



Chapter 10

Plan for Greenways, Open Space and Recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

The Juniata & Mifflin County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan

The plan is a ten-year strategy to improve the quality of life in our region through parks, recreation, and open space conservation. It is based upon opinions of people who live and work here, research, and trends in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

The plan is a guide, not a law. It offers a course of action geared towards preserving the tremendous scenic rural character in Juniata and Mifflin Counties as well as for creating recreation opportunities for citizens and visitors. The results of the plan will help to reap the important benefits of a thriving economy, conservation of our scenic rural character, healthy citizens enjoying active lifestyles, and a strong sense of community.

Guiding Principles, Vision and Mission

Guiding Principles

Based upon the needs expressed by the public, municipalities, conservationists, recreationists, business owners, and citizens, the following principles will guide the development of Juniata and Mifflin Counties' parks and trails; conservation of open space and greenways; and creation of recreation opportunities. These principles provide the foundation for the vision, mission, goals, recommendations, and implementation of the Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan.

The five principles describe what our counties value and include:

1. **Active healthy lifestyles** made possible through plentiful recreation opportunities are vital to the quality of life for future generations and us.
2. Our **rural character** and high quality natural resources are valuable to our citizens and our community as a whole. Agriculture is crucial to our economy and our rural agrarian way of life.

3. Our **economic vitality, community wellness, and livable communities** depend on the health of our natural environment and the integrity of our rural character.
4. **Collaboration, partnerships, and involvement** by the state agencies, regional conservation and recreation entities, community organizations, the private sector, municipalities, and citizens are crucial to the successful implementation of greenway, open space, and recreation initiatives.
5. The **primary role of the Counties** is to serve as the catalyst for open space conservation by harnessing partners in collaborative efforts, providing leadership, encouragement, and professional technical assistance to municipalities, outreach to landowners, and educational support for municipalities and the public. Through these services, Juniata and Mifflin Counties offers a basic level of investment in open space, greenways, and recreation.

Our Vision for 2019

By 2019, Juniata and Mifflin Counties will have preserved our rural agrarian way of life through the conservation of agricultural lands, forests, streams, and natural resources. Our natural resources and scenic beauty offer plentiful opportunities for exceptional recreational experiences for our citizens as well as support thriving tourism.

Recreation will be a hallmark of the Juniata and Mifflin County area as a well-know tourism destination. Recreation will help our citizens and visitors to engage in active recreational pursuits that contribute to their own health and wellness as well as to the healthy economy in the region.

County Missions

While the planning departments and commissions of Juniata and Mifflin Counties operate separately, they share a common mission that applies to open space, greenway, and rural recreation planning. The following wording has been tailored to reflect both Counties.

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Mission

The mission of Juniata County and Mifflin County with respect to planning is to provide strategic, coordinated and objective guidance and oversight to the growth, planning, and development activities for the County.

In doing so, it is the goal of the planning departments and commissions is to ensure that each County's future is characterized by a healthy environment, economy, and society achieved through proactive planning, citizen representation, effective communication and the provision of professional services from the Juniata County and Mifflin County Planning Departments. Their purpose is to:

- Provide the orderly growth, development and redevelopment in each County in accordance with the long-term objectives, principles, and standards in the best interest and welfare of its citizens and political subdivisions.
- Coordinate and integrate plans for orderly growth, development, and redevelopment.
- Improve the social and economic climate and well being of each County.
- Encourage appropriate land use and the efficient use of fiscal resources through implementation of the County Comprehensive Plans.
- Encourage the maximum utilization of the existing infrastructure and plan for new infrastructure, including housing.
- Promote the conservation and effective use of energy, land, water, and air as well as the preserve unique historic, cultural, and natural features and resources.
- Promote and assist in achieving improved traffic and transportation flow.
- Collect and distribute relevant County and regional data and information.
- Ensure that citizens and municipal officials are well informed of their responsibilities

regarding effective planning and development in each County.

- Ensure consistency, coordination and communication between and among the County's municipal planning entities
- Encourage the continued support of a fully staffed Planning Department in each County.
- Encourage effective coordination and communication among all County entities, agencies and organizations whose activities either influence or are influenced by the effective planning and development of each County.

Plan Goals and Objectives

The goals are broad general intentions of what Juniata and Mifflin Counties desire to achieve through this plan over the long term. The goals include:

Goals

Goal 1: Preserve the scenic rural character of Juniata and Mifflin Counties through open space conservation.

Goal 2: Connect the Counties and the region beyond through a network of greenways and trails.

Goal 3: Foster and promote recreation opportunities to advance active healthy lifestyles year round for people who live, work, and visit here.

Goal 4: Organize and manage open space conservation, greenways, and rural recreation through partnerships for the greatest public benefit and responsible use of resources.

Goal 5: Invest in open space, parks, and recreation to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the citizens and contribute to the economic vitality of Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

Objectives

The objectives are specific tasks to undertake to help achieve the goal. The following section presents the goals and specifies the objectives for each goal.

Goal 1: Preserve the rural character of Juniata and Mifflin Counties through open space conservation.

The rural character of Juniata and Mifflin Counties is central to the quality of life and the local economy of this region. The rural character, abundant open space, and natural resources are valued by residents and the draw for the seasonal visitors that come to the Counties to hunt, fish, and enjoy time outdoors and will be the basis of tourism expansion efforts. The agricultural industry is vital to the way of life here. It attracts newcomers with their sight set on becoming farmers coming from other counties in Pennsylvania where land values have sky-rocketed and pushed farming out. Preserving the resources and rural character of the Counties is paramount to sustaining the quality of life the area offers.

Objectives

1. Preserve large interconnected areas of significant open space.

a. Improve the understanding and harness the collaborative efforts among the people and organizations that are or could be players in open space conservation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. This includes government at the state, county, and municipal levels, conservation organizations, farmers, landowners, developers, and businesses.

- Continue to provide technical assistance from the County planning departments, conservation districts, and agricultural preservation programs.
- Develop a formal strategic education and conservation outreach program targeted at municipalities, landowners, and citizens. Apply for a grant for funding for this program and/or work in partnership with a conservation organization for this purpose.
- Work with the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership and Allegheny Ridge Corporation (Main Line Canal Greenway) regarding conservation of lands along the Susquehanna River and Juniata River.

- Develop partnerships with other organizations with a conservation mission. Consider establishing an advisory board of conservation organizations to work in partnership with the Counties on natural resource protection. Seek to parlay the fragmented resources of individual organizations into the greater whole of conservation bi-county wide. Include representatives of Bureau of State Forestry, Game Commission, Fish & Boat Commission, County Conservation Districts, and conservation organizations such as the Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, and others.

b. Encourage municipalities to develop and adopt effective zoning and land use regulations that promote natural resource and open space protection. The Counties should provide information about the needs and benefits of municipal regulations and technical assistance and model ordinances for the preparation of ordinances. Recommended ordinance provisions are noted below. These ordinance provisions are simply defined below to express the intent. Each ordinance provision should be fully developed with additional criteria and appropriate exceptions.

- Restrictions relating to permitted uses and coverage requirements for property located on slopes of fifteen percent (15%) or more.
- Restrictions on any alternation, re-grading, clearing of slopes of twenty-five percent (25%) or greater.
- Restrictions relating to areas of high water table that prohibits development of or discharge directly or indirectly toward areas of high water table soils.
- Restrictions prohibiting new or substantially improved structures, filling of low areas, or disposal of solid waste within flood-prone areas.

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- Requiring wetland buffer of a minimum width of thirty-five (35) feet from the wetland boundary. Restriction prohibiting removal of existing natural vegetation, earth moving activities, or development of impervious surfaces within the designated buffer.
- Requiring riparian buffers of a minimum of 100 feet from any stream bank. Restriction prohibiting woodland or land disturbance within the designated buffer. Timber harvesting in accordance with a certified woodland management plan would be an exception to this requirement.
- Restriction to development that prohibits structures to be located or extend above the ridgeline elevations to preserve scenic vistas.

The effectiveness of municipal regulations can not be overstated as a means to conserve sensitive natural areas and the character and landscape of the Counties. A quick estimation of areas that have slopes in excess of 15-percent and the riparian buffer areas of significant streams (100 feet from each bank) was completed for each County. These areas together equate to approximately 57-percent of Mifflin County and approximately 43-percent of Juniata County. This estimation illustrates that by enacting ordinance that protect steep slopes and riparian buffer areas significant percentages of each County would be conserved.

Additionally, the Counties should work with the municipalities to:

- Serve as the local planning agency providing conservation ordinances for municipalities without local codes.
- Encourage municipalities with ordinances to complete a Growing Greener Ordinance Assessment. The assessment should review municipal ordinance and make recommendations regarding modifications that promote

natural resource protection, open space preservation, and promote greenway opportunities.

- Support effective planning and smart growth to steer development away from sensitive natural resources and direct development to designated growth areas as defined by the County Comprehensive Plans.
- c. Reach out to landowners and provide information about land conservation and available resources. Share information about:
- How landowners can pursue conservation of their property and the tax benefit and estate planning options and benefits.
 - The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) that promotes stream protection, wildlife habitat enhancements, erosion control, and other conservation practices.
 - The three cooperative habitat protection programs of the Game Commission promote conservation of wildlife habitat areas.
 - Local and regional land trusts and land conservation organizations and their programs.
- d. Invest in the boroughs and villages of the Counties to retain residents and attract businesses. Vibrant towns and villages will attract and retain residents, thereby reducing sprawl and protecting open space.
- e. Adopt bi-county open space and conservation area priorities. Achieving the recommendations of this plan will require an aggressive and targeted approach to implementation at both the county and local level. To focus implementation efforts, regional priority areas were determined based on criteria including: population projections and growth patterns; locations of existing protected lands, prime agricultural areas, and vulnerable natural resources; and

recreation need and opportunity. The recommended conservation areas are shown on the Targeted Conservation Maps.

Table 10-1 – Juniata and Mifflin Counties Targeted Conservation Areas
Juniata County
Tuscarora Mountain
Black Log and Shade Mountains – Milford Township south of East Licking Creek, east of State Forest Land
Black Log and Shade Mountains – Milford and Fermanagh Township in area of Lewistown Narrows
Slim Valley Ridge – at boundary between Fermanagh and Fayette Townships
Susquehanna River Corridor
Juniata River Corridor
Tuscarora Creek – in central Tuscarora Township
Willow Run – in Lack Township
East Licking Creek – Milford Township
Mifflin County
Blue and Shade Mountains – along southern County boundary at Lewistown Narrows
Jacks Mountain
Stone, Long, Strong, and Thick Mountains
Juniata River Corridor
Lingle Creek – west of Mount Pleasant
Ferguson Valley – toe of Jacks Mtn. in Oliver Township
Toe of Slope in Decatur Township

- f. Encourage the development of regional open space and comprehensive plans to identify more detailed connected land areas that should be conserved along with specific recommendations on how to do that.

2. Maintain and enhance agriculture in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

- a. Juniata and Mifflin Counties should provide outreach and education for municipal official and landowners about the benefits and restrictions of the Agricultural Security Area program and Agricultural Conservation Enhancement program.
- b. The County Planning Departments should provide education to municipal officials on land use planning and its benefits relative to agricultural preservation and sustaining agricultural based businesses and share model zoning ordinance provisions that support agricultural activities.

- c. Determine how to increase staffing of the Conservation Districts and Cooperative Extension office and support for farmers. Support the farmland preservation programs in both Counties. Advocate for additional funding from the Commonwealth for the Agricultural Conservation Easement program with the goal of doubling the acreage preserved from the typical 80-120 acres per County per year to at least 250 acres annually in each County. Work with the County Conservation Districts, the Penn State Cooperative Extension, PASA (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture), state representatives, and others to make the case for additional funding through presentation of research-based information. Define the benefits in financial terms of redirecting funding for conservation easements to rural areas from areas under development pressures. Promote the benefits of preserving large areas of currently productive farmland.
- d. Develop a program to recruit future farmers to the area who may work with existing farmers for the purpose of establishing future generations of farmers. Encourage new and emerging types of niche type of farming such as organics, specialty crops, community-supported agriculture, farm to table programs, and others.
- e. Work with other organizations such as the Conservation Districts to develop a forum for farmers to meet on a regular basis, perhaps once or twice a year, and share ideas and concerns as well as to advocate for agriculture in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Use an existing organization such as the Farm Bureau to promote and host the forum. Engage the newest generation of farmers that have sought the latest training and have diverse education and broad experience in agriculture. Partner with PASA and others to define and implement a strategy to sustain and invigorate the agricultural industry in the Counties.

3. Protect important natural resources and features including steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and ridge tops.

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- a. Develop and implement an outreach program to foster education about the methods and benefits of conservation in Mifflin and Juniata Counties.
 - The County Planning Departments should provide technical assistance and model ordinances to municipalities to promote sound land use practices and sustainable natural resources. Staffing levels of the Departments should be assessed with consideration of these additional services. Mifflin County is developing a county-wide stormwater ordinance and Juniata County is considering developing an ordinance as well. The JCWP (Juniata Clean Water Partnership) also provides resources such as model ordinances and links to technical and planning documents that are available to municipalities.
 - The Counties should consider partnering with JCWP to join forces on outreach, education, and fostering stewardship for conservation and expand conservation initiatives in the lower Juniata River area. Explore how outreach and education programs could be developed in conjunction with JCWP's grant to undertake educational programs.
 - Consider developing a program that fosters a philosophy that everyone is a land steward in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.
- b. Work with the Conservation Districts, the Game Commission, JCWP, and other agencies and organizations to educate landowners about the importance of conserving Juniata and Mifflin County's natural resources. Share information about conservation strategies that landowners can practice and implement on their lands.
 - Provide information to landowners with a specific target of large landowners such as sportsmen clubs, camps, and farmers to direct them to tools, resources, and organizations that will help them manage their resources in a sustainable manner.
 - The Game Commission has three cooperative habitat protection programs in the two Counties. Promote these important programs which help support conservation.
 - Develop partnerships with other organizations with a conservation mission. Consider establishing an advisory board of conservation organizations to work in partnership with the Counties on natural resource protection. Seek to parlay the fragmented resources of individual organizations into the greater whole of conservation bi-county wide. The board members could include representatives of Bureau of State Forestry, Game Commission, Fish & Boat Commission, County Conservation Districts, and conservation organizations such as the Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited, and others.
 - The County and municipalities should work with the PA Bureau of Forestry to provide information and technical assistance to landowners to encourage conservation and sustainable management of forestlands.
- c. Partner with conservancies and state agencies to seek conservation easements on vulnerable lands for the protection of natural resources. Promote conservation strategies and initiatives that reduce fragmentation of resources, protect vegetative cover of ridgelines and riparian corridors, protect scenic areas, and control invasive species. The JCWP and the Central PA Conservancy are potential partners, along with the Bureau of State Forests, State Game Lands, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission. Refer to Table 10-1 for Targeted Conservation Areas.
- d. Encourage and assist municipalities to implement land use regulations that protect natural resources to include provisions

outlined in Goal 1, objective 1.b. plus the following:

- Municipalities in Mifflin County have floodplain ordinances which limit development and certain development activities in floodplains. Municipalities in Juniata County without floodplain ordinances should develop and adopt ordinances.
 - Woodland management provisions that promote the maintenance, management, and sound sustainable use of forest lands.
 - Stormwater Best Management Practices which promote sustainable approach to stormwater management and erosion control.
 - Conservation subdivision and zoning (Natural Lands Trust's Growing Greener: Conservation by Design). The Mifflin County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance contains an open space development option provision which encourages land use and development patterns that complement and accentuate the distinctive features of the County's landscapes and natural environment. This ordinance could be referenced as a model for municipal ordinances.
 - Water source and wellhead protection provisions that provide protective buffers around sensitive water resources.
- e. Juniata and Mifflin Counties should encourage municipalities to refer to the County Natural Areas Inventory as part of municipal land use planning and development approval processes.
- f. Juniata and Mifflin Counties should encourage protection and enhancement of riparian buffers along the Juniata River and streams of the Counties.
- Work cooperatively with agencies and municipalities to promote protection of these critical resource areas. Working

together is critical to achieve effective results that span governmental boundaries.

- Reach out to farmers and other landowners to provide information about the importance of riparian buffers and resources available to them to establish riparian buffers of native vegetation on their properties.
- Encourage landowner participation in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to protect and restore riparian buffers. The program provides income for landowners who enroll.

4. Protect and preserve the historic, cultural, and scenic resources of the Counties.

- a. Adopt a cultural landscapes approach to land use planning and regulations in Big Valley to sustain and protect agriculture and promote agi-tourism.
- Mifflin County should invite the municipalities of the Big Valley to a workshop to define the initial opportunities and concerns regarding protection of this cultural landscape and brainstorm strategies to protect the agricultural resources of the area.
 - Seek public input regarding the Big Valley and a landscape approach to protection of the land resources.
 - The County and municipalities should work together to further define a protection strategy and identify implementation actions and responsibilities.
- b. Preserve the five covered bridges of Juniata County through outreach and partnerships with landowners and municipalities, acquisition, partnership and support of the Juniata County Historical Society, and coordination and communications with municipalities, PennDOT, and the State Historic Preservation Office.
- c. The Counties should support the efforts of

the Juniata County Historical Society and the Mifflin County Historical Society.

What are Historic Landscapes?

Historic landscapes are places that, through their physical characteristics and features, reflect the interaction of human beings with the environment. They may be associated with a historically significant activity, event or person, or otherwise manifest the values or traditions of a culture. Sometimes called cultural landscapes or heritage landscapes, historic landscapes often incorporate both natural resources, such as vegetation, bodies of water and topographical characteristics, and human-made features, such as buildings, monuments and path systems. Ranging in size from a small plot to thousands of acres, historic landscapes may be the setting for an important building or might be significant in their own right.

Source: Doherty, Joanna. (2005) **Terra Firma: Putting Historic Landscape Preservation on Solid Ground**. Boston: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. P 3.

- d. Protect scenic resources through ordinance provisions, easements, partnerships, and other measures. Both Counties should work with the municipalities of the Lewistown Narrows to seek designation of the Lewistown Narrows corridor as a Pennsylvania Byway.

Goal 2: Connect the Counties and the region beyond through a network of greenways and trails.

Objectives

1. Incorporate greenway, trail, and bikeway planning and development as a primary function of County Planning Departments.

- a. Work with municipalities to promote the Greenway, Trail, and Bikeway System vision, facilitate system development initiatives, and extend the system with local corridors. Municipalities should pursue the following initiatives to promote bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities:

- Mandatory dedication of parkland is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 and municipal mandatory dedication ordinances should include provisions for the dedication of land for trails and/or trail development.
 - Include requirements for sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian linkages to existing sidewalks/trails in new subdivisions and land development projects.
 - Encourage developers to incorporate trails as part of subdivisions and land development plans.
- b. Work with landowners and municipalities to identify and secure access easements for conservation, trails, and fishing access areas. Much of the proposed greenway and trail system will depend on cooperation of private landowners. Conservation easements should be sought for lands along greenways to protect the underlying natural resources. Access easements for trails will be required for the greenways identified in this plan as well as for local links that extend the system to local destinations separated from identified system corridors. Appendix B contains sample documents for Conservation Easements, Trail Easements, and a Fishing Access Agreement developed by the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association. These documents can be downloaded from http://conserveland.org/model_documents for customization and use in conservation and trails initiatives in Mifflin and Juniata Counties.

Pennsylvania's Recreational Use of Land and Water Act ("RULWA") is a law that limits the legal liability of landowners who make their land available to the public for free for recreation. The purpose of the law is to supplement the availability of publicly owned parks and forests by encouraging landowners to allow hikers, fishermen, and other recreational users onto their properties. RULWA creates this incentive by limiting the traditional duty of care that landowners owe to entrants upon their land. As no

entrance or use fee is charged, the Act provides that landowners owe no duty of care to keep their land safe for recreational users and have no duty to warn of dangerous conditions. A fact sheet on RLWA is included in Appendix A.

- c. Coordinate greenway and trail planning with adjacent counties, municipalities, public agencies, the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau, and existing organizations such as the Allegheny Ridge Corporation and the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership.
 - d. Encourage the incorporation of conservation provisions into local ordinances to promote preservation of green infrastructure and resource conservation that furthers greenway objectives. Reference Goal 1.
 - e. Create a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee to work to develop a County-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan. Undertake the steps discussed in Chapter 6 to enhance bicycle and pedestrian opportunities in the two Counties.
2. **Initiate actions and partner with other organizations and agencies to develop a comprehensive network of greenways, trails, and bikeways for Juniata and Mifflin Counties.**

- a. Coordinated greenway and trail planning and development initiatives with State, county, and local governments; public agencies such as DCNR, PA Game Commission, PennDOT, Fish & Boat Commission, and others; businesses; the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau; school districts; the Allegheny Ridge Corporation, the Juniata Clean Water Partnership, regional conservancies, and landowners.
- b. Promote the benefits of greenways and trails through a public education and outreach program. Involve community organizations and public agencies. Tie the benefits of greenways and trails to key issues in the community such as children's health and

obesity, economic development and jobs, and resource-based recreation.

- c. Work with the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau to promote the area as a destination for biking, hiking, and paddling.
- d. Promote the acquisition of land and access easements for additional river and stream access opportunities for boating and fishing through partnerships with the PA Fish and Boat Commission, municipalities, the JCWP, and other entities. Consider areas that are convenient for fisherman and small craft put-in and locations with room to accommodate vehicle parking.
- e. Juniata and Mifflin Counties should initiate and undertake actions to develop the comprehensive system of greenways, trails and bikeways identified in this plan. Table 10-2 on the following page lists the regional greenway segments in prioritized order. Actions should include:
 - Central Spine - Team with DCNR, the Allegheny Ridge Corporation, and JCWP to prioritize the planning, preservation, and development of the Main Line Canal Greenway and the Kishacoquillas Creek Greenway – Lewistown to Reedsville segment.
 - Prioritize trail development that extends from the two county seats of Mifflintown and Lewistown along the corridor. In the Lewistown area, build upon the success and planning of the Lewistown RiverWalk to extend the existing trail along the river and Kishacoquillas Creek. In Juniata County tie trail development to the PennDOT bridge replacement between Mifflin and Mifflintown and extend a trail north and south along the river, connecting to Central Juniata Park, Mifflin Park, and Mountain View Elementary School.

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- Work with the Allegheny Ridge Corporation and JCWP to develop interpretative signs in public locations along the corridor to promote awareness of the unique history of the corridor and expand awareness of the greenway and trail initiatives.
- Designate access points along the Juniata River that are convenient for fisherman and small craft put-in. Consider locations with room to accommodate vehicle parking. Space access points to accommodate a variety of trip duration. Where possible, locate access points where convenient access to on-road bicycle routes or bike trails are planned so that round trip routes can be planned with paddling one direction and bicycling back to the point of origin.
- Target the Upper Section of the Juniata River Water Trail which extends 22 miles between public access points. Seek funding, secure, and developing three additional access points, spaced approximately five-miles apart to provide convenient access in this section. Suggested locations for additional access include: near the village of Longfellow, near McVeytown/Mittawana, and near the village of Ryde.
- Natural Greenways – Work with the Bureau of State Forest and Game Commission to protect and conserve the natural greenways identified in this plan.
 - Evaluate the land ownership status of the natural greenway corridors and develop a strategy for conservation that reduces fragmentation, expands protection, and links protected parcels.
 - Acquire conservation easements on mountain and ridgeline lands to protect their natural resources and

scenic qualities and along riparian corridors to protect their ecological functions.

- Where acquisition and/or easements are not feasible or realistic, work with the landowners to provide information on natural resource management.

Table 10-2 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Prioritized Greenways
▪ Main Line Canal Greenway – Juniata County
▪ Main Line Canal Greenway – Mifflin County – Juniata County to Lewistown
▪ Main Line Canal Greenway – Mifflin County – Lewistown to Huntingdon County
▪ Kishacoquillas Creek Greenway – Lewistown to Reedsville
▪ Black Log Mountain/Shade Mountain Greenway – west of Juniata River
▪ Kishacoquillas Creek Greenway – Reedsville to Belleville
▪ Susquehanna Greenway
▪ Tuscarora Creek Greenway
▪ Black Log Mountain/Shade Mountain Greenway – East of Juniata River
▪ Stone Mountain Greenway
▪ Mid-State Trail Greenway
▪ Tuscarora Mountain Greenway
▪ Jacks Mountain Greenway – west of Juniata River
▪ Jacks Mountain Greenway – east of Juniata River

- Active Greenways – Work with State agencies, landowners, and municipalities to extend greenways with trails along identified corridors. Table 10-3 identifies greenways that are recommended to include trails.
 - Develop trails, bike routes, and river paddle segments that interconnect local destinations and have recreational, historical, and scenic qualities that can be promoted as tourism attractions. As the greenway, trail, and bikeway system is developed, identify loop excursions of various durations: an afternoon, a day, a weekend. The excursions could include a single mode of transportation such as

paddling the Main Line Canal from Lewistown to Mifflintown or incorporate a variety of modes such as paddling for one leg of the journey and returning via bikes or hiking. Work with local users to identify trailheads to facilitate a variety of excursions.

- Seek funding for feasibility studies and the development of high priority trails identified in this plan.

Table 10-3 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Recommended Greenways with Trails
▪ Main Line Canal Greenway – Juniata County
▪ Main Line Canal Greenway – Mifflin County – Juniata County to Lewistown
▪ Main Line Canal Greenway – Mifflin County – Lewistown to Huntingdon County
▪ Kishacoquillas Creek Greenway – Lewistown to Reedsville
▪ Kishacoquillas Creek Greenway – Reedsville to Belleville
▪ Tuscarora Creek Greenway
▪ Black Log Mountain/Shade Mountain Greenway – west of Juniata River
▪ Kishacoquillas Creek Greenway – Reedsville to Belleville

3. Team with the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor’s Bureau and advocates for children’s health and fitness and the environment, and both school districts to develop promotional information about bike routes and trails in the Counties.

- a. Define trail, bike route, and river paddle segments that interconnect and have recreation, historical, and scenic qualities. Promote as tourism attractions.
- b. Replicate the Indian Valley High School bike club in other schools throughout the Counties.

4. Undertake pilot trail projects to illustrate the benefits of trails and create momentum for pursuing the greenway and trail vision.

- a. The former 12 mile KV Railroad corridor, north of Yeagertown to Reedsville and to Bellville has been suggested as a recreation trail. There are multiple land owners along

the reverted corridor. Each of the three steps below is eligible for funding from PA DCNR and grants should be sought to offset costs.

- As the first step, determine the feasibility of developing a trail along the corridor from legal, physical, management and operations, and financing perspectives.
- If the study results in a positive finding of feasibility, secure easements or acquire lands along the trail corridor.
- Develop a trail master plan that identifies specific improvements, associated costs, and strategic implementation plan.

- b. The 1.25-mile Lehman Covered Bridge Park Trail in Port Royal Borough and Milford Township, Juniata County holds potential as a pilot trail project in Juniata County. The steps outlined above should be undertaken to evaluate and pursue development of this trail.

5. Work with PennDOT and municipalities to expand opportunities for safe convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel throughout the Counties.

- a. Work with PennDOT and school districts to promote safe routes to schools and coordinate funding for route enhancements. Prioritize the Electric Avenue Re-Stripping/Indian Valley High School and Green Avenue Extension/Lewistown Middle School projects.
- b. Work with local municipalities to extend the Electric Avenue and Green Avenue pedestrian and bicycle trail initiatives.
 - Extend the re-stripping of Electric Avenue north to Logan Boulevard in Derry Township and Burnham Borough and Main Street in Yeagertown Borough.

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- Complete roadway improvement to Ort Valley Road to connect to Electric Avenue.
 - Explore opportunities with Derry Township to extend the Green Avenue trail to the east.
- c. Work with municipalities to improve the shoulders of local roads, provide sidewalks and crosswalks, and incorporate other improvements to facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle use. Reference the Greenways, Trails, and Bicycle Routes maps to prioritize identified potential on-road bicycle routes.
- d. Contact PennDOT to formally request in writing permission for bicycle travel on Route 322 in the area of Seven Mountains due to the unavailability of a reasonable alternate routes.
- e. Task the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee with building upon the bicycle routes identified and mapped in this plan to expand the system and field test and develop detailed enhancement plans for designated routes.

Goal 3: Foster and promote recreation opportunities to advance active healthy lifestyles year round for people who live, work, and visit here.

Having plenty of things to do year round make a community an enjoyable place in which to live, work, and visit. Recreation opportunities include parks, recreation facilities, programs, services, and events.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Juniata and Mifflin Counties have bountiful outdoor recreation opportunities. Nearly 100,000 acres of conservation and parklands offer opportunities for hunting, fishing, boating, camping, picnicking, nature study, wildlife observation, hiking, cycling, winter sports, geo-caching, photography, relaxation, serenity, and a host of other restorative and fun pursuits.

Even with the extensive acreage of parkland, local recreation opportunities fall short of the acreage needed to meet accepted standards. The approximately 420 acres of local parkland is far less than the nearly 700 acres currently need based on the Counties populations. As the counties grow, the need for more local parks will continue to grow. Parks and recreation opportunities are essential elements of a high quality of life and there are 11 municipalities without a park and others with aging facilities and limited recreation opportunity.

Objectives

1. Provide parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of County residents.

- a. The Counties should promote the concept of regional parks to address, in part, the need for additional parkland and recreation facilities. The Counties should convene and facilitate a discussion between municipalities to explore regional park partnerships. If the regional park concept is embraced by the Counties and municipalities a Peer to Peer grant could be sought from DCNR to explore the concept further and develop an action plan for municipal cooperation which initially would include parkland funding, acquisition, and development.
- Three regional parks are recommended for each County and general locations are identified in Chapter 5 and mapped on the Conservation Recommendations maps. Feasibility studies should be completed for site selection.
 - Two of the proposed regional parks are existing recreation sites; Reeds Gap State Park and Kistler Borough Farm. These parks offer the opportunity to develop regional parks through partnerships with State Parks and Kistler Borough respectively. Exploration of these two regional park opportunities should be prioritized.
 - As part of the planning process for regional parks explore the need and

opportunities for special use and non-traditional recreational facilities.

b. The Counties should encourage municipalities to work in partnership with school districts to establish school/community parks where possible to provide recreation opportunities in a shared manner. The schools are already community destinations and if contiguous acreage can be acquired by either or both entities, facilities can be developed to serve the entire community and provide a focused location for recreation facilities.

- In Juniata County possible school sites to consider school/community parks include Susquehanna Township, Lack-Tuscarora, Monroe Township Elementary Schools; East Juniata High School; and Juniata High School/Tuscarora Junior High School.
- In Mifflin County possible school/community park sites include Armagh, Brown, East Derry, Strodes Mill, and Mount Union - Kistler Elementary Schools and Indian Valley and Strodes Mill Middle Schools.

c. The Counties should consider working together, along with the host municipality, to promote recreation opportunities on a regional basis to serve residents. Table 5-14 in Chapter 5 illustrates a typical park classification system that should be considered for a bi-county system.

- Opportunities for cooperation include Canal Park along Route 322. Ownership of the park site is to be transferred from PennDOT to the two Counties in the future.
- The Counties should explore the need for environmental education resources in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Convene a meeting with the two school districts serving the majority of the area to discuss how the PA Department of Education academic standards are being met and if existing parks enhancements

or new facilities such as a nature center are important to meet the education standards. The County Conservation Districts are potential partners if a nature center is pursued.

- Another area of potential partnership between the Counties is on historic and cultural themed parks. Mifflin County has Stone Arch Bridge Historic Site, the five covered bridges in Juniata County, and the stone canal house and canal remnants in Canal Park are all important from a historic and cultural perspective. Working together and aligning these efforts with the Juniata River Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau could further the promotion of the Counties as tourism destinations.

d. The Counties should support the municipalities in their efforts to address the municipal parkland deficit.

- Act as a facilitator to harness parkland opportunities between municipalities, State agencies, conservation organization such as the Allegheny Ridge Corporation, and the school districts.
- Provide support and technical expertise to further funding applications for acquisition and development.
- Prioritize coordination and support efforts with the municipalities that do not have municipal parks.
- Work with the municipalities and their partners to undertake park development pilot projects identified in this plan.
- Renovate East End Playground and West End Playground in Juniata Terrace Borough to provide facilities that meet safety guidelines and accessibility requirements while enhancing the convenience of using the facility and broadening the user base for the parks. Improvements suggested for these parks were described in detail in Chapter 5 to

address the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for playground safety and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. Similar

improvements should be completed to all public parks throughout both Counties. Consider promoting the improvements to these two parks as demonstration projects.

- Develop Fort Granville Heritage Park in Granville Township, Mifflin County as described in 2.c.
- Explore the opportunity of developing Lehman Covered Bridge Park in Port Royal Borough and Milford Township, Juniata County. Complete a feasibility study to explore if a trail and passive park can be developed to connect Moyer Park in the Borough and Lions Club Park in the Township and provide additional recreation opportunities.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a public park in Beale Township, Juniata County at the Academia Pomeroy Covered Bridge.

2. Promote county and municipal parks and recreation facilities through the following initiatives.

- a. Provide technical assistance to municipalities on grant applications, funding opportunities, model ordinance language, and information/ updates regarding accessibility and safety standards.
- b. Provide technical assistance and model language to municipalities for the development and adoption of mandatory dedication ordinances as an amendment to their subdivision and land development ordinances. Mifflin County should likewise adopt mandatory dedication ordinances as amendments to its subdivision and land development ordinances to address the needs of constitute municipalities using the County ordinances. Juniata County should

include mandatory dedication provisions as they develop a subdivision and land development ordinance. Once mandatory dedication ordinances are adopted, municipalities should review them annually to determine if their fee-in-lieu requirement aligns with the fair market value of land. The Counties should encourage municipalities to adopt this plan to meet the recreation plan requirements of the mandatory dedication provisions.

- c. Advocate for parks and trails as part of an economic development strategy for the Counties that includes new or redeveloped parks and trails and brownfields remediation for parks. Coordinate with housing and redevelopment agencies and initiatives.
 - Pursue the development of the Granville Fort Heritage Park working in partnership with Granville Township. Seek funding for the remediation of the on-site soils as identified in the Phase II Environmental Assessment for the site. Follow the remediation with a public master planning process to design the park and define an implementation strategy for the parks development. Funding for the master plan could be sought from PA DCNR. The park has economic stimulus potential, would create a river access point, and remediate a derelict parcel. Additionally, the project could include a pedestrian bridge connection to the Juniata RiverWalk, expanding safe convenient access to the park site from both shores.

Programs and Services

Encourage the planning, provision, and promotion of recreational opportunities and services as part of multi-municipal recreation efforts, partnerships with community organizations, and in collaboration with private non-profit and commercial recreation providers. Juniata and Mifflin Counties have a number of issues that can be addressed through recreation including: childhood and adult obesity with its associated diseases; increasing tourism; and attracting businesses to the area. Providing both

scheduled, organized programs/events and self-directed opportunities would enable residents to engage in active healthy lifestyles, help to attract and retain residents ages 18 to 45, and make the region a desirable location for business.

Objectives

1. Continue the Peer Study through completion in 2010 to develop a regional partnership for recreation services in Mifflin County.

- a. Determine how the County, the municipalities and the school district can continue to work together in a more formalized manner to provide community recreation services.
- b. Evaluate the potential for an intergovernmental agreement for a regional recreation partnership.
- c. Assess the potential to hire a Recreation Director to plan, implement and evaluate regional recreation services.
- d. Determine roles and responsibilities based upon the outcome of the Peer Study with respect to having paid staff or continuing as a volunteer collaboration. Assess the role of the Mifflin County Playground Association in the future with consideration of its transformation into a regional recreation organization. Include the roles and responsibilities of private sector partners.
- e. Establish a three-year plan of action for the regional recreation partnership with the first year of the plan fleshed out.
- f. If the finding of the Peer Study finds support for a recreation director, apply for a Circuit Rider grant from PA DCNR. This is a four-year grant to subsidize a professional recreation director's salary over four years matched by the regional recreation partners.

2. Use the experience and findings of the Peer Study to undertake a similar study of Juniata County.

- a. Evaluate the Mifflin County Peer Study and establish goals and desired actions for a similar study in Juniata County.

- b. Decide upon an approach for Juniata County and solicit municipal representatives to engage in the process.
- c. Apply for a grant for the Peer Study from PA DCNR.

3. Phase in increasing recreation programs to a broad range of age groups and interests.

The expansion of community recreation programs depends upon the hiring of a director. Until a dedicated paid professional is in place, recreational programs will be at the urge of whoever wants to undertake recreational services. The following recommendations could be phased in as staff becomes available:

- a. Increase both programs and awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities for people ages 18 to 45. Use recreation opportunities as a way of retaining and attracting this age group to Juniata and Mifflin Counties.
- b. Direct recreation services and planning toward recreation opportunities that create active healthy life styles and family connections. Move forward with broadening opportunities beyond sports and summer into year round opportunities in music, the arts, and social activity.
 - Coordinate recreation programming efforts in creating programs to engage citizens in active healthy lifestyles with MJ PATH.
 - Join forces with PANA (Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity). Involve both school districts. Explore how to work with PANA including having the schools sign up to participate in PANA's school based program, nrgBalance Zone. The conduit for linking to PANA could be the MJ PATH program.
- c. Recognize that recreation opportunities also include the self-directed activities. These include activities that people who live or visit here can do at their own discretion such as fishing, hunting, boating, cycling, hiking, wildlife watching, camping, cross country skiing, and other outdoor recreational

pursuits. Promoting these activities and where to pursue them would be an important public service.

4. Strive to increase involvement of the Juniata County and Mifflin County School Districts as community recreation partners.

- a. Encourage the school districts to become partners in regional recreation organizations such as the one under study in the Mifflin County Peer Study. Use examples of other regional recreation systems in which the school districts are partners and provide financial and facility support.
- b. Continue to support and expand programs incorporating life-time active recreation pursuits into the physical education curricula such as bicycling as part of the physical education program and the after-school clubs for cycling and walking at Indian Valley High School.
- c. Establish the school campuses as “community schools” to be recognized and used as recreation hubs. Strive to increase the public recreational use of school district facilities.

5. Create an environmental education system for the region. Work with the state agencies such as Greenwood Furnace State Park, Shavers Creek, the school districts, and environmental organizations to provide this in the bi-county area. Explore innovative approaches that may be program and expertise based rather than a traditional approach of building a dedicated nature facility.

6. Promote and advertise recreation opportunities. Create awareness about self-directed opportunities in the parks that people can use at their own discretion as well and organized scheduled programs and events. The lack of awareness is one of the major blocks to participation in recreation. Use municipal newsletters as well as WEB sites and vehicles available through partnering organizations.

Tourism

Tourism is vital to the economy of Juniata and

Mifflin Counties. The scenic beauty and outdoor recreational resources could help to position this region as a tourism destination rather than as a “pass through” community as the logo “Discover Our Good Nature” advocates.

Objectives

- 1. Juniata and Mifflin Counties should continue to have a close alliance with the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor’s Bureau.** If the counties decide to establish a an Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Board, then consider creating a position on the Board for the Tourism Director.
- 2. Support the *Juniata River Valley Regional Tourism Plan*.** Incorporate the parks and outdoor recreation opportunities as part of the tourism program. Develop brochures on outdoor recreation destinations for racks in visitor locations such as rest stops, hotels, and restaurants.
- 3. Use local recreation opportunities as tourism draws.** Focus on the activities that appeal to both residents and tourists such as bicycling, hiking, enjoying nature, and special events. Coordinate efforts with the Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor’s Bureau.
- 4. Undertake projects in recreation and heritage resources that will advance tourism in the area.** This includes the development and promotion of cycling, nature based recreation, and cultural heritage tourism.
- 5. Consider the development of an agri-tourism program where it is appropriate.** Work with willing partners who support the idea. Select a pilot project to explore the potential for agri-tourism.

Goal 4: Organize and manage open space conservation, greenways, and rural recreation through partnerships for the greatest public benefit and responsible use of resources.

Partnerships have strong roots in Juniata and Mifflin

Counties. Juniata and Mifflin Counties have been fortunate in having people and organizations step up to undertake projects for the public good. Building upon this tradition will be a key to the implementation of this plan. The strategic management of partnerships is essential in order to address all elements of the plan.

Objectives

1. **Adopt the role of facilitator by the Counties in the respective planning departments to coordinate *major* initiatives in parks and recreation.** Do not establish county parks and recreation departments. Neither Juniata County nor Mifflin County should own parks nor directly provide recreation programs as county functions. The Counties should participate in partnership with other organizations to accomplish parks and recreation goals. The roles of the Counties with respect to parks of countywide significance could be to plan them, seek development funds and negotiate with a municipality or community organization for the long-term operation and maintenance of the site.

- a. Continue to coordinate planning efforts to advance the Regional Tourism Plan with the Juniata Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau.
- b. Continue to participate as a partner in regional recreation efforts.

2. **Implement the organizational recommendations of the Mifflin County Peer Study regarding recreation.** Consider the following:

- a. Carry out the actions regarding a circuit rider.
- b. Prioritize establishment of a recreation director position in Mifflin County.
- c. Organize the advisory board for the intergovernmental agreement. Although intergovernmental agreements are governed by law in Pennsylvania, consider ad hoc members important to recreation here such as the United Way, CTC, and the Juniata Valley Visitors Bureau.

- d. Continue to use the current volunteer partnerships in providing community recreational services such as the summer playground program until a recreation director is hired.

3. **Undertake a Peer Study in Juniata County and carry out the recommendations of that study.**

- a. In the meantime, recreation programming would continue to fall under the auspices of community volunteer organizations.
- b. A recreation/school partnership could be considered in each school district as a way to house and partially support a recreation director in each county. These partnerships need to be defined and cultivated.

4. **Establish the Juniata Mifflin Open Space Board.** The purpose of the board would be to help implement the Juniata/Mifflin County Open Space, Greenway and Rural Recreation Plan in the areas of open space conservation, parks, greenways, and trails.

- a. Include representation from conservation, land preservation, and recreation on this committee. Ensure that equitable countywide representation is in place.
- b. Establish a bi-county outreach program to the state agencies that own land in each County. Hold regular meetings with the state agencies as a group to advance common goals and implementation of this plan. Consider appointing representatives of the state park, forests, and game lands on the Open Space Board. Use the state's Conservation Landscapes Initiatives program as a model.
- c. Consider the establishment of sub-committees based upon capacity and level of support of potential members to fulfill the mission and purpose of the respective committee. Committees could include: bicycling, open space funding program, promotion and advertising, and so on. Committees could have County oversight where needed and may be able to operate independently while coordinating with

Plan for Greenways, Open Space and Recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

County planning staff. Care must be taken to respect the time available with the small County staffs.

- d. Long term, if a County secures capital funding for an open space program, consider hiring staff to manage the program. The cost of staff could be included in the funding source such as a bond program. The Open Space Board and staff would establish the guidelines for participation in the open space program.

5. **Strive to create a Juniata Mifflin Conservancy.**

One of the most important needs of Juniata and Mifflin Counties is a land conservancy. Open space conservation is very difficult without the assistance of a conservancy (ies). A conservancy works with landowners who wish to sell or donate their exceptional land for conservation by finding a public agency or conservation buyer to own and manage the land permanently. Funding for acquisition can come from state or federal appropriations, private foundations, or individuals. A conservancy can administer conservation easements, a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that permanently limits uses of the land to protect its conservation values. It allows the landowner to continue to own and use the land and sell it or pass it on to heirs subject to the restrictions of the easement. A conservancy has broad expertise in legal, real estate, and fundraising capabilities. Since no conservancies serve this area, forming a conservancy should be a priority. An existing organization such as the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, or the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy could potentially facilitate the formation of a conservancy here. In the meantime, encourage the Juniata Clean Water Partnership to serve in a temporary role of a conservancy or land trust should an important land conservation opportunity arise.

- a. Seek a partner would serve as a champion in forming a conservancy. Conservancies are usually formed by an interested conservationist and have also been started under the auspices of a park agency.

6. **Establish roles for the various entities regarding the implementation of this plan.**

- a. Bi-County Role: Juniata and Mifflin Counties would continue to collaborate on the implementation of this plan regarding open space conservation and planning.
 - The Juniata Mifflin Open Space Board would serve in an advisory capacity to implement this plan.
- b. Juniata County and Mifflin County: Each County will have the primary responsibility for implementing the Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan in its own county. County Commissioners will set policy regarding the plan implementation. The Juniata County Planning Department and the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department will be the lead agencies in each County to carry out policy and implement the plan. They will assist municipalities in their own open space, greenway and recreation planning initiatives and provide information on funding opportunities. They will try to advance multi-municipal planning with respect to open space, greenway, trail and park planning, and recreation.
- c. Municipal Role: For municipalities desiring to participate in the Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan, their actions would be voluntary. To advance the open space plan, the role of municipalities is essential. Their role could include participating in multi-municipal planning in open space, greenways and rural recreation; undertaking a conservation by design audit and creating, adopting or revising their local zoning ordinances accordingly; and commit to a short, medium, and long range plan to provide parks and recreation opportunities close-to-home.
- d. Private Sector: The private sector could work with Juniata and Mifflin Counties in developing an approach to land management in which they would be land stewards, adopt conservation-oriented policies, and help to implement the plan through advocacy,

donations, easements, facility development, and provision of services.

- e. **Non-Profit Organizations:** Non-profit organizations are vital in the implementation of this plan. They can provide outreach, action steps, education, and assist in specific land preservation and recreation efforts.

Existing and Potential Partners in Open Space

Juniata County Planning Department, Mifflin County Planning and Development Department, United Way, Communities that Care, Mifflin County School District, Juniata County School District, Juniata Valley Visitors Bureau, Juniata Mifflin Chamber of Commerce, Juniata Valley YMCA, DeLauter Center, Lion's Den, the Senior Citizens Centers, Lewistown Main Street, Industrial Development Corporation, Faith based intuitions, Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited. Mifflin County Conservation District, Juniata County Conservation District, Agricultural Land Preservation Programs in each county, PSU Cooperative Extension Service, Lewistown Hospital, Juniata Clean Water Partnership, PANA, Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Reeds Gap State Park, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Main Line Canal Greenway, Southern Alleghenies Development Corp., PTA's, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Commercial recreation operators such as campgrounds and canoe rentals.

Goal 5: Invest in open space, parks and recreation to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and contribute to the economic vitality of Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

Funding is a major challenge in both Counties. The present economic climate in the United States compounds the problem. County coffers are limited due to mandates for operations. The small rural municipalities have commensurate budgets. Except for the United Way, the Counties are also not in the realm of any philanthropic organization or foundation due to location and other factors. Nevertheless, it is important to establish open space conservation, greenways, and recreation as a tool to help solve problems in Juniata and Mifflin Counties including economic development, retaining young people, tourism stimulation, health and wellness,

Value of Partnerships & Organization

Fundraising

With organization, funds from various sources including government programs, private donations, foundation grants, and other sources can be raised for operations or capital improvements.

Organizing Volunteers

A well-organized volunteer program will prove to be of great benefit to any partnership, developing community stewardship and increasing public involvement.

Design, Planning & Construction of Capital Improvements

Partners become involved in capital planning and design processes to help develop alternative concepts and methodologies that address the needs and desires of the citizens.

Programming

Partners create programs to serve citizens and tourists and directly coordinate and implement special events that attract the public to the region.

Advocacy

Partners are highly informed and well equipped to advocate on behalf specific issues. With their knowledge, they can provide information for decision-making and help identify opportunities for increased public benefit. As representatives of the community, partners can present a strong and unified public image, allowing them to effectively advocate for projects, programs and support.

Maintenance

Long-term maintenance is the most expensive part of parks. Partners can help with planning, program development, and ongoing communication. They can organize volunteer events like "clean up" days,

Outreach and Education

Partners can support the above activities with a program of marketing and public outreach, staff. Park partners can build momentum through Internet sites, newsletters, flyers, and postings. By also spending time in the community, at events like PTA and civic organization meetings, partners can develop a public outreach program that raises awareness and recruits new supporters. One of their biggest benefits is that they can engage the public in the development of specific projects or programs.

attracting business, and protection of the scenic rural character. Investment in open space, parks and recreation needs to be integrated into public and

private planning efforts. Some level of investment is needed – not everything can be done at once. By undertaking strategic funding and seeking a mix of public and private resources over time, the Counties can move ahead in achieving this goal.

Objectives

1. **Promote land use planning and zoning to achieve open space conservation.** Funding is needed to advance educational and outreach efforts to increase the capacity and expertise at the municipal level. Seek to secure grant funds for an education and outreach program.
 - a. Use planning strategies such as Conservation By Design, transfer of development rights, and official maps to preserve land.
 - b. Assist municipalities in developing and adopting mandatory dedication of parkland and trail ordinances. These ordinances will help to secure a large portion of the 508 acres of parkland required by the potential 7,600 additional residents by 2020 as well as land for trails. Obtaining the parkland should be the top priority with the fees-in-lieu-of dedication a distant second priority.
2. **Provide information to municipalities in need of information about potential tax measures to preserve open space.** These include:
 - Realty Transfer Tax
 - Portion of the Earned Income Tax
 - Funds from the property tax either apportioned or dedicated.
 - Provide information to municipalities on case studies and examples of how to acquire land with public access or preserve land for conservation.
 - Appoint a person in County government to pursue state and federal grants.
3. **Establish a conservancy for Juniata and Mifflin Counties.** A conservancy can help to raise funds for open space conservation.
4. **Use a portion of the hotel tax for projects**

related to open space, greenways, and recreation that would help to stimulate tourism such as trails and special events.

Hotel Tax: Examples and Benefits

- Half of Bucks County’s hotel tax goes to open space conservation, a prime factor underlying tourism.
- Montour County has a grant program to fund park, trail, and conservation projects through the hotel tax.
- The York County Visitors Bureau created a ten-year agreement to support the York County Rail Trail Authority with \$50,000 annually out of the hotel tax for a full time professional who does fund-raising, secures grants for land acquisition; trail planning, construction and maintenance; negotiates agreements for maintenance; and provides technical assistance to municipalities on trails. *The York Heritage Rail Trail generates over \$10 million annually in economic benefits through direct spending of trail users in York County.*

5. **Direct the potential Regional Recreation Director to use a mix of public and private funds to generate revenue to help offset the cost of recreation.** Programs can generate substantial funds through fees and charges. Grants, gifts, donations, and sponsorships further help to generate alternative funds.
6. **Provide information to municipalities regarding municipal investment in parks and recreation so that they can make informed decisions about their own funding levels.** Encourage regional and multi-municipal support to make the most of every dollar. Over the lifetime of a park, about 75 percent of its cost is in operation and maintenance. Effective land conservation is not just about getting the land; it is also about “what you do with what you have.” For facilities and destinations to be tourism destinations, they must be maintained in a premiere condition in terms of appearance and safety. Some benchmarks for dedicated investment in parks and recreation include:
 - The national average municipal investment for operations of parks and recreation is \$65 per capita.

- Pennsylvania’s average municipal investment is about \$38.69 per capita.
- Rural municipalities (townships) spend about \$7.85 per capita on recreation. The rural boroughs spent an average of \$55.55 per capita.
- The multi-municipal park and recreation organizations have a wide range of per capita investment from about a dollar to about \$17 dollars; most range from \$6 to \$8 per capita. The lower per capita investment from regional cooperation produces economy that a single municipality cannot offer on its own. Sources of the per capita funding include the municipal general fund and/or a dedicated tax for parks and recreation. Per capita municipal investment in Juniata and Mifflin Counties ranges from none to \$50.23.

7. **Consider getting the school districts to participate as partners in each County’s potential regional recreation system.** School districts that participate in such partnerships report getting major community support from their investment which benefits all residents including those without children in the school system. In regional recreation consortiums elsewhere in Pennsylvania such as Mechanicsburg and Manheim fund the director’s salary and the director provides community recreation services through a “community school”.

8. **Long term, strive to obtain bond issue or other source of capital funds in each County to provide funds for open space conservation.**

- a. Establish a finance committee to determine the amount appropriate in each County.
- b. Use the funds to leverage additional grants and investment by other organizations. County bond funds for open space elsewhere have generated significant additional investment and grants.

What a County Founded Open Space Program Could Do

- Conserve land through the purchase of conservation easements that would enable large landowners to afford to preserve their land and avoid cashing out to developers.
- Acquire land for public parks and trails.
- Protect the rural agrarian way of life here. Increase the number of farms preserved through the Agricultural Conservation Easement program thereby insuring the viability of agriculture as an industry.
- Insure that the foundation for tourism is protected and flourishes. Visitors come here for the open space, recreation, history, and scenery.
- Reduce future traffic impacts by deterring development in rural areas.
- Avoiding expensive long-term requirements of additional public services required by new development.
- Plan for and foster smart growth that supports the local economy as well as the rural character of the area.



Chapter 11

Implementation Strategy

Implementation Strategy

Present circumstances in Juniata and Mifflin Counties make this the ideal time to take action in greenways, open space, and rural recreation. Development pressures are on hold, land values are trending downward, and people are looking for recreation opportunities close to home. Many of the recommendations in this plan can be achieved through planning and partnerships. Throughout the process, those involved expressed concern about how to go about carrying out the plan. This chapter presents the implementation strategy to guide County actions. The implementation strategy summarizes immediate, short, medium, and long-term recommendations along with designated partners and potential funding sources. Not everything can be achieved at once. Achieving small successes in a steady manner is more important than undertaking too many action items at once.

Leadership First

Juniata and Mifflin Counties need to provide the fundamental leadership in putting this plan to work. Implementation will need to occur in stages. Focus first on cost effective actions that can be achieved in the near term. As initial milestones are reached, and the capacity of the planning and management entities of Juniata and Mifflin Counties grows in concert with their partners, more ambitious efforts may follow.

While County leadership is crucial, the Counties cannot implement this plan on their own. Partnerships and investment by other key stakeholders are required. Effective on-going partnerships rooted in strong productive collaboration are the linchpin of this plan. Juniata and Mifflin Counties have a good record of community organizations and volunteers that support a host of civic initiatives. The most important thing that the Counties will need over the next ten years is staff expertise in planning, outreach, and conservation to advance the plans goals. Now the planning staffs of the Counties are operating at full capacity with maximum staff possible given the County budgets. This plan can help to highlight the most important actions to be

undertaken over time so that County planners can set priorities for their time and budget to leverage their expertise to expand partnerships and local planning capacity.

The Strategy

The **Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan** balances the needs and interests of many diverse stakeholders. Grounded in the broad public input received during the planning process, the Plan provides a framework for people of different perspectives to work productively together around common interests.

The strategy offers a carefully devised plan of action to achieve the goals and undertake the objectives. The following strategy is organized within two time frames: the immediate and short term (2010 through 2012) and the medium to long term (2013 – 2019 and beyond). Adopting a three-year time frame for the most important and achievable actions makes the most sense given the staffing and funding levels of Juniata and Mifflin Counties. A major concern of the key stakeholders was determining who would undertake identified objectives and what is the order the recommendations should be pursued. The intent of the following strategy is to offer guidance in these areas that could actually serve as a work plan starting in 2010.

Immediate and Short Term (2010 – 2012)

1. Juniata and Mifflin Counties would adopt the policy that they will be facilitators in providing parks and recreation opportunities but they would not own or maintain conservation areas, parks, or recreation facilities or directly provide recreation services. Facilitate means that the Counties will continue to work in collaboration with the municipalities and other community organization in identifying needs, seizing opportunities to expand recreation and parks, monitor potential funding sources, and make the information available to other key stakeholders.
2. Continue the same organizational structure in each County with the lead responsibility for planning and facilitating open space, greenways and recreation vested in the respective planning

departments. Within the staff time and resources available, the County planning departments would create an annual work program to advance the implementation of this plan. This would include:

- Continue outreach and coordination with the major related community organizations.
 - Support municipalities in planning for open space conservation, parks, and recreation.
 - Encourage multi-municipal planning and undertaking action steps.
 - Identify opportunities for projects and programs that would benefit the Counties and put people, organizations, and actions together to move forward on the projects. Examples of how the Counties are doing this include this plan and the Peer Study.
3. Establish recreation as a priority and tool in addressing issues in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. These issues include wellness, tourism, and economic development.
- Complete the Mifflin County Peer Study with the goal of achieving consensus to establish a coalition of the County, municipalities, the school district, and community organizations. Negotiate an intergovernmental agreement with the entities that are willing to participate. Try to transition the Mifflin County Playground Association into a regional recreation coalition.
 - Hire a Regional Recreation Director. This is the only new position recommended in the immediate to short term. If the Peer Study outcome is to pursue a Circuit Rider grant to support this position, then move ahead with the application. The grant would provide about \$100,000 over four years to be matched by the partners. If ten partners were involved, that would mean a partner contribution of \$10,000 over four years or an average of \$2,500 per year per partner. In return the partners would get the services of a recreation professional that could help them to pursue grants, provide and expand programs, raise funds through non-tax dollars, work with partners, help solve problems, and provide technical and planning assistance. The partners would set the roles, responsibilities, and expectations from this position to ensure the benefits of collaboration while retaining authority for their land, facilities, and other specified interests. Over the course of four years, the director would strive to create stable funding from public and private sources to continue once the Circuit Rider grant ends. Another consideration is to encourage the school district to provide major backing for regional recreation to realize the benefits from increased community support as other school districts involved in regional recreation have experienced. A regional recreation advisory board including representatives of the partners would be formed.
 - Undertake a similar Peer Study with grant funding in Juniata County. Move ahead with the recommendations of the study in a similar fashion as described above for Mifflin County.
 - Undertake projects that would boost tourism. Use outdoor recreation for tourism. Set trails planning and development as a high priority for tourism.
4. Harness the various entities involved in open space conservation to work towards the common vision and goals set forth in this plan. Establish the Juniata Mifflin Open Space Board. Include representatives of both Counties; conservation organizations; farmers; the state gamelands, parks and forests; tourism; municipalities; campgrounds, sports clubs, and outdoor recreation rental businesses; and private

landowners. The role of the board as an advisory body would be to:

- Provide a forum for coordination and information sharing among key stakeholders in open space and land conservation. The forum will enable a regular high quality discussion that will be networked among the stakeholders. This will facilitate real change and advancement in open space, conservation and preservation of the scenic rural character so vital to this region.
 - Work with the County Agricultural Land Preservation Boards to promote conservation of farmland.
 - Identify projects and programs that would advance the recommendations of this plan.
 - Explore the potential for County funding for an Open Space Program.
 - Assist in education and outreach.
5. Organize a Juniata Mifflin Land Conservancy. This is essential for open space conservation. Other than the few parcels protected by the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy in Juniata County and the single property conserved by the Nature Conservancy in Mifflin County, this bi-county area is not served by an active conservancy. Existing conservancies are addressing areas in which development is more pressing and threatened by the loss of open space and natural resources.
- Seek a champion(s) who would be interested in leading the effort to start a conservancy.
 - Consult with PALTA (Pennsylvania Land Trust Association) for guidance in starting a conservancy or land trust.
 - Contact the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to determine if their goal of expanding their service area might
- involve service to Juniata and Mifflin Counties.
- Continue discussions with the Juniata Clean Water Partnership to advance the dialogue begun as part of the planning process for this plan regarding the potential for the Partnership to assist in land conservation efforts in ways other than outright ownership.
6. Increase public awareness and understanding about open space, greenways and recreation. Strive to make land stewardship “everybody’s business”.
- Seek a partnership and grant funding to plan and undertake a public education program targeted at elected and appointed officials serving on boards and commissions; landowners; and the public. Planning staff is too limited to undertake an education and outreach program on their own. Nevertheless, increasing understanding about open space conservation and ways to accomplish it is a crucial aspect of the strategy. As an example, the Juniata Clean Water Partnership obtained a grant for education. Juniata and Mifflin Counties could advocate to be considered as part of such a program or seek to get a similar program started on their own. Other county planning departments have secured grant funding to retain conservancies or contractors in conducting the outreach program. Some have used their own residents who are also experts in an educational topic to do the educational sessions as volunteers.
 - Coordination with the municipalities in education about conservation planning is critical as most impact in land conservation happens at the local level. Choose three to five municipalities in each county as pilot projects to advance open space, greenway, and recreation planning. Seek grant funding for a planning project in each County that

would use this County plan as a foundation. Strive to carry the pilot projects through from planning, through land conservation, park planning and development, trail planning and development, and operation.

7. Strive to establish funding for open space, greenways and trails. Without funding, efforts are limited to what can be done with existing County staff and the generosity and interest of partners and volunteers.
 - Work with the municipalities to establish Mandatory Dedication of Parkland and Trails Ordinances. Ensure that the provision for fees-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland is at market value.
 - Use planning and land use regulations as a way to offset the lack of funds. Most of the gains in open space conservation can be achieved through sound planning and municipal land use ordinances.
 - Consider a County or bi-county open space program as discussed in the potential role of an Open Space Board.
 - Provide information to municipalities on the benchmark data about municipal operating funds contained in this plan. This information may help them to make informed decisions about the appropriation of financial resources.
 - Charge the potential Recreation Director with the task of generating non-tax funds to support recreation programs and services, in part.
 - Should a regional recreation coalition be established, charge the group with monitoring and documenting the benefits of working together. This information can be used to promote additional regional collaboration in other aspects of open space, greenways and recreation in both Counties.
8. Promote open space conservation to protect the natural resources, agricultural lands, and open space lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties.
 - Encourage municipalities to develop and adopt effective zoning and land use regulations as a means of conserving sensitive natural areas and the character and landscape of the Counties.
 - Provide technical assistance and model ordinances to the municipalities to promote conservation objectives.
 - Share the Targeted Conservation Areas with municipalities to guide their planning efforts.
 - Work with agricultural partners to advocate for additional funding from the Commonwealth for the Agricultural Conservation Easement program with the goal of doubling the acreage preserved annually in each County.
9. Work with the municipalities to provide additional parkland to meet the needs of County residents. Target adding or making available a minimum of an additional 50 acres of parkland per year in each County.
 - Encourage the municipalities to work in partnership with the school districts to provide school/community parks with facilities to meet recreation needs.
 - Encourage municipalities to work together to provide regional parks to serve the recreation needs of multiple municipalities. Facilitate regional discussions between municipalities to explore regional cooperation. Apply to DCNR for site selection feasibility study funding.
 - The Counties should provide support and technical expertise to assist municipalities develop funding applications for acquisition and development of parks.
 - Assist the municipalities and their

partners to undertake the four park development pilot projects identified in this plan. In the short term for planning and development project funding from DCNR as appropriate. Assist the municipalities with applications for matching funds that may be appropriate such as Community Development Block Grants funds.

10. Promote the development of greenways, trails, and bikeways throughout the two Counties.

- The Counties should act as the coordinator working with municipalities, landowners, government entities, Allegheny Ridge Corporation, the Juniata Clean Water Partnership, and others to promote the planning and development of greenways, trails, and safe bicycle routes throughout the Counties.
- Assist the municipalities and their partners to undertake the two pilot trail projects identified in this plan. Apply for feasibility study project funding from DCNR. Target completion of the associated feasibility studies within the immediate to short term time frame.
- Work with municipalities, PennDOT, and school districts to promote safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to schools. Prioritize the Electric Avenue and Green Avenue initiatives identified in this plan and apply for Safe Routes to Schools funding.

Medium to Long Term – 2013 – 2019

1. Continue to focus County planning time on leveraging help from other public and private organizations to advance the goals of this plan. Continue to undertake a few projects with a high likelihood of success rather than many projects that would not receive adequate attention. Assess County planning staff levels and resources to determine if additional staff is needed and possible for implementation of the Open Space, Greenways and Rural Recreation

Plan. Proceed with recommendations based upon the analysis.

2. Move efforts with the Land Conservancy forward to ensure its success as a partner in land conservation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.
3. Evaluate the Open Space Board to determine progress and future directions. Consider potential sub-committees such as trails, open space program, outreach, and education or others that would emerge in the short-term accomplishments.
4. Review the recreation service delivery and opportunities. Consider expansion based upon progress, revenue generation, partnership, and staff capacity. Consider environmental education as a mid-term strategy if funding and staffing or partnership resources are available.
5. Continue to facilitate and support local and multi-municipal planning for open space conservation. Advance the adoption of ordinances for this purpose.
6. Thoroughly evaluate the program and revenue progress of potential circuit rider/recreation directors. Take steps to increase the stabilization of funding for recreation to ensure the long-term viability of the recreation director position.
7. Continue the education and outreach program as part of a partnership program and hopefully with grant funding to hire outside contractors.
8. Consider undertaking a public opinion survey to ascertain if the implementation of the plan is creating more awareness and support for open space, greenways, and recreation.
9. Continue to support conservation of natural resource lands, agricultural lands, open space, and greenways through outreach, education, coordination, and assistance to municipalities and their partners and landowners.
10. Target the development of three additional public access points along the Upper Section of the Juniata River Water Trail. Facilitate discussions with the municipalities of each proposed location, the PA Fish and Boat

Commission, and the Allegheny Ridge Corporation.

11. Continue to act as a facilitator of park and recreation initiatives and support the municipalities in their efforts to expand parks and recreation facilities to citizens.
12. Continue to work with municipalities, conservation organizations, government agencies, and landowners to connect the Counties and region with greenways and trails. Focus on momentum building projects that illustrate the benefits and opportunities associated with greenways, trails, and safe bicycle routes.

Action Plans

The major implementation tasks of the Juniata/Mifflin County Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan are listed in the following action plans that correspond to the Plan's five goals.

Goal 1: Preserve the scenic rural character of Juniata and Mifflin Counties through open space conservation.			
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2010-2012	2013-2019
County Planning Departments, Conservation Districts, and the Agricultural Preservation Program should continue to provide technical assistance to landowners.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Develop a strategic education and outreach program for municipalities, landowners, and citizens working in partnership with conservation organizations.	Staff time	√	⇒
▪ Apply for grant funding for this program	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Develop and adopt conservation ordinance that protect sensitive natural resources. Provide model ordinance language to municipalities.	Staff time	√	
Work with municipalities with existing ordinances to complete Growing Greener Ordinance Assessments.	Staff time	√	
County Planning Departments should serve as local planning agencies to provide conservation ordinances to municipalities without local codes.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Invest in boroughs and villages to retain residents and attract businesses. Direct growth towards defined growth areas.	Staff time, DCNR, DCED	⇒	⇒
Encourage municipalities to join together to develop regional open space and comprehensive plans.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Develop a strategic approach to achieving the conservation priorities for the areas shown on the Targeted Conservation Maps.	Staff time with assistance from state agencies and conservation organizations		√
Advocate for additional Commonwealth funding for the Farmland Preservation Program.	Staff time, Conservation Districts	√	⇒
Develop a program to recruit farmers to the area.	Staff time, Conservation Districts		√
Create a farmers forum for discussion and advocacy of common issues.	Staff time, Conservation Districts		√
Partner with conservancies and state agencies to seek conservation easements.	Staff time with assistance from state agencies and conservation organizations	⇒	⇒
Adopt the concept of cultural heritage landscape for the Big Valley and tie planning efforts to protecting this landscape.	Staff time		√

Goal 2: Connect the Counties and the region beyond through a network of greenways and trails.			
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2010-2012	2013-2019
Promote greenways and trails through ordinance provisions, the land development process, and public education and outreach.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Design a public outreach and education program for landowners about greenway and trail issues.	Staff time, conservation organizations		√
Coordinate greenway and trail planning with adjacent counties, municipalities, public agencies, and organizations.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Create a bicycle advisory board to develop a county-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan for each County.	Staff time, volunteers		√
Team with the Juniata River Valley Visitor Bureau, advocates for children’s health and fitness and the environment, and Indian Valley High School to develop promotional information about bike routes and trails.	Staff time		√
Define trail, bike route, and paddle segments that interconnect.	Staff time		√
Seek funding for trail feasibility studies and development for the two pilot trail projects.	DCNR grant/Staff time		√
Work with JCWP to develop interpretative signs along the Main Line Canal Greenway	Staff time	√	
Define parcels and seek funding to acquire additional public river access.	Staff time, PA F&BC		√
Evaluate land ownership status of natural greenways and develop conservation strategies. Share natural resource management information with landowners.	Staff time, conservation organizations, state agencies	√	
Acquire conservation easements to protect natural greenways.	Staff time, conservation organizations	⇒	⇒
Seek funding and undertake a feasibility study for a pilot trail project.	DCNR grant/Staff time	√	
Work with PennDOT, municipalities and public agencies to promote safe convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel.	Staff time, municipalities, PennDOT, public agencies	√	⇒
Seek funding for safe routes to schools	PennDOT funding, DCNR, staff time	√	

Goal 3: Foster and promote recreation opportunities to advance active healthy lifestyles year round for people who live, work, and visit here.			
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2010-2012	2013-2019
County Planning Departments should be clearinghouse for park and recreation information.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
County Planning Departments should provide mandatory dedication model language to municipalities and adopt County mandatory dedication ordinances.	Staff time, municipalities	√	
Explore opportunities for revitalization and redevelopment of deteriorated sites through parks and advocate for parks as economic development.	Staff time, DCNR, DCED	⇒	⇒
Explore recreation opportunities on a bi-county basis.	Staff time, DCNR		√
Meet with municipalities to discuss partnering on parkland to fund, acquire, develop, and operate regional parks. Seek funding for regional parks and recreation facilities.	Staff time, municipalities, DCNR	√	⇒
Adopt the position through this plan that the counties will not directly provide recreation programs but will work to support recreation programming efforts providers by other organizations.	Staff time and policy foundation.	⇒	⇒
Focus on three areas to support recreation programs and services: active lifestyles, environmental opportunities to get people outside, and tourism.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with United Way and the future recreation organization that may emerge from the Peer Study that is underway to facilitate active healthy lifestyle programs and services. 	Staff time, volunteers, community org. PANA potential funding. Potential support Lewistown Hospital. School Districts' support for youth services.	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the establishment of an environmental education program in Juniata and Mifflin Counties 	Staff time. Partnerships with state lands' managers. Coordinate with School Districts. Potential support from PSU.		√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand or establish tourism destinations and attractions based on outdoor recreation, cultural heritage features, and agri-tourism. 	Coordinate with state lands organizations. Explore agri-tourism with the Agricultural Pres. Program. Partner with Tourism Bureau.		√
Work with municipalities, the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau, Lewistown Main Street, the Chamber of Commerce, Lewistown Hospital, and others to facilitate and encourage the promotion of recreation opportunities, the benefits of participation, and locations.	Staff time for coordination	√	⇒

Goal 4:			
Organize and manage open space conservation, greenways, and rural recreation through partnerships for the greatest public benefit and responsible use of resources.			
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2010-2012	2013-2019
Continue to provide professional planning assistance to municipalities regarding community planning, open space, greenways, trails and recreation.	Staff time.	⇒	⇒
Serve as a clearinghouse of information from municipalities, landowners, developers, and community organizations about greenways, open space and recreation.	Staff time. Strive to use the WEB as a mechanism over time.	√	⇒
Develop and implement an outreach and education program for municipalities, landowners, community organizations and the general citizenry about open space conservation and ways to preserve open space.	Staff time. Work with partner organization on this such as the Juniata Clean Water Partnership. Secure grant from PADCNr to undertake the educational program.		√
Create a Juniata Mifflin Conservancy.	Staff time. Assistance from an existing conservancy or land trust such as the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy. Strive to get a community champion to take this on.		√
Undertake the Mifflin County Peer Study to explore regional recreation opportunities.	\$10,000 grant from PADCNr. \$200 from each participating municipality	√	
Determine Viability of Mifflin County Circuit Rider who would serve as a regional parks and recreation director over four years.	\$100,000 PADCNr grant over four years. \$60,000 over four years split by participating municipalities.	√	⇒
Undertake the Juniata County Peer Study to explore regional recreation opportunities.	\$100,000 grant from PADCNr. \$1,000 match split among \$ participating municipalities	√	
Determine viability of Juniata County Circuit Rider who would serve as a regional parks and recreation director over four years.	\$100,000 PADCNr grant over four years. \$60,000 over four years split by participating municipalities.		√

Goal 4: continued			
Organize and manage open space conservation, greenways, and rural recreation through partnerships for the greatest public benefit and responsible use of resources.			
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2010-2012	2013-2019
Form the Open Space Board and carry it forward.	Staff time.	√	⇒
Hire an Open Space Coordinator	TBD		√
Consider retaining seasonal, short term or outside assistance for special projects in planning, outreach, education and so on that would be of a specific short term duration.	Variable. Advantage is that independent contractors do not require benefits and payroll taxes.		
Form the Juniata Mifflin Trails Advisory Board	Staff time to set up and coordinate with. Use a trail champion(s) to manage the committee and coordinate with the counties.	√	⇒
Work in partnership with community organizations to encourage recreation throughout the counties. This includes United Way, Communities That Care, PANA and others.	Staff time	⇒	⇒
Work with state and regional organizations to position Juniata and Mifflin Counties as part of initiatives, projects, programs and destinations. SEDA COG, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Juniata Clean Water Partnership, Main Line Canal Greenway.	Staff time.	⇒	⇒
Coordinate county and tourism planning with the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau.		⇒	⇒

Goal 5:			
Invest in open space, parks, and recreation to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and contribute to the economic vitality of Juniata and Mifflin Counties.			
Project Key √ Start Project ⇒ Continue Implementation	Cost/Source	2010-2012	2013-2019
Invest in increasing staff for planning.	County funds. TBD. Investment will result in return through land preservation, grants, and programs.	√	⇒
Consider county open space program for open space conservation, increased funding for farmland preservation, parks, greenways and trails.	Start with an initial investment of \$2-4 million focused on high visibility with likelihood of success and public support.		√
Provide information to municipalities on potential resources they could tap to support open space such as dedicated tax millage, Earned Income Tax increment. Also provide information on the benefits of investing in open space.	Staff time.	⇒	⇒
Provide planning assistance to municipalities on land use planning as the chief method of open space conservation.	Without funds for acquisitions and conservation easements, local land use planning is crucial.	√	⇒

Potential Partners of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Conservation Partners

- Municipalities
- Conservation Districts
- Agricultural Preservation Program
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Juniata Clean Water Partnership
- Allegheny Ridge Corporation
- Future Farmers of America
- Private Landowners
- Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporations
- Main Street and Elm Street Program Managers
- Mifflin and Juniata County Farm Bureaus

New Partner Needed

A conservancy dedicated to Juniata and Mifflin Counties needs to be established. In the interim, partnering with the Juniata Clean Water Partnership could serve to advance land conservation and educational outreach efforts.

Greenway Partners

- Municipalities
- Juniata County Conservation District
- Mifflin County Conservation District
- Allegheny Ridge Corporation
- Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
- PennDOT
- Bicycle clubs and businesses
- Hiking clubs
- Communities that Care
- PANA
- Lewistown Hospital
- Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau
- Juniata Mifflin Chamber of Commerce
- Mifflin County School District
- Juniata County School District

- High School Physical Education Staff
- High School Clubs
- Juniata Clean Water Partnership
- 4-H
- Juniata Valley YMCA
- Trout Unlimited
- Reeds Gap State Park
- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- PADCNR
- State Forest Districts
- Fayette Area Lion's Den

Recreation Partners

- Municipalities
- United Way
- MJ PATH
- Communities that Care
- Mifflin County Playground Association
- PANA
- Lewistown Hospital
- Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau
- Mifflin County School District
- Juniata County School District
- High School Physical Education Staff
- High School Clubs
- Main Line Canal Greenway
- Juniata Clean Water Partnership
- Future Farmers of America
- 4-H
- Juniata Valley YMCA
- DeLauter Center
- Lumina Center
- Fayette Area Lion's Den
- Community Sports Organizations
- Campgrounds
- Trout Unlimited
- Nature centers in the region
- Reeds Gap State Park
- Environmental Education Center of Penn State University

Management and Financing Partners

- Municipalities
- Mifflin County COG
- SEDA COG

- Juniata County School District
- Mifflin County School District
- United Way
- Communities That Care
- Juniata Clean Water Partnership
- Main Line Canal Greenway
- Allegheny Ridge Corporation
- Susquehanna Greenway
- Lewistown Main Street Program
- Juniata River Valley Tourism Bureau
- PANA
- Bureau of State Parks
- Bureau of State Forestry
- Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Area cyclists
- Juniata Valley YMCA
- Community center staff
- Proposed Conservancy
- Community organizations and sports groups
- Regional sportsmen's groups
- Campgrounds
- Penn State University
- Fayette Area Lion's Den

How Can We Begin Implementation?

While it might appear that the job is complete because the plan is written, the work has only begun. Implementing the Juniata/Mifflin Counties Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan in actuality is not one step, but more of an ongoing process of planning, doing, assessing effectiveness, and beginning the process anew over the next ten years to bring the counties ever closer to reaching its parks and recreation goals. For implementation, an operational plan is needed. The operational plan will describe the specific actions that will be taken to accomplish each objective identified in **Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan**. The operational plan will identify timelines, responsible parties, resource allocations and sources, and an evaluation plan that will identify specific outcomes to be achieved. It is usually developed as an annual work program. The **Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan** focuses on the *what*. The

operational plan focuses on the *how*. The operational plan should include the following:

- **Action Items** – Identify the specific tasks that should be done to achieve the identified objective.
- **Responsible Parties** – Designate the staff members, committees, partners or others who will be accountable for accomplishing each task.
- **Schedule** – Create the exact dates in months and years for accomplishment of the task. Set milestones for important accomplishments by specific date.
- **Resource Requirements and Sources** – List all of the funds, materials, equipment, facilities and so on required to accomplish the task. Provide the source of these resources including the Counties, partners, sponsors, fees and charges, or others.
- **Outcomes** – Specify the anticipated results to be achieved by the specified timeline.
- **Evaluation Measure** – Establish indicators to show if the effort has been successful.

Ensuring Success for the Operational Plan

Each County should prepare its own operational plan which should include coordination between the two Counties. Generally, the lead staff professional of each County such as the planning director, prepares the bulk of the operational plan that is used for an annual work program in consultation with the County Commissioners. The Juniata Mifflin Open Space Board, if established, could provide input and review of the operational plans and recommend them to the Board of Commissioners.

To get started, consider having a “retreat” of key staff, key stakeholders, and potentially Open Space Board members to identify how to kick-start this plan. Include a liaison from the County Board of Commissioners. Plan this ahead thoroughly to get the maximum benefit. Consider applying for a PADCNr RecTAP grant of \$1,500 with no match required to hire an outside facilitator. The retreat

could be by single County or a combined retreat of both Counties allowing individual time within the retreat for each county.

Based on the outcomes of the retreat, the lead County staff professional would create the operational plan for the next fiscal year. It should address all of the functional areas of greenways, open space, and recreation including programs, management, parks, recreation facilities, education and outreach, and financing. The operational plan links the work of the County departments such as the planning departments and the proposed Open Space Board to the recommendations of **the Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan.**

Establish scheduled review meetings to keep implementation and use of the plan front and center. Hold these quarterly or schedule them strategically. Keep this plan before key stakeholders. The plan should be out and used regularly. All outcomes should refer to plan implementation. It is easy to get distracted in routine activities but the plan needs to be in use in all County, regional and township planning and decision-making boards. The Commissioners, Planning, Environmental Advisory Committees, municipal planning boards and parks and recreation boards, and other related boards and commissions all need to have the plan and refer to it repeatedly so that there is an on-going link to this plan.

The plan serves as a guide; it is not carved in stone. It is intended to seize opportunities and meet emerging needs as circumstances warrant. The *process* of implementing the plan is ongoing and continuous, not a one time event, as set forth in the operational plan.

Juniata County and Mifflin County should move ahead with the plan as adopted, but be prepared to let go and switch strategies as necessary. Flexibility, patience, and adaptability will be essential in creating a greenway, open space, and recreation system that suits the scenic rural character and the prized quality of life of the area. The development and execution of a plan such as this helps to achieve successes along the way that build momentum and public support. Success breeds success. While initially daunting, those involved with plan

implementation gain significantly from the experience and find new ways and strategies to generate future achievements. This experience helps to strengthen strategies and capacity every year. With a tangible plan and a sound implementation process in place Juniata and Mifflin Counties are likely to conserve open space, provide community connections, and a host of recreation opportunities that will be a community treasure, a source of economic vitality, and a reason to live, work, and play here.

