



**Washington County
Greenways Plan Update**
Draft Plan: February 10, 2025

The Washington County Greenways Plan was prepared
with assistance from:



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Washington County Planning Commission, on behalf of the Washington County Board of Commissioners, spearheaded the update of the Washington County Greenways Plan. This collaborative effort involved the invaluable assistance of numerous groups, organizations, and individuals.

Special acknowledgment is due to the following individuals for their devoted time and contributions:

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Chapter 1: Introduction



Background Information

Nestled in Southwest Pennsylvania, Washington County shares borders with Beaver County and Allegheny County to the north, Westmoreland County and Fayette County to the east, Greene County to the south, and West Virginia to the west. Positioned well in the region, Washington County is conveniently within an hour's commute from major metropolitan areas, including the City of Pittsburgh, Morgantown, and Wheeling. Encompassing approximately 857 square miles, the County is home to 209,349 residents (according to the official 2020 Census) spread across its 66 municipalities, which includes two cities, 32 townships, and 32 boroughs.

The history of Washington County is woven into the fabric of our nation's development, marked by numerous events that played pivotal roles in the settlement of America. Positioned at the forefront of westward expansion and colonization, Washington County has left an indelible mark on the nation's narrative. The County's character is shaped by its agricultural heritage, strategic position along key transportation routes, rich natural resources, and the strength of its educational institutions. As a testament to its historical significance, Washington County continues to thrive as a dynamic and culturally rich community shaped by its past and embracing the promise of its future.

The Washington County Greenways initiative spans across the entire County, aiming to conceptualize, plan, and execute an expansive network of greenways and urban trails throughout the region. These facilities are strategically designed to link multi-modal transportation options with parks, open space and water corridors, providing not only recreational opportunities but also enhancing the County's overall mobility options, community health, well-being, and economic vitality. Washington County's Greenways system envisions the creation of an interconnected network that is both safe and inviting for individuals of all ages, abilities, and demographics, thereby reshaping perceptions and patterns of movement within the County.

Purpose of the Plan

To systematically outline a strategy for the creation, enhancement, and preservation of green spaces, corridors, and recreational areas within the County, this Greenways Plan aims to:

- **Enhance Quality of Life:** Develop greenways to provide residents with accessible and attractive recreational spaces, promoting physical activity, health, and overall well-being.
- **Preserve Natural Resources:** Identify and protect ecologically significant areas, biodiversity, and critical habitats within the County through the establishment of green corridors.
- **Connect Communities:** Foster connectivity by creating a network of greenways that link neighborhoods, parks, and other points of interest, promoting community interaction and a sense of unity.
- **Promote Sustainable Development:** Integrate greenways into the County's planning and development initiatives to ensure a balance between growth and environmental conservation.
- **Improve Economic Vitality:** Recognize the economic benefits associated with greenways, including increased property values, tourism, and job creation, contributing to the overall economic health of the County.
- **Cultural and Historical Preservation:** Incorporate cultural and historical elements into the greenways plan to preserve and showcase the County's heritage while providing educational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- **Collaboration and Stakeholder Involvement:** Engage various stakeholders, including community members, organizations, and agencies, in the planning process to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and active participation in the implementation of the greenways plan.

By addressing these objectives, Washington County aims to create a sustainable and resilient environment that enhances the overall quality of life for its residents and contributes to the long-term health and prosperity of the community.

What are Greenways?

Greenways are protected linear corridors that often trace natural features such as rivers, streams, or ridgelines. These interconnected networks of trails, parks, and natural areas serve multiple purposes including providing recreational opportunities for communities, preserving wildlife habitats, protecting water quality, and promoting non-motorized transportation options such as walking and cycling. Greenways also offer environmental benefits by mitigating the effects of urbanization, such as reducing the heat island effect and improving air quality. Additionally, greenways contribute to the overall quality of life by enhancing access to nature, promoting physical activity, and improving community cohesion.

Greenways play a crucial role in conserving biodiversity by providing wildlife with corridors for movement and migration, thereby maintaining healthy ecosystems and preserving native plant and animal species. Greenway corridors also help to safeguard critical habitats and protect natural resources by serving as buffers between developed areas and sensitive ecosystems. Furthermore, greenways can contribute to economic development by attracting tourists, enhancing property values, and supporting local businesses that cater to outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Greenways represent a sustainable approach to land use planning that balances the needs of people, wildlife, and the environment while fostering healthier and more resilient communities.



Panhandle Trail - Source : Washington County

Benefits of Greenways

Greenways play a multifaceted role in enhancing the overall quality of life for residents by supporting environmental conservation, and contributing to the economic and social vitality of a community. Some of the key benefits include:

Economic Benefits

Greenways, especially those serving as buffers along streams and wetlands, play a crucial role in preventing economic losses from floods and costly pollution. They also attract new businesses and industries, and enhance property values. Inviting areas such as greenways, parks, and natural landscapes appeal to developers by increasing the value of nearby land, enabling owners of buildings or properties in or around these areas to command premium rents. Additionally, recreational opportunities can entice corporations to relocate.

Water Quality Benefits:

Buffering wetlands and streams in greenways is crucial for ensuring high water quality. This directly impacts drinking, boating, swimming, and fishing. The prevention of rainwater runoff carrying pollutants into rivers and other water bodies is a powerful benefit of preserving open space. Undeveloped land acts as a natural filter, preventing contaminants from reaching streams and lakes. Greenways, especially those surrounding water bodies, typically feature natural vegetation that serves as an effective filter, thereby enhancing water quality.

Recreational Benefits:

Greenways play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life by providing active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The creation of a network of biking and walking trails encourages alternative transportation methods and promotes activities such as jogging and nature walks, contributing to a healthier and more active community. Greenways also provide connections to parks which increases recreational opportunities.

Wildlife Benefits:

Greenways often serve as sanctuaries for endangered plants and animals. Preserving large, contiguous tracts of land and maintaining high water quality are essential for providing healthy habitats for wildlife. Protecting these natural habitats helps prevent the decline and extinction of plant and animal species caused by habitat loss due to development.

Sense of Place:

Greenways, including agricultural lands and scenic vistas, serve to counterbalance the visual impact of urbanization and contribute to Washington County's cultural and historical identity, representing the stewardship of the land. As the community grew along creeks and streams, the rolling terrain became the foundation for the agricultural and industrial economy. Preserving and creating greenways help conserve the cultural and historical landscapes of Washington County, preserving the natural history for future generations.

Correlation to the Comprehensive Plan

There are a number of key concepts and actions identified in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update that correspond to the Greenways Plan. These include:

- Expand the County Trail Network
- Provide education to local municipalities regarding the importance of utilizing land use tools to assist with natural resource protection.
- Develop a Countywide Parks and Recreation plan.
- Continue the Agricultural Land Preservation Program as well as continue to provide information and education to landowners and municipalities on farmland preservation and the Agricultural Security Area Program.
- Compile model ordinances for agricultural protection zoning and make these available on the County website. When reviewing submitted municipal ordinance proposals, the County Planning Commission should make recommendations to include buffer zones and open space around active farms.

The Washington County Greenways Plan is designed to pinpoint key greenways, formulate strategies, and establish County-wide policies for their development. The recommendations, and action plan are devised to foster local coordination among Washington County's municipalities and regional cooperation with neighboring counties and the Commonwealth. The planning process is inclusive, considering the diverse needs and interests of the County's constituents and incorporating an educational component to raise public awareness about greenways and their advantages. The detailed mapping illustrates the diversity of the greenways network, encompassing both existing and proposed routes. Consequently, the Washington County Greenways Plan is recommended for use by state-level agencies as a reference for funding greenway initiatives and programming in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Planning Process

Incorporating public input was crucial in the development of the Washington County Greenways Plan. Engaging with municipalities, stakeholders, and the community ensured a comprehensive understanding of recreational needs and priorities, leading to a more effective and inclusive plan. Various means of public input included:

- **Steering Committee:** The County-appointed steering committee met several times during the process to discuss issues within the County, assist with public outreach efforts, and provide valuable insights into projects and initiatives related to greenways throughout the County.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** With assistance from the steering committee, a list of stakeholders was compiled, including organizations and recreation providers in the County. These stakeholders were interviewed by County staff to gather additional data on existing conditions and recreational needs.
- **Municipal Survey:** A survey was distributed to all municipalities to collect information on current staffing levels, recreation-related issues, existing facilities and programs, and future plans for new or updated facilities and programs.
- **Online Survey:** Approximately 100 people completed an online survey in the fall of 2023, providing their opinions on recreational priorities for Washington County. The County publicized the survey through various outreach and media initiatives.
- **Public Meeting:** A public meeting was held in January 2024, in conjunction with the master parks plan update. Major themes discussed included trail systems, natural resources, and recreational assets.



Greenways Public Meeting - Imagery Courtesy of Mackin

The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA)

The typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,386 residents served, with 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. But park and recreation agencies are as diverse as the communities that they serve, and what works well for one agency may not be best for your agency. Therefore, park and recreation professionals need data to identify the best practices to optimally serve their communities.

NRPA Park Metrics is the most comprehensive source of benchmarks and insights for park and recreation agencies. Launched in 2009, these agency performance resources assist park and recreation professionals in the effective management and planning of their operating resources and capital facilities. This suite of tools allows park and recreation agencies to build customized reports that allow for comparisons with peer agencies. Park and recreation professionals can use this benchmark data to gain more funding support, improve operations and better serve their communities.

Number of Residents per Park (2024 Park Metrics)

Median Estimates	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
	2,386	1,172	2,062	2,346	3,344	6,120

2023 Population Estimates: 210,232

Based on NRPA statistics, Washington County should have approximately 3,344 residents per park. With a total of 100 local, state, and County parks, these parks are expected to serve 334,400 residents, suggesting a surplus of about 37 parks in the County.

Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents (2024 Park Metrics)

Median Estimates	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
	10.6	12.6	11.2	10.2	7	10.2

2023 Population Estimates: 210,232

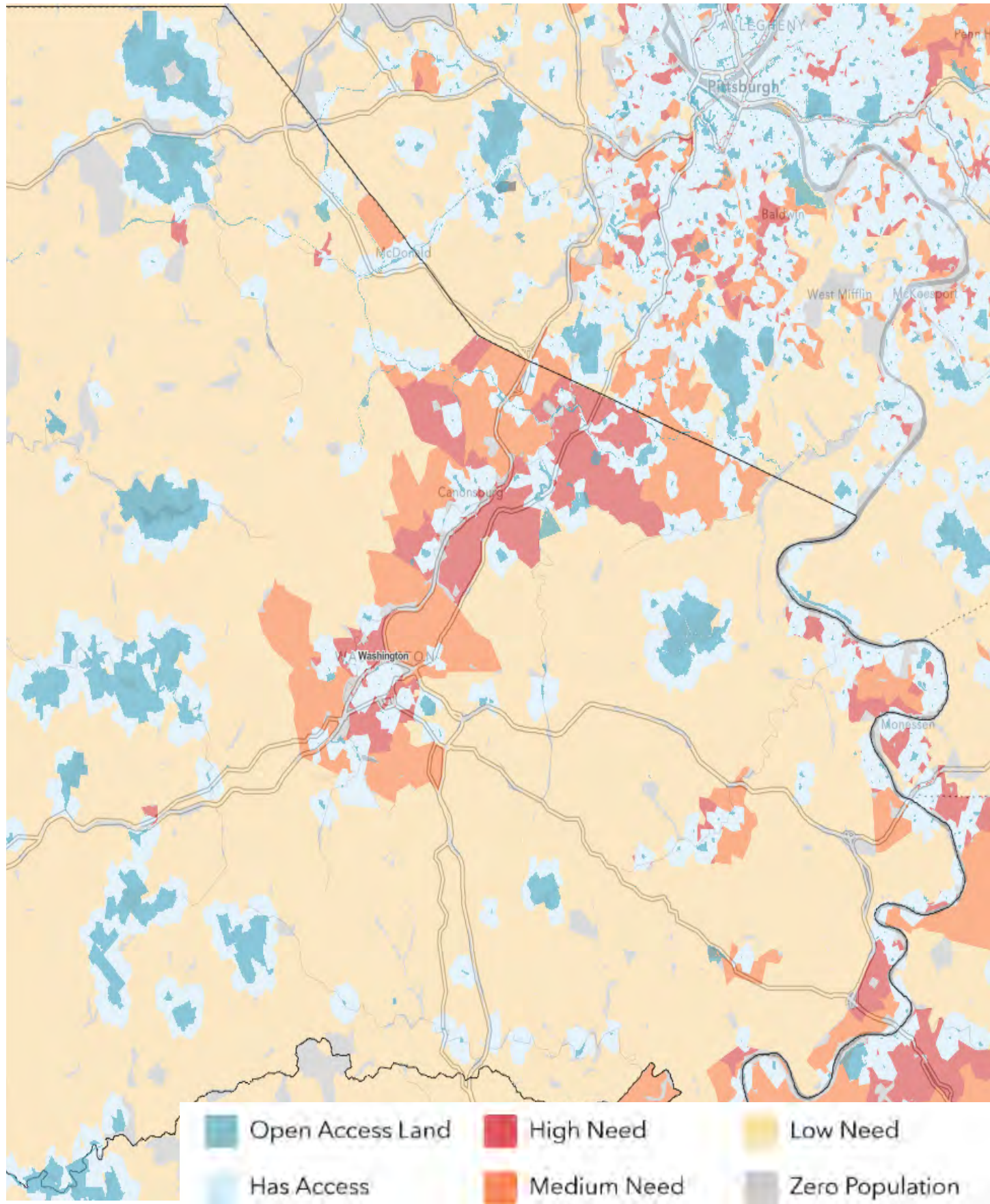
According to NRPA statistics, Washington County should have around 7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. With an estimated total of 15,800 acres of parkland, the County exceeds the recommended amount, which would approximately be 1,470 acres.

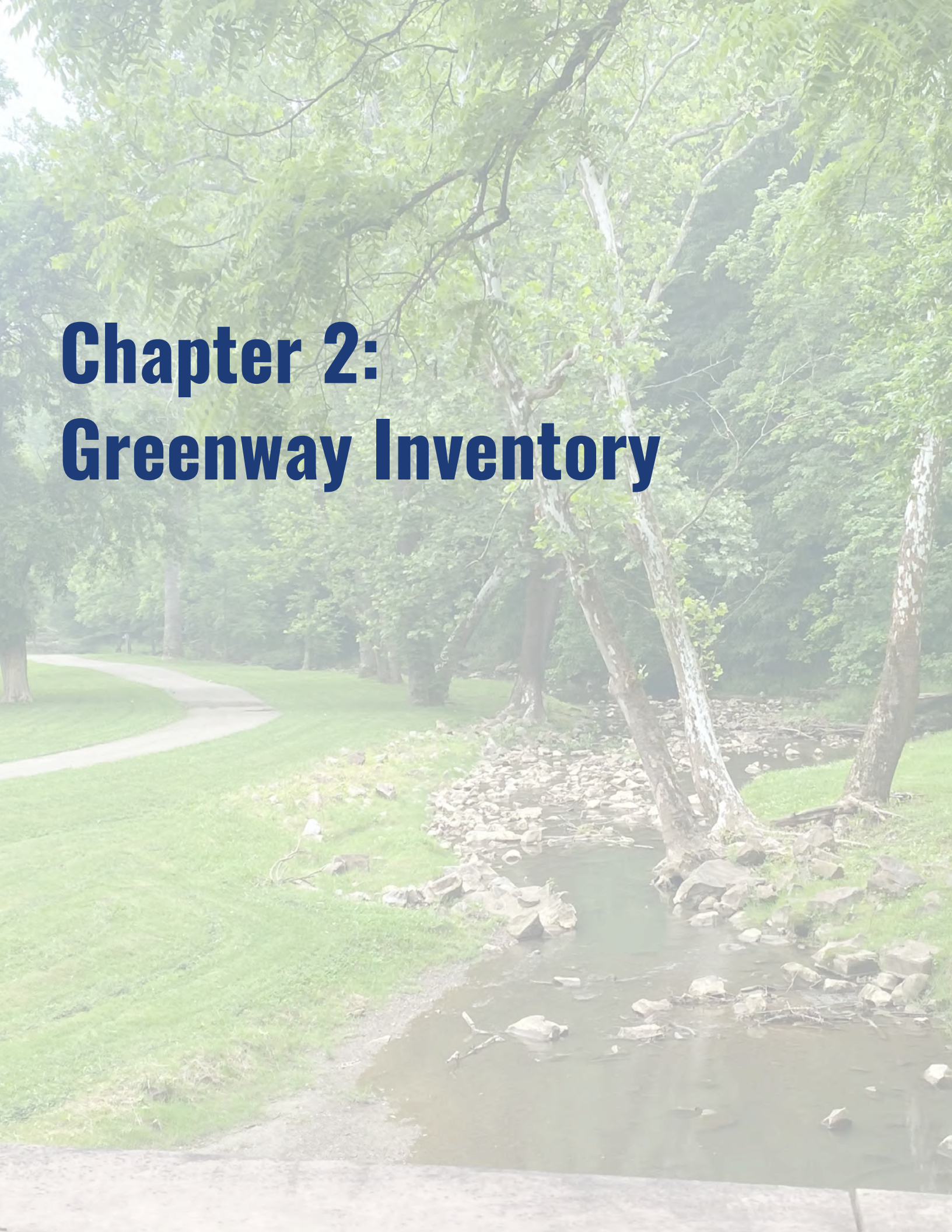
The NRPA, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Urban Land Institute (ULI), launched the 10-Minute Walk Campaign on October 10, 2017. This initiative aims to increase park access, enhance park quality, and secure funding to ensure that every resident lives within a 10-minute walk of a park. The map to the right illustrates areas in Washington County that have the highest to lowest need for additional parks based on this 10-minute walk goal. It also highlights regions with available open land, offering valuable insight into where park development can be prioritized.



Cross Creek - Imagery Courtesy of Mackin

NRPA 10-Minute Walk



A scenic view of a park with a winding path, a small stream, and lush green trees. The path curves from the left towards the center. A stream flows from the right towards the bottom center, bordered by a rocky bank. Large trees with dense green foliage are scattered throughout the scene, particularly on the right side. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Chapter 2: Greenway Inventory

Man-Made Greenways

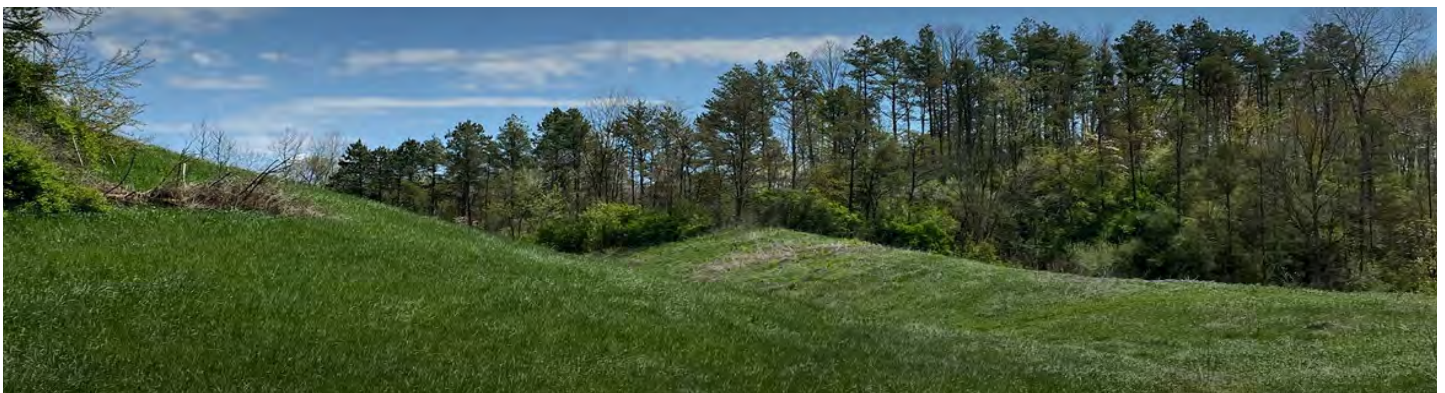
The landscape of Washington County features vast forested areas and pasture lands, offering breathtaking scenic views. However, a significant portion of this land is privately owned and lacks preservation restrictions. Fortunately, there are promising locations in the County that could bolster the existing Greenways Network within the County.

The Washington County Greenways Inventory encompasses both protected greenspace and crucial elements that could enhance the greenspace, even if they are not currently safeguarded. The protected resources consist of lands subject to various conservation methods, such as state, County, or municipal ownership, as well as conservation easements. This also includes state park lands, state game lands, state-owned lakes, and County-owned areas, contributing to the County's overall greenspace.

State Park

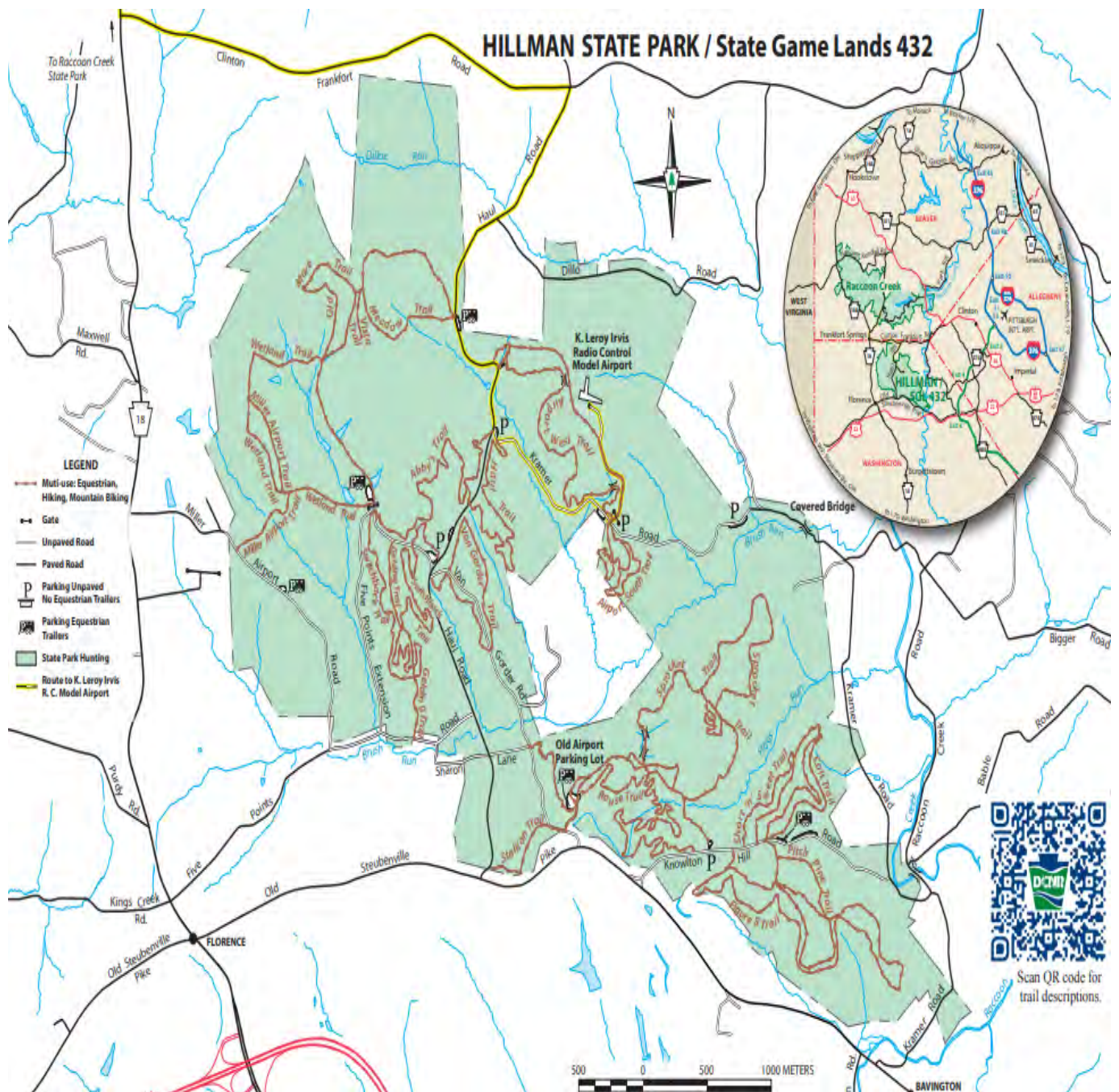
Hillman State Park, a 3,654-acre undeveloped park, with no facilities or restrooms, known as State Game Lands 432, showcases rolling terrain dominated by deciduous and coniferous forests, shrubs, grassy fields, and steep slopes. It is jointly managed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) for public access and outdoor recreation. The PGC oversees the park's administration and operation.

Over 3,000 acres are available to hunting, trapping, and dog training during designated seasons, with common game species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, pheasant, and squirrel. The park boasts 34.2 miles of trails, all open to horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking, marked with red blazes, indicating shared-use trails. E-bikes are permitted but must adhere to all e-bike guidelines. Be aware that some access roadways maintained by the PGC through habitat management areas may be closed to horses and biking.



Hillman State Park - Source: www.alltrails.com

Figure 1.1 Hillman State Park



Source: DCNR

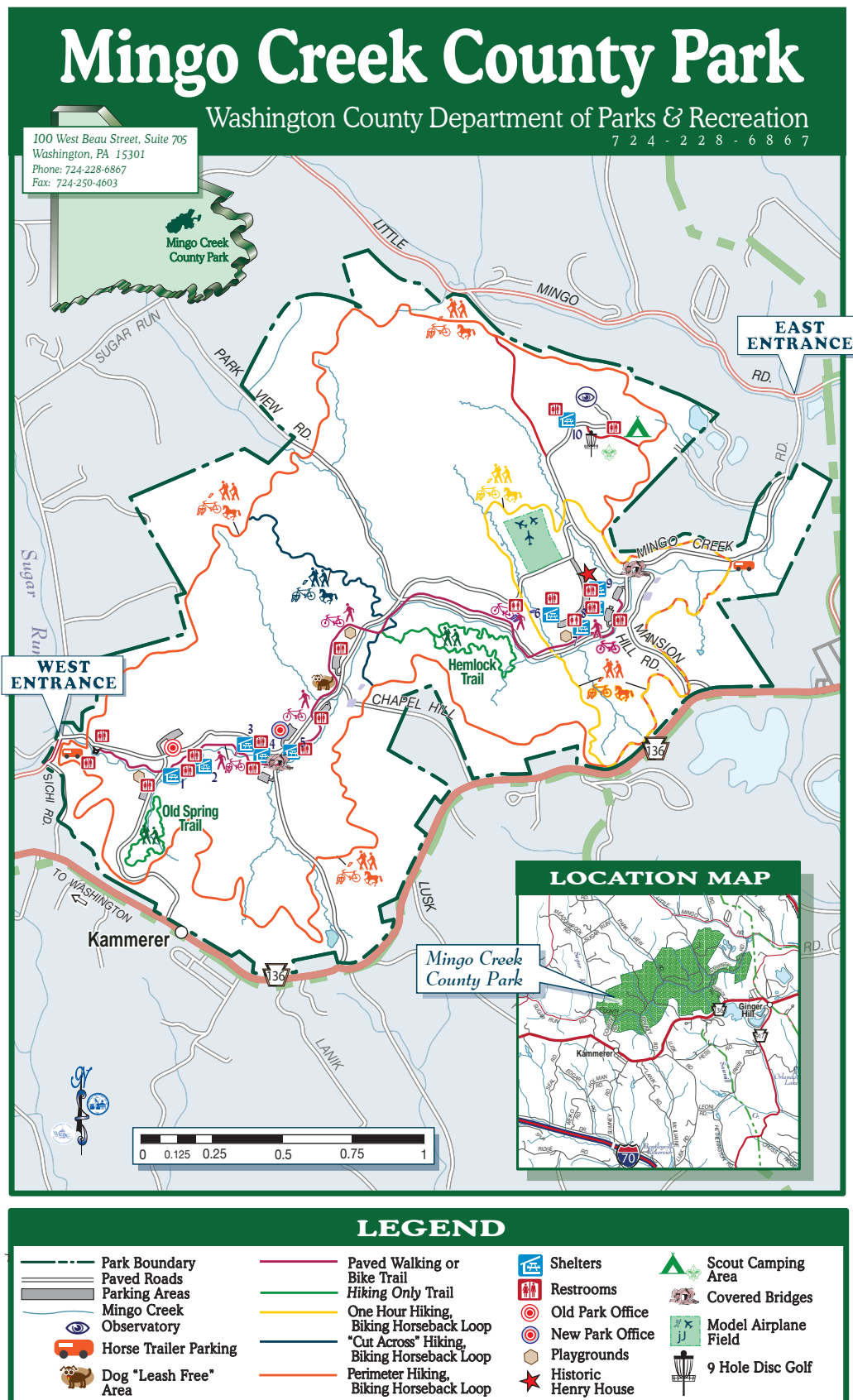
County Parks

The Washington County Department of Parks and Recreation manages three County parks totaling 5,500 acres: Cross Creek Park, Mingo Park, and Ten Mile Creek Park. A variety of amenities are available to residents and visitors, including picnic shelters, nature trails, bicycle and bridle trails, as well as hunting and fishing areas. The parks also host recreational programs and special events. Table 1.2 through 1.5 displays amenities and activities available at the three County parks.

Figure 1.2 County Parks

Name	Acres	Locations
Cross Creek County Park	2,900	Situated within Cross Creek Township and portions of Hopewell Township, this park features pavilions, picnic tables, grills, playgrounds, a boat launch, docks, a handicapped-accessible fishing pier, horseshoe pits, trails, parking facilities, and restrooms.
Mingo Creek County Park	2,580	Situated twelve miles east of the City of Washington along PA Route 136, this park hosts the Washington County Covered Bridge Festival, featuring two of the County's historic bridges (Ebenezer and Henry) within the park. Mingo Creek, a designated High-Quality Trout Stocked Fishery, offers four miles of designated fishing areas. The park offers shelters, pavilions, an observatory, picnic tables, grills, playgrounds, restrooms, trails, a multi-use field, a model airplane field, a leash-free dog park, pickleball courts, 9-hole disc golf course, parking facilities, and four miles of creek.
Ten Mile Creek County Park	20	Situated in close proximity to Fredericktown along PA Route 88, this park offers boat access to the Monongahela River. Owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, the facility is managed through a 99-year lease agreement with Washington County. The County leases 12 acres from the US Army Corps of Engineers and owns the remaining 13 acres, providing various amenities such as pavilions, picnic tables, grills, playgrounds, a boat launch, dock, restrooms, and parking.

Figure 1.3 Mingo Creek County Park



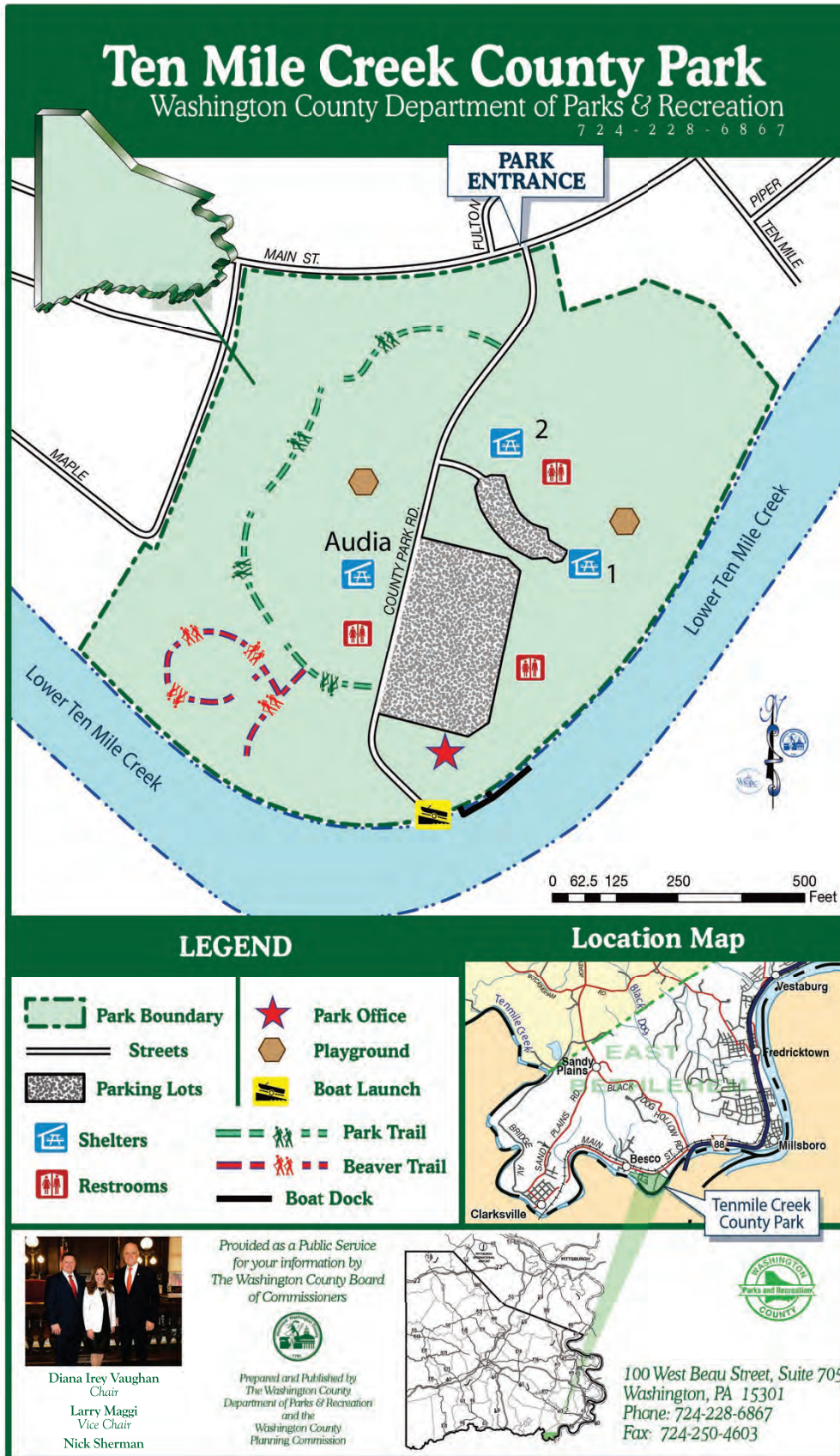
Source: Washington County

Figure 1.4 Cross Creek County Park



Source: Washington County

Figure 1.5 Ten Mile Creek County Park



Source: Washington County

Municipal Recreation Facilities/Parks

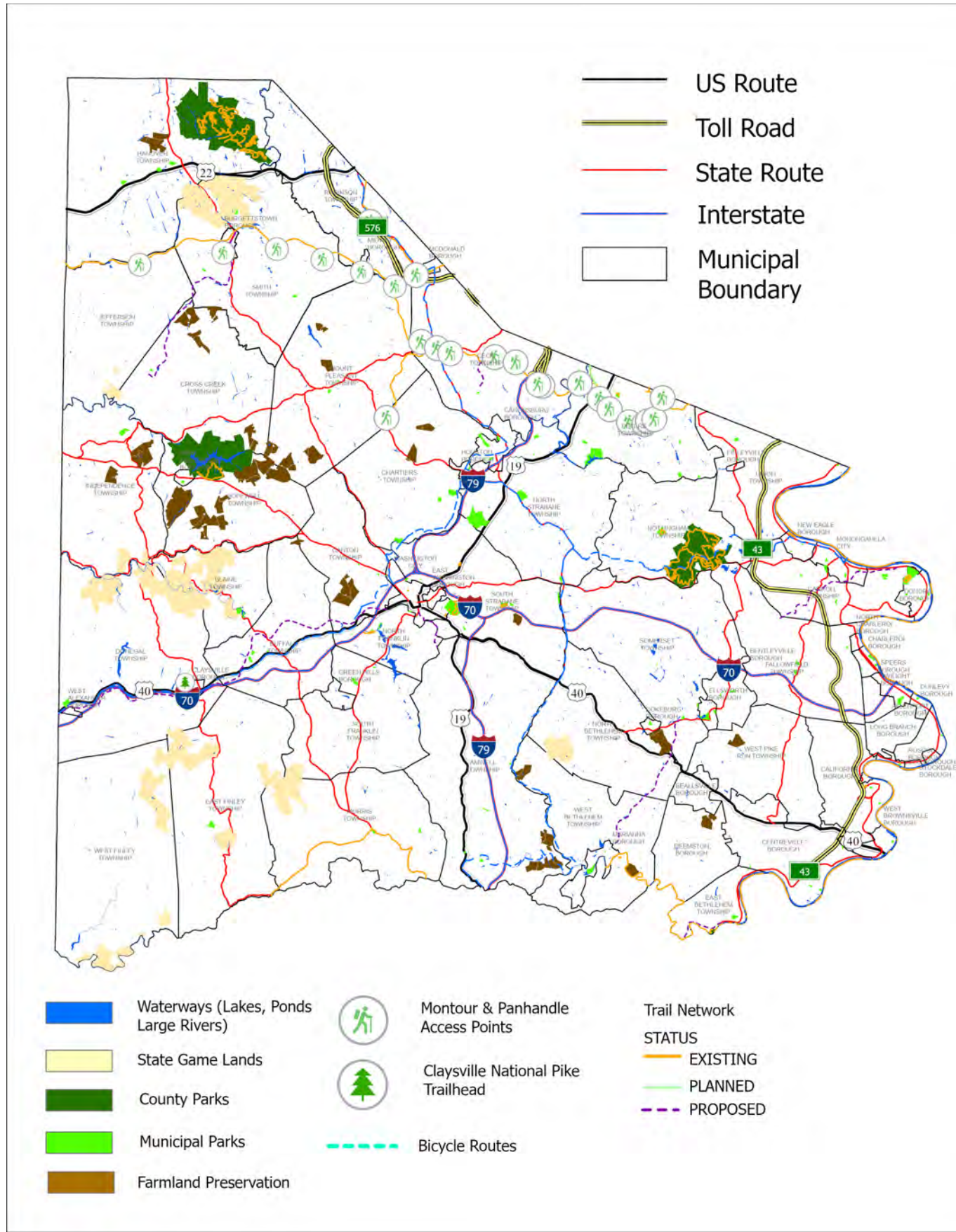
Greenspace within the County is predominantly managed at the local level, with a focus on traditional parks and recreational facilities. These parks, as illustrated on Map 1: Protected Resources, provide vital spaces for community activities, leisure, and environmental preservation. The County boasts a substantial inventory of 96 municipal parks, each documented with detailed information and photographs accessible through the County GIS HUB. This comprehensive digital resource enables residents and planners to better understand and utilize the available greenspace, increasing community engagement, and promoting outdoor activities.

Despite the abundance of local parks, very few of the municipal recreation facilities are recognized as having Countywide significance. This indicates a gap in large-scale recreational amenities that could serve broader regional needs and attract visitors from beyond the immediate vicinity. Addressing this gap could involve developing larger, more versatile parks or recreational facilities that offer unique features or amenities not available in smaller, local parks. By doing so, the County could enhance its appeal as a destination for recreation and outdoor activities, benefiting both local residents and the wider community. Washington Park - Pony League (bottom image) would be an example of a park that has Countywide significance.



Municipal Parks - Source: County GIS HUB

Map 1: Protected Resources



County Park Trail Systems

Cross Creek Park Trail System

1. Southside Trail: A 2.8-mile loop trail that is generally considered an intermediate route, it takes a little over an hour to complete.
2. Lake Shore Trail: A 2.1-mile out-and-back trail that travels along Cross Creek Lake.

Ten Mile Park Trail System

1. Beaver Trail: A 0.3-mile hiking loop with a natural surface.
2. Park Trail: A 0.5-mile trail with a natural surface.

Mingo Creek County Park Trail System

1. Perimeter Trail: A 11.7-mile hiking, biking, and equestrian trail.
2. Hemlock Trail: A 1-mile hiking loop with a natural surface, designated for hiking only.
3. Old Spring Trail: A 0.3-mile hiking loop with a natural surface, designated for hiking only.
4. Paved Bicycle Trail: A 2-mile paved walking/bicycling path. The trail starts at the western entrance and ends at the Henry Bridge. The trail passes the Ebenezer Bridge.
5. Overlook Trail: A 0.3-mile hiking trail designed exclusively for hiking.
6. Little Mingo Creek Road: This bicycle trail traverses Mingo Creek Park and forms part of the Bicycle PA "S" Route.
7. One Hour Loop Trail: A 3.5 mile trail for hiking, bicycling, or horseback trail.

Regional Trail Systems

Greenway trails are designated paths within a larger interconnected network of open spaces, designed for recreational, ecological, and transportation purposes. These trails cater to various activities like walking, jogging, cycling, horseback riding, and non-motorized water activities. They serve as connectors within greenway systems, linking natural or cultural sites, parks, and recreational areas. They enhance overall connectivity and provide continuous routes for recreation and transportation.

In the ecological context, greenways and their trails act as corridors, facilitating wildlife movement, preserving biodiversity, and protecting natural habitats. Designed with environmental sensitivity, these trails minimize disruption to the surrounding ecosystem. Additionally, these trails contribute to community health and well-being by offering accessible and safe spaces for physical activities, with the natural surroundings promoting mental health and stress reduction.

Some greenway trails are integrated into urban or suburban areas to serve as alternative transportation routes, promoting sustainable commuting options, reducing reliance on motorized vehicles, and contributing to environmentally friendly transportation. Furthermore, trails within greenways may feature interpretative elements such as signage, educational displays, or historical markers to enhance users' understanding of the cultural and historical significance of the area. Overall, greenway trails play a vital role in creating sustainable, interconnected networks that benefit communities and the environment.



Mingo Park Trail - Source: Mackin

Montour Trail

The Montour Trail is a picturesque multi-use trail extending from Coraopolis to Clairton in western Pennsylvania, with branches reaching into Bethel Park, Westland, and the Pittsburgh International Airport. Managed by the mostly volunteer-driven Montour Trail Council (MTC), the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization receives funding from various sources, including the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Key features include:

1. **Trail Surface:** The trail features a smooth surface of crushed limestone, ideal for non-motorized activities such as walking, running, cycling, cross-country skiing, and nature appreciation. Some sections are asphalt, aiding navigation through inclines, blind curves, and road crossings.
2. **Trailhead Access:** Accessible via 25+ trailheads strategically located every few miles, the trailheads offer parking, water fountains, benches, picnic shelters, and portable toilets. Campsites are available for through-travelers heading to the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) and C&O Canal routes leading to Washington, DC.
3. **Branch Trails:** Westland Branch is a 4.1-mile stretch from Venice to Westland, running parallel to an active railroad line. The Bethel Park Branch is a 2.8-mile trail through forested and residential neighborhoods, with ongoing efforts to extend its mileage. The Airport Connector is a 6-mile combination trail/on-road link making Pittsburgh more accessible to bicycle tourists.
4. **Trail Connectors Under Construction:** The Coraopolis Connector, Muse Connector, and the Southpointe Connector.
5. **Linking Trails:** The Montour Trail connects with the Panhandle Trail in McDonald, which extends 29 miles between Carnegie, Pennsylvania, and Weirton, West Virginia. It also links to the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) and the C&O Canal Towpath, creating a 300+ mile trail system from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC.
6. **User Base:** With over 400,000 users annually, the Montour Trail Council conducts surveys to gather feedback and improve trail amenities. User concerns, such as clear trailhead signage, year-round toilet facilities, and adequate parking access, are considered in ongoing strategic planning.



Montour Trail - Source: railstotrails.org

Panhandle Trail

The Panhandle Trail, spanning 29 miles from Weirton, West Virginia, to Collier Township near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, offers a direct and scenic route for self-propelled travel. Originally a railroad corridor, it gained historical significance as part of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad (PCC & StL) in the 1860s, later leased by the Pennsylvania Railroad and incorporated into the Penn Central and Conrail systems until 1991.

The trail, maintained by various communities and organizations, is a segment of the 3,700-mile Great American Rail-Trail, connecting Washington, D.C., to Washington State, and part of the 1,500-mile trail network developed by the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition. It is a Rails-to-Trails Conservancy TrailNation project.

Starting in Weirton, the trail climbs 16 miles through hardwood forests to Bulger before descending to Collier Township. The Washington County portion of the Panhandle Trail is maintained by the Washington County Parks Department. The 17-mile center segment through Washington County is paved. The Panhandle Trail intersects with the 61.5-mile Montour Trail, providing off-road connections to the 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage and the 184.5-mile C&O Canal Towpath, offering a route to Washington, D.C.

Highlights along the trail include Burgettstown, Harmon Creek, Midway (the halfway point between Pittsburgh and Steubenville), a connection to the Montour Trail, McDonald, Sturgeon, Noblestown, and Oakdale. The trail crosses Robinson Run multiple times before concluding at Walkers Mill Road in Collier Township. A pedestrian bridge near the end leads to Fossil Cliff, where rock enthusiasts can search for fossilized fern leaves.



Panhandle Trail - Source: railstotrails.org



Panhandle Trail - Source: railstotrails.org

Claysville National Pike Trail

The Claysville National Pike Trail, developed by the National Pike Trail Council, is a 1.9-mile nature trail in Claysville, PA. Built on an abandoned CSX railroad bed originally constructed by the Hempfield Railroad between 1851-1857, the trail celebrated its Grand Opening on May 14, 2022. The nearly 2-mile path follows the pre-Civil War railroad line and leads through two arch tunnels, offering a serene journey from the eastern edge of Claysville to Timber Lake Road near Sunset Beach.

Traversing scenic terrain between Route 40 and Interstate 70, the trail provides a quiet and peaceful experience. The walking path varies from grass to dirt to gravel, depending on the section. The eastern terminus features a picnic area with a grassy field for relaxation and wilderness enjoyment. The Council envisions future expansion, extending another half-mile eastward to a third tunnel near Timber Lake Road.

Monongahela River Trail

Gracefully winding through the hills of the Allegheny Plateau in Southeastern Washington County, the Monongahela River, affectionately known as "the Mon," travels north for 129 miles. Originating at the confluence of the West Fork and Tygart Valley Rivers in Fairmont, West Virginia, it eventually merges with the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Washington County proudly features approximately 40 miles of the river's middle section, known as the Mid Mon, extending from Millsboro to Elrama. The Mid Mon offers a year-round floatable experience, providing visitors with numerous dining and entertainment opportunities. Notable along this stretch is The Monongahela Aquatorium, a unique outdoor waterside venue that hosts a variety of summer concerts, fireworks displays, and other exciting events, making it one of the few waterside aquatoriums in the country.



Claysville National Pike Trail - Source: claysvillenptail.com



Mon River Trail - Source: uppermonriver.org

Upper Monongahela Water Trail

The Upper Monongahela Water Trail extends 68 miles along the Monongahela River from Fairmont, West Virginia to Maxwell Lock and Dam in Pennsylvania. Acknowledged as one of the Major Greenway Corridors in Pennsylvania by the Department of Natural Resources (DCNR), this trail offers various opportunities for public and private boat access along the Monongahela River in Washington County.

The National Road Heritage Corridor, a non-profit organization that manages the Pennsylvania portion of the Historic National Road, has been working to obtain water trail designation for the Mid-Mon section of the Monongahela River, which is almost exclusively along Washington County.

Figure 1.6 illustrates the exact location of the Upper Monongahela Water Trail, including all its sites and amenities.

Figure 1.6 Upper Monongahela Water Trail



Source: Upper Monongahela River Association

BicyclePA Routes

Crafted by seasoned cyclists, BicyclePA routes act as navigational aids for biking enthusiasts exploring the state. Although some routes lack dedicated bike lanes or cyclist-specific amenities, cyclists are strongly encouraged to prioritize personal safety and remain vigilant whether on roads or trails. Users of BicyclePA routes are expected to be licensed drivers or individuals aged sixteen or older with several years of experience in road bicycling. These meticulously designed routes offer guidance for cyclists journeying across the state, even though few incorporate dedicated bike lanes or cyclist-specific amenities. Despite the limited infrastructure catering to cyclists across Pennsylvania, cyclists are reminded to prioritize their safety, stay alert, and be mindful of road or trail conditions.

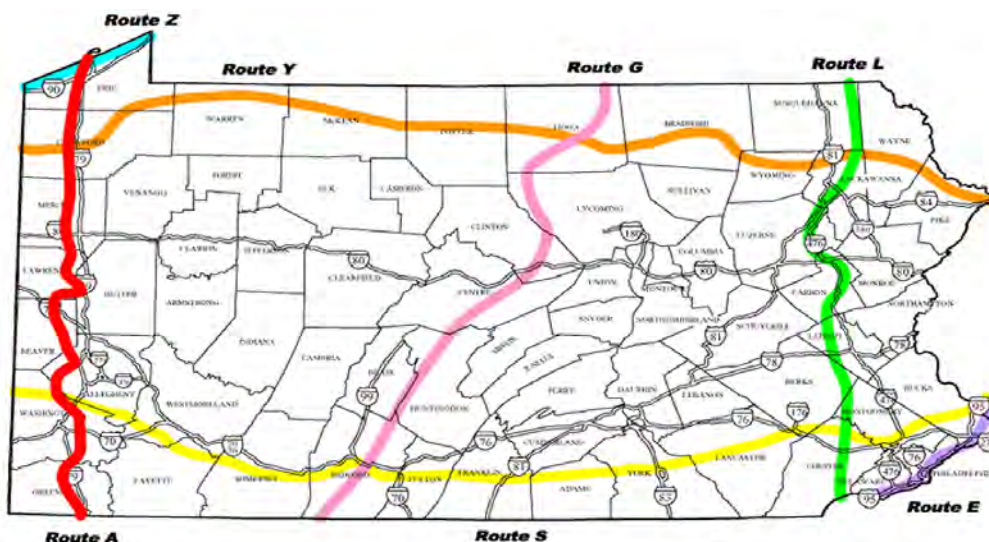
BicyclePA Route S

Stretching from the Washington County border into WV (east of Wheeling, WV) to Washington Crossing Military Park on the Delaware River in Bucks County, Route S is the longest BicyclePA Route. It meanders through the metropolitan areas of Pittsburgh, York, Lancaster, and Philadelphia. This extensive route includes a captivating 65-mile segment along the Youghiogheny River and Allegheny Highlands Rail-Trails in southwest Pennsylvania, offering a scenic ride that bypasses challenging steep climbs.

An exciting addition to the route is the Pike-to-Bike Trail, an 8.5-mile option located east of Breezewood. This trail incorporates an abandoned section of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, featuring two tunnels totaling 2.0 miles in length. Cyclists are advised to bring bicycle lights for this part of the journey.

BicyclePA Route A

Spanning from Erie, PA to Greene County, PA, just north of Morgantown, WV, this route exhibits a flat terrain in its northern half and gently rolling to hilly features in the southern section. The northern terminus conveniently links to BicyclePA Route Z and the Seaway Trail. This route follows Route 19 into Washington County, continues on PA Route 519, and exits via State Route 980.



BicycleRoutes - Source: greenway.ohiorivertrail.org

Agricultural Resources

Washington County Fairgrounds

In 1911, The Washington Fair Association purchased a 100-acre parcel in Arden to provide a permanent home for the Washington County Fair. The inaugural fair, referred to as the Morganza Fair, was held in October 1798 and took place at various venues around the city before the Arden property was acquired. The Washington Fair Association underwent a name change to Washington County Agricultural Fair, Inc. in 1940. This change was officially documented with the Pennsylvania Department of State on March 5, 1940, designating it as a non-profit corporation in accordance with the non-profit laws established in 1933.

The Washington County Fair is an important annual event that attracts tens of thousands of visitors annually. The fair showcases more than 2,600 agricultural exhibits, barns housing nearly 2,000 animals, over 6,000 youth and craft exhibits, a designated food area, amusement rides, and a petting zoo. Additionally, the grandstands, equipped with an outdoor stage and 3,000 seating arrangements, provide a vantage point overlooking a dirt racetrack and are heavily utilized throughout the fair.

The Fairgrounds have undergone numerous expansions and improvements throughout the years that preserves the historic character of the fairgrounds, while adding modern improvements. When the fair is not underway, the grounds are versatile enough to meet the specific requirements of various events hosted throughout the year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous events, including the 2020 Washington County Fair, were cancelled. However, the Fairgrounds were utilized for vital services, hosting a temporary COVID-19 testing clinic and a drive-up food distribution initiative organized by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The Pennsylvania Trolley Museum trolleys provide convenient transportation, dropping riders off at the entrance of the Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds Trolley Platform is conveniently situated at the front entrance to the Fair and features a covered canopy to shelter riders during inclement weather.



Fun Fact: The Fairgrounds was the venue for the inaugural airplane stunt exhibition in 1917, performed by aviator DeLloyd Thompson.

Washington County Fairgrounds - Source: Washington County

Agricultural Land

Agricultural land holds substantial importance in Washington County, encompassing economic, environmental, and aesthetic dimensions. The 2022 Census of Agriculture reported around 182,118 acres, which represents 33 percent of the total land area in Washington County, was utilized for agricultural purposes.

Farmland, while not a natural landscape and generally lacking public access, offers numerous advantages such as picturesque scenery, fresh produce, employment opportunities, and economic variety. Additionally, farmland enhances greenways by supplying open spaces, aiding in groundwater replenishment, and serving as a habitat for various species.

Prime Agricultural Soils

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Prime farmland is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent.

Prime agricultural soils are vital for food security and efficient farming, offering high productivity with minimal resource inputs. Farming on these soils supports sustainability by reducing reliance on harmful fertilizers and irrigation. Preserving these soils is essential to maintain long-term agricultural productivity, support high-value crops, and ensure fertile land for future generations. As urban development threatens farmland, safeguarding prime agricultural soils is increasingly critical.

Prime Farmland Soils in Washington County						
Soil Name	Symbol	Slope		Soil Name	Symbol	Slope
Allegheny Silt Loam	AgB	3-8%		Dormont Silt Loam	DoB	3-8%
Brooke Silty Clay Loam	BoB	3-8%		Glenford Silt Loam	GdA	0-3%
Culleoka Silt Loam	CaB	3-8%		Glenford Silt Loam	GdB	3-8%
Chagrin Silt Loam	Cg			Guernsey Silt Loam	GeB	3-8%
Culleoka-Upshur Complex	CkB	3-8%		Huntington Silt Loam	Hu	0-3%

Washington County offers three initiatives aimed at supporting the ongoing practice of farming and safeguarding agricultural lands within the county.

1. Pennsylvania Clean and Green Act (Act 319)
2. Agricultural Security Areas
3. Agricultural Conservation Easements

Clean and Green

The Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974, also known as the Clean and Green Act, or Act 319, protects farmland, forestland, and open space by allowing for land taxation per its value as used rather than the prevailing market value. Rollback taxes are assessed when the landowner changes the use of the property, subject up to seven years, plus six percent simple interest. Landowners must have a minimum of 10 acres of agricultural land to be eligible to participate. In 2024, a total of 352,731 acres, which constitutes 64 percent of the County, enrolled in the Clean and Green Program.

Agricultural Security Areas (ASA)

The Agricultural Security Area Law (Act 43 of 1981) provides a tool for strengthening and protecting agriculture in Pennsylvania. Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) are intended to promote more permanent and viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm. ASAs are created by local municipalities in cooperation with individual landowners who agree to collectively place at least 250 acres in an agricultural security area.

ASAs provide three main benefits to landowners:

1. The Township Supervisors agree to support agriculture by not passing nuisance laws that would restrict normal farming operations.
2. Limitations are placed on the ability of government to condemn farmland in the ASA for highways, parks, schools, or municipal projects.
3. Landowners will be eligible to voluntarily apply to sell a conservation easement to the County Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

Municipalities are encouraged, when appropriate, to conduct a seven-year review of their ASA. This review process allows both landowners and the governing body to propose additions, modifications, or removals within the ASA framework. Presently, there are 28 municipalities within the county, covering more than 73,000 acres.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

The Washington County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, established in 1994, utilizes both county and state funds to safeguard farmland through the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements. In return for financial compensation, these conservation easements impose legal restrictions on the land, preventing development and confining its use to agricultural activities. The landowner retains ownership of the farmland.

The program assesses prospective farms for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements by evaluating various factors, including development pressures, acreage, clustering potential, soil quality, and other pertinent criteria through a points-based system that prioritizes the acquisition of these easements. The Board initiates the purchase of easements with the highest-ranked farms, acquiring as many easements as available funding allows. In some cases, the Board can enhance the value of taxpayer investments by negotiating bargain sale easement purchases, typically ranging from 60% to 90% of the easement's total value. To date, 51 farms and over 7,700 acres have been preserved (See Figure 1.7).

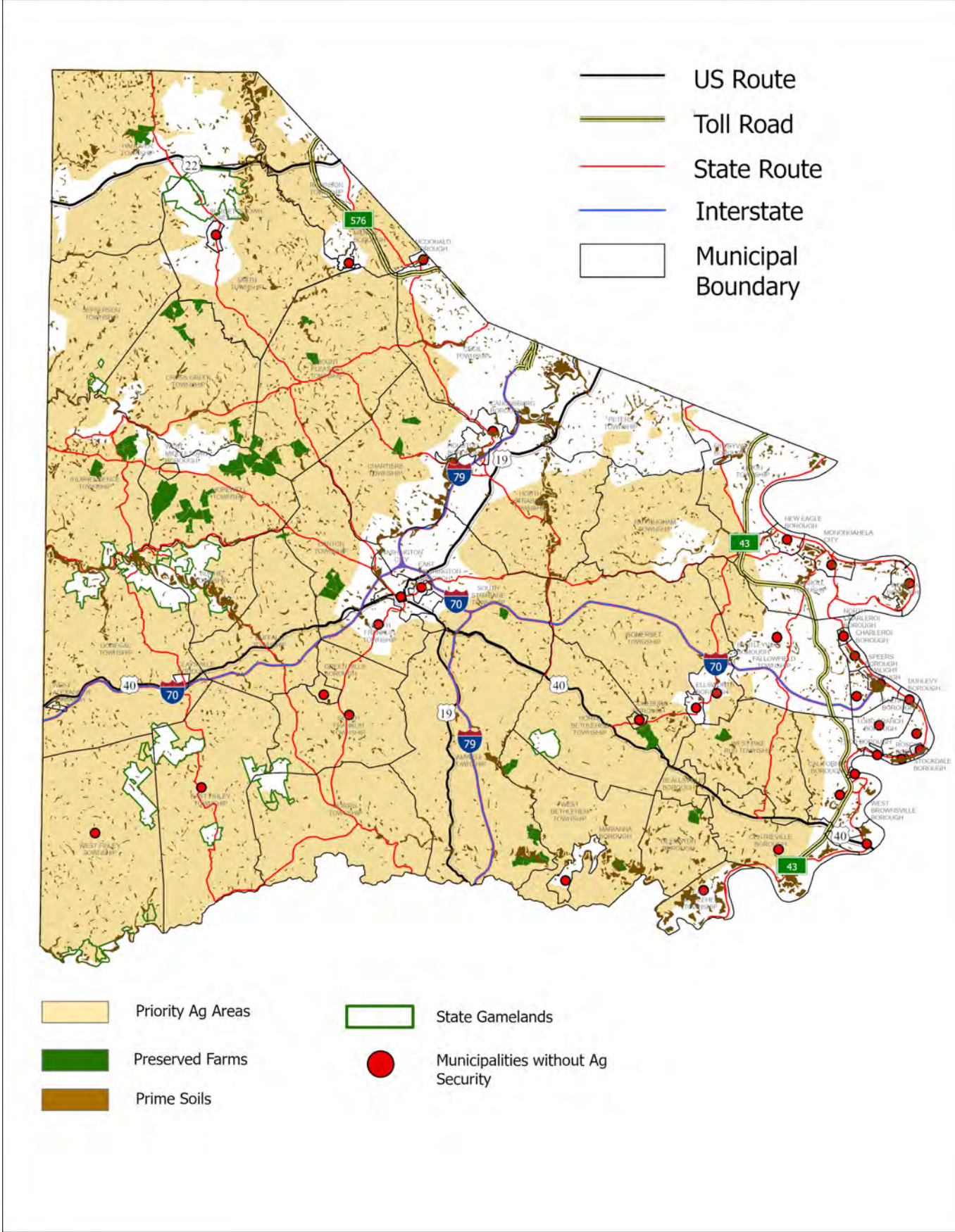
Figure 1.7: Washington County Farmland Preservation

Summary of Preserved Farms by Municipality, 1994-2024	
Municipality	Acres Preserved
Amwell	508.60
Canton	499.13
Chartiers	407.13
Cross Creek	625.86
Cross Creek/Smith	117.85
Cross Creek/Jefferson	96.23
Deemston	170.43
Hanover	327.21
Hopewell	2197.28
Independence	550.96
Mt. Pleasant	390.87
Mt. Pleasant/Hopewell	619.77
North Bethlehem	274.33
North Strabane	124.05
Robinson	180.96
Somerset	47.18
South Strabane	182.92
West Bethlehem	262.12
West Pike Run	146.83
Total Countywide	7,729.70



Farmland Preservation - Source: Washington County

Map 2: Agricultural Resources



Cultural / Historic / Recreational Resources

Cultural, historic, and recreational resources play a crucial role in shaping the character and identity of a place, contributing to its cultural richness and providing opportunities for both recreation and historical exploration. This includes:

- **Cultural Resources:** Encompasses tangible and intangible elements that define a community's cultural identity, such as historic buildings, museums, artifacts, cultural events, and traditions.
- **Historic Resources:** Includes historical elements within a region, such as landmarks, heritage sites, battlefields, historical documents, and interpretive programs.
- **Recreational Resources:** Areas and facilities designed for leisure and outdoor activities, including parks, trails, sports facilities, and campgrounds.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of these resources contributes to the overall well-being and vibrancy of a community. The preservation and promotion of these elements not only enhance residents' quality of life but also attract visitors, contributing to the economic and social vitality of the region. Planning and conservation efforts are vital for identifying, protecting, and promoting these resources to ensure their accessibility and meaningful preservation for current and future generations.

National Road Heritage Corridor

The Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program, administered by the DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, is a comprehensive economic development initiative rooted in the natural, cultural, and industrial history of the state. Heritage Areas create cross-sector partnerships to enhance the "sense of place" in regions, contributing to vibrant communities that attract private investment and drive Pennsylvania's tourism industry. The National Road Heritage Corridor (found on Map 3), is one of 12 Heritage Areas in Pennsylvania, and focuses on celebrating America's first federally-funded highway in Somerset, Fayette, and Washington counties. The corridor emphasizes history, education, preservation, recreation, conservation, and cultural tourism as vital components for regional vitality. By treating the National Road as a 90-mile museum, the Corridor aims to increase its perceived and actual value, serving as a cultural heritage partner in the Region of Reinvention. The overarching goals include sustaining economic opportunity, preserving heritage, supporting local artists, and fostering community connections. The group also has been integral in working to achieve water trail designation for the Mid Monongahela section of the Monongahela River. (dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/HeritageAreas/).

Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area

Rivers of Steel encompasses an eight-County region in southwestern Pennsylvania, representing the Pittsburgh Industrial District. Designated as both a National and State Heritage Area, it is recognized by Congress for its industrial and cultural heritage. National Heritage Areas, of which there are 62, are significant places in American history, combining natural, cultural, and historic resources to tell nationally important stories. These areas adopt a community-driven approach through public-private partnerships, supporting heritage conservation, economic development, historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects.

Rivers of Steel, established in response to the steel industry collapse in the 1980s, focuses on telling the stories of the region's workers and promotes community advancement by facilitating transitions to a new economy. The organization achieves this through initiatives like heritage development, creative placemaking, outdoor recreation, and community partnerships, creating economic redevelopment and enhancing cultural engagement.



Rivers of Steel Boat - Source: riversofsteel.com

Geologic Features/Fossil Locations

Two geological features and fossil locations have been identified within the County as part of the Natural Heritage Inventory. These areas have been included due to their historical significance. Map 3 highlights these two locations: the California Overlook and the Meadowcroft Rock Shelter.

- **California Overlook:** Situated in eastern Washington County along the Monongahela River, the California Overlook can be found just north of the town of Coal Center. As the Monongahela River sharply meanders to the west in this area, it forms a steep sloped outer bank. Notably, the overlook of this meander, referred to as Greenfield Bend and located along State Route 88, is acknowledged as an exceptional geological site.
- **Meadowcroft Rock Shelter:** Meadowcroft, recognized as a National Historic Landmark, boasts a significant rock overhang, the Rockshelter, which served as shelter for the region's first inhabitants 19,000 years ago. Visitors can take a tour of this renowned archaeological site to learn about the lives of prehistoric hunters and gatherers in Western Pennsylvania. Meadowcroft also offers interpretive villages, allowing visitors to step back in time and experience rural life spanning 500 years. Activities include exploring a wigwam and using a spear thrower at the 16th-century Eastern Woodland Indian Village, exploring an 18th-century log cabin and trading post, and attending blacksmithing and lessons in a one-room school house at the 19th-century Historic Village.

Golf Courses

There are currently 19 golf courses located throughout Washington County which are listed below:

- Quicksilver Golf Club, Fort Cherry Golf Club, Southpointe Golf Club, Valley Brook Country Club, Village Green Golf Course, Indian Run Golf Club, Lindenwood Golf Club, The Golf Club Of Washington, Rolling Green Golf Course, Monongahela Valley Country Club, Chippewa Golf Course, Lone Pine Country Club, Dogwood Hills Golf Course, Nemacolin Country Club, Washington Country Club, and 1781 Club Golf Course.



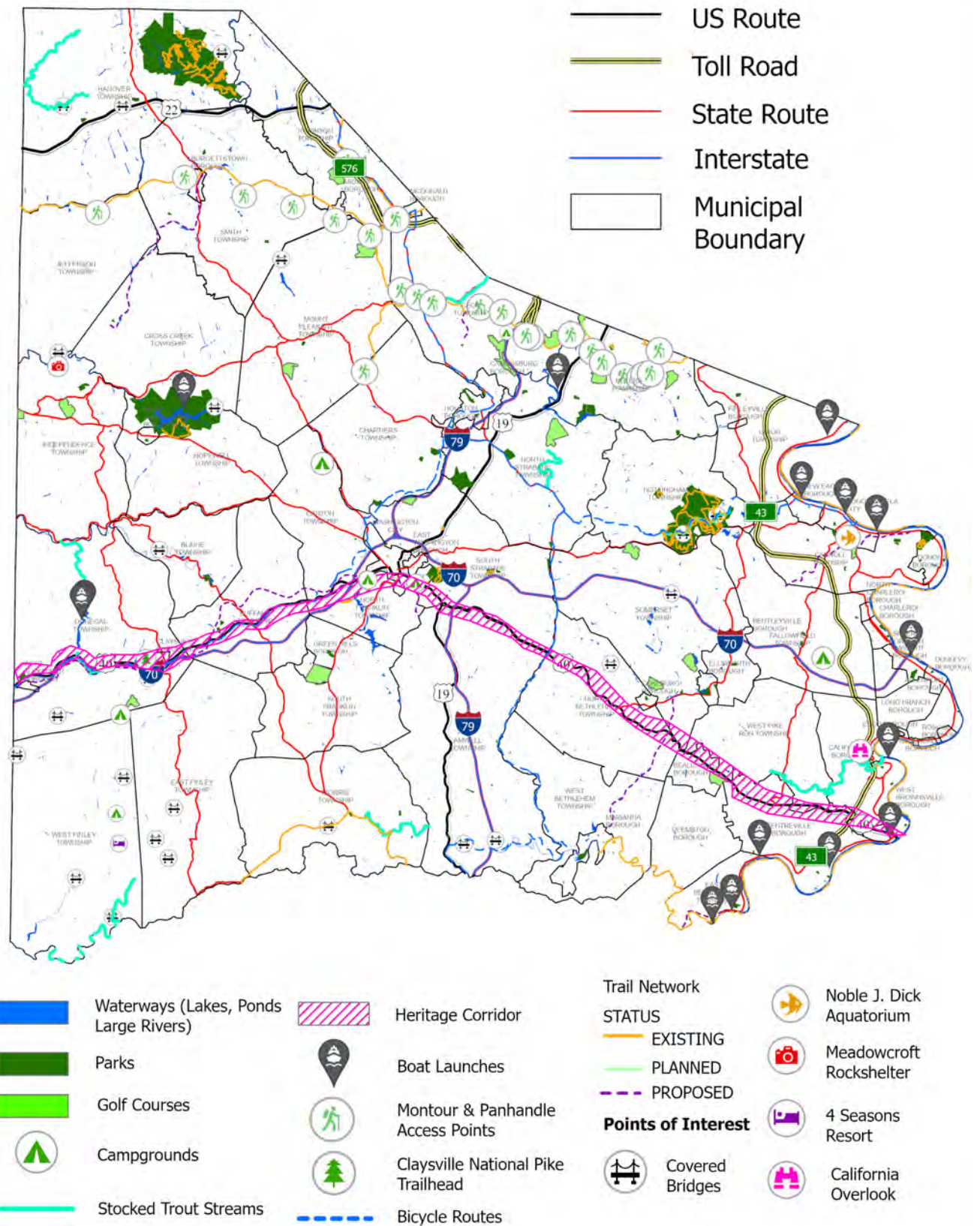
Washington Country Club - Source: washingtoncountryclub.golf

Campgrounds & RV Parks

Washington County has five campground and RV park facilities. These include:

- 1. Four Seasons Resort**, located in the hills of West Finley Township, spans 850 acres and is surrounded by nearly 1,050 acres of state game lands, featuring over 35 miles of ATV groomed trails. The resort offers various accommodation options, including seasonal RV sites, weekend RV stays, tent sites, cabins, apartments, and motel rooms. As a family-oriented facility, it provides an Olympic-sized swimming pool and a wide range of amenities and activities for all ages.
- 2. Hotel RV** is located in West Alexander and offers a fresh and fulfilling approach to various housing needs. Whether for a single night, a week, or an extended stay of a month or more, the hotel caters to diverse lodging requirements. The emphasis is on providing absolute lodging perfection, encompassing ideal locations, diverse property types, and a range of amenities and extra comforts for guests.
- 3. Pine Cove Beach Club** in Charleroi offers a diverse range of services and activities suitable for all ages. Whether visitors seek an exciting family summer vacation, an RV camping adventure, or a group picnic, Pine Cove has something for everyone. The resort features 38 deluxe RV camping sites set in a serene environment surrounded by trees and two fishing lakes, all conveniently located near Pine Cove's amenities. Complimentary WiFi and cable services are available at each site, with the option to order firewood on-site. The area between the pool and the RV park, there are three picnic pavilions for parties, a treehouse with swings, a volleyball court, and fishing lakes with catch-and-release options featuring plenty of bass.
- 4. The Washington/Pittsburgh SW KOA**, located near the City of Washington amid wooded hills, serves as a convenient stopover for both local and major city attractions. Campers can enjoy activities such as volleyball, horseshoes, and a spacious pool. The surrounding rural highways offer scenic drives with 23 covered bridges and access to antique stores and flea markets.
- 5. Whispering Pines Family Campground** is a cozy retreat with small campgrounds situated off Henderson Avenue. These campgrounds offer access to various amenities, including a pool, hiking trails, and more.

Map 3: Cultural / Historic / Recreational Resources



Transportation Facilities and Utility Corridors Resources

Water Transportation

The Monongahela River is a 130-mile-long river flowing through north-central West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania. It originates at the confluence of the West Fork River and Tygart Valley River, then flows northeasterly to cross the Pennsylvania border north to Pittsburgh. There, it joins the Allegheny River to form the Ohio. The river is navigable due to a series of locks and dams maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Monongahela's drainage basin is 7,340 square miles, and its average 30-year discharge at Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, is 9,109 cubic feet per second. The river descends 3,831 feet in elevation from its highest source to its mouth. Two major tributaries, the Cheat River and Youghiogheny River, join in southwestern Pennsylvania.

The navigation system has nine dam-locks along its length, overcoming a change in elevation of about 147 feet. Notable locks and dams include Braddock, Maxwell, Grays Landing, and Point Marion. The locks and dam at Elizabeth are scheduled for removal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2024, allowing a 30-mile stretch between Charleroi and Braddock to become free-flowing.



Monongahela River - Source: lrd.usace.army.mil

Marinas

Washington County boasts two marinas within its borders. The Beach Club Marina, established in 1986 and situated at the 30.7-mile mark on the Monongahela River, has grown to become the largest marina in the area, accommodating up to 300 boats. Conveniently located on State Route 88, it's just minutes away from the South Hills region of Pittsburgh.

The other notable marina is the Allenport Marina, nestled in Allenport Borough. Offering dockage, fuel services, an outdoor Tiki bar, and an indoor bar with air conditioning, it provides a comfortable setting for visitors. The marina hosts a variety of events that span throughout the year and is now open 365 days a year.



Allenport Marina - Source: allenportmarina.com

Ports

Washington County is home to the Donora River Terminal (DRT), a pivotal port acquired in October 2014. Spanning 50 acres along the Monongahela River, just south of Pittsburgh, DRT occupies a strategic position within the heart of western Pennsylvania's mining region at Monongahela River Milepost 34.. This prime location establishes DRT as a crucial hub for the transportation of both metallurgical and thermal coals via river routes. Advantages of DRT include convenient access to major interstates, including I-70, as well as PA Routes 837, 51, and 43. This port also contains a dock facility boasting nearly a mile of riverfront, facilitating efficient loading and unloading of bulk and discrete products. These ports allow for extensive storage capacity, accommodating over 250,000 tons of material, guaranteeing year-round inventory availability.

Roadways

Washington County features an extensive roadway network that includes state, township, and interstate roads. The Southwestern PA Commission (SPC), the Regional Planning Agency, oversees the creation of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the 4-year Transportation Improvement Program. These initiatives identify priority transportation projects in the ten-county SPC Region. A significant recent project in Washington County is the Southern Beltway's completion and opening, with its final unrestricted access occurring on June 24, 2022, including all connections with I-79.

Some of Washington County's specific roadways include:

- **Interstate 70 (I-70):** This major east-west highway traverses the County's northern part.
- **Interstate 79 (I-79):** Running north-south, it intersects with I-70 near Washington, PA.
- **U.S. Route 40 (US 40):** Also known as the National Road, this historic route crosses the County.
- **Pennsylvania Route 18 (PA 18):** A significant north-south state highway connecting various towns.
- **Pennsylvania Route 51 (PA 51):** This key route for local traffic runs through the County's western part.

Abandoned Railroad Right-of-Way

An abandoned railroad right-of-way denotes a strip of land previously designated for railroads but currently inactive for rail car use. Preserving these right-of-ways is essential for potential future utilization by rail companies, trail development, or as green corridors. Notable instances of repurposed abandoned railroad right-of-ways into trails are the Panhandle and Montour Trails in the northern part of the County. These abandoned railroad right-of-ways are scattered across the County, as illustrated in Map 4. The County's historical association with numerous rail companies has resulted in several abandoned rail corridors. Further investigation is needed to confirm the physical presence and current status of each line.

Airports

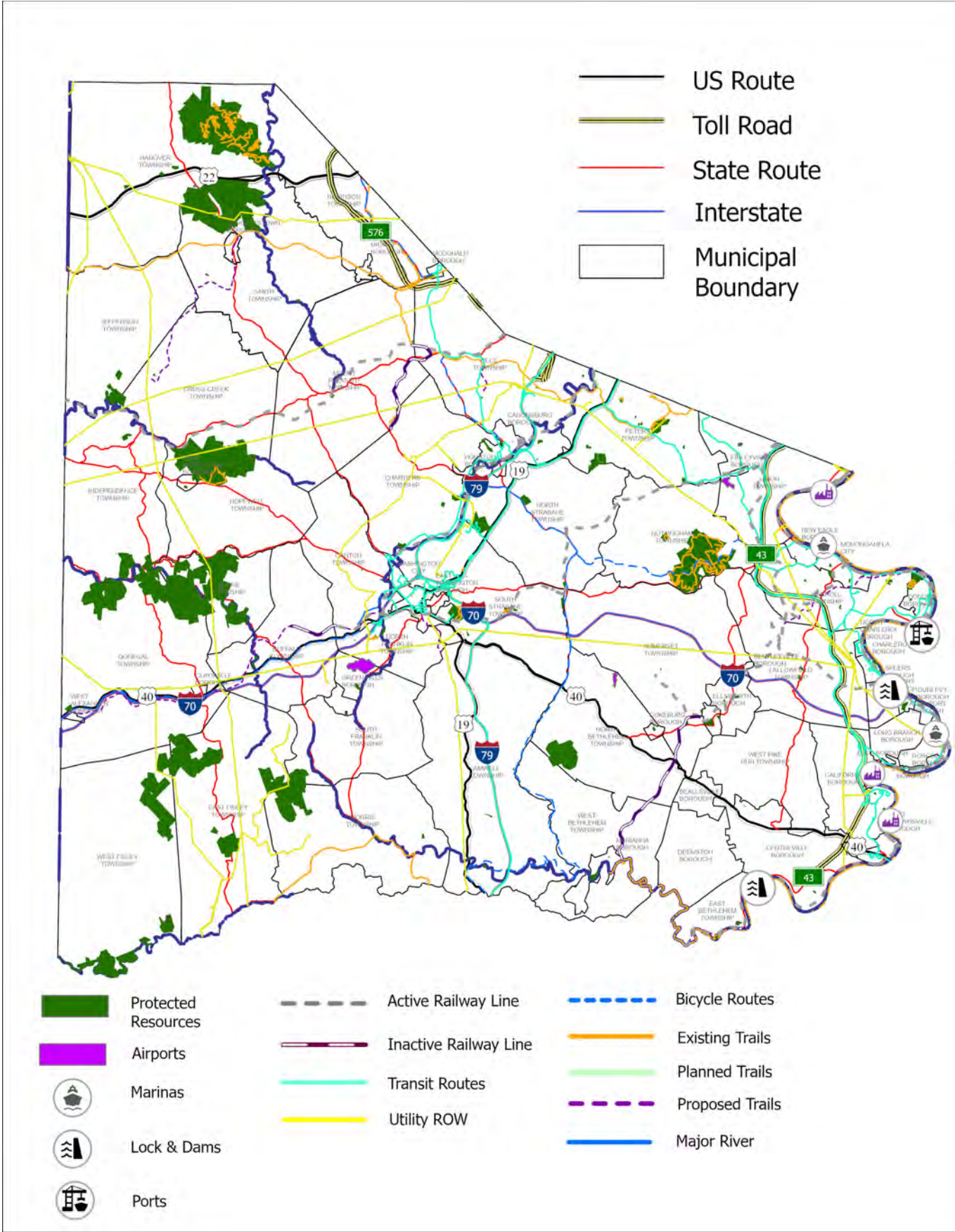
Washington County is served by three airports;

- **Washington County Airport (KAFJ)** serves as a significant economic hub in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Situated just five miles southwest of the City of Washington's central business area and 30 miles south of Pittsburgh, it boasts a 5,004-foot runway, parallel taxiway system, and advanced weather observation and landing systems, making it suitable for various corporate and general aviation aircraft year-round.
- **Bandel Airport**, located in North Bethlehem Township, features a smaller turf/dirt runway spanning 2,260 feet.
- **Finleyville Airport** provides convenient access to Pittsburgh's attractions without navigating the busy Pittsburgh International Airport. Situated less than 15 miles from Downtown Pittsburgh and the Meadows Casino and Racetrack, it offers a smaller, more tranquil alternative.

Utility Corridors

Utility corridors function as areas where facilities are situated for power generation, transmission, or distribution of power and energy, encompassing both electric and natural gas transmission. In the context of the Washington County Greenways Plan, the utility corridor encompasses all facilities related to energy transmission and interconnection. This includes the entire transmission line and its associated facilities, extending from one substation or interconnection point to another, for the segment traversing Washington County. Utility Corridors present opportunities for the County to establish greenway connections. These corridors are visually represented on Map 4.

Map 4: Transportation Facilities & Utility Corridor Resources



Natural Greenways

Washington County features natural greenways, defined as undeveloped or minimally developed land following natural features like rivers, streams, wetlands, and ridgelines. Natural greenways form interconnected pathways, offering ecological, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. Natural Greenways play a vital role in ecological connectivity, supporting wildlife movement, genetic diversity, and access to essential habitats. Greenways also preserve diverse ecosystems, contributing to the resilience of native species. Along water bodies, corridors protect water quality by acting as buffer zones, filtering pollutants, preventing erosion, and regulating water flow.

Natural greenways provide spaces for outdoor recreation, education, and appreciation of local ecosystems. Trails within the corridors offer opportunities for activities like hiking, biking, and birdwatching, serving as educational resources about natural history. Additionally, greenways enhance the scenic beauty of regions, attracting residents and visitors interested in nature-based tourism. Beyond recreation, greenways contribute to floodplain protection, absorbing excess water during heavy rainfall, mitigating floods, and reducing risks to developed areas. Greenways also play a role in climate resilience by absorbing carbon dioxide, mitigating heat island effects, and contributing to climate adaptation.



Mingo Creek Park - Image Courtesy of Mackin

State Game Lands (SGL)

The Pennsylvania Game Commission oversees over 1.5 million acres of state game lands across the state. These lands are primarily dedicated to wildlife habitat management and offer opportunities for lawful hunting and trapping. Secondary recreational activities such as hiking, birdwatching, nature photography, camping, and wildlife observation, among other are allowed as per the Game Commission's regulations.

In Washington County, there are seven State Game Lands including Hillman State Park managed under the Pennsylvania State Game Commission's Southwest Region, totaling 16,261 acres. These lands are detailed in Figure 1.8 below and are depicted on various maps of State Game Lands or Protected Resources.

Figure 1.8 State Gamelands

SGL	Acres	Locations
117	2,895	Hanover Township & Smith Township
232	5,183	Independence Township, Donegal Township, Blaine Township, & Hopewell Township
245	4,044	East Finley Township, West Finley Township, South Franklin Township, & Morris Township
297	633	Bethlehem Township
302	852	West Finley Township
303	222	Southeastern Jefferson Township
432	2,432	Donegal Township, Blaine Township, Independence Township, and Hanover Township

Major Surface Waters & Watersheds

Monongahela River Watershed

The Monongahela River watershed is a vital component of the larger Ohio River watershed, encompassing an area of approximately 7,340 square miles. It is located in the Appalachian region of the United States, primarily spanning through the states of West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The Monongahela River, originating in northern West Virginia, flows northward for about 130 miles before joining the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh to form the Ohio River.

The watershed is characterized by a diverse landscape, ranging from rugged mountains and forests to rolling hills and urban areas. It is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna, including several endangered species such as the eastern hellbender and the Indiana bat. The river and its tributaries support a wide range of aquatic life, including numerous fish species such as bass, catfish, and trout, making it a popular destination for anglers. The Monongahela River watershed has played a significant role in the economic development of the region, historically serving as a vital transportation route for the coal, steel, and timber industries. Today, it continues to support various industries, including manufacturing, energy production, and agriculture.

To protect these watersheds, The Washington County Watershed Alliance (WCWA) was formed in 1998 to enhance and coordinate conservation efforts throughout the County and support the activities of individual watershed associations. The WCWA is actively engaged in various activities aimed at conserving natural resources and promoting watershed management. These activities include water quality monitoring, supporting watershed groups through grants and management plan development, coordinating County-wide efforts, and providing resources such as information on funding sources and programs.



Monongahela River - Source: Washington County

Monongahela River Subwatersheds

The Monongahela River watershed consists of numerous smaller watersheds, known as subwatersheds, each with its own network of tributaries and drainage systems. These subwatersheds contribute to the overall hydrology of the Monongahela River watershed, ultimately feeding into the main stem of the river. They play vital roles in managing water resources, controlling pollution, and preserving aquatic and riparian ecosystems within the larger watershed context.

The WCWA comprises individual watershed associations, including Chartiers Creek, Buffalo Creek, Ten-Mile Creek, Little Wheeling Creek, and Raccoon Creek, as outlined in Figures 1.9 and 1.10. These associations are integral to the alliance's efforts in watershed management and conservation.

Figure 1.9 Monongahela River Subwatersheds

Name	Mileage	Locations	Designation
Mingo Creek	119 sq.	Union Township & Nottingham Township	High-Quality Warm Water Fishery
Pigeon Creek	105 sq.	Carroll Township, Fallowfield Township, Bentleyville Borough, & City of Monongahela	Warm Water Fishery
Pike Run Creek	30 sq.	West Pike Run Township, California Borough, & Centreville Borough	Warm Water Fishery
Maple Creek	25 sq.	Fallowfield Township, Twilight Borough, & Charleroi Borough	Warm Water Fishery
Peters Creek	16 sq.	Peters Township & Union Township	Warm Water Fishery
Ten-Mile Creek	139 sq.	Amwell Township, Morris Township, Deemston Borough, Marianna Borough, South Franklin Township, & West Bethlehem Township	Warm Water Fishery
Two Mile Creek	24 sq.	Centreville Borough	Warm Water Fishery
Hudson Creek	16 sq.	Union Township	Warm Water Fishery

Ohio River Watershed

The Ohio River Basin's watershed drainage area totaling 203,940 square miles, excluding the Tennessee River Basin, spans across various states including Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. In Washington County, nine sub-watersheds, contribute to the Ohio River's flow. Originating in Pittsburgh at the confluence of the Allegheny River and the Monongahela River, the Ohio River travels through Allegheny and Beaver Counties before reaching the Ohio border north of Washington County. Designated as a Warm Water Fishery (WWF) by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), the Ohio River supports diverse aquatic life native to warm water habitats.

The management of the Ohio River involves collaboration among multiple organizations at various levels of government and stakeholders. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) oversees navigation, flood control, and infrastructure maintenance, while the U.S. Coast Guard ensures maritime safety and security. State governments, including those of Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Illinois, also regulate and manage the river. Interstate organizations like the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) monitor and regulate water quality within the basin, ensuring its conservation and environmental protection.



Ohio River - Source: Washington County

Ohio River Subwatersheds

Similar to the Monongahela River, the Ohio River watershed includes several designated subwatersheds spanning from the central to the western parts of Washington County. These subwatersheds are vital elements of the Ohio River's hydrology, as they flow into its main stem. Their significance lies in their role in managing water resources, combating pollution, and preserving the health of aquatic and riparian ecosystems within the larger watershed context.

Figure 1.10 Ohio River Subwatersheds

Name	Mileage	Locations	Designation
Chartiers Creek	340 sq.	Cecil Township, Canonsburg Borough, Canton Township, North and South Strabane Township, North and South Franklin Township, & City of Washington	Warm Water Fishery
Little Chartiers Creek	70 sq.	North and South Strabane Township, Somerset Township & Canonsburg Borough	High-Quality Warm Water Fishery
Buffalo Creek	164 sq.	Independence Township, Buffalo Township, Blaine Township, Donegal Township, & East Finley Township	High-Quality Warm Water Fishery
Raccoon Creek	184 sq.	Hanover Township, Robinson Township, Smith Township, & Mount Pleasant Township	Warm Water Fishery
Little Wheeling Creek	60 sq.	Donegal Township & West Alexander Borough	Warm Water Fishery
Cross Creek	75 sq.	Jefferson Township, Cross Creek Township, Canton Township, Hopewell Township, Independence Township, & Mount Pleasant Township	High-Quality Warm Water Fishery
Kings Creek	25 sq.	Hanover Township.	Cold Water Fishery
Harmon Creek	31 sq.	Hanover Township, Jefferson Township, & Smith Township	Warm Water Fishery

Lakes

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) functions as an autonomous agency of the Commonwealth, dedicated to the mission of ensuring fishing and boating opportunities while safeguarding aquatic resources. Under this mandate, PFBC oversees the management and protection of various bodies of water. In Washington County, PFBC manages two prominent fishing lakes: Canonsburg Lake and Dutch Fork Lake. Canonsburg Lake is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and managed by the PFBC for public fishing and boating. The PFBC stocks the lake with trout and it is designated as Stocked Trout Waters Open to Year-Round Fishing.

Figure 1.11 Major Lakes

Identifier	Acres	Locations
Canonsburg Lake	76	The lake is situated in the townships of North Strabane and Peters.
Dutch Fork Lake	91	This lake is located in Donegal Township.

In addition to Canonsburg Lake and Dutch Fork Lake, Washington County boasts several other minor lakes; however, these are owned and managed by different entities. These lakes contribute significantly to the recreational and environmental landscape of the County, offering diverse opportunities for fishing, boating, and outdoor leisure activities. While not under the ownership of the PFBC, these lakes remain integral to the local community. Two lakes recognized as important water resources by the PFBC include Peters Township Lake and Cross Creek Lake.

Figure 1.12 Minor Lakes

Identifier	Acres	Locations
Peters Township Lake	36	The lake is situated in Peters Township.
Cross Creek Lake	244	This lake is located in Cross Creek Park, Avella.

Floodplains

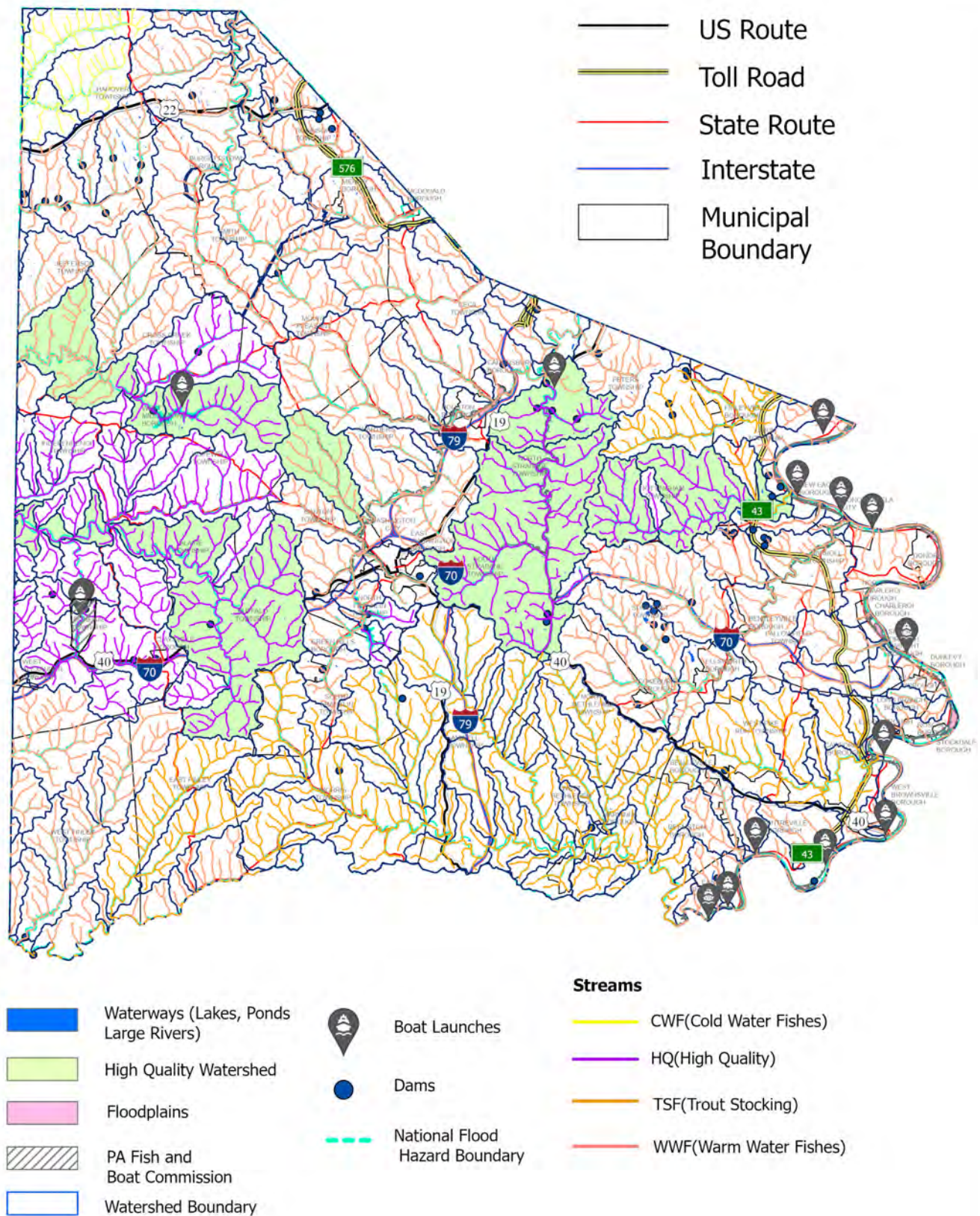
Floodplains are integral to natural ecosystems, serving as buffers against flooding by absorbing excess water during high flow periods. Floodplains contain fertile soils conducive to agriculture and provide essential habitats for wildlife, contributing to biodiversity. Managed by a combination of local, state, and federal authorities, floodplains are subject to zoning ordinances, floodplain mapping, and the implementation of flood control measures like levees and stormwater management systems. FEMA-approved floodplain maps delineate the 100-year floodplain boundary and the maximum flood-prone areas.

Both floodplains and floodways are essential for community resilience, as they help mitigate storm surges and minimize flood damage downstream. Floodplains offer fertile farmland and crucial habitats for aquatic species, fostering connections between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Municipal ordinances play a vital role in regulating development within these areas to ensure effective floodplain management. Map 5 provides valuable information on floodplain zones and the locations of flood control dams, aiding in flood risk assessment and management efforts.



Cherry Valley Dam - Source: Washington County

Map 5: Water Resources



Living Resources

Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI)

The Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) is a comprehensive database or inventory of rare, threatened, and endangered species, as well as significant natural communities and ecosystems within a specific geographic area. Managed by government agencies, conservation organizations, or research institutions, the NHI aims to document and catalog the biological diversity and ecological resources of a region.

The Washington County NHI of 2021 documents the significant biotic and ecological resources existing within the political boundaries of Washington County. Its primary objective is to furnish County authorities, local governments, and community organizations with a valuable resource aiding in their planning endeavors. This inventory not only informs local development initiatives but also offers recommendations for safeguarding the noteworthy natural heritage resources present in Washington County.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)

Sites in the NHI report from 1994 were referred to Biological Diversity Areas (BDAs), Landscape Conservation Areas (LCAs), Dedicated Areas (DAs), and Other Heritage Areas (OHAs). All of these sites of ecological significance are now referred to as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). Eighty-three species and natural communities of concern were documented in Washington County for the NHI 2021. Many of these have multiple occurrences within several Natural Heritage Areas in the County. Factsheets describing habitats, threats, and conservation recommendations for many of these species may be found on the PNHP website under "Species Lists": <http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/>.

This inventory of rare species has resulted in the designation of 86 Natural Heritage Areas in Washington County which can be viewed on Map 6. Brief site descriptions, criteria for rankings, and their significance ranks are presented in the NHI 2021. Ten of the sites are ranked as having Global Significance, 9 have Regional Significance, 65 have State Significance, and 2 have Local Significance.

Important Bird Areas (IBA)

The Audubon Society, representing BirdLife International in the United States, leads efforts to designate IBAs across the country. Through this program, priority is given to identifying and conserving vital habitats crucial for bird populations' survival and well-being. IBAs vary in size from small parcels to expansive landscapes spanning hundreds of square miles, offering essential resources such as nesting sites, feeding areas, and stopover locations for migratory birds. Pennsylvania pioneered the Audubon IBA program in 1996, resulting in the identification of 81 IBAs statewide, covering over 2 million acres of both public and private lands. In Washington County, three IBAs have been recognized: Raccoon Creek Valley, Buffalo Creek Valley, and Enlow Fork. These areas play significant roles in supporting diverse bird species throughout various stages of their life cycles, contributing to regional and global bird conservation efforts.

Trout Stocked Fisheries

Trout stocked fisheries refer to bodies of water where the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) releases trout for recreational fishing purposes. These fisheries are typically stocked with different trout species, including rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout, to provide anglers with diverse fishing opportunities. The PFBC regularly updates its list of trout stocked waters, including streams, creeks, rivers, and lakes, throughout the state, including those within Washington County. Anglers can refer to the PFBC website or local fishing regulations for specific information on stocked fisheries, including stocking schedules, regulations, and access points. The PFBC has also officially approved the following streams in Washington County as “approved trout waters”, indicating that they meet criteria qualifying them to be stocked with trout by the PFBC:

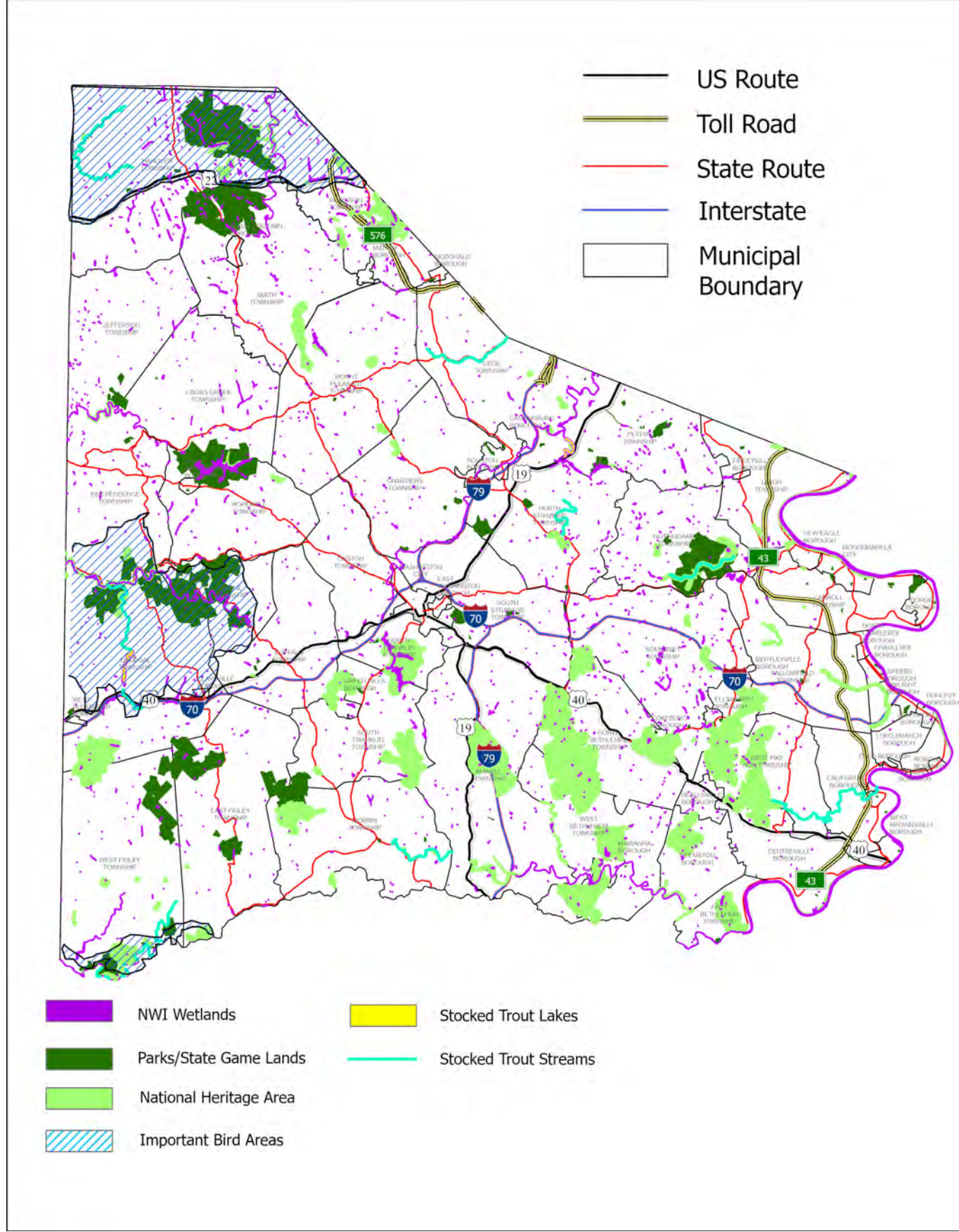
1. Dutch Fork
2. Little Chartiers Creek
3. Kings Creek
4. Pike Run
5. Millers Run
6. Ten-Mile Creek
7. Templeton Fork
8. Mingo Creek
9. Aunt Clara Fork
10. Enlow Fork

Wetlands

Wetlands in Washington County, Pennsylvania, are diverse ecosystems that play crucial roles in the local environment. Wetlands vary in size and type, including marshes, swamps, and floodplains, and they are often located along streams, rivers, and other bodies of water. Wetlands provide various ecological services, such as flood control, water filtration, and habitat for diverse plant and animal species.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI), created by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) following the Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986, maps wetland areas across the United States. According to NWI mapping data, there are approximately around 2,300 wetlands, covering roughly 7,000 acres within Washington County, which represents less than two percent of the County's total area. Map 6 provides an illustration of these NWI-identified wetlands within the County. However, it's important to note that the NWI may not encompass all wetlands in Washington County, necessitating the collection of site-specific data before undertaking new development initiatives. (<https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory>).

Map 6: Living Resources



Forest Resources

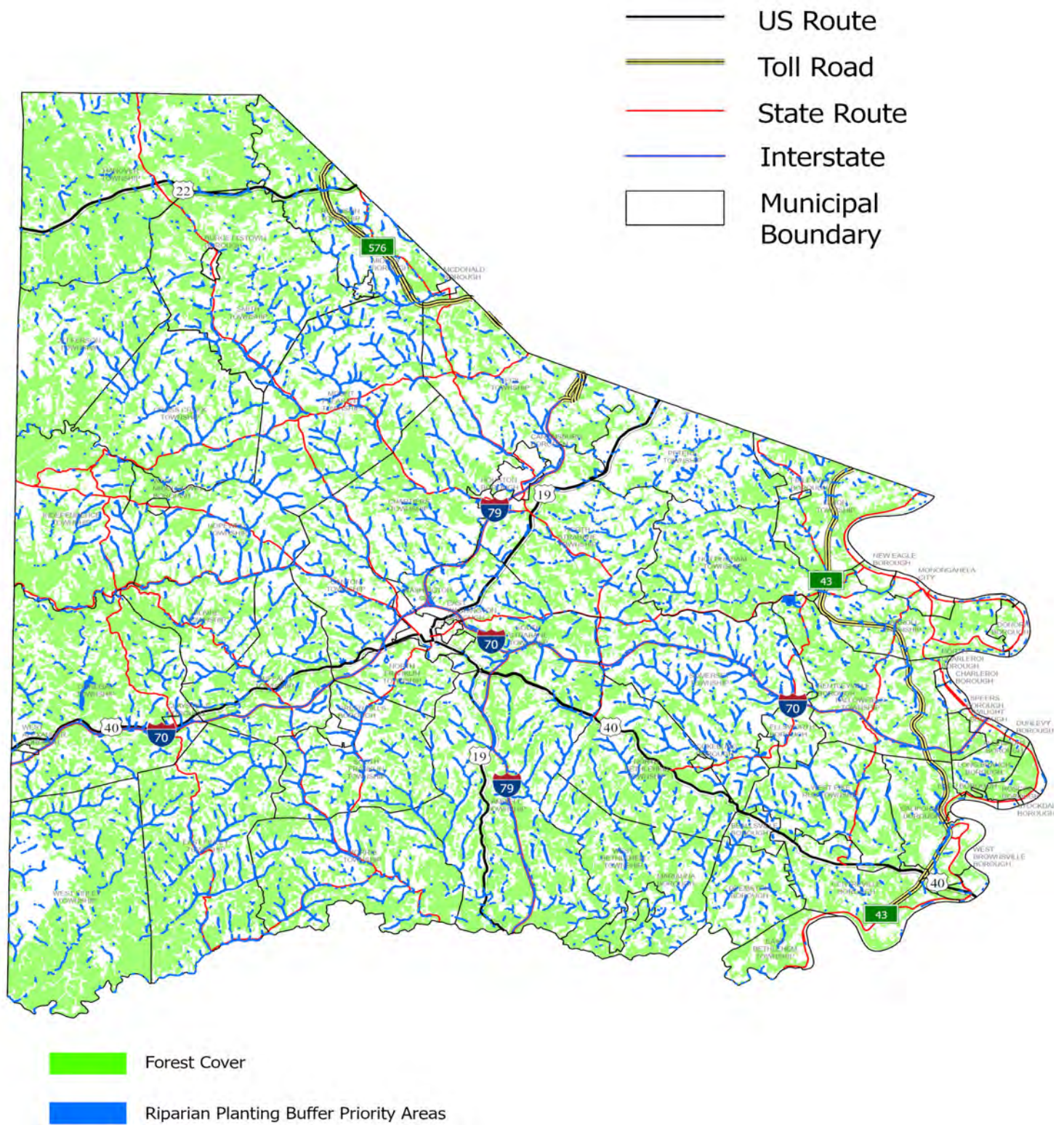
Washington County's natural landscape is deeply intertwined with its forests, yet this critical natural resource is under threat from logging, farming expansion, and urban sprawl. Implementing best management practices is crucial to maintain the sustainability of the timber industry and ensure that these forests continue to thrive for future generations.

Beyond their economic value, forests are vital for biodiversity and ecological stability, providing essential habitats for a wide range of species and serving as effective natural filtration systems. By absorbing runoff from precipitation and snowmelt, forests capture sediments and pollutants through their root systems, thereby preventing these harmful substances from contaminating and damaging aquatic environments. Map 7: Forest Resources illustrates the distribution of forested areas across Washington County, identifying zones with high riparian planting priorities. These priority areas are crucial for enhancing vegetation along the land-water interfaces of rivers and streams, ensuring the health and stability of these ecosystems. The map underscores large, unbroken expanses of forest in the northwest and southwest, while highlighting the impact of development and agriculture in reducing forest cover in the central and northeastern parts of the County, especially along the I-70 corridor.



Mingo Park; Image Courtesy of Mackin

Map 7: Forest Resources

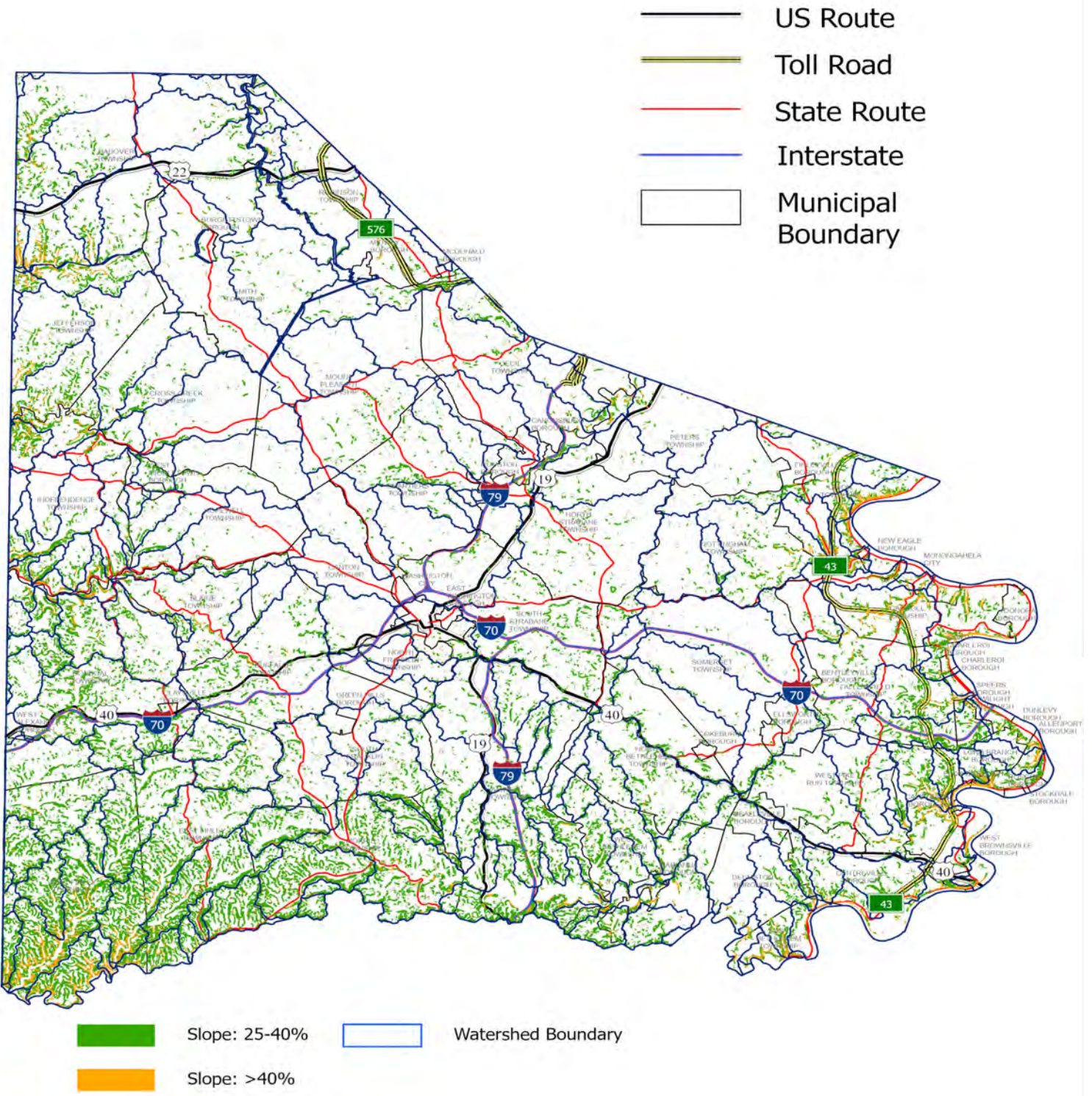


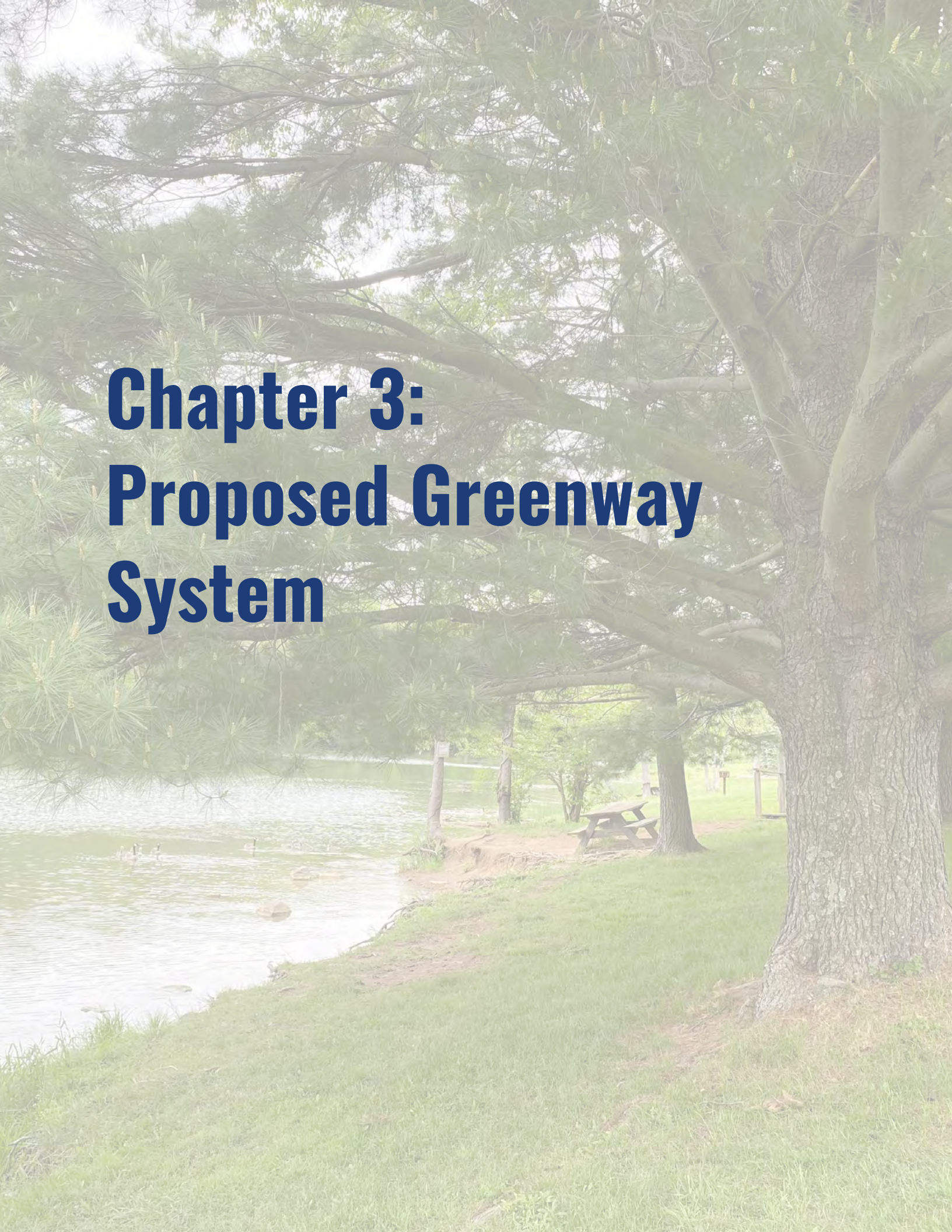
Topographical Resources

Washington County is distinguished by its numerous slender valleys that are relatively shallow, creating a varied landscape. The northern part of the County features gentle, rolling hills, whereas the southern region is marked by higher elevations, sharper ridges, and more dramatically defined stream valleys. Slope is a critical factor in determining suitable development practices, as land with slopes exceeding 25 percent presents considerable challenges for construction and land use.

Despite a history of construction on slopes ranging from 15 to 25 percent, it is important for developers to recognize the potential impacts of such developments. The delicate equilibrium between slope, soil, vegetation, geology, and precipitation levels is crucial. Disturbances in these areas, especially through the removal of vegetation or active land use, can lead to soil erosion. Moreover, the high clay content of the soil in Washington County, combined with the region's significant rainfall, increases the risk of landslides. The County's topography, including its diverse slopes, is illustrated on Map 8: Topographical Resources, providing a visual guide to these geographical features as well as watershed boundaries.

Map 8: Topographical Resources



A scenic view of a lake with a large pine tree in the foreground and a picnic table in the background. The text "Chapter 3: Proposed Greenway System" is overlaid on the image in a bold, dark blue font.

Chapter 3: Proposed Greenway System

Classifying Greenways

Washington County is tasked with implementing the Statewide Greenways Action Plan while also facilitating and empowering municipalities to develop their own greenway initiatives. To streamline this process, greenways have been categorized as either primary or secondary and are depicted on Map 9: Primary Greenways and Map 10: Secondary Greenways.

Primary Greenways encompass all greenways designated by the state as major corridors, as outlined in the Pennsylvania Greenways Action Plan or other official planning documents. These corridors, labeled as "Major greenways" by the DCNR, span at least fifty miles and traverse two or more counties, facilitating regional connectivity and recreation.

Secondary Greenways, as identified in this plan, comprise greenways not officially designated by the state but recognized locally for their significance. These areas were selected based on their potential to contribute to the overall greenway network and enhance recreational opportunities and environmental conservation efforts within the County.

Primary Greenways

Primary greenways are extensive and typically cover significant geographic areas, forming major corridors that connect different cities, regions, or even states. They serve as essential routes for non-motorized transportation such as biking, walking, and sometimes equestrian activities, providing primary pathways that facilitate regional and national connectivity. These greenways also act as major recreational areas, offering extensive trails that accommodate a variety of outdoor activities. Additionally, they play a crucial role in environmental protection by preserving large natural habitats and critical ecosystems, thus significantly contributing to biodiversity and conservation efforts. Notable examples of primary greenways include Rails-to-Trails projects, which convert old railway lines into long-distance trails, and river corridors, which create extensive linear parks by following major rivers.

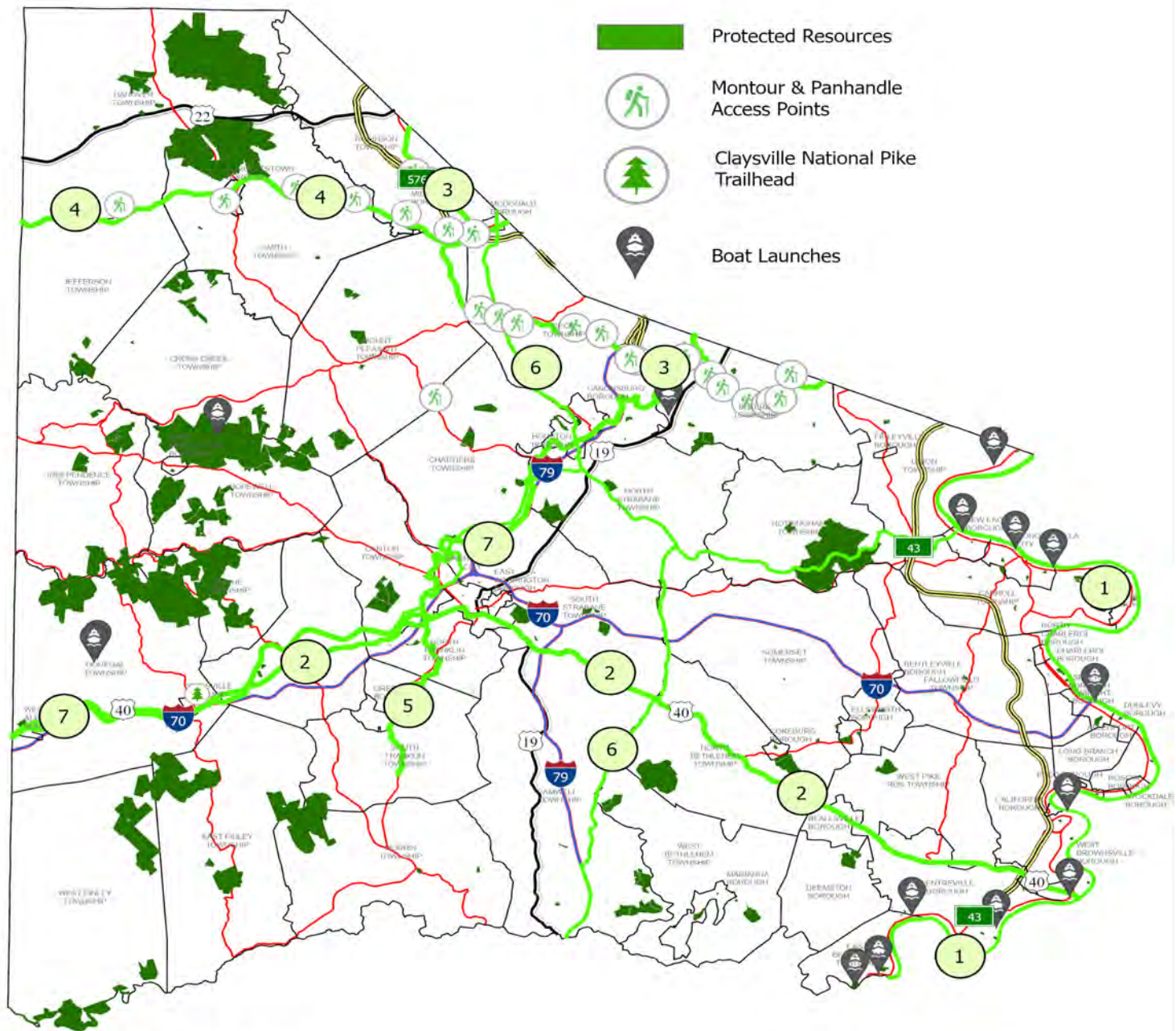


Mon River; Image Courtesy of Washington County



Montour Trail; Image Courtesy of Washington County

Map 9: Primary Greenways



Major Greenways

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Monongahela River Corridor | 4 Panhandle Trail Corridor |
| 2 National Road Heritage Corridor | 5 Chartiers Creek Water Corridor |
| 3 Montour Trail Corridor | 6 BicyclePA Route A Corridor |
| | 7 BicyclePA Route S Corridor |

Secondary Greenways

Secondary greenways are localized corridors covering smaller geographic areas. They link neighborhoods, local parks, schools, and community centers, enhancing local access and connectivity. By serving as supplementary routes, secondary greenways complement primary greenways, offering additional pathways that facilitate easier community access. These greenways are valuable for community recreation, offering accessible spaces for residents to engage in outdoor activities. Additionally, secondary greenways contribute to environmental enhancement by managing stormwater, reducing urban heat islands, and boosting local biodiversity. Examples include neighborhood trails, which connect residential areas to nearby parks and amenities, and utility corridors, which run along utility lines or smaller waterways within a community.

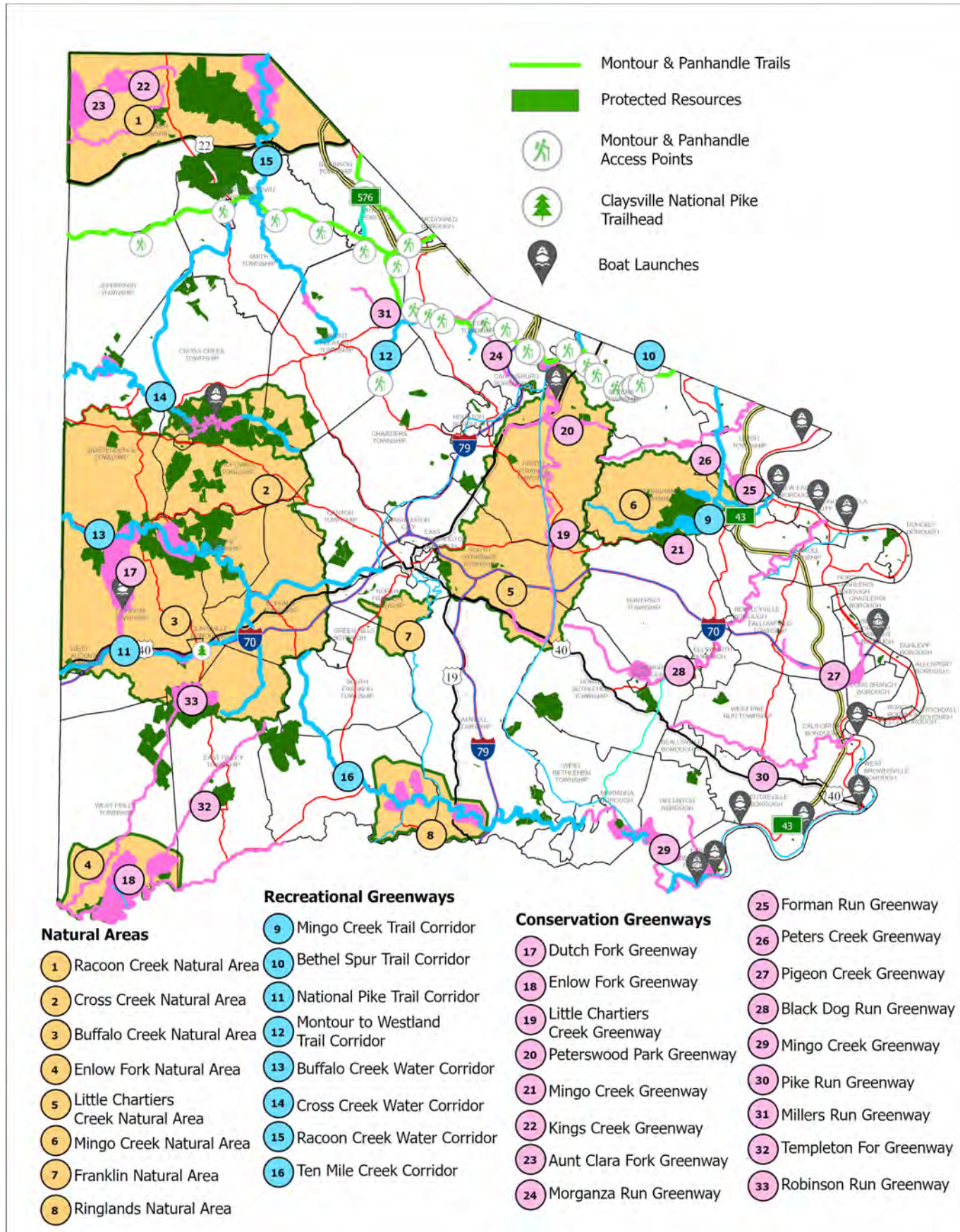
They are divided into the following categories:

Natural Areas: Typically large areas of high ecological importance for nature observation or environmental education. In Washington County, these include high-quality watersheds, landscape conservation areas, and protected resources such as State and County Parks, State Game Lands, and Agricultural Conservation Easements. Sites in the NHI report from 1994 were referred to Biological Diversity Areas (BDAs), Landscape Conservation Areas (LCAs), Dedicated Areas (DAs), and Other Heritage Areas (OHAs). All of these sites of ecological significance are now referred to as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs).

Recreational Greenways: Linear corridors of ecological importance that include some form of low-impact recreation, usually on land or water trails. Planning and development indicate an active sponsor and a completed feasibility study. These trails provide connectivity and warrant further study and consideration. Potential trails with no sponsor or completed feasibility study are not yet classified as primary or secondary greenways. Once feasibility is established, their status can be determined.

Conservation Greenways: Linear corridors of ecological importance intended to have little or no human impact. Two types of conservation greenways are Riparian Buffers and Landscape Corridors. Riparian Buffers are corridors of vegetation along stream banks that shade and cool the stream, protect banks from erosion, and provide wildlife movement and habitat. Landscape Corridors connect habitat areas to provide ecological connectivity.

Map 10: Secondary Greenways



Chapter 4:

Vision, Goals, Action Items



OVERVIEW

Washington County Greenways Vision Statement:

Washington County's greenway system is comprised of recreational, environmental, historical, cultural, and agricultural resources that link residents and communities to nature through a system of trails, parks, open space, and scenic vistas. The Washington County Greenway System is invaluable to maintaining the rural character of the County, which is imperative to County residents, and should be protected and celebrated. The Greenways Plan will ensure those precious assets are preserved through collaboration with public, private, and nonprofit entities by focusing on the importance of the conservation of open space and smart development practices that celebrate our rural character.

The Washington County Greenways Plan includes five Focus Areas, each with specific goals and action items. A summary of funding sources for these action items can be found in the Appendices.

- 1. Protect the Greenway System:** Ensure the County's greenway system is protected through County support and increased awareness.
- 2. Foster Collaborative Partnerships:** Establish collaborative partnerships to aid in the expansion and maintenance of the County's greenway system.
- 3. Preserve Natural Resources:** Promote the preservation of resources by defining greenways that encompass the County's most sensitive, unique, and interconnected natural landscapes.
- 4. Expand the Greenway Network:** Expand the County's greenway system by developing a system of land and water trails to connect local and regional recreation assets and key destination centers to population hubs.
- 5. Honor Heritage:** Honor Washington County's heritage by safeguarding and promoting its agricultural, cultural, and historic landmarks through preservation and strategic marketing efforts.

Protect the Greenway System



Goal: Ensure the County's greenway system is protected through County support and increased awareness.

Protecting the greenway system in Washington County through effective support and increased awareness is crucial for a variety of reasons. Greenways provide essential ecological benefits by preserving natural habitats, maintaining biodiversity, and enhancing the resilience of local ecosystems. By safeguarding these areas, the County can ensure that native plant and animal species continue to thrive, which in turn supports a healthy environment. Effective initiatives that protect greenways also help mitigate the impacts of urban development and climate change, reduce flood risks, and improve air and water quality.

Furthermore, increasing public awareness about the importance of greenways help create a community culture that values and actively participates in the preservation of natural spaces. When residents are informed about the benefits of greenways, such as recreational opportunities, improved mental and physical health, and enhanced property values, they are more likely to support and engage in conservation efforts. This community involvement can lead to stronger advocacy for greenway protection, ensuring that these areas remain a cherished and well-maintained part of Washington County for future generations.



Mingo Park Shelter 5; Image Courtesy of Mackin

Recommendations and Actions

Marketing & Promotion

Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy.

Developing and implementing a comprehensive marketing and promotion strategy is crucial for enhancing public awareness and engagement with Washington County's parks, recreation areas, and greenways. Effective marketing can highlight the numerous benefits these spaces offer, such as recreational opportunities, environmental conservation, and community well-being. By collaborating with local agencies and utilizing various communication channels, the County can reach a wider audience and develop a culture of appreciation and stewardship. This increased visibility and engagement can lead to greater community support, higher usage rates, and enhanced funding opportunities, ensuring the long-term preservation and enjoyment of these valuable natural assets.

The County should establish a dedicated marketing and promotion initiative to raise awareness and engagement with Washington County stakeholders regarding parks, recreation areas, and greenways.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Tourism Promotion Agency; Washington County Council on Economic Development; Local Media Outlets; Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- Cost (if applicable): \$10,000 - \$50,000
- Funding Sources: DCNR; DCED; PRPS; NRPA
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1 to 3 years)

Promote Educational Initiatives and General Awareness on the Importance of Greenways.

Supporting and collaborating with existing programs in Washington County to highlight and promote educational initiatives about greenways is essential for developing a well-informed and engaged community. Education on the benefits of greenways helps residents understand the critical role these spaces play in environmental conservation, such as preserving biodiversity, protecting natural habitats, and improving air and water quality. By learning about these benefits, the community can better appreciate the ecological significance of greenways and the need to support their preservation and expansion. This increased awareness can lead to stronger community advocacy for policies and practices that protect and enhance greenway systems.

Moreover, general education on the role of greenways in community health and recreational opportunities can significantly enhance the quality of life for Washington County residents. Greenways provide accessible spaces for physical activities such as walking, biking, and jogging, which promote healthier lifestyles and reduce the incidence of chronic diseases. Additionally, greenways serve as scenic and tranquil areas for mental relaxation and social interaction, fostering a sense of community and well-being. By promoting these educational initiatives, the County can encourage more residents to utilize and support greenways, creating a more vibrant, healthy, and environmentally conscious community.

The County should highlight and promote educational initiatives provided by municipalities and organizations regarding the importance of greenways. This should include general education on the benefits of greenways and their role in environmental conservation, community health, and recreational opportunities.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; School Districts; Watershed Alliance; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

Example: Watershed Alliance educational initiatives

- *Washington County Watershed Alliance, WCWA, is an all volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the many Waterways of Washington County.*
- *WCWA organizes educational events for all ages to encourage people to learn about our local natural resources and become partners in restoring them.*
- *WCWA also organizes creek clean up events, conducts regular stream water quality monitoring, and secures grant funding for stream restoration projects.*

Promote and Organize Community Events.

Promoting and organizing community events such as dedicated running and biking races, fishing tournaments, and sporting events can significantly enhance the community's engagement with Washington County's parks, recreation, and greenway assets. These events create a vibrant social atmosphere, bringing residents together and a sense of community and belonging. By participating in these activities, residents can experience the County's recreational facilities firsthand, which helps to increase their appreciation and utilization of these spaces. Moreover, community events serve as a platform to educate residents about the various amenities available within the County's parks, encouraging them to explore and take advantage of these resources in their daily lives.

Additionally, organizing these events can have substantial health and economic benefits for Washington County. Physically engaging activities such as races and sports events promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging regular exercise and outdoor activity, which can reduce the prevalence of lifestyle-related health issues among residents. Economically, these events can draw visitors from outside the County, boosting local businesses and generating revenue. Sponsorships and partnerships with local businesses can further enhance the economic impact, while also building strong relationships between the County, local businesses, and the community.

The County should actively promote and organize community events to generate enthusiasm and awareness about parks and recreation opportunities.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Local Municipalities
- Partners: Washington County Planning; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; PennDOT; SPC; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Tourism Promotion Agency
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: SPC; PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Fund; PRPS; DCNR; WCCF
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1-3 years)

Online Engagement

Enhance and Update the Washington County Website (Parks & Recreation).

Conducting a thorough review of the current Parks and Recreation section of the Washington County website is essential for identifying areas for improvement. This assessment will ensure that the website is user-friendly, informative, and efficiently serves the community's needs. An updated and well-organized website can significantly enhance user experience, making it easier for residents to find information about parks, recreational activities, and greenway initiatives. Identifying and addressing any outdated or confusing content, broken links, or usability issues is the first step in ensuring the website meets modern standards and effectively communicates with the community. In addition, feedback, through user testing, and ongoing monitoring and maintenance should be utilized to make sure the website is meeting needs and remaining functional.

Suggested updates to the website includes:

- A grant assistance form;
- Add features for user feedback, such as surveys or comment sections, to gather input on the website's usability and content;
- Implement an events calendar with details about upcoming activities, programs, and events.

The County should enhance its website to better serve the community's Parks and Recreation needs. This includes developing a user-friendly form or mobile app for grant assistance requests and enabling online submissions for comments and updates on County plans.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County IT Department
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Washington County Planning; Local Universities and Colleges
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on projects (estimate - \$15,000 - \$50,000)
- Funding Sources: DCNR; DCED
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

Utilize and Implement Social Media and GIS Technology for Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Promotion Efforts.

Utilizing social media platforms and GIS technology to promote parks, recreation, and greenways empowers the County to engage with a broad audience, create real-time community interaction, and elevate the user experience. Through the creation of captivating content and the integration of GIS mapping for interactive displays, the County can seamlessly communicate essential details about park locations, amenities, and recreational opportunities. This approach not only encourages increased utilization of these assets but also cultivates a deeper appreciation for them among residents and visitors. Below, you'll find examples of engaging storymaps developed by DCNR, showcasing how such initiatives can ignite excitement and interest in recreational activities.

The County should leverage social media platforms and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to actively promote parks, recreation, and greenways. This involves creating engaging content, utilizing GIS mapping for interactive displays, and fostering community engagement through digital platforms.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County GIS and IT Department
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Washington County Planning; Local Universities and Colleges; Tourism Promotion Agency; Washington County Council on Economic Development; Local Media Outlets
- Cost (if applicable): Staff Time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

DCNR examples of park & recreation storymaps

- *Exploring Pennsylvania's Top Ten Trail Gap*
- *25 Must-See Pennsylvania State Parks*
- *PA Green Community Parks*
- *Growing Greener and Keystone Grants*
- *Explore Pennsylvania's National Natural Landmarks*

Incorporate an Interactive Feedback Portal.

Incorporating an interactive feedback portal within the Washington County Planning Commission Hub is essential for the successful execution of the greenways plan. Through the utilization of ESRI HUB technology, the County can establish a user-friendly online platform that actively engages stakeholders, community members, and project partners in ongoing discussions regarding crucial aspects of community development. This portal would serve as a centralized hub for gathering a wide range of perspectives, insights, and suggestions, thereby incorporating transparency, collaboration, and inclusivity in the decision-making process. Additionally, integrating a Letter Request feature tailored for grant funding and project support within the portal streamlines administrative procedures, enhancing efficiency and accessibility for stakeholders seeking financial assistance or partnership opportunities. By updating its Planning Commission Hub to facilitate continuous feedback on parks, recreation, and greenways, the County can effectively prioritize community input and ensure the successful implementation of the greenways plan.

The County should update its Planning Commission Hub to facilitate continuous feedback and request for information from stakeholders, community members, and project partners in regards to parks, recreation, and greenways. The County should also integrate QR code feedback systems in the parks to gather complaints or solicit visitor input.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County GIS & IT Department
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Washington County Planning; Local Universities and Colleges; Tourism Promotion Agency; Local Media Outlets; Local municipalities
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1 to 3 years)



GIS Hub; Image Courtesy of Washington County

Unified Wayfinding

Establish a cohesive Countywide parks and recreation signage and wayfinding program.

Effective signage plays a fundamental role in guiding visitors to key destinations, amenities, and points of interest, ensuring they can easily access and enjoy all available resources. Without clear signage, visitors may struggle to navigate or find destinations, leading to frustration, decreased satisfaction, and potentially missed opportunities to explore and engage with recreational and greenway activities. By implementing a cohesive signage and wayfinding program, the County can address these challenges, providing visitors with a user-friendly experience that encourages return visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

A visually cohesive signage program not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of parks but also strengthens their overall identity as valuable community assets. Additionally, by promoting awareness of parks and recreational amenities through clear and attractive signage, the program can stimulate interest and encourage greater utilization of these facilities, ultimately contributing to improved public health, community well-being, and environmental stewardship.

The County should establish a comprehensive signage and wayfinding program to enhance navigation and promote awareness of recreational and greenway facilities across the County. This initiative aims to create a cohesive visual identity, improve visitor experience, and encourage greater utilization of parks and recreational amenities.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local Municipalities; Local Universities and Colleges; SPC; PennDOT; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: SPC; DCNR; DCED; PRPS; PennDOT; NPS
- Time Frame: Medium to Long Term (3 to 5 years)

Example: Lumber Heritage Region (LHR)

- The LHR has successfully implemented wayfinding signage, featuring totem poles partnered with organizations displaying the LHR logo and QR codes for additional information.
- This signage is complemented by their website and events, ensuring consistent branding and a unified image. An example of one of the LHR totem poles is shown to the right.



Example of Cohesive Signage; Image Courtesy of LHR

Foster Collaborative Partnerships



Goal: Establish collaborative partnerships to aid in the expansion and maintenance of the County's greenway system.

Fostering collaborative partnerships is essential for expanding and maintaining Washington County's greenway system. Greenways often cross multiple jurisdictions and involve various stakeholders, including local governments, non-profit organizations, community groups, and private landowners. Establishing these partnerships allows the County to leverage collective expertise, resources, and networks, addressing complex challenges related to greenway development and upkeep more efficiently. Collaboration enables information sharing, coordinated planning, and joint decision-making, leading to better resource allocation and shared goals. Additionally, partnerships encourage long-term commitment and engagement from all parties, developing a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. By integrating diverse perspectives and skill sets, partnerships can implement innovative solutions and enhance public support, ultimately ensuring the resilience and sustainability of the greenway system for future generations.



BMX Track at Cross Creek Park; Image Courtesy of

Recommendations and Actions

Partner Network Connections

Compile a Comprehensive List of Existing & Potential Partners.

Greenway projects often require collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including local governments, environmental organizations, recreational associations, and community groups. By identifying and engaging with relevant partners, the County can leverage their collective expertise, resources, and networks to address complex challenges and opportunities related to greenway development and management.

Establishing partnerships allows for the pooling of knowledge and resources, leading to more efficient and effective outcomes. By bringing together stakeholders with shared interests and expertise in greenway development, management, and advocacy, the County can tap into a wealth of experience and insights to inform decision-making and implementation strategies. Additionally, partnerships facilitate coordination and alignment of efforts among various stakeholders, minimizing duplication of work and maximizing the impact of limited resources. Developing a comprehensive inventory of partners help develop a collaborative ecosystem that is essential for realizing the vision of a connected and sustainable greenway system in Washington County.

The County should develop a comprehensive inventory of existing and potential partners with shared interests and expertise in greenway development, management, and advocacy to facilitate collaborative efforts in the expansion and maintenance of Washington County's greenway system.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; PennDOT; SPC; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Tourism Promotion Agency
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Ongoing

Increase coordination and volunteerism throughout the County.

By engaging community members in volunteer activities, the County can harness the collective energy, skills, and resources of residents to enhance the quality and accessibility of trails and greenways. Volunteers contribute valuable labor, expertise, and passion, enabling the County to undertake projects that may otherwise be limited by budget constraints or staffing capacity. A volunteer program fosters a sense of ownership, pride, and stewardship among community members towards their local trails and greenways. Through initiatives like "Adopt a Trail," volunteers become personally invested in the care and maintenance of specific trail segments, cultivating a deeper connection to the natural environment and promoting responsible use and conservation practices. This heightened sense of community ownership not only enhances the overall quality and attractiveness of trails but also creates a stronger sense of community cohesion and engagement.

Organizational coordination and volunteers are also helpful since the County has limited resources. Volunteers provide extra capacity and manpower to promote and maintain the greenways system. Additionally, by involving residents in the planning and management of trails and greenways, the County promotes a sense of inclusivity and empowerment, ensuring that community voices are heard and valued in the decision-making process.

The County work in concert with existing parks staff to engage community members and organizations in supporting trail development, maintenance, and other greenway initiatives. This should provide information on various volunteer opportunities and levels of involvement, and contact information.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department
- Partners: Washington County Planning; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations
- Cost (if applicable): Staff Time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1-3 years)

Municipal Assistance

Enhance Collaboration with Municipal Entities and Organizations.

By regularly engaging with municipal representatives and organizational leaders, the County can build trust, mutual understanding, and shared ownership of recreation and greenway initiatives, leading to more cohesive and sustainable outcomes. This coordinated approach minimizes duplication of efforts, maximizes efficiency, and optimizes the impact of investments in parks, trails, and greenway infrastructure.

Additionally, increasing collaboration facilitates capacity building among municipal entities and organizations involved in recreation and greenway planning. By providing advisory and consulting support, Washington County can offer additional resources, share best management practices, and facilitate access to funding opportunities. This will help to empower municipalities and local organizations to enhance their planning processes and project outcomes. Furthermore, by documenting and sharing success stories, the County can inspire and inform others, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement in parks and recreation planning and management practices.

The County should increase regular follow-up and collaboration with municipal entities and organizations to provide advisory and consulting support for parks, trails, and recreation planning initiatives.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning; Local municipalities
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Ongoing

Assist with Grant Funding & Support for Municipalities and Local Organizations.

In Pennsylvania, the primary source of funding for public recreation and greenways typically stems from the general funds allocated by local municipalities. However, many municipalities currently face constraints with limited financial resources. Fortunately, numerous grant opportunities exist that can supplement these municipal budgets. Through recent municipal outreach efforts conducted as part of the planning process, it has become evident that many municipalities are seeking support in navigating grant opportunities, as many lack the staffing capacity to conduct thorough research and pursue available grants effectively. Washington County is poised to provide valuable resources to assist municipalities in accessing grant opportunities. This support includes identifying relevant grant opportunities and offering assistance where possible. While the County is not responsible for grant writing, due to limited capacity, the County can still support municipal grant efforts by providing letters of consistency for projects applying for grant funds. Additionally, the County can inform municipalities about available opportunities, leaving the technical assistance to the agencies that administer the grants.

The County should provide assistance and support to municipalities and local organizations in obtaining grant funding for recreation and greenway projects to facilitate the implementation of priority projects and initiatives.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; DCNR
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

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Preserve Natural Resources



Goal: Promote the preservation of resources by defining greenways that encompass the County's most sensitive, unique, and interconnected natural landscapes.

As mentioned throughout the plan, greenways serve as vital corridors that protect biodiversity by connecting habitats and allowing wildlife to move freely, which is essential for their survival and genetic diversity. These greenways help to mitigate the effects of habitat fragmentation caused by urban development, ensuring that ecosystems remain resilient and functional.

Greenways play a significant role in enhancing the quality of life for residents by providing accessible natural spaces for recreation and relaxation. This connection not only promotes physical and mental well-being but also raises awareness and appreciation for the importance of environmental conservation. Furthermore, greenways can help to improve air and water quality, manage stormwater runoff, and reduce the urban heat island effect, creating a healthier and more sustainable living environment for current and future generations. By prioritizing the preservation of natural resources through well-defined greenways, Washington County can ensure the long-term ecological integrity and livability of the region.



Playground in Mingo; Image Courtesy of Mackin

Recommendations and Actions

Strengthen Zoning & Land Use Regulations

Assist Municipalities with Regulations Related to Ordinances and Conservation.

Local governments often lack the resources, expertise, or capacity to develop and enforce comprehensive conservation regulations independently. By providing guidance and support, Washington County can help municipalities create effective ordinances that protect vital natural resources, such as waterways, forests, and wildlife habitats. According to the MPC, municipalities without zoning or land use regulations fall under the County's jurisdiction. This collaborative approach ensures consistent and effective conservation efforts across the County, which helps maintain a more sustainable and resilient environment.

Properly designed conservation ordinances can guide growth and development in ways that minimize environmental impact, preserve green spaces, and maintain ecosystem services. Sustainable development practices can improve air and water quality, reduce the risk of natural disasters, and create more livable communities. The County does not have enforcement authority over land use regulations, but its greatest strengths lie in coordination and support. By assisting municipalities in these efforts, Washington County promotes a proactive approach to environmental stewardship, helping to ensure that future generations can enjoy and benefit from the County's natural resources.

The County should continue to provide comprehensive support to municipalities in understanding, developing, and implementing regulations related to ordinances that promote conservation and natural resource protection.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

Protecting & Promote Conservation Easements.

Implementing conservation easements in Washington County is essential for preserving greenway corridors and promoting sustainable land use. Conservation easements are legally binding agreements that restrict development and protect the natural state of the land, ensuring that these greenways remain intact for future generations. By encouraging landowners to establish conservation easements, Washington County can effectively protect viable agriculture land, maintain biodiversity, and preserve the ecological integrity of its greenways. This is particularly important as urban development and land use pressures continue to increase, threatening the County's natural landscapes and the benefits they provide. The rate at which farmland is being converted to non-agricultural use is a growing concern. As development expands, particularly in areas experiencing suburbanization and commercial growth, valuable farmland is increasingly being repurposed for residential, industrial, and commercial developments. This trend is not only reducing the overall amount of agricultural land but is also leading to the loss of prime soils which are soils that are among the most fertile and capable of producing high yields with minimal inputs.

Washington County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program, also known as the Farmland Preservation Program, purchases agricultural easements on productive farms within the County. Through this program, landowners retain private ownership of their property and can continue to use, lease, or sell it. However, any new owner must adhere to the terms of the easement, which restricts subdivision, non-agricultural development, and other uses that are inconsistent with commercial agriculture. Increasing participation in this program is highly beneficial for preserving agricultural land and supporting sustainable farming practices.

The County should encourage conservation easements, where appropriate. They should also provide education to landowners about the benefits and importance of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Washington County Conservation District; Local Land Trusts, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Local Farmers and Landowners
- Cost (if applicable): Staff Time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1 to 3 years)



Farmland; Image Courtesy of Washington County

Support Enforcement of Environmental Protection Laws.

Enhancing the enforcement of existing environmental protection laws in Washington County is essential to preserving the integrity and sustainability of greenway areas. Preventing illegal activities like dumping and unauthorized development ensures that these natural corridors remain unspoiled for the benefit of both wildlife and the community. While the County does not possess direct enforcement authority over land use, its support of environmental protection is critical to the preservation of greenways. This proactive approach not only protects the environment but also promotes public health, recreational opportunities, and the overall quality of life for residents

The County should support and coordinate with local enforcement officers on the importance of greenway conservation and the specific regulations that protect these areas.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local Municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Washington County Conservation District; Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Local Police Departments; PA Game Commission; PA Fish & Boat; Environmental Groups
- Cost (if applicable): Staff Time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

Promote Eco-Friendly Practices.

Encouraging eco-friendly practices among residents and businesses in Washington County plays a pivotal role in fostering environmental stewardship and safeguarding the health of greenway ecosystems. Through initiatives aimed at waste reduction, sustainable material usage, and carbon footprint minimization, individuals and businesses contribute to mitigating environmental degradation and preserving the natural balance of green spaces. Washington County already promotes these practices and 20 of the 65 municipalities have adopted the model stormwater ordinance. These eco-friendly endeavors not only promote the long-term sustainability of greenway ecosystems but also ensure their continued flourishing for the benefit of present and future generations.

As development transforms significant portions of natural land in Washington County into impervious surfaces like parking lots and roads, the natural absorption of rainwater into the ground is hindered, leading to detrimental environmental consequences. The resulting stormwater runoff, laden with pollutants and sediment from impervious surfaces, poses a threat to water bodies and their surrounding ecosystems. To counteract these adverse effects, the County must prioritize the adoption of best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management, with guidance and resources available through organizations like the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's Water Resource Center. Implementing measures such as additional rain gardens in low-lying areas, pervious pavement in parking lot construction, and riparian area enhancements through naturalization efforts are crucial steps in mitigating stormwater runoff, protecting water quality, and preserving the ecological integrity of greenways.

The County should continue to provide resources and incentives for eco-friendly practices including green infrastructure and stormwater BMPs that benefit greenways.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; EPA; Washington County Conservation District; US Army Corps of Engineers; Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Water Resource Group; County/Regional Organizations focusing on stormwater management; USDA
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; USDA; EPA; DEP
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)

Community Cohesion

Promote Existing Programs to Keep Parks Clean

Connecting local municipalities to programs like "Keep PA Beautiful" is essential for maintaining and enhancing the beauty, cleanliness, and sustainability of Washington County's parks and green spaces. These programs provide valuable resources, including volunteers, funding, and educational tools, that help municipalities address littering, illegal dumping, and other environmental challenges. By collaborating with established initiatives, the County can promote community involvement, increase environmental stewardship, and ensure that public spaces remain attractive and accessible to residents. This not only enhances the quality of life but also strengthens local ecosystems, supports tourism, and reinforces the long-term preservation of the County's natural areas.

The County should connect local municipalities to existing programs such as "Keep PA Beautiful" to help clean, beautify, and help preserve local parks and green spaces.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department
- Partners: Washington County Planning; Tourism Promotion Agency; PRPS; DCNR; EPA; Local Environmental Groups; Local Municipalities
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1 to 3 years)



Cecil Twp. Playground; Image Courtesy of Visit Washington County

Enhance Promotional Efforts as needed and Expand Programming Options.

While Washington County already offers a broad range of programming, the County recognizes the need to continuously improve promotional efforts and expand offerings to better serve its diverse community. With a focus on environmental education, children's activities, fitness programs, and more, Washington County aims to increase community engagement, promote healthy lifestyles, and meet the varied interests and needs of its residents. To support this, the County is committed to improving promotion strategies and adopting new technologies that simplify the enrollment process, ensuring easy access to these opportunities.

As programming becomes more popular, creating additional space and offering more time slots will be crucial for future growth. The County also plans to diversify its offerings to cater to a wider audience, ensuring that all residents can participate in enriching activities. By enhancing visibility and continuously evolving its programs, Washington County seeks to contribute to the overall well-being and vitality of the community.

The County should improve promotional efforts as events become more popular and continue to diversify programming options across various categories catering to diverse interests and demographics within the County. The County should create a park "passport" program. This program could be designed as a kid-friendly activity, featuring multiple "passport" stations within a park or recreation area for children to visit and "collect" stamps or markers.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department
- Partners: Washington County Planning; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; DCNR; Educational Institutions; Tourism Promotion Agency; Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: PRPS; DCNR; NPS; Keystone Fund
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)



Historical Structure; Image Courtesy of Mackin

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Expand the Greenway Network



Goal: Expand the County's greenway system by developing a system of land and water trails to connect local and regional recreation assets and key destination centers to population hubs.

Expanding the greenway network throughout the County is essential for improving the overall quality of life for residents and visitors. By developing a comprehensive system of land and water trails, the County can provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and leisure activities that promote physical and mental well-being. Additionally, connecting local and regional recreation assets and key destination centers to population hubs through the greenway network can create a sense of community cohesion and inclusivity, as people from all walks of life can come together and enjoy the benefits of the natural environment.

Expanding the greenway network can also have numerous environmental benefits for the County. By providing alternative transportation options through the development of land and water trails, residents can reduce their reliance on cars, leading to a decrease in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Preserving green spaces and creating wildlife corridors through the greenway network can also help protect local ecosystems and biodiversity. The overall expansion of the greenway system not only enhances recreational opportunities for the community but also contributes to the sustainability and resilience of the County's natural environment.



Hiking Trail; Image Courtesy of Mackin

Recommendations and Actions

Trail System

Further Develop Washington County's Countywide Trail Network.

Municipal and organizational collaboration ensures a holistic understanding of the existing trail network, taking into account diverse perspectives and expertise. By conducting a comprehensive assessment, areas requiring immediate attention, such as deteriorating paths or inadequate signage, can be identified, allowing for targeted improvements that enhance safety and usability for trail users. Moreover, involving relevant stakeholders increases a sense of ownership and engagement within the community, leading to increased support for trail development initiatives.

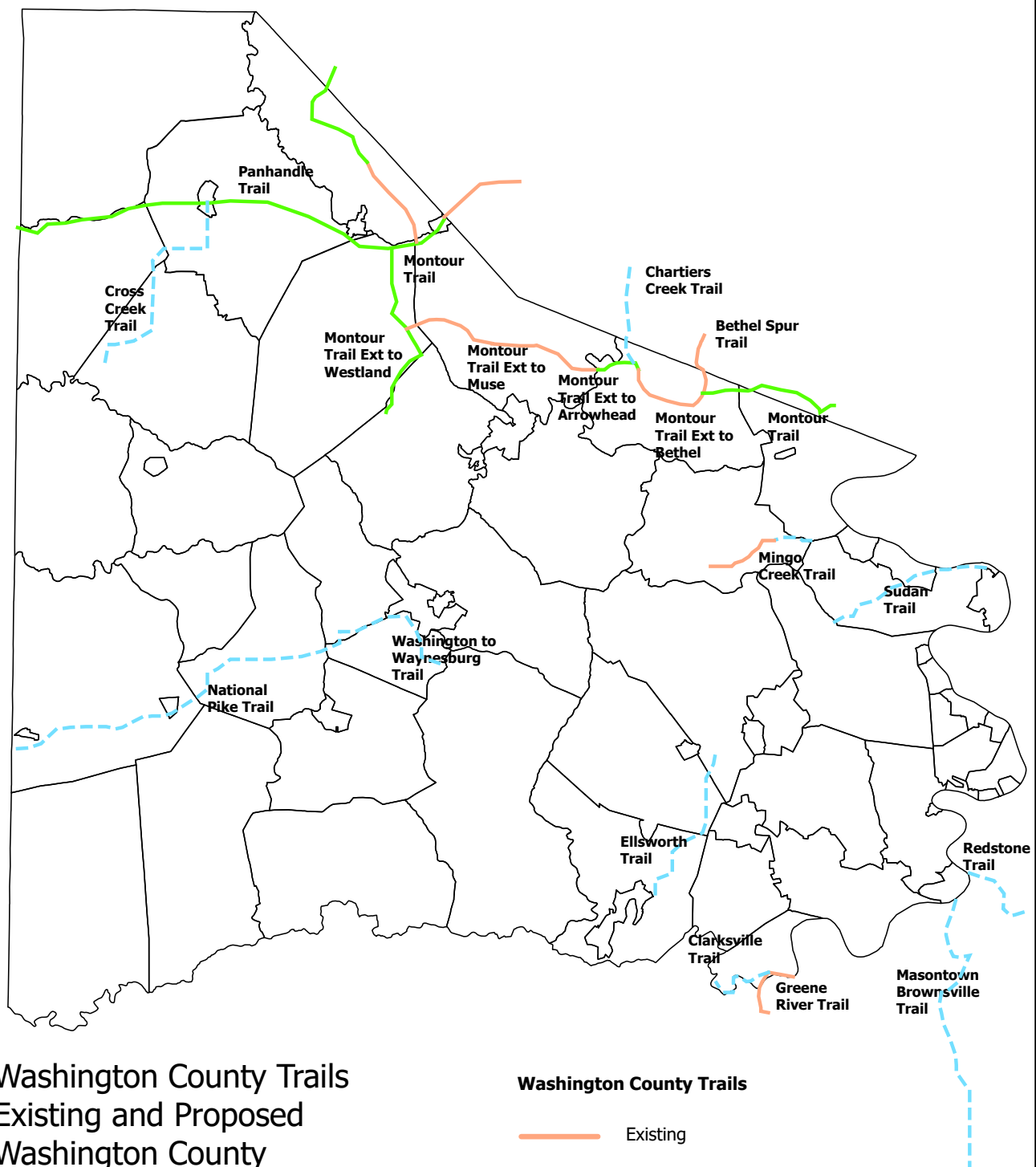
Secondly, prioritizing areas for expansion or improvement based on the assessment findings enables efficient resource allocation and strategic planning. By identifying gaps in the trail network, whether it be geographical disparities or connectivity issues, the County can focus its efforts on initiatives that have the greatest impact on enhancing accessibility and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Furthermore, addressing these priorities in collaboration with local municipalities and community organizations fosters synergy and alignment of goals, facilitating smoother implementation of trail development projects and maximizing the overall benefits for Washington County's residents and the broader community.

The County should coordinate with local municipalities, community organizations, and relevant stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive assessment of current trail infrastructure, identify gaps in the network, and prioritize areas for expansion or improvement.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Trail Advocacy Groups; PennDOT; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on Project (\$10,000 to \$50,000 per mile.)
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; EPA; PennDOT; NPS
- Time Frame: Medium Term (within 1 to 3 years)

Map 11: Washington County Trails Existing and Proposed



Washington County Trails Existing and Proposed Washington County

Note: Existing and proposed trails can be depicted as Right of Way which could be reverted to rail lines if requested.

Foster Regional and Local Trail Connections.

Promoting regional and local trail connections in Washington County is essential for creating a more connected and sustainable community. Linking trails allows residents and visitors to access a vast network of recreational pathways, parks, and cultural attractions, significantly enhancing their quality of life. This connectivity encourages physical activity, reduces car dependence, and builds a sense of community among trail users. Additionally, well-connected trails support local businesses and economic development by attracting tourists and providing a unique selling point for the region.

Washington County already features a diverse range of trails, including the Montour Trail and the Panhandle Trail, which have received state recognition. By building upon these existing trails and extending regional and local connections, the County can benefit not only itself but also neighboring municipalities.

The County should collaborate with neighboring regional and local counties, municipalities, as well as recreational and trail organizations to further develop and extend trail connections both within and beyond its borders.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Trail Advocacy Groups; PennDOT; Surrounding Counties; Tourism Promotion Agency; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- Cost (if applicable): Depend on Project (\$10,000 to \$50,000 per mile.)
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; EPA; PennDOT; NPS
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1-3 years)

Support Efforts to Convert Abandoned Rail Corridors into Trails & Walking Paths.

Across Pennsylvania, communities have effectively repurposed abandoned rail corridors into versatile trails for cyclists and pedestrians. These transformed corridors seamlessly connect population hubs and offer a safe and accessible passage through all different types of landscapes. Additionally, the trails serve as crucial connectors between neighborhoods, parks, and local businesses, fostering greater connectivity and reducing reliance on motor vehicles. By preserving historical transportation routes, these trails also honor the county's rich heritage, while simultaneously boosting economic development by attracting tourists and supporting local businesses. The potential for converting abandoned rail corridors into trails is vast, warranting further exploration to assess feasibility and capitalize on this valuable asset. Notably, the Montour Trail in Washington County is a successful example of such initiatives, underscoring the importance of pursuing similar opportunities.

The County should support efforts in identifying areas for revitalizing abandoned rail corridors through Rails-to-Trails initiatives.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Trail Advocacy Groups; PennDOT; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on Project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; EPA; PennDOT; NPS
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1-3 years)



Montour Trail; Image Courtesy of Rails-to-Trails

Waterways

Expand Public Access to the County's Waterways for Fishing, Boating, and Recreational Activities.

Expanding public access to Washington County's waterways for fishing, boating, and recreational activities can yield numerous benefits. By attracting tourists, businesses, and developers, the County can generate revenue and create jobs, thus stimulating economic growth. Accessible and enjoyable waterfront spaces also improve the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing parks, trails, and recreational activities that promote physical activity, relaxation, and socialization. However, a major obstacle to waterfront development is the proximity of the rail corridor, which bisects the area and serves as a barrier to riverfront access. Overcoming this challenge is crucial for enhancing waterfront accessibility and ensuring these spaces contribute fully to the County's economic development, quality of life, environmental sustainability, community building, and public health.

The County should explore the potential for enhancing access to waterways and waterfront recreational opportunities across Washington County.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; PA; Washington County Conservation District; SPC; USDA
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on Project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; LWCF; NFWF
- Time Frame: Medium to Long Term (3 to 5 years)

Honor Heritage



Goal: Honor Washington County's heritage by safeguarding and promoting its agricultural, cultural, and historic landmarks through preservation and strategic marketing efforts.

Honoring Washington County's heritage is crucial for preserving the unique identity and rich history of the region. By safeguarding and promoting its agricultural, cultural, and historic landmarks, the County ensures that future generations can appreciate and learn from these valuable assets. Preservation efforts help maintain the integrity of these landmarks, preventing the loss of irreplaceable historical and cultural resources. Moreover, by highlighting the significance of these sites, the County can form a deeper connection between the community and its heritage, promoting a sense of pride in their community.

Strategic marketing efforts play a vital role in bringing awareness to Washington County's heritage. By effectively promoting these landmarks, the County can attract visitors, boost local tourism, and stimulate economic growth. Marketing initiatives can showcase the County's unique historical narratives, agricultural traditions, and cultural achievements, drawing attention to the stories and achievements that define the area. This not only supports local businesses and creates job opportunities but also enhances the County's reputation as a destination rich in history and culture. Overall, honoring heritage goals through preservation and strategic marketing is essential for maintaining the vibrancy and sustainability of Washington County's historical and cultural landscape.



LeMoynes House; Image Courtesy of Washington County

Recommendations and Actions

History & Heritage

Establish Heritage Preservation Programs.

Heritage Preservation programs serve as a proactive measures to ensure that the County's valuable heritage assets are preserved for future generations to appreciate and learn from. By working with property owners to maintain and restore historic buildings, landmarks, and sites, the County encourages active participation in preservation efforts. This not only helps to maintain the integrity and authenticity of these landmarks but also prevents the loss of irreplaceable historical and cultural resources.

Preservation programs also play a crucial role in building a sense of community pride and identity. By investing in the preservation of agricultural, cultural, and historic landmarks, Washington County reaffirms its commitment to honoring its heritage and celebrating its unique identity. These landmarks serve as tangible reminders of the County's rich history and cultural heritage, connecting residents to their past and building a foundation for a deeper appreciation for their local community. Additionally, preserving these landmarks can have economic benefits by attracting visitors, boosting tourism, and supporting local businesses that rely on heritage tourism. Overall, establishing heritage preservation programs is vital for Washington County to maintain the vibrancy, authenticity, and sustainability of its historical and cultural landscape.

The County should continue to develop programs and initiatives focused on preserving agricultural, cultural, and historic landmarks within Washington County. The County should also continue to conduct comprehensive assessments of the County's heritage assets to identify key landmarks, structures, and sites that require preservation efforts.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; Natural Heritage Program staff; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Washington County History and Landmarks Foundation; National Road Heritage Corridor
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on Project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund; WCCF
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1 to 3 years)

Promote Heritage Trails and Tours.

Promoting and highlighting heritage trails and tours is essential for Washington County as it provides an immersive experience for visitors, allowing them to delve into the diverse narratives and legacies of the region's communities and historical periods. By supporting and promoting these curated pathways, the County not only showcases its rich heritage but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of its cultural and historical significance. These trails serve as educational tools, engaging visitors in a multifaceted exploration of the County's past, present, and future, ultimately contributing to the preservation and promotion of its unique identity and legacy.

The County should actively promote heritage trails and tours to spotlight the distinct narratives and impacts of various communities and historical eras, offering visitors a multifaceted exploration of the region's heritage.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Natural Heritage Program staff; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; National Road Heritage Corridor; Washington County History and Landmarks Foundation
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund; WCCF
- Time Frame: Medium to Long Term (3 to 5 years)

Case Study: St. Petersburg African-American Heritage Trail

- *Year completed: 2014*
- *Number of markers: 20*
- *Marker type: Kiosk (trailhead) and double mounted*
- *Overall project cost: \$50,000*
- *Estimated cost per marker: \$2,500*

The African American Heritage Trail in St. Petersburg's Deuces community identifies significant people and places in African American history. The Deuces, historically an African American neighborhood, thrived during segregation and is centered on 22nd Street South. Split into two corridors, the trail offers insight into the neighborhood's culture, beginning at the Carter G. Woodson Museum. Linking the trail with local cultural institutions like the museum stimulates exposure, synergy, and foot traffic. Additionally, the trail's signage colors align with those of the local high school, further integrating it with the community.

Collaborate with Targeted Partners to Support History and Heritage Preservation.

Collaborating with key stakeholders helps create a sense of shared responsibility and ownership over heritage preservation initiatives, ensuring that they reflect the diverse perspectives and interests of the community. By engaging local businesses, organizations, and community groups, the County can tap into their resources, expertise, and networks to amplify the impact of heritage preservation efforts. This partnership approach also encourages active participation and engagement from residents, reinforcing the collective commitment to celebrating and safeguarding the County's cultural heritage.

Moreover, partnering with local entities for heritage preservation opens up opportunities for the creation of vibrant and inclusive community events such as heritage festivals and cultural celebrations. These events not only serve as platforms for showcasing the County's rich cultural heritage but also promote social cohesion and mutual understanding among residents from diverse backgrounds. Joint marketing campaigns further amplify the visibility and reach of these events, attracting visitors from neighboring areas and beyond. By nurturing these partnerships and supporting collaborative heritage preservation initiatives, the County can strengthen its cultural identity, develop a sense of pride and belonging among residents, and contribute to the overall well-being and vibrancy of the community.

The County should partner with appropriate entities to support heritage preservation and promotion efforts which can include heritage festivals, cultural celebrations, and joint marketing campaigns.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning; Local municipalities
- Partners: Natural Heritage Areas; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; National Road Corridor; WCCF; History and Landmarks Foundation; Washington County Tourism
- Cost (if applicable): Staff time
- Funding Sources: N/A
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)



Bradford House Garden; Image Courtesy of Washington County Heritage Alliance

Educational Initiatives

Promote and Support Heritage Educational Programs and Events.

By facilitating initiatives ranging from lectures to hands-on experiences, the County can cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of its diverse history, agricultural practices, and cultural traditions among residents and visitors. Through such collaborations, the County harnesses the expertise and resources of these organizations to create engaging and informative programming, increase a sense of pride and connection to the community's heritage while also serving as a platform for cultural exchange and enrichment.

The County should collaborate with local historical and heritage organizations to facilitate the promotion and organization of educational programs, workshops, and events aimed at fostering awareness and appreciation of the County's heritage.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Natural Heritage Program staff; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; Meadowcroft Rockshelter & Historic Village; History and Landmarks Foundation Washington County Tourism; PA Trolley Museum
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund; WCCF
- Time Frame: Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)



The annual Whiskey Rebellion Festival, downtown Washington, PA; Image Courtesy of Washington County Heritage Alliance

Engage Youth and Future Generations into the Importance of History/Heritage.

By partnering with local schools, youth organizations, and cultural institutions, the County can integrate heritage education into both curricula and extracurricular activities, making history accessible and engaging for students. Encouraging youth participation in heritage projects, volunteer opportunities, and leadership roles not only fosters a deep appreciation for local history but also instills a sense of pride and responsibility in maintaining and promoting the County's cultural and historical legacy. This approach ensures that the rich heritage of Washington County continues to be valued and preserved by the next generation, contributing to a stronger, more informed, and cohesive community.

The County should support and promote educational programs, youth initiatives, and interactive activities that inspire young people to connect with and preserve Washington County's heritage.

Implementation plan:

- Responsible Party: Washington County Planning
- Partners: Local municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department School Districts; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Meadowcroft Rockshelter & Historic Village; History and Landmarks Foundation; Youth fraternal organizations (i.e Boys/Girls Scouts)
- Cost (if applicable): Dependent on project
- Funding Sources: DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund
- Time Frame: Medium Term (1 to 3 years)



Meadowcroft Rockshelter & Historic Village; Image Courtesy of Washington County Heritage Alliance

Implementation Matrix

The plan recommendations and implementation items are listed separately in the Focus Areas section. The Implementation Matrix on the following pages provides a full list of all the recommendations along with supporting information.

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsible for Implementation	Potential Partner Organizations	Cost	Funding Sources
<i>Protect the Greenway System</i>					
<i>Marketing & Promotion</i>					
Establish a dedicated marketing and promotion initiative to raise awareness and engagement with Washington County stakeholders regarding parks, recreation areas, and greenways.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Tourism Promotion Agency; Washington County Council on Economic Development; Local Media Outlets; Washington County Chamber of Commerce	\$10,000 - \$50,000	DCNR; DCED; PRPS; NRPA
Highlight and promote educational initiatives provided by municipalities and organizations regarding the importance of greenways. This should include general education on the benefits of greenways and their role in environmental conservation, community health, and recreational opportunities.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; School Districts; Watershed Alliance; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations	Staff Time	N/A
Actively promote and organize community events to generate enthusiasm and awareness about parks and recreation opportunities.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Local Municipalities	Washington County Planning; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; PennDOT; SPC; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Tourism Promotion Agency	Dependent on project	SPC; PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Fund; PRPS; DCNR; WCCF
<i>Online Engagement</i>					
Enhance its website to better serve the community's Parks and Recreation needs. This includes developing a user-friendly form or mobile app for grant assistance requests and enabling online submissions for comments and updates on County plans.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County IT Department	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Washington County Planning; Local Universities and Colleges	Dependent on projects (estimate - \$15,000 - \$50,000)	DCNR; DCED
Leverage social media platforms and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to actively promote parks, recreation, and greenways. This involves creating engaging content, utilizing GIS mapping for interactive displays, and fostering community engagement through digital platforms.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County GIS and IT Department	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Washington County Planning; Local Universities and Colleges; Tourism Promotion Agency; Washington County Council on Economic Development; Local Media Outlets	Staff Time	N/A
Update its Planning Commission Hub to facilitate continuous feedback from stakeholders, community members, and project partner in regards to parks, recreation, and greenways. Additionally, implement a Letter Request within this portal specifically designed to streamline the process of soliciting grant funding and project support.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County GIS & IT Department	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Washington County Planning; Local Universities and Colleges; Tourism Promotion Agency; Local Media Outlets; Local municipalities	Staff Time	N/A
<i>Unified Wayfinding</i>					
Establish a comprehensive signage and wayfinding program to enhance navigation and promote awareness of recreational and greenway facilities across the County. This initiative aims to create a cohesive visual identity, improve visitor experience, and encourage greater utilization of parks and recreational amenities.	Medium to Long Term (3 to 5 years)	Washington County Planning	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local Municipalities; Local Universities and Colleges; SPC; PennDOT; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations	Dependent on project	SPC; DCNR; DCED; PRPS; PennDOT; NPS

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsible for Implementation	Potential Partner Organizations	Cost	Funding Sources
<i>Foster Collaborative Partnerships</i>					
<i>Partner Network Connections</i>					
Develop a comprehensive inventory of existing and potential partners with shared interests and expertise in greenway development, management, and advocacy to facilitate collaborative efforts in the expansion and maintenance of Washington County's greenway system.	Ongoing	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; PennDOT; SPC; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Washington County Chamber of Commerce; Tourism Promotion Agency	Staff Time	N/A
Work in concert with existing parks staff to engage community members and organizations in supporting trail development, maintenance, and other greenway initiatives. This should provide information on various volunteer opportunities and levels of involvement, and contact information.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department	Washington County Planning; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations	Staff Time	N/A
<i>Municipal Assistance</i>					
Increase regular follow-up and collaboration with municipal entities and organizations to provide advisory and consulting support for parks, trails, and recreation planning initiatives.	Ongoing	Washington County Planning; Local Municipalities	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations	Staff Time	N/A
Provide assistance and support to municipalities and local organizations in obtaining grant funding for recreation and greenway projects to facilitate the implementation of priority projects and initiatives.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; DCNR	Staff Time	N/A
<i>Preserve Natural Resources</i>					
<i>Strengthen Zoning & Land Use Regulations</i>					
Continue to provide comprehensive support to municipalities in understanding, developing, and implementing regulations related to ordinances that promote conservation and natural resource protection.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities	Staff Time	N/A
Encourage conservation easements, where appropriate. They should also provide education to landowners about the benefits and importance of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Washington County Conservation District; Local Land Trusts, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Local Farmers and Landowners	Staff Time	N/A
Support and coordinate with local enforcement officers on the importance of greenway conservation and the specific regulations that protect these areas.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning	Local Municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Washington County Conservation District; Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Local Police Departments; PA Game Commission; PA Fish & Boat; Environmental Groups	Staff Time	N/A
Provide resources and incentives for eco-friendly practices including green infrastructure and stormwater BMPs that benefit greenways.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; EPA; Washington County Conservation District; US Army Corps of Engineers; Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Water Resource Group; County/Regional Organizations focusing on stormwater management; USDA	Dependent on project	DCNR; USDA; EPA; DEP

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsible for Implementation	Potential Partner Organizations	Cost	Funding Sources
Community Cohesion					
Connect local municipalities to existing programs such as "Keep PA Beautiful" to help clean, beautify, and help preserve local parks and green spaces.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department	Washington County Planning; Tourism Promotion Agency; PRPS; DCNR; EPA; Local Environmental Groups; Local Municipalities	Staff Time	N/A
Improve promotional efforts as events become more popular and continue to diversify programming options across various categories catering to diverse interests and demographics within the County. The County should create a park "passport" program. This program could be designed as a kid-friendly activity, featuring multiple "passport" stations within a park or recreation area for children to visit and "collect" stamps or markers.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department	Washington County Planning; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; DCNR; Educational Institutions; Tourism Promotion Agency; Washington County Chamber of Commerce	Dependent on project	PRPS; DCNR; NPS; Keystone Fund
Expand the Greenway Network					
Trail System					
Coordinate with local municipalities, community organizations, and relevant stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive assessment of current trail infrastructure, identify gaps in the network, and prioritize areas for expansion or improvement. The County should also Support the establishment of trails aimed at connecting targeted population centers to key recreation sites.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Trail Advocacy Groups; PennDOT; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Dependent on Project (\$10,000 to \$50,000 per mile.)	DCNR; PRPS; EPA; PennDOT; NPS
Collaborate with neighboring regional and local counties, municipalities, as well as recreational and trail organizations to further develop and extend trail connections both within and beyond its borders.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Trail Advocacy Groups; PennDOT; Surrounding Counties; Tourism Promotion Agency; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Dependent on Project (\$10,000 to \$50,000 per mile.)	DCNR; PRPS; EPA; PennDOT; NPS
Support efforts in identifying areas for revitalizing abandoned rail corridors through Rails-to-Trails initiatives.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Trail Advocacy Groups; PennDOT; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington; Washington County Chamber of Commerce	Dependent on Project	DCNR; PRPS; EPA; PennDOT; NPS
Waterways					
Explore the potential for enhancing access to waterways and waterfront recreational opportunities across Washington County.	Medium to Long Term (3 to 5 years)	Washington County Planning	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; PA; Washington County Conservation District; SPC; USDA	Dependent on project	DCNR; PRPS; LWCF; NFWF

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsible for Implementation	Potential Partner Organizations	Cost	Funding Sources
<i>Honor Heritage</i>					
<i>History & Heritage</i>					
Continue to develop programs and initiatives focused on preserving agricultural, cultural, and historic landmarks within Washington County. The County should also continue to conduct comprehensive assessments of the County's heritage assets to identify key landmarks, structures, and sites that require preservation efforts.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; Natural Heritage Program staff; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society;Washington County History and Landmarks Foundation; National Road Heritage Corridor	Dependent on project	DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund; WCCF
Actively promote heritage trails and tours to spotlight the distinct narratives and impacts of various communities and historical eras, offering visitors a multifaceted exploration of the region's heritage.	Medium to Long Term (3 to 5 years)	Washington County Parks and Recreation Department	Local municipalities; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Natural Heritage Program staff; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; National Road Corridor; Washington County History and Landmarks Foundation	Dependent on project	DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund; WCCF
Partner with appropriate entities to support heritage preservation and promotion efforts which can include heritage festivals, cultural celebrations, and joint marketing campaigns.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning; Local municipalities	Natural Heritage Areas; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; National Road Corridor; WCCF; History and Landmarks Foundation; Washington County Tourism	Staff Time	N/A
<i>Educational Initiatives</i>					
Collaborate with local historical and heritage organizations to facilitate the promotion and organization of educational programs, workshops, and events aimed at fostering awareness and appreciation of the County's heritage.	Short Term (within 6 months to 1 year)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department; Local and Regional Recreation Organizations; Natural Heritage Program staff; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; Meadowcroft Rockshelter & Historic Village; History and Landmarks Foundation;Washington County Tourism; PA Trolley Museum	Dependent on project	DCNR; PRPS; LWCF; NFWF
Support and promote educational programs, youth initiatives, and interactive activities that inspire young people to connect with and preserve Washington County's heritage.	Medium Term (within 1-3 years)	Washington County Planning	Local municipalities; Washington County Parks and Recreation Department School Districts; Washington County Heritage Alliance; Washington County Historical Society; Meadowcroft Rockshelter & Historic Village; History and Landmarks Foundation;Youth fraternal organizations (i.e Boys/Girls Scouts)	Dependent on project	DCNR; PRPS; Keystone Fund

Appendices

A scenic view of a lake with a large pine tree in the foreground and a picnic table in the background. The image is a full-page background for a document titled "Appendices". The scene shows a calm lake with some rocks in the water. A large, mature pine tree with dense green needles and small yellow cones dominates the right side of the frame. Its branches extend over the lake. In the background, a wooden picnic table is visible on a grassy area near the water's edge. The sky is overcast and grey.

Funding Sources

A list of funding sources was identified during the implementation process and is provided in the implementation matrix. A brief summary of the funding sources is included below.

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)

- DCNR funds a variety of programs and projects aimed at enhancing greenways, trails, and recreational spaces across the state. Through the Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2), DCNR offers grants for planning, acquisition, and development of public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails, and river conservation projects. This program supports the creation and maintenance of greenways that connect communities to natural spaces and promote outdoor recreation. The Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), established by Act 13 of 2012, allocates funds for the development, rehabilitation, and improvement of public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails, and river conservation projects. This program enables municipalities and organizations to enhance recreational opportunities and preserve natural resources.
- Additionally, DCNR supports regional initiatives such as the Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program, which provides funding for projects that align with regional greenways and open space plans, promoting connectivity and conservation at a local level. Through these programs, DCNR fosters the development of greenways that enhance public access to natural spaces, promote environmental stewardship, and support sustainable land use practices benefiting both the environment and local communities.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

- DCED administers the Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), which provides funding for the planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open spaces, parks, and beautification projects. This program supports municipalities, councils of governments, authorized organizations, institutions of higher education, and watershed organizations in enhancing public access to natural spaces and promoting environmental stewardship. Eligible projects include the development and improvement of public parks, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, trails, greenways, and watershed implementation projects. Grants can cover various project costs, such as construction activities, fixed equipment, land clearing and preparation, environmental site assessments, and related engineering, design, and inspection costs. A 15% match of the total project cost is required for grant recipients. Through the GTRP, DCED has supported numerous projects across Pennsylvania, including the rehabilitation and development of public parks and recreation areas, the creation of greenways and trails, and the enhancement of rivers and streams for recreational purposes.

The Washington County Community Foundation (WCCF)

- The WCCF actively supports greenways and environmental conservation projects in Washington County, Pennsylvania, through various funding initiatives. For instance, in 2016, WCCF awarded a \$10,000 unrestricted grant to the Independence Conservancy to help establish the Langeloth Valley Conservation Area near Burgettstown, highlighting its commitment to land stewardship and water quality preservation. The WCCF also administers the GIVE Washington County Fund, which aims to support local nonprofits, schools, and municipalities. In December 2024, grants of \$5,000 each were awarded to the Mon Valley Initiative and the Penn State Nittany AI Alliance, demonstrating WCCF's dedication to fostering community development and environmental initiatives. Through these programs, WCCF contributes to the enhancement of greenways and environmental conservation efforts, promoting sustainable land use and improving the quality of life in Washington County.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- The EPA funds greenways planning through various funding programs aimed at enhancing environmental quality and promoting sustainable land use. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) provides low-cost financing to communities for water quality infrastructure projects, including green infrastructure initiatives that manage stormwater and protect water resources. Additionally, the Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3) Grant Program offers funding to implement green infrastructure projects that reduce stormwater runoff, increase green spaces, and improve local water quality. The EPA also provides technical assistance to communities through programs like the Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA), which helps plan and design stormwater projects, obtain funding, and develop financial mechanisms for sustainable infrastructure. These initiatives collectively support the development and enhancement of greenways, promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable land use practices.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

- PennDOT supports greenways planning through several funding programs aimed at enhancing transportation infrastructure and promoting sustainable land use. The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program provides funding for projects that improve non-motorized transportation options, including the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, which are integral components of greenways. Eligible projects may include the construction of sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths that enhance connectivity and promote active transportation.
- PennDOT also administers the Multimodal Transportation Fund, which offers grants to municipalities, councils of governments, businesses, economic development organizations, public transportation agencies, rail freight, passenger rail, and ports. This program aims to improve transportation assets that enhance communities, pedestrian safety, and transit revitalization, supporting the development of greenways that integrate transportation and recreation. Through these initiatives, PennDOT contributes to the development and enhancement of greenways, promoting sustainable transportation options and improving the quality of life for communities across Pennsylvania.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- The USDA funds various programs that support greenways planning, focusing on land conservation, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Through the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program, the USDA provides grants to local governments, qualified nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes to establish community forests by acquiring private forest land from willing sellers. These community forests offer public recreation, environmental and economic benefits, and forest-based educational programs.
- Additionally, the Water and Environmental Programs offer funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, and stormwater drainage in eligible rural areas. These programs help improve water quality and support sustainable land use practices, which are essential components of greenways planning.
- Furthermore, the Forest Service's Greenways and Trails System Plan encourages local, state, and federal programs to provide funding for greenways and trails, aiming to advance greenways and trails systems with an emphasis on completing priorities. Through these initiatives, the USDA supports the development and enhancement of greenways, promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable land use practices that benefit both the environment and local communities.

The National Park Service (NPS)

- The NPS funds a variety of programs and projects aimed at enhancing parks, trails, and greenways across the United States. Through the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program, NPS provides matching grants to cities for park projects in communities underserved by parks and access to outdoor recreation. These investments enable urban communities to create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors.
- Additionally, the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects by assisting communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats. This program also helps create outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors. NPS also has the Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Challenge Cost Share program which is intended to support specific NPS mission-related projects that align with the goals of project partners. Challenge Cost Share projects must support one or more of the following funding themes: Conservation, Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Heritage Preservation.

The Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund (Keystone Fund)

- The Keystone Fund is a dedicated funding source in Pennsylvania that supports a wide range of projects aimed at enhancing parks, trails, open spaces, libraries, and historical sites. Administered by DCNR, the fund offers grants for planning, acquisition, and development activities. Eligible projects include the creation and maintenance of community parks, recreational facilities, greenways, and conservation areas.
- Since its inception, the Keystone Fund has significantly contributed to over 3,700 community park projects, including ball fields, green spaces, playgrounds, pools, and recreation centers. Through these initiatives, the Keystone Fund plays a pivotal role in enhancing public access to natural spaces, promoting environmental stewardship, and supporting sustainable land use practices that benefit both the environment and local communities.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

- The NFWF has several funding programs aimed at enhancing conservation and promoting sustainable land use. The National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) provides grants for projects that restore and enhance natural systems, such as coastal marshes, wetlands, and forests, which can be integral components of greenways. These projects aim to increase protection for communities from coastal hazards and improve habitats for fish and wildlife. Another funding option is the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund offers grants through programs like the Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) Grants Program, which funds projects that enhance conservation, stewardship, and the improvement of fish and wildlife habitats within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- The LWCF is a federal program that provides funding for a variety of projects aimed at enhancing public access to natural spaces and promoting environmental stewardship. Administered by the National Park Service, the LWCF offers grants for planning, acquisition, and development activities related to parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails, and river conservation projects. These grants support the creation and maintenance of greenways that connect communities to natural spaces and promote outdoor recreation.
- The LWCF funds federal land acquisition programs, including the National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, National Trails, and other federal land units. These programs aim to protect critical natural resources and outdoor recreation lands from development, enhance public access for recreation, protect key wildlife habitats, and conserve land and water resources on federally designated and managed lands.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC)

- SPC administers several funding programs that support the development and enhancement of greenways and parks in the region. The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Program provides funding for projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, environmental mitigation, and recreational trail development, promoting alternative transportation modes and environmental stewardship. Additionally, the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) allocates funds to reduce transportation carbon emissions through the development of state carbon reduction strategies and funding projects designed to lower transportation-related carbon emissions..

Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS)

- PRPS supports the development and enhancement of greenways through various programs and initiatives. PRPS collaborates with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to promote the Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP), which provides grants for the development, rehabilitation, and improvement of public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails, and river conservation projects. This program enables municipalities and organizations to enhance recreational opportunities and preserve natural resources.
- Also, PRPS advocates for funding opportunities such as the Watershed Restoration and Protection Program, which supports projects aimed at improving water quality and restoring natural habitats within greenway corridors. By promoting these funding avenues, PRPS assists communities in securing financial resources necessary for planning, developing, and maintaining greenways that connect people to natural spaces, promote environmental stewardship, and support sustainable land use practices.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

- NRPA offers various programs and funding opportunities to support the development and enhancement of greenways and parks. Through the Great Urban Parks Campaign, NRPA provides grants to communities for green stormwater infrastructure projects in parks, aiming to improve environmental resilience and public access to green spaces. For instance, NRPA awarded funding to the City of Pittsburgh's Greenways Platform Partnership program, leading to significant improvements in the Hazelwood Greenway, including trail construction, invasive vegetation removal, and tree planting.
- NRPA has a Greener Parks initiative that also offers resources and training to park professionals on implementing green infrastructure in parks. This includes scholarships for virtual green stormwater infrastructure training and the development of a Green Infrastructure Evaluation Framework to assess the benefits of such projects.