



Chapter 1

Juniata and Mifflin Counties Introduction

Introduction: The Plan and the Process

Scenic Views

Natural Areas

Farmland

Open Space

Historic Properties

The Great Outdoors

These important resources are the hallmark of Juniata and Mifflin Counties, a place renowned for its beautiful scenery and peaceful way of life.

Preserving Our Way of Life

The open spaces of Juniata and Mifflin Counties are the foundation for the way of life here. Agriculture is the chief industry. Outdoor recreation serves the residents and can attract tourists. By making the counties an attractive place to be, open space, parks, greenways and recreation can have a strong economic impact directly through farming and tourism and indirectly by making the region a more attractive place for knowledge based workers and business of the future.

Yet as the Counties become developed, the cultural heritage landscape with its bountiful outdoor resources is in jeopardy. Development pressure from the Harrisburg and State College areas into this scenic, affordable area is evident. Major highway improvements have made driving to Harrisburg and State College from this area convenient for commuters to the state capitol and Penn State University.

This plan, **The Juniata/Mifflin County Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan** is intended to guide open space planning and decision-making through the year 2019. This plan advocates continued and expanded support for the counties' agricultural preservation program, lists high priority natural areas that should be conserved, prescribes new and improved parks, and conceptualizes important ways to create an interconnected greenway

system that benefits citizens as well as wildlife. In addition to recommendations for the physical resources, the plan fosters support for the organizational, management, and funding mechanisms that need to be in place to successfully achieve a vision of a green and connected region rooted in a rural agrarian way of life for many generations yet to come.



Rising to the Challenge

While about 100,000 acres of land is protected in Juniata and Mifflin Counties through state ownership, agricultural conservation, public parks and conservancy lands, this represents only about 19 percent of the total land area of these Counties. Taking into account land that is already developed, fully 66 percent of the land area of these counties is vulnerable to development. Today's severe economic crisis offers one important benefit to Juniata and Mifflin Counties: it is providing time for the counties to plan and put systems into place that will help to conserve the important landscape, open spaces, and natural features before they are lost to development. It will also help the Counties and their partners to position the Counties for important economic development gains to be made in the future through an invigorated agricultural base, enhanced tourism, attraction of businesses and knowledge based workers to this high quality of life area, and establishment of outdoor recreation as a destination in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Definitions

What are Greenways?

Greenways are natural corridors that contain and/or link open space, natural, and cultural resources. Greenways differ in their location and function, but overall will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources; provide recreational benefits; enhance natural beauty and the quality of life in communities; and stimulate economic development. Some greenways are recreational corridors or scenic byways that may accommodate motorized and non-motorized vehicles. Others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage. Greenways vary greatly in scale, from narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wider corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural and scenic features. They can incorporate both public and private property and be land or water based. They may follow old railways, canals, ridge tops, stream corridors, shorelines, or wetlands, and could include water trails.

What is Open Space?

For this plan, Open Space includes the land and water features of the natural landscape that have not been developed for intensive human uses, such as housing, business, and industrial sites. Open Space

- *Protects natural resources;*
- *Provides for outdoor recreation, parks, natural areas, trails, and/or nature observatories;*
- *Provides for natural resource management in forests, farmland, and fisheries;*
- *Secures public health and safety by protecting water, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes;*
- *Contributes to community character by protecting cultural, archeological, and/or historic resources;*
- *Creates connections through greenways that are predominantly natural corridors that contain and/or link open space and natural and cultural resources and communities.*

Open Space may include lands that are dedicated and restricted to open space uses as well as managed open space, which is land that is used or preserved for some purpose other than open space but that provides open space characteristics such as farmland, golf courses, and others.

What is Recreation?

Recreation includes activities one chooses to do, based upon their value as being enjoyable, satisfying, interesting, diverting, or otherwise capable of sustaining pleasure for that individual. Recreation preferences vary greatly among individuals. This plan focuses on two aspects of recreation: outdoor recreation and community based recreation.

Outdoor recreation is the hallmark of recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, cycling, and picnicking opportunities are plentiful here in the great outdoors. Outdoor activities can create opportunities for independence, closeness to nature, and a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. These can include wildlife watching, nature study, non-motorized boating, fishing, hiking, walking, and other activities generally in harmony with protecting the natural environment.

Community recreation provides the close-to-home recreation opportunities within minutes of every residence. As in most rural communities, it is rooted in volunteerism with most major public recreation facilities being located in boroughs and the larger townships. Traditional recreation programs focus on youth, summer playgrounds, swimming pools, and organized sports. In addition, numerous community special events and fairs occur throughout the Counties under the auspices of private organizations.

The Plan

To advance these opportunities and create a conserved connected bi-county open space system, this Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan proposes to:

- Preserve important open space.
- Create greenways and an interconnected system of trails.
- Conserve the historic landscape.
- Protect natural resources.
- Strengthen agricultural preservation to conserve farmland and secure the rural way of life treasured by the citizens.
- Expand the public park system for people who live, work and visit here
- Provide a strategy to plan, operate manage and fund the open space system in Juniata County and Mifflin County through a mix of public and private partners.

The Benefits

Mifflin and Juniata Counties will reap extensive benefits from moving ahead with the implementation of this plan. Preserved agricultural, natural and historic resources along with an interconnected open space network with plenty of outdoor recreation opportunities helps to:

- Attract and retain businesses.
- Increase property values.
- Improve the health and wellness of a community while reducing health care costs.
- Extend the average life expectancy while increasing the quality of the lives of the citizens.
- Protect the environment.
- Build a sense of community.

- Enhance tourism as an important economic engine.
- Help to retain youth in the area and prevent the “brain drain”.
- Reduce the isolation of the elderly by providing social connections.
- Support and strengthens agriculture as an industry and a way of life.

The Process

The **Juniata/Mifflin County Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan** is part of the county comprehensive plans of each County. Juniata County is undertaking this regional plan in conjunction with the development of its comprehensive plan while Mifflin County is undertaking it as an extension of its comprehensive plan adopted in 2000.

The development of the **Juniata/Mifflin County Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan** was underway in 2007-2009. The planning team included Director of the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; a planner serving Juniata County through a shared position with the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department; and the consulting team of Yost Strodoski Mears, Toole Recreation Planning, and Rettew Associates, Inc. A bi-county Study Committee representing a broad range of interests, including but not limited to: agriculture, conservation, education, recreation, community organizations, recreation providers, the justice system, elected and appointed officials, tourism, planning, economic development and land-use planning. The Study Committee helped to guide the direction of the plan and assist the staff and consultants in collecting data, conducting interviews and other public participation activities, and reviewing the draft plan and maps.

Phases of Plan Preparation

The **Juniata/Mifflin County Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan** included seven phases that all incorporated involvement by

the public and County officials.

1. Inventory and Analysis of existing open space, natural and cultural resources; parks and recreation facilities; recreation opportunities, operations, management, and finance. This included the production of reports on demographics; agriculture; natural resources; public and protected open space; park and recreation areas; greenways and trails; historic and cultural sites; recreation opportunities; conservation; and management and financing.
2. Development of conclusions and options regarding the strengths, challenges, and opportunities and potential recommendations regarding open space, greenways, parks, and recreation.
4. Creation of vision, mission, goals, guiding principles, and objectives for the plan.
5. Identification of an action plan with a schedule for implementation, potential partners, costs, and revenue sources.
6. Production of the plan including drafts for review by County planners, the Study Committee, County officials, and the public. The plan was revised in according to comments received and considered.
7. Plan adoption by Juniata and Mifflin Counties Boards of Commissioners

Public Participation

Public participation was the foundation of the planning process. A six-part community involvement program featured the Study Committee, a direct mail public opinion survey, key person interviews, focus groups, public meetings, and regional meetings with municipal officials in Juniata County and the Mifflin County COG (Council of Governments).

The focus groups and the regional meetings with municipal officials were structured to obtain information about specific topics and localized interests that vary by geographic location in the region. These topics included trails and cycling,

educational programs, tourism, municipal issues, and agriculture. Findings from the public involvement process are presented in Chapter 2: Profile of Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this plan a law?

No, it is a guide. The elected and appointed officials in Juniata and Mifflin Counties will use the plan to make informed decisions and set policy relative to parks and recreation. The municipalities can adopt this plan as their open space, greenway, and recreation plan. They can adapt it for their own specific opportunities and interests.

What will the plan do?

The plan will focus planning on opportunities, issues, and public interests that can be addressed through open space, greenways, and recreation. It provides a common framework for decision-making and sets forth recommendations and strategies to improve the quality of life in the bi-county region.

What will the plan *not* do?

The plan does not mandate or require actions. It does not preclude adding new projects based upon trends, changing needs, and emerging opportunities. The intent of the plan is to provide an overall framework and guidelines to improve the Counties through open space conservation, greenways, and recreation.

How will the plan be used?

The plan is intended to be a living document that will play a role in the decisions the Counties and their partners make about open space, greenways, trails, parks, recreation, financing, organization and management, and related efforts. This plan serves as a reference document and a framework for overall regional and collaborative planning. It is essential that all related boards and commissions incorporate this plan into their own planning efforts in related areas including land development; open space conservation; trail, park and recreation facility planning; and capital improvement planning and municipal financing.

Each County should review the plan annually prior to budget season. Through this review by designated officials, accomplishments, needs, and opportunities should be identified. Actions should be adapted to changing circumstances in the pursuit of the goals identified. Budgets could then be based on the formulation of an action plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The plan will facilitate the counties working together on projects and programs in an effort to target resources to community needs.

A key factor in making Pennsylvania attractive as a place for businesses and workers to come and stay is quality of life. The industries Pennsylvania needs to retain and attract have a choice of where to locate. Increasingly, they judge a location not by traditional measures – tax rates, access to markets, the quality of the workforce – but as a place where the workers they need will want to call home. This means a clean, safe environment, vibrant towns and neighborhoods, opportunities for outdoor recreation and entertainment and abundant open space.

Governor Edward Rendell



Chapter 2

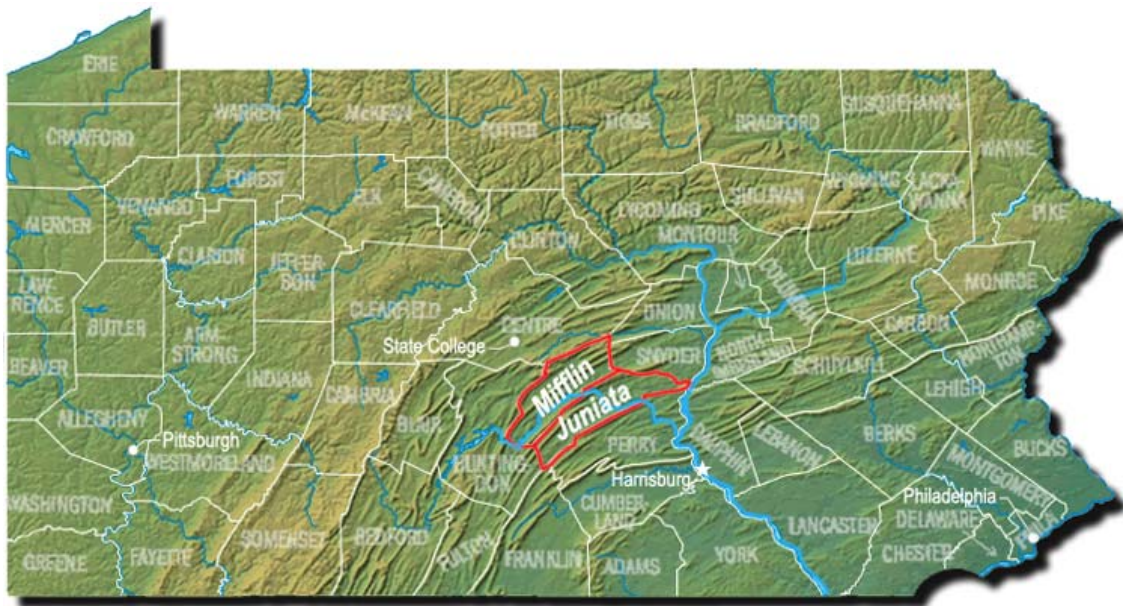
Juniata and Mifflin Counties Profile

Location

Located in the heart of Pennsylvania, Mifflin and Juniata Counties are nestled in the beautiful Juniata River Valley surrounded by the Appalachian Mountains. To the southeast, Pennsylvania's capital city of Harrisburg is an hour away. State College, the home of the Pennsylvania State University, is less than an hour to the north. This part of Pennsylvania is within about a day's drive of 40 percent of the population of the United States¹. According to the Pennsylvania State Data Center, Juniata County covers 393.57 square miles. Mifflin County covers 414.60 square miles². Combined, the land area is 808.17 square miles, about 80 percent of the size of the state of Rhode Island.

The Indian name Juniata is said to mean "people of the standing stone."³

The Pennsylvania Canal was the backbone of the early economy beginning in 1826, followed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the late 1840s. The canal closed about 1900, and the Tuscarora Valley Railroad closed in 1934. Kosher poultry production is the biggest industry. Farms cover 36.6 percent of the land. Dairy, poultry, farming and fruit are predominant industries throughout the County. Juniata is the fourth largest poultry-producing county in the state. The largest industry in Juniata County is Empire Kosher. Founded in Liberty, NY in 1938, it is the world's largest kosher poultry processing plant. Empire has its



History

Juniata County

Named for the Juniata River, Juniata County was created in 1831 from part of Mifflin County. Mifflintown, the County seat, was named for Governor Thomas Mifflin.

own hatchery, feed mill, and network of local contract farmers who grow free roaming chickens and turkeys for kosher processing. Their product line encompasses 650 different strictly kosher items, from fresh chicken cutlets and fat free cooked turkey breast to pizza. Distributed to kosher butcher shops, supermarkets, and gourmet stores nationwide, Empire also exports its premium quality products to five continents.

Though the farming industry and Empire Kosher

¹ <http://www.pennsylvaniashheartland.com/region.htm>. Pennsylvania's Heartland. About the Region. Downloaded 6/20/08.

² Pennsylvania State Data Center. **Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2000**. Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data. Geographic Area: Pennsylvania – County. Harrisburg, PA.

³ Herberling, Paul. 2007. A Few Notes on the American Indian Presence in the Juniata Valley. Huntingdon: Juniata College. P 2. Juniata Water Trail Guide P2. Pennsylvania's Travel Guide Where & When. P1.

are stalwarts in the County, Juniata County has seen a continually expanding Industrial Park that provides an ever-increasing number of manufacturing jobs in the county⁴.

Mifflin County

Also named for Governor Thomas Mifflin, Mifflin County was created from parts of Cumberland and Northumberland Counties in 1789. The first settlers arrived in 1745. The area was involved in the Indian raids of 1755 to 1763. Fort Granville fell to Indian assault in 1756. The topographical division at the Narrows created a rivalry between Lewistown and Mifflintown for designation as the county seat. The formation of Juniata County settled the matter. In 1829, the Pennsylvania Canal was created. In 1849, the Pennsylvania Railroad arrived. Soon, the discovery of iron ore and the making of iron at Freedom Forge in 1775 caused the economy to flourish. During this time in 1783, the Scotch-Irish traders were joined by an inflow of German farmers from Northampton and Berks Counties and Amish moving north from Lancaster.⁵ In 1798, William Lewis founded the Hope Furnace. By 1836, five such furnaces were in operation, and iron and charcoal began to replace fur and grain as the largest local economic pursuits. The Kishacoquillas Valley is fertile and limestone, glass quality sand, silica sand, and ganister are profitable resources. Iron and steel were once produced, leaving in their trail the current trades of fabricated forgings, rolled rings, and railroad wheels and axles. Thirty percent of the work force is still engaged in manufacturing. One-third of the area is in farmland. Dairy production is high.

Demographics

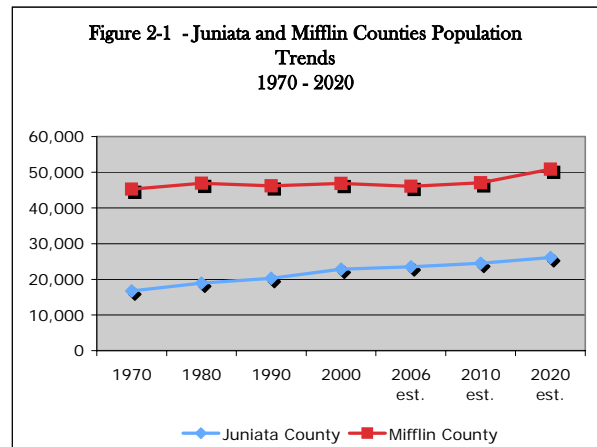
The estimated 2007 population of Juniata County was 23,168 and Mifflin County was 46,941⁶.

According to the 2000 census, Juniata County ranked 61 and Mifflin County 45 in population among Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

Juniata and Mifflin Counties have a largely rural and Caucasian population base. The cost of living here is less than elsewhere in Pennsylvania and the United States. Rural counties have lower costs for the cost of living including groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, insurance, taxes, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services.

County Population Changes

Juniata County has been experiencing growth while Mifflin County's population has been fluctuating. The population in both counties is projected to increase through 2020. Figure 2-1 presents the population trends from 1980 through the 2020 projections.



Juniata County saw a substantial population growth much greater than the growth of the State, since 1970. This includes a 7.48 percent change in growth between 1980 and 1990 and 10.65 percent from 1990 to 2000. This was nearly triple the state's growth of 3.36 percent.

Mifflin County's population has been hovering at about 45,000 to 46,500 since 1970. The major factor in population trends for Mifflin County is population shifts with declining borough populations and increasing township populations. The result is a hollowing out of the urban core in

⁴ http://www.co.juniata.pa.us/juniata_desc.php. Juniata

⁵ Mifflin County Comprehensive Plan. 2000. Lewistown, PA: Mifflin County Planning Commission. P 1-3.

⁶ Pennsylvania State Data Center. **Estimated Population by Race and Ethnicity: Pennsylvania Counties, 2007**. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State Data Center.

the boroughs and increased land consumption even though the population has been trending towards declining.

Municipal Population Changes

Within the jurisdictions in both Counties are many villages and locations known by more common names such as Reedsville, Mount Pleasant Mills, and others. Juniata County has 17 municipalities including four boroughs and 13 townships. Table 2-1 presents the population for the municipalities in Juniata County. It shows that the population of all of the municipalities has increased except for two boroughs, Mifflin and Mifflintown. Over half of the municipalities experienced double digit gains.

Table 2-1 - Juniata County Municipal Population Trends 1990-2000				
Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	Numeric Change 1990- 2000	% Change
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	399,411	3.36
Juniata County	20,625	22,821	2,196	10.65
Boroughs				
Mifflin	660	627	-33	-5.00
Mifflintown	866	861	-5	-0.58
Port Royal	836	977	141	16.87
Thompsontown	582	711	129	22.16
Total	2944	3176	232	7.8
Townships				
Beale	629	726	97	15.42
Delaware	1,440	1,464	24	1.67
Fayette	3,002	3,252	250	8.33
Fermanagh	2,249	2,544	295	13.12
Greenwood	493	548	55	11.16
Lack	714	750	36	5.04
Milford	1,429	1,758	329	23.02
Monroe	1,800	2,042	242	13.44
Spruce Hill	694	724	30	4.32
Susquehanna	1,022	1,261	239	23.39
Turbett	779	819	40	5.13
Tuscarora	1,099	1,159	60	5.46
Walker	2,331	2,598	267	11.45
Total	17,681	19,645	1,964	11.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Mifflin County has 16 municipalities including six boroughs and 10 townships. Table 2-2 presents the population for the municipalities in Mifflin County. It shows that half of the

municipalities, including six of the seven boroughs and two townships, lost population between 1990 and 2000.

Table 2-2 - Mifflin County Municipal Population Trends 1990-2000				
Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	Numeric Change 1990- 2000	% Change
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	399,411	3.36
Mifflin County	46,197	46,486	289	.6
Boroughs				
Burnham	2,197	2,144	-53	-2.4
Juniata Terrace	556	502	-54	-9.7
Kistler	314	344	30	9.6
Lewistown	9,341	8,998	-343	-3.7
McVeytown	408	405	-3	-.7
Newton Hamilton	287	272	-15	-5.2
Total	13,103	12,665	-438	-3.3
Townships				
Armagh	3,627	3,998	371	10.2
Bratton	1,427	1,259	-168	-11.8
Brown	3,320	3,852	532	16
Decatur	2,735	3,021	286	10.5
Derry	7,650	7,256	-394	-5.1
Granville	5,090	4,895	-195	-3.8
Menno	1,637	1,763	126	7.7
Oliver	1,822	2,060	238	13
Union	3,265	3,313	48	1.5
Wayne	2,521	2,414	-107	-4.2
Total	33,094	33,831	737	2.2

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; PA State Data Center.

What Change is Significant?
The U.S. Bureau of the Census considers a change of 2.5 percent to be significant.

Population Projections

Projections are based upon a linear projection model, which determines future growth on a steady rate of increase or decline from historic population figures.

County Projections

The Counties are experiencing population increases in areas with convenient access to employment centers in Harrisburg and State College. Interviews and anecdotal information

Juniata and Mifflin Counties Profile

revealed that the relatively lower cost of housing here is attracting people from these areas. The population projections for Juniata and Mifflin Counties are in Table 2-3.

County	2000 Actual	2010	2020	Numeric Change 2000 - 2020	% Change 2000 - 2020
Juniata	22,821	24,463	26,071	3,250	14%
Mifflin	46,486	47,062	50,862	4,016	9%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Mifflin County Public Sewer Plan; Juniata County Comprehensive Plan

Municipal Population Projections

Table 2-4 lists the population projections for Juniata County. Table 2-5 lists the population projections for Mifflin County.

Municipality	2000 Actual	2010	2020	Numeric Change 2000-2020	% Change 2000 - 2020
Boroughs					
Mifflin	627	596	575	-52	-8%
Mifflintown	861	839	861	0	0
Port Royal	977	963	998	21	2
Thompson-town	711	704	726	15	2
Total	3,176	3,102	3,160	-16	.5
Townships					
Beale	726	764	821	95	13%
Delaware	1,464	1,676	1,811	437	24
Fayette	3,252	3,655	4,006	744	23
Fermanagh	2,544	2,817	2,975	431	17
Greenwood	548	601	618	70	13
Lack	750	721	733	17	2
Milford	1,758	1,882	2,054	296	17
Monroe	2,042	2,193	2,293	251	12
Spruce Hill	724	760	798	74	10
Susquehanna	1,261	1,392	1,521	260	21
Turbett	819	905	963	144	18
Tuscarora	1,159	1,202	1,211	52	4
Walker	2,598	2,790	3,015	417	16
Total	19,645	21,358	22,819	3,174	16

Source: Adapted from Juniata County Comprehensive Plan

Municipality	2000 Actual	2010	2020	Numeric Change 2000-2020	% Change 2000 - 2020
Boroughs					
Burnham	2,144	1,942	1,779	-365	-17%
Juniata Terrace	502	414	332	-170	-34
Kistler	344	313	298	-46	-13
Lewistown	8,998	7,669	6,765	-2,233	-25
McVeytown	405	380	355	-50	-12
Newton Hamilton	272	264	251	-21	-8
Total	12,665	10,982	9,780	-2885	-23
Townships					
Armagh	3,998	4,142	4,328	330	8%
Bratton	1,259	1,433	1,479	220	17
Brown	3,852	4,161	4,589	737	19
Decatur	3,021	3,318	3,604	583	19
Derry	7,256	7,656	7,845	589	8
Granville	4,895	5,226	5,434	539	11
Menno	1,763	1,957	2,113	350	20
Oliver	2,060	2,190	2,346	286	14
Union	3,313	3,535	3,699	386	12
Wayne	2,414	2,853	3,078	664	27
Total	33,831	36,471	38,515	4,684	14

Source: Adapted from Mifflin County Public Sewer Plan

Age

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Juniata and Mifflin Counties have very similar age profiles as show in Table 2-6. The median age for each County is about 38 years. The largest percentage of each county's population (about 15%) is between the ages of 35 and 44, followed closely by 45 to 54 year olds (13%) and 25 to 34 year olds (13%).

Over the next twenty years, the people in these groups will age and move into higher age brackets. Residents 45 and older will comprise a large portion of each County toward the year 2020. The median age of Pennsylvania is 38.0, approximately that of Juniata (37.7) and Mifflin (38.8) Counties.

Age Group	Juniata County	Mifflin County
Under 5 yrs.	6.5%	6.3%
5 - 9 yrs.	7.0	6.9
10 - 14 yrs.	7.3	7.3
15 - 19 yrs.	6.6	6.3
20 - 24 yrs.	5.6	4.9
25 - 34 yrs.	12.8	12.7
35 - 44 yrs.	15.2	14.7
45 - 54 yrs.	13.6	13.3
55 - 59 yrs.	5.4	5.8
60 - 64 yrs.	4.9	4.8
65 - 74 yrs.	8.2	8.8
75 - 84 yrs.	5.0	6.1
85 yrs +	2.0	2.1
Total	100%	100%
Median Age	37.7	38.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Race and Ancestry

Juniata and Mifflin Counties have a similar racial composition. According to Census 2000, about 98 percent of the residents in each county are White. In 2007, the Latino population of Juniata County was about two percent (1.98%). Mifflin County's was .7 percent (.7%)⁷. About .5 percent is African American, with other races accounting for less than one percent of each County's population. While the ancestry of residents in the bi-county area is very diverse, about one-third declares German ancestry, contributing to the Pennsylvania Dutch culture.

The Amish

The area is home to one of the largest Amish populations in the east. Five different Amish groups are represented. Most of the Amish live in the Big Valley.

Education

The education level of residents age 25 and over is improving in each county. Table 2-7 shows a clear increase in the percentage of residents who have graduated from high school and who hold bachelor's degrees or higher. Statewide about 22

percent of Pennsylvanians hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

	Juniata County		Mifflin County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than 9 th grade	NA	10.1%	NA	8.9%
9 th - 12 th grade		15.3		13.8
HS graduate		51.8		52.1
Some college, no degree		9.5		10.2
Associates Degree		4.5		4.0
Bachelor's Degree		6.1		7.0
Graduate or Professional Degree		2.7		3.9
HS Graduate or higher	65.2%	74.5%	68.2%	77.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.3	8.8	8.7	10.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Income

The income levels in both Counties fall below the statewide average as shown in Table 2-8. However, the median family income in both Counties had gains in the overall value of a dollar (that is, the relative value of an amount of money in one year compared to another) between 1990 and 2000. The median family income in terms of the value of a dollar in 2000 increased by \$1,738 in Juniata County and \$2,252 in Mifflin County. About 9.5 percent of Juniata County residents live at or below poverty. About 12.5 percent of Mifflin County's population falls into this category.

⁷ Pennsylvania State Data Center. **Estimated population by Race and Ethnicity: Pennsylvania Counties, 2007.** Pennsylvania State Data Center: Harrisburg, Pa.

Area	Median Household Income	Median Family Income
Pennsylvania	\$40,106	\$49,184
Juniata County	34,698	39,757
Mifflin County	32,157	38,486

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Pennsylvania State Data Center.

Housing

Table 2-9 shows information about housing in the bi-county area. Housing is an indicator of affluence. Generally those who can afford to own their homes are more affluent than those who rent. About half of the housing units in Juniata County and three out of four housing units in Mifflin County were built before 1970. About three-quarters of the housing units in the bi-county area are owner occupied, a good rate. Housing values and rents are lower than elsewhere in the state. In Juniata County, about 14 percent of the renters pay 35 percent or more of their gross household income for rent; in Mifflin County, about 25 percent of the renters pay 35 percent or more. Government housing agencies and mortgage lenders suggest that 30 percent is the maximum amount a household should spend on housing

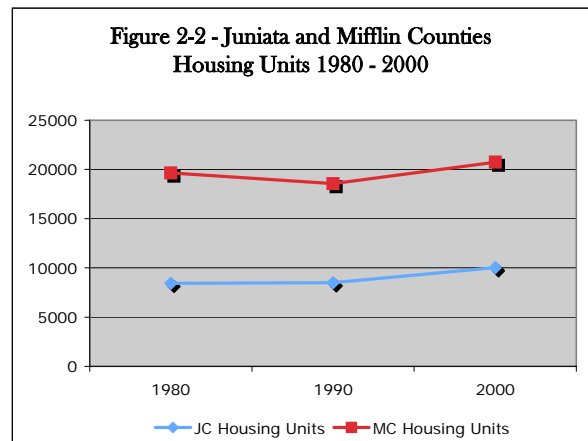
	PA	Juniata County	Mifflin County
Owner Occupied %	71%	78%	74%
Renter Occupied %	29%	22%	26%
Detached single family homes %	56%	74%	66%
Median House Value	\$97,000	\$87,000	\$73,300
Median Gross Rent	\$531	\$395	\$384

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Housing Units

Figure 2-2 depicts the trend in housing units in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. The agricultural land, of this area is desirable for development due to its relatively flat topography, expansiveness, and market value relative to other areas of the

state. The scenic forest areas of the mountains are also attractive for more secluded and private housing often with scenic views. The number of housing units in both Counties is increasing steadily, indicating an existing and growing level of development pressure. From 1980 to 2000, Mifflin County experienced about a 6 percent rise in the number of housing units but only a .6 percent increase in population. Juniata saw a 19 percent increase corresponding with its population gain. Single family, large lot residential development occurring in non-urbanized areas, often without planning or zoning, is the major threat to the rural character of Mifflin and Juniata Counties. In some cases, development is occurring on prime farmland and environmentally valuable lands in each County.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Pennsylvania State Data Center.

People with Special Needs

Table 2-10 presents the statistics regarding people with special needs in the community. The Juniata-Mifflin community has a relatively higher proportion of people with disabilities than elsewhere in Pennsylvania. In the Census 2000, over 12,500 citizens reported having a disability. This does not include children younger than five. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disability is defined as a substantial limitation in a major life activity. It is measured as difficulty in performing activities of daily living (personal care tasks), instrumental activities of daily living, or difficulty (household management) in performing more general mobility-related activities.

Table 2-10 – Juniata and Mifflin Counties Disability Status of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population in 2000

	PA	Juniata County		Mifflin County	
	%	#	%	#	%
Ages 5-20	7%	366	7	692	7
Ages 21-64	17%	2,237	17	5,035	20
Ages 65+	39%	1,237	40	2,957	40
Total*	17%	3,840	17%	8,684	19%

Health Factors

One of the most significant demographic trends is the growing health risk regarding conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease that are associated with a poor diet and sedentary lifestyle. In the 2004 study of the Behavioral Health Risks of Juniata and Mifflin County Adults, the following findings were reported:

- 27 percent reported having no leisure time physical activity.
- Three in every ten adults is obese which is 20 percent higher than elsewhere in the State.
- Only 15 percent reported exercising other than running or walking in the preceding month.
- 46 percent report undertaking vigorous activities resulting in large increases in heart rate.
- 43 percent consider themselves to be overweight.
- 45 percent use exercise to lose weight or keep from gaining it.
- About 86 percent report doing moderate activities that create a small increase in heart rate.

Youth at Risk

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, youth in Juniata and Mifflin Counties are at risk to disease as a result of high Body Mass

Index (BMI). A high BMI correlates with diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, arthritis, some cancers, and premature death.

About one in five children are considered obese in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. While the American Academy of pediatrics recommends no more than two hours of screen time daily, 70 percent of youth spend over that amount of time on the computer, playing video games, or watching television and movies.

High State Rank in Overweight and Obese Youth

In 2007, Juniata County ranked fifth in percentage of children in grades k – 6 classified as overweight or obese among the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. Mifflin County ranked 25th.

Health Initiatives

MJ PATH (Mifflin-Juniata Partners Advancing Tomorrow’s Health), a SHIP (State Health Improvement Plan) partner, is a collaboration of municipal, public, private, and voluntary organizations, agencies, and individuals in Juniata and Mifflin Counties dedicated to promoting prevention and access to care.

Public Opinion

This planning project included a five part public participation process: a Plan Advisory Committee, interviews, focus groups, public meetings, and a public opinion survey.

Plan Advisory Committee

An advisory committee was established to guide the planning process and provide feed back regarding project findings. The advisory committee was comprised of representatives from both Counties, Juniata Clear Water Partnership, United Way of Mifflin-Juniata, Conservation Districts, Mifflin County School District, and other organizations/interests.

⁸ Pennsylvania Department of Health. 2008. Growth Screens/BMI-For-Age percentiles by Health District and County: Grades K – 6. Report.

Key Person Interviews

The planning process included interviews with key stakeholder in the community. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain the ideas, concerns, and suggestions from individuals and organizations regarding open space, greenways and rural recreation.

Interviews took place throughout the planning process and included the Pennsylvania State Game Commission; State Foresters; Pennsylvania Activity and Nutrition Advocates (PANA); PennDOT; Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Greenways Chief, Peer Program Manager, and Regional Adviser; PA Fish & Boat Commission; Allegheny Ridge Corporation; Main Line Canal Greenway; Susquehanna Greenway; SEDA COG; Downtown Lewistown; adjacent county planning departments; municipal elected and appointed officials and managers; municipal parks and recreation managers; Juniata Clear Water Partnership; local sports organizations; United Way of Mifflin-Juniata; Mifflin and Juniata Conservation Districts; local businesses; waterfront business owner; Juniata County Children & Youth Services; Mifflin County Director of Planning; Juniata County Associate Planner; Juniata County School District Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent; Mifflin County School District Assistant Superintendent, High School Physical Education Staff Bicycle Club Coordinator and Walking Club Coordinator; YMCA Executive Director and the Fitness Director; Team Mifflin County; Regional Police Force Commission and Chief; Lewistown Hospital Executive Director and administrative staff in charge of programs and research; Lewistown Hospital Silver Sneaker Director; Area Agency on Aging Fitness partnership; Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau; Juniata Mifflin Chamber of Commerce; Mifflin County Industrial Development Corporation Executive Director and the Board Chairperson; Fayette Area Lions Den; DeLauter Youth Center; municipal community center and swimming pool operators; youth sports organizations; Linn Conservancy; Central Pennsylvania Conservancy; Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Wildlands Conservancy; and citizens.

Focus Groups

Focus group meetings were held with elected officials, cyclists, and farmers to explore common issues and opportunities. The farmer's forum explored issues and opportunities associated with preserving working farms and forests in Mifflin and Juniata Counties. The cyclists forum explored challenges and opportunities associated with biking in the Counties. Participants marked up maps with popular on-road bike routes. The municipal official's forum had limited attendance. The forum explored potential roles that the Counties could play in relation to open space and recreation.

Public Meetings

Public meetings were held to obtain citizen input for the plan. Two meetings were held early in the planning process, one in each County. The early public meeting discussions explored County assets and features and threats, weaknesses, and opportunities relative to natural resources, open space, and recreation including greenways and trails in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Two public meetings were held near the conclusion of the project to present recommendations of the plan and obtain public feedback.

Direct Mail Survey

A direct mail survey of households in Juniata and Mifflin Counties was conducted to obtain public opinion about a variety of County issues including open space, parks, and rural recreation. The survey process yielded a statistically significant return of 24 percent (475 surveys) from Juniata County and 25 percent (617 surveys) from Mifflin County. The survey findings are important because they represent the opinions of individual citizens who generally do not attend public meetings or provide their feedback in any other way. The survey findings provide elected and appointed officials with sound information on which to base decisions.

Figure 2-3 shows that the top four recreation facilities or opportunities in both counties are:

- Public Forests
- Natural Areas

- Playgrounds
- Picnic Areas

Walking paths, recreation programs, and indoor recreation are important to over half of the respondents from Mifflin County.

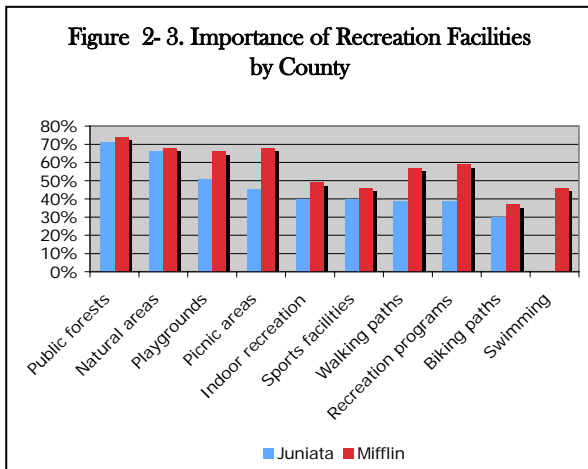
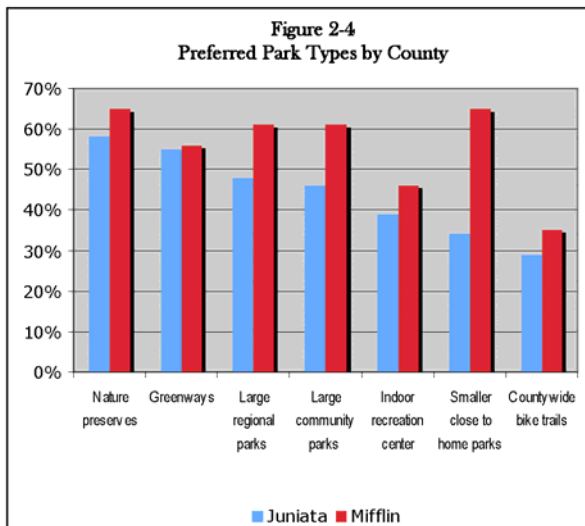
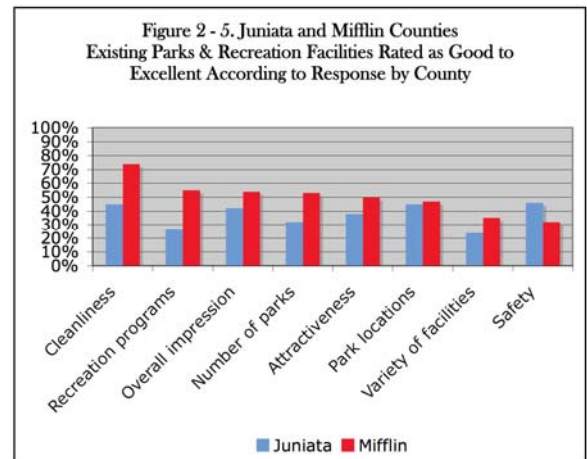


Figure 2-4 shows some differences between the two Counties in terms of preferred park types. About 65 percent of the respondents from Mifflin County rated smaller close to home parks and nature preserves as their most preferred park types. More than three out of five respondents from Mifflin County also rated large regional and community parks as important. Respondents from Juniata County rated nature preserves (58%), greenways (55%) and large regional parks (48%) as their top choices.



The respondents rated the quality of existing parks and recreation facilities in the region. Figure 2-5 shows more favorable ratings overall by the Mifflin County respondents. The different ratings can be attributed to Mifflin County having more parks than Juniata County. With fewer parks, Juniata County residents would be more likely to rate park characteristics lower.



Mifflin County Quality Ratings

- Three out of four Mifflin County residents rated the parks as clean.
- Over half rated the recreation programs favorably.
- One out of two has an overall favorable impression of the parks in Mifflin County.
- The lowest ratings went to the variety of facilities (35%) and safety (32%).

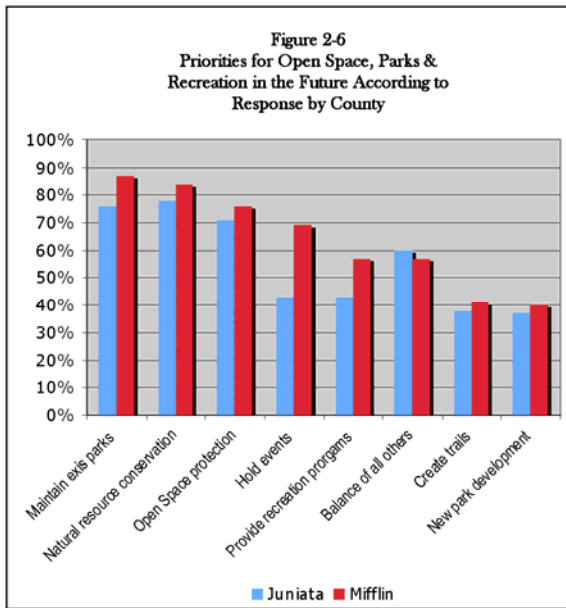
Juniata County Quality Ratings

- Less than half of the respondents provided favorable ratings.
- Three out of four rated the variety of facilities and recreation programs unfavorably. It is likely that this finding is related to the lack of these rather than to the quality of existing facilities and programs.

- Two out of three think that there are not enough parks.

Preferred Directions in Open Space, Parks & Recreation

Determining the opinion of the citizens regarding the future direction of Mifflin and Juniata Counties in open space, parks and recreation was a crucial goal of the survey. The findings revealed consistent results for the respondents of both counties as shown in Figure 2-6.



- Four out of five respondents wanted to focus on maintaining existing parks. The interpretation of this is to focus on taking care of what already exists.
- Natural resource conservation and open space protection ranked next in terms of future focus.
- Achieving a balance of preservation, parks, trails and services was important to 60 percent of the Juniata County respondents.
- About 70 percent of the Mifflin County respondents were interested in events as a focus. Combined with a 57 percent response on programs as a focus, recreation services would be important.

- New park development and trails rated lowest in future focus preferences.

Findings of the Public Participation Process

- Overall the public participation process revealed the love of the rural agrarian quality of life here.** The residents love the way of life here. They are concerned about losing this as more development occurs. About one-third of the bi-county area is in farmland.
- The preservation of farms, natural resources, and open space is a high priority among the citizenry.** The loss of farms would change the essential character of Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Although there is great concern about the future of agriculture in the Counties, funding and staff time that support farmland preservation is minimal. State policies favor farmland preservation in other counties.
- Recreation in the great outdoors is a hallmark of the bi-county region.** State forests, parks, and game lands offer major outdoor recreation opportunities that are important for residents and visitors alike. Nature based recreation including hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, hiking, cycling, nature enjoyment, wildlife watching, and other activities are at their finest here.
- Organized scheduled recreation close-to-home is in the arena of private non-profit organizations and volunteers.** Since there are no municipal or county parks and recreation departments, as expected in this rural area, organizations such as the United Way, Communities That Care, YMCA, Fayette Area Lion’s Den, the Deleuter Youth Center, and community sports leagues provide community recreation programs and services.
- Health issues related to the lack of physical activity are a major issue in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.** The Counties have relatively higher incidences of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and addiction compared with other counties in Pennsylvania. Concern about the prevalence of youth classified as overweight

or obese was frequently discussed by community health and social welfare providers.

6. **Citizens of all ages with varied interests should have access to programs and services.** Serving citizens throughout their lifetime in a broad range of opportunities year round indoors and outdoors should be a goal. Expanding services can only happen with additional staff, partnerships, and a solid plan for phasing in additional services.
7. **Year-round recreation should be a priority.** Focus has been on outdoor recreation here. Providing opportunities for people to lead active healthy lives year round regardless of weather.
8. **Tourism is vital to the Juniata/Mifflin region.** This plan could help to create recreation destinations and opportunities that would increase tourism. The Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau would be an important partner in plan implementation and could use this plan to advance the **Juniata River Valley Regional Tourism Plan**.
9. **Taking care of existing facilities and maximizing their use is important to the citizens.** Most people prefer improving existing facilities and maintaining them more effectively is preferable to building new facilities.
10. **Close-to-home parks are limited.** There are not enough parks or enough parkland. Although the Counties are blessed with significant state-owned recreation and conservation lands, additional local parkland and recreation facilities are needed. The challenge here is that municipalities have small populations and lack resources to undertake the planning, development, and operation of public recreation systems.
11. **Governmental entities are experiencing austere fiscal conditions.** Municipal elected and appointed officials expressed the need for more support in terms of technical assistance in grants, planning, conservation, and recreation. Implementing this plan will be a challenge with the limited resources. Planning represents an important alternative to the expensive direct acquisition of land. By adopting key land

conservation and open space protection ordinances, municipalities can preserve more land through effective land-use planning than they can by outright purchase.

12. **County and municipal staff and funding for open space, greenways and recreation is limited.** Both Counties are largely rural. The municipalities and the County have small staffs. Funding devoted to parks and recreation is only available in a few jurisdictions.
13. **Community organizations and individuals who are interested and contribute to parks and recreation here are an invaluable asset.** Tapping into the civic potential here can be an important tool in implementing this open space, greenway and rural recreation plan. Juniata and Mifflin Counties can provide leadership, outreach and public education to leverage partnerships and advance the goals and recommendations of this plan. This can be done to the level that staff, time, and budget allow.
14. **Partnerships are important.** Juniata and Mifflin Counties provided a model partnership in the development of this plan. It would be advantageous for the Counties to continue partnering in open space, park, greenway, trail, and recreation endeavors in the future. This partnership would provide shared expertise, maximization of limited resources, strengthened position in competing for grants, and enhanced public service for less cost. A number of partnerships in recreation are already underway. Citizens recognize that the County government cannot advance open space, greenways and conservation parks and recreation independently. Partnerships with a host of community organizations are crucial. Building upon relationships with community providers and both school districts should be a major initiative of this plan.

Community Analysis

Strengths

The Juniata-Mifflin County area has a high quality of life, scenic beauty, tremendous natural resources, low crime, affordable housing, and many people and

organizations interested in advancing initiatives that would enhance the areas for the people who live work and visit here. The current economic crisis in the United States is providing some breathing room for conservation and land preservation initiatives.

interested organizations and individuals as partners in land conservation and recreation would help to achieve goals not possible with the limited financial human and staff resources here.

Challenges

The population is expected to increase through the year 2020. However, most of this growth is in the townships. A major concern is that the urban core in the boroughs is hollowing out as borough populations are generally declining. The major demographic trend that will affect the provision of parks and recreation is the aging of the population. The baby boomers are emerging as an active, healthy, well-educated, and engaged group of people. The area continues to be family oriented. Population changes warrant planning ahead for adult park and recreation consumers. The large number of older citizens that will emerge with the baby boomers is the single most significant demographic change. Dealing with the health crisis generated by the lack of physical activity offers both challenges and opportunities. Challenges are related to the area's significant incidences of disease resulting from the lack of activity. Parks and recreation offer powerful tools for preventing and reducing these diseases by providing opportunities for people to lead active healthy lifestyles.

The municipal populations are small ranging from 272 to 8,998. Only two of the 33 municipalities have a population over 5,000. The declining borough populations warrant attention as trends elsewhere show that rural boroughs may be making a comeback. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania has indicated that the baby boomers may be returning to rural boroughs in their retirement. Offering parks and recreation opportunities could help to spur this phenomenon in the bi-county area.

Opportunities

This plan and the time advantage resulting from the current economic crisis could help key stakeholders to position Mifflin and Juniata Counties for conservation, smart growth, recreation, and tourism. Consideration could be given to multi-municipal planning and partnerships to advance community goals in conservation and recreation. Harnessing the