developing OHV riding areas and businesses which support them.	M		X	X
4.6: Educate local municipalities on the benefits of having legal off-highway vehicle riding areas in their municipalities.	M		X	X

Healthy Communities Guiding Principles and Recommendations

	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
County Role				
#1: Educate the public about the importance of healthy communities and active lifestyles.				
1.1: Develop a public health campaign to encourage residents to be more physically active.	H	X		
#2: Promote healthy communities through active transportation corridors.				
2.1: Develop a countywide wayfinding program for the greenways network.	H	X	X	
2.2: Develop a coordinated public outreach campaign to promote the greenways network.	H	X		
2.3. Develop partnerships to promote the use of active transportation corridors.	M	X	X	
#3: Improve access to greenways and outdoor recreation facilities.				
3.1: Improve public transportation service for underserved areas in Core Communities (New Castle / Ellwood City) to major outdoor recreation areas.	M		X	X
3.2: Ensure that ADA-accessible facilities are well-publicized.	M	X	X	X
3.3: Encourage schools, municipal governments and nonprofit organizations to develop joint use agreements to increase access to places for physical activity in underserved areas.	L		X	X

Complete Communities Guiding Principles and Recommendations

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
#1: Protect natural features and environmentally sensitive areas of countywide significance.				
1.1. Identify priority areas for conservation and preservation for areas of significant value as shown on the conservation greenways corridor map.	H	X	X	X
1.2. Prepare and adopt an Official Map of priority areas for greenway connections.	L	X		
#2: Ensure that comprehensive plans and ordinances implement the Countywide Greenway Plan.				
2.1. Update the County’s subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) and encourage municipalities to include provisions for pedestrian and bicycle networks where appropriate.	H	X		
2.2. Create a plan review checklist to ensure consistency with the County’s Greenways Plan Guiding Principles.	H	X		
2.3. Encourage municipalities to update their zoning ordinances to encourage trail-related amenities.	H		X	X
2.4. Encourage municipalities to include a mandatory dedication and fee-in-lieu of provision in their subdivision and land development ordinances.	M		X	X
#3: Incorporate and encourage best management practices and green design.				
3.1. Encourage municipalities to include conservation best management practices in conservation greenways.	H		X	X
3.2. Assist municipalities with incorporating green design into public projects.	M		X	X
#4: Increase the County’s capacity to implement the greenways plan.				
4.1. Hire an additional staff person within the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development.	H	X		
4.2. Form a countywide Environmental Advisory Council.	H	X		
4.3. Develop a maintenance plan (short-term and long-term activities) for all county-owned facilities.	H	X		

The real work starts now...

Once the Lawrence County Greenways Plan is adopted...what does the County do next? The recommendations provided in the Plan include specific action steps that can be taken to implement the overall Plan Visions for Core, Connecting, Complete and Healthy Communities. But how can the County ensure that they are actively implementing the Plan? Here are four high priority actions that should be taken by the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development on an annual basis.

Tracking implementation of these overarching goals can be measured through miles of trails and greenways established, programs implemented and funding received.

With the LCDPCD already working on implementing these projects before the plan is adopted, Lawrence County is poised for a bright...and green... future.

1

Prepare an implementation update annually.

Plan implementation should be tracked and publicized to market the County's progress with realizing the established Vision and Guiding Principles of the Plan. The Update should be included on the County website and provided to the municipalities. The annual update should:

- a. **Identify actions taken by the County over the past year** that helped to achieve the Vision and Guiding Principles set forth in the Plan.
- b. **Survey municipalities and other County Departments** to include projects that have been completed by organizations outside of the LCDPCD that implement the Plan.
- c. **Include a list of priority trails and greenways projects.**

2

Encourage municipalities to adopt policies and ordinances consistent with the Plan.

An online toolkit was developed as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan in 2016, which offers resources and model ordinances for municipalities in achieving consistency with the Plan. To implement the Greenways Plan, the County should:

- a. **Educate its municipalities on the benefits of policies** such as Complete Streets, WalkWorks, Bicycle Friendly Communities and other programs that can help municipalities become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
- b. **Provide model ordinances and technical resources to municipalities** that encourage the development and preservation of greenways through ordinances and best management practices. The online toolkit should be reviewed and updated as necessary.

3

Promote the Countywide greenways and trails network.

Marketing and publicity should be a high priority for the LCDPCD moving forward. With an established network of land and water trails, outdoor recreation needs to be publicized and marketed not only to existing residents and businesses, but to encourage more visitors. As such, the County should:

- a. **Partner with the Lawrence County Tourism Promotion Agency** to capitalize on the economic impact that can be generated from outdoor recreation, greenway and trail-related tourism.
- b. **Improve the visibility of the greenways network** through an increased online presence, social media campaign and wayfinding signage.
- c. **Apply for state designation of the Beaver-Mahoning-Shenango River Water Trail.**
- d. **Develop a public health campaign** to encourage residents to be more physically active.

4

Pursue grant funding to acquire and develop trails, greenways and outdoor recreation areas.

The Greenways Plan identifies several high priority recommendations to extend the County's network of trails (land and water), ATV sites and other outdoor recreation areas. Grant funding should be pursued as follows:

- a. **Develop the former railroad station site in New Castle as a trailhead**, featuring a nonmotorized boat launch on the Shenango River, a bicycle/pedestrian trail connection to the Riverwalk and a kiosk/map that shows the entire trail network.
- b. **Acquire the Quaker Falls site and develop as a County park**, complete with a scenic overlook, natural trails, restrooms and nature center.
- c. **Pursue the development of an ATV park.**

