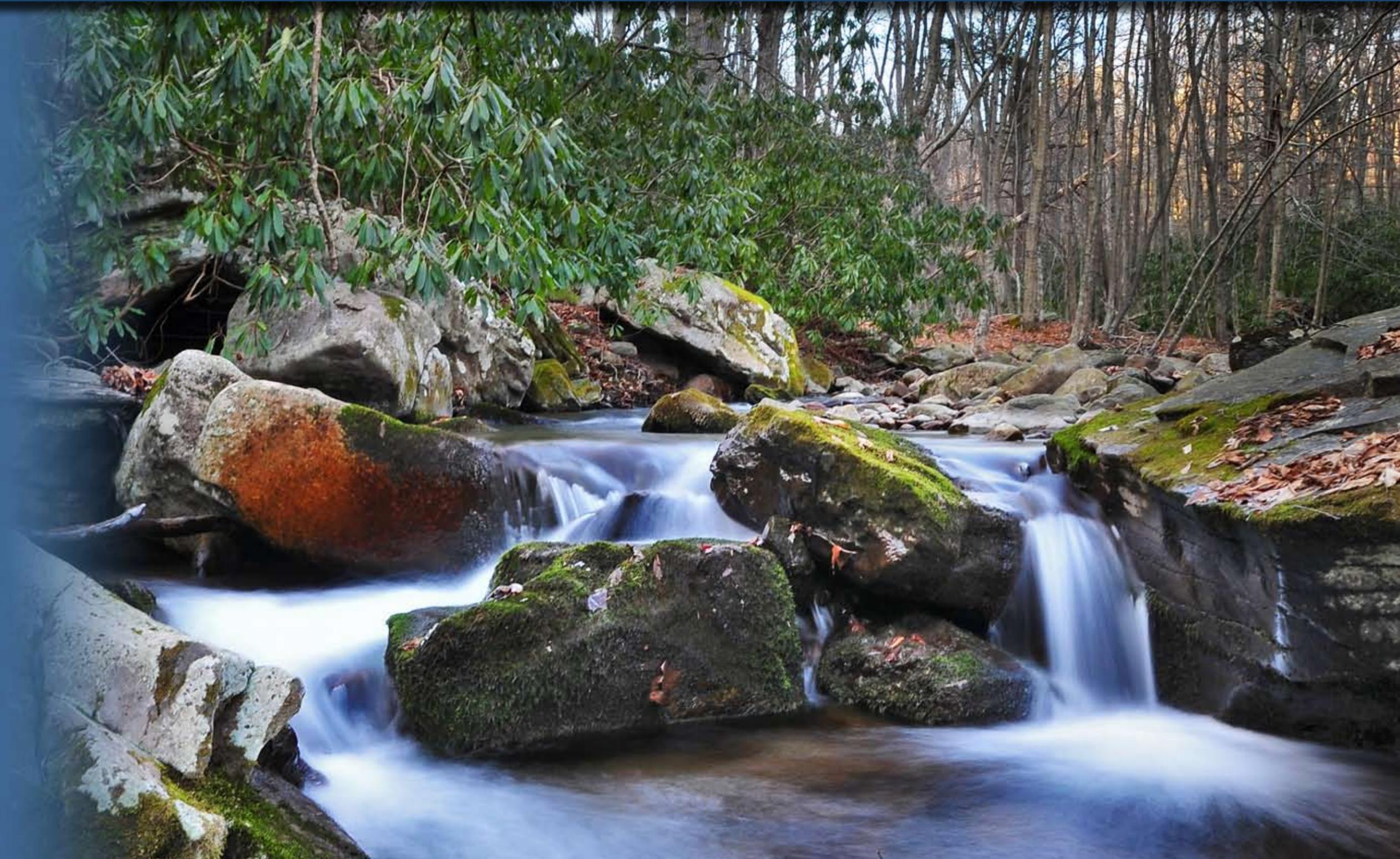




Update to the Monroe County
**Open Space, Greenway
& Recreation Plan**

FINAL
December 2014





Update to the Monroe County Open Space, Greenway & Recreation Plan

FINAL

December 2014

Prepared for: Monroe County Planning Commission

Monroe County Commissioners: John Moyer, Chairman
Charles Garris, Vice-Chairman
Suzanne McCool, Commissioner

Monroe County Planning Commission: Christine Meinhart-Fritz, Director
Eric Koopman, Senior Planner
Nathaniel Staruch, Community Planner
Steven Rinker, GIS Coordinator/Manager
George Basila, GIS Analyst
John Evan Makuvek, Environmental Planner

Open Space Advisory Board: Daryl Eppley, Chair
Anne Sincavage, Vice-Chairwoman
Nancy Abbott Amici
Susan Cooper
Domenick DiPaolo
John Ferro
Pauline Fox
Donald Miller
Ann Pilcher
Dr. Elaine Rogers
Paul Snyder
Frank Allen, Alternate

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John Rogers, in association with Audubon Society.

Prepared by: Simone Collins Landscape Architecture
Mark Palerino CPRP, AFO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1

INTRODUCTION

To understand the 2014 Monroe County Open Space and Recreation Plan "Update," the original Monroe County Open Space and Recreation Plan of 2001 must be acknowledged as a "state of the art" visionary conservation and recreation strategy in Pennsylvania for the time it was created.

The 2001 plan satisfied its obligations under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) as an element of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan – and more importantly – it fostered an interactive planning process to articulate the deep community conservation ethic that was adopted with broad support.

Monroe County then put its money where its heart is.

An investment of \$36M comprised of \$25M plus interest passed by voters and \$11M by County Commissioners secured an additional \$78M investment by other partners in Monroe County's "green infrastructure." Monroe County understood its opportunities and aggressively took responsibility to achieve them.

In the thirteen years since 2001, by nearly every measure, Monroe County has wildly surpassed its original open space and recreation goals.

State Game
Lands 127



ACHIEVEMENTS

Funding Invested

\$114M totalling:

- \$36M by Monroe County
- \$78M leveraged from federal, state & municipal matching funds

Acres Preserved

20,000 acres of:

- Agricultural Easements
- Conservancies
- Public Parks
- Natural Open Spaces

Recreation Commissions Established

- Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission
- Hamilton, Jackson, Pocono Park and Open Space Commission
- West End Park & Open Space Commission
- Pocono Area Recreation Commission

Regional Parks Improved

- Smithfield Township Minisink Park
- Paradise Township "Roof"
- Coolbaugh Township Park and Recreation Area
- East Stroudsburg Dansbury Park
- Pocono Township Mountain View Park
- Chestnuthill Township Park
- West End Regional Park
- HJP Regional Park
- Austin T. Blakeslee Natural Area
- Seven Pines Park, Ice Lake and Skywood Park
- Brodhead Creek Park & Pinebrook Park South

Trails Developed

- Levee Loop Trail
- Cherry Creek Trails
- Trails at Blakeslee
- Trails at Kurmes Preserve

Plans / Studies Completed

- (refer to list in appendices)

Partnerships Established

- DCNR
- PennDOT
- DCED
- PMVB
- PMEDC
- Land Trusts

Technical Capabilities Improved

- GIS Library
- Data Collection

2013-14 CONTEXT

Since 2001, the vital importance of Monroe County's natural environment to the state of Pennsylvania and the eastern United States is now universally recognized and issues have become even more complex. In 2013, Monroe County faced a new question:

How do we continue our environmental stewardship in a dramatically different economic landscape ?

This question can also be phrased:

Can we afford not to continue our conservation legacy ?

Since the Monroe County Open Space bond

referendum of 1998, the Pocono regional economy has declined from boom to recession, similar to the US economy on the whole. During the "recovery" years since 2008, there have been concerted efforts at the state and federal levels to eliminate regulations that protect natural resources and "zero out" funding for conservation and recreation. Americans in general have rejected those tactics and remain in favor of government responsibility to protect the environment and preserve open space and recreation as cornerstones of public infrastructure. The smart emphasis has shifted to open space and recreation as economic generators in their own rights – not simply as backdrops to other industries.

Fortunately, for Monroe, the historic Pocono industries of tourism and recreation are still thriving in the County today, and their successes have always been based on the lure of the natural environment. Wisely, the County sought to focus its 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan update on developing strategies for future open space and recreation investments that can benefit the Monroe economy. Consider the power of the past green investments by Monroe County.

Monroe County has invested \$36M plus interest in open space and recreation assets since 2001. That "risk" of investing in real estate and recreation infrastructure has netted an additional \$78M investment by others into Monroe County. Over the past 12-year period, that growth equates to an average 16% annual return on Monroe County's original green investment. Monroe County has invested a percentage of those funds to preserve 20,000 acres of open space as real estate "principal" in the public "bank." The County acknowledges that the initial borrowing (principal and interest) for open space will be paid off in 2022.

Open Space & Recreation Planning Regions

HJP

Hamilton / Jackson / Pocono

BMP

Barrett / Mt Pocono / Paradise

Stroud Region

Stroud / East Stroudsburg / Stroudsburg

West End

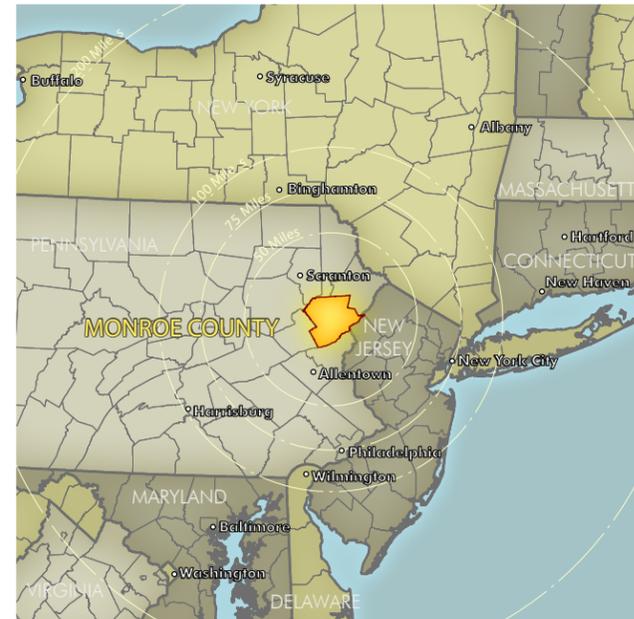
Chestnuthill / Eldred / Polk / Ross

Eastern Monroe

DWG / Middle Smithfield / Price / Smithfield

Top of the Mountain

Coolbaugh / Tobyhanna / Tunkhannock



What other industry attracts an equivalent secured return ?

The “interest” paid on the Monroe County green investment can be estimated in multiple ways, and needs to be acknowledged as real annual “dividends” to Monroe County citizens. One clear example is calculating the true value of forested open space that is conserved to protect and filter water for residents who rely on 90,000 wells in Monroe County.

How do these investments in “prevention” compare to the costs and quality of centralized replacement water supply systems ?

The values of natural amenities as assets essential to the recreation economy of the Poconos is well documented. These and other factors present the economic justifications for Monroe to continue investing in open space and recreation assets within the County. Strong support continues for this strategy among Monroe County residents.

A Special Place

The Monroe County location in the center of the East Coast “megapolis” draws from the dense populations of New York City and Philadelphia and beckons people to visit the “country.” Monroe County is in the enviable position of having retained its cherished environmental culture that is seen as a healthy place; still attracts people to live and visit; and still remains a sustainable economic “product.”

Many communities are now seeking to create similar “sustainable economies” based on their natural resources, but few have the historic economic infrastructure to serve visitor and recreation markets like Monroe County. Residents understand the benefits and costs of living in a place that everyone wants to visit - in terms of employment, as well as being active, hometown open space users. They also realize there are limits to growth and seek proactive conservation.

The Data Support Conservation

Multiple studies now confirm the quantifiable economic benefits of the natural environment to local communities and regions – as irreplaceable “quality of life” assets; as “green infrastructure” that performs the work to clean air, maintain water quality, temper climate, and support habitat; and as real increases to surrounding property values.

Where is the Tipping Point ?

The threshold where impacts to the natural environment begin to irreversibly decrease environmental and economic values is different for each community – but for Monroe County – where natural resources are of such high value, and the private and public investments that are based on the value of those environmental resources are so significant, it seems prudent for Monroe County to continue to invest strategically in conservation.

The Next Decade

The 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan acknowledges that many elements of the original 2001 plan are still relevant, and builds on that original work. The 2013 public involvement process enforced the original conservation vision and goals including:

- Conserving natural resources as irreplaceable common wealth,
- Improving the local “quality of life” by protecting the natural environment,
- Expecting sustainable development – economically and environmentally,
- Enforcing the Pennsylvania Constitution guarantees of rights to “clean air” and “clean water”

OVERVIEW OF THE 2014 PLAN

The Planning process began in January 2013 and concluded in December 2014.

The report presents the information within three major sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Inventory / Analysis

This section includes results of all data collection, field observations and the public participation program. GIS data supplied by Monroe County and other sources were used to create new mapping displays of resources, issues and opportunities for conservation. Narrative and image content was developed for the report.

3. Action Plan

This section describes the study findings and makes broad recommendations for implementing consensus priorities.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding

Consider committing to funding open space and recreation resources by Monroe County in at least two ways:

- Secure another bond dedicated to open space acquisition and recreation improvements.
- Dedicate a percentage of the County Hotel Tax revenue to the Recreation Commissions

Continue to actively engage funding partners

- Engage DCNR at staff, policy and legislative levels
- Actively seek other public agency partnerships
- Actively seek private-sector partnerships

Consider dedicating TIF funding to leverage specific open space and recreation investments

Seek funds from the DEWA power line mitigation settlement to fund critical acquisition and trail linkage projects in Monroe County

Partnerships

Support and fulfill the goals of the multi-municipal Recreation Commission system in Monroe

Strengthen bonds with schools, non-profits, the business community and adjacent counties to improve green resources and services that serve Monroe

PennDOT – Seek stronger partnerships with PennDOT District 5 and Central Office

Continue partnerships with DEWA to improve the regional trail network

Continue to build partnerships with non profit organizations, including:

BWA, APWC, TTWA, TNC and others

Resources

Continue Strategic Open Space Acquisitions

Trails – Focus on study/development of a central “spine” rail-trail and create critical linkages along:

- WB&E Trail
- Glen to Glen Trail

Parks – Support the needs identified by the regional recreation commissions

Gateways – Focus resources on initiatives at three major gateway locations to Monroe County: Delaware Water Gap, Blakeslee, and Bushkill Villages

Farmland – Monroe County should continue its strong commitment to farmland preservation and local sustainable food production as a major component of open space preservation and should consider creating a sustainable agriculture model ordinance that municipalities may adopt.

Access - Improve public access to preserved lands and implement ADA accessibility where possible

Water – Seek and support initiatives that protect surface and groundwater resources

Education

Identity – Create and implement a Monroe County “branding” system including a master interpretive

plan and a unified signage system

Promotion – Work with partners to actively promote Monroe County environmental accomplishments within the Pocono region.

Communications – Subcommittees within the OSAB can systematically maintain a network of active and personal communications with the broad partnerships in Monroe County

Sustainable Environmental - Economic Development Projects

Actively Support Green Infrastructure - The wise financial investments by Monroe County into open space and recreation infrastructure over the past 12 years have also produced direct revenue returns of 2:1 for every dollar invested by the County

Policy / Management / Catalyst

Adopt the 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Consider another Open Space referendum question

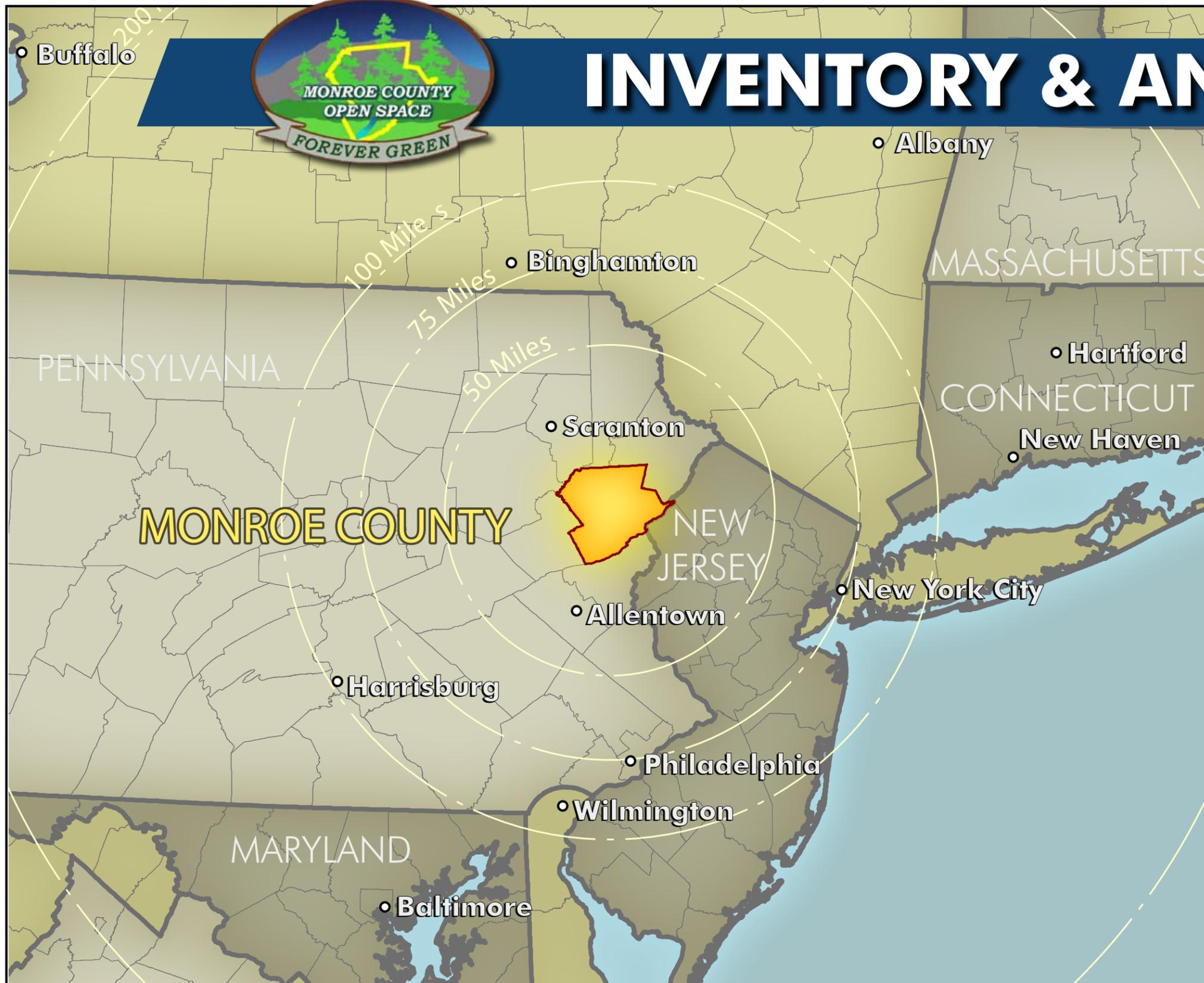
Empower the OSAB by delineating specific subcommittee chairs and specific subtasks





INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

2



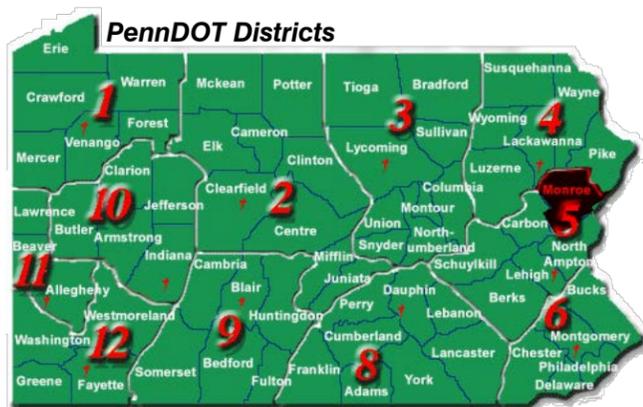
OVERVIEW

Monroe County Context

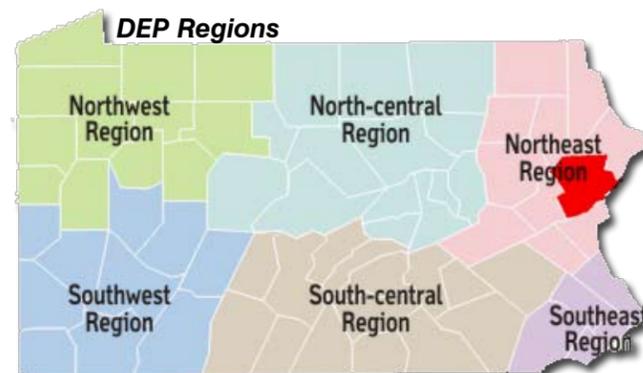
Monroe County is 617 square miles (394,878 acres) located in eastern Pennsylvania adjacent to the Delaware River and bordered by Carbon County to the west; Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties to the north-west; Wayne and Pike Counties to the north; Northampton County to the south; and Sussex and Warren Counties to the east in New Jersey. Within Monroe County are 20 municipalities, consisting of 16 townships and 4 boroughs all within a 2-hour drive of millions of people.

The municipalities within Monroe County are organized into six open space and recreation planning regions; three comprehensive planning regions; and four school districts, each having some level of influence on the County's open space and recreation resources and utilizing funds from different sources. The eight counties surrounding Monroe County each have their own open space, greenway and comprehensive plans. These adjacent county plans for parks, greenways and trails were reviewed to identify the most immediate resources potentially accessible to Monroe residents.

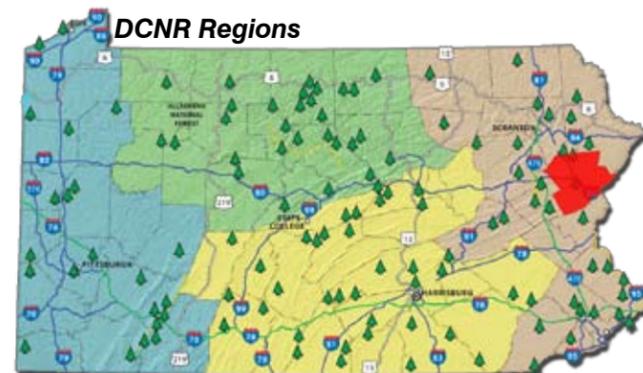
Regionally, Monroe is part of several multi-county planning organizations. The County is 1 of 6 counties part of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) economic development area. Monroe is also 1 of 11 counties in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Northeast planning region; 1 of 6 counties in Pennsylvania's Department



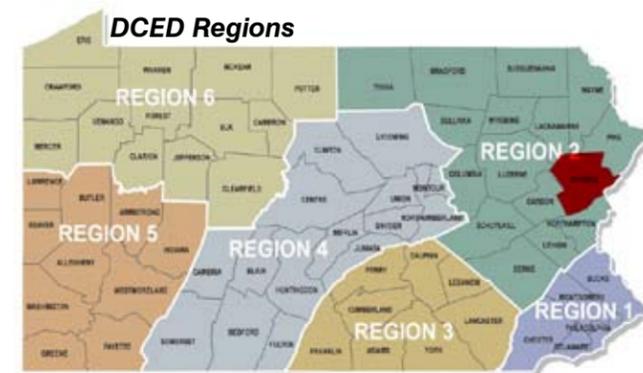
(Map Source: www.dot.state.pa.us)



(Map Source: www.depweb.state.pa.us)

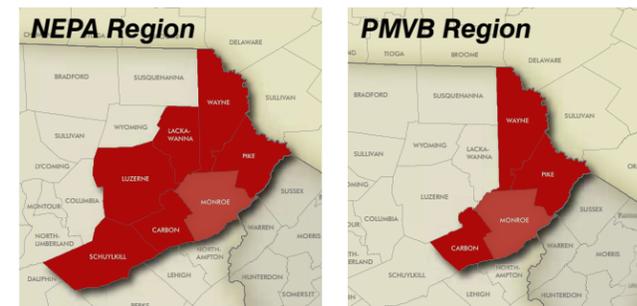


(Map Source: www.dcnr.state.pa.us)



(Map Source: www.dced.state.pa.us)

of Transportation (PennDOT) District 5; 1 of 18 counties in the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Eastern planning region; 1 of 16 counties in the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) region #2; and 1 of 4 counties that comprise the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB), the official tourist promotion agency (TPA) for the Pocono Mountains region.



Monroe County hydrologic areas include two main watersheds, with the Lehigh River to the west and Delaware River to the east. The Lehigh River confluence with the Delaware is at Easton, Pennsylvania. Two main physiographic elements in Monroe are the Pocono Plateau / escarpment that is oriented in a northeast to southwest direction in the northern portion of the County and the Kittatinny Ridge of the Appalachian Mountain range which defines the County's southern border.

Consistency with the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan

The section covering open space and recreation in the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan (MCCP) demonstrates how essential open space, greenways and recreation are to conserve and improve environmental, social and economic values in this bell weather county. The Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Update of 2014 and the Monroe County Open Space Greenway and Recreation Plan of 2014 are consistent to preserving and expanding conservation areas, agricultural land easements, and park lands

for returns on investments that outweigh initial expenditures. By analyzing subdivision design and viewshed management the MCCP provides rationale to limit additional sprawl and billboard placement along roadsides as a beneficial investment in the County's overall economy. Conservation efforts are now proven to protect and grow value of a region's character, watersheds and public open spaces. The Comprehensive Plan mentions that 20% of the total land and water area within Monroe County is public open space and if Act 319 tracts are included, that number climbs to 50%. This number can be easily misinterpreted to give the impression that Monroe County has abundant open space, when in reality most of these lands remain vulnerable to developmental pressures and are unprotected. The MCCP provides the rationale for how open space and recreation is connected to environmental, social and economic needs of Monroe County and why it is a wise investment to continue protecting open spaces for public uses.

Changes since the 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Since the 2001 Open Space Plan, Monroe County's population has grown from approximately 130,000 to nearly 170,000 people - an average 4,000 person/year increase. In 1998 Monroe County passed a bond referendum for \$25M to finance the original Monroe County Open Space program in 2001. The County was then able to commit an additional \$11M to leverage \$78 million in non-county matching funds for open space preservation and recreation improvements. These dollars were essential to protect about 20,000 acres of parks and open space. Over 7,000 acres were preserved as farmland under the Monroe County Agricultural Land Preservation program - totaling 1/4 of all land preserved by Monroe County programs since 2001.

These acquisitions are based on a strategic component of the original Open Space Plan as defined by the Open Space Advisory Board. All acquisitions were negotiated with willing sellers only and no condemnation of property; ranked by an independent professional evaluation team with ranking scheme to determine significance of each property for the program; based on a professionally prepared average appraised property value; and purchased with matching monies wherever possible.

The original 2001 Open Space Plan initiated six recreation planning regions and supported them to prepare their own multi-municipal open space and recreation plans. These regional, multi-municipal plans helped spawn four recreation commissions, of which, three commissions have current professional staff to manage their respective agencies.

Acquisitions, Improvements & Accomplishments

The recreation commissions and municipalities within the multi-municipal recreation planning regions have acquired properties for use as public open spaces; published multiple types of plans; and improved on existing owned and leased open spaces with assistance from the Monroe County Open Space Program and Agricultural Land Preservation Program. These accomplishments are organized by recreation commission / multi-municipal recreation planning regions and identify the successes of each area.

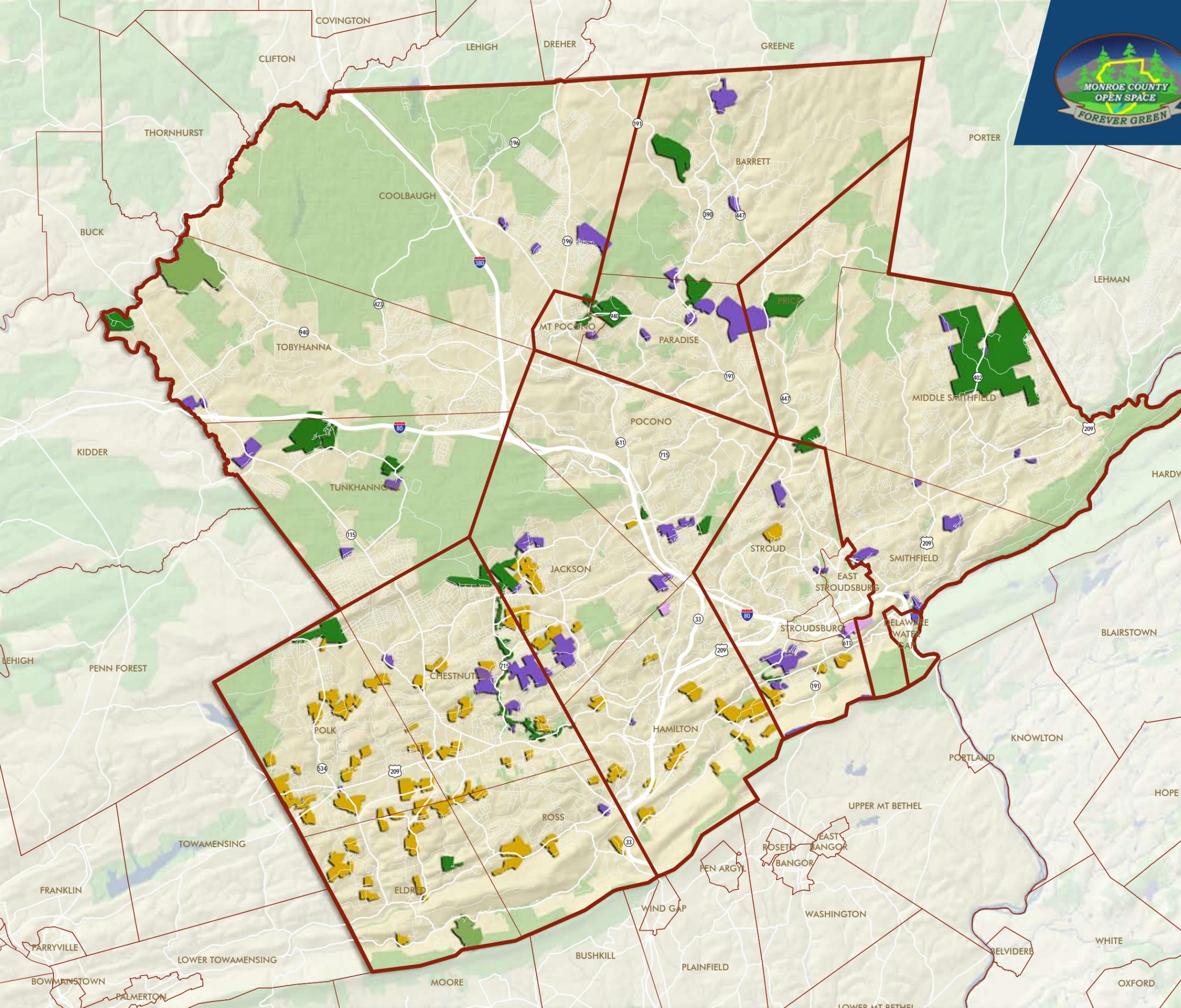
Eastern Monroe Recreation Committee

Acquisitions acquired with bond fund assistance:

- 30-acre Cherry Creek Crossing Park
- 17-acre Echo Lake
- 13-acre Judy Putek Park
- 4232-acre Camp Resica Conservation Easement
- 60-acre Former Cradle of Liberty Properties



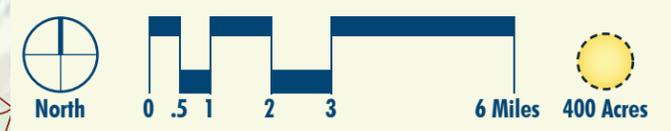
Update to the Monroe County Open Space, Greenways & Recreation Plan

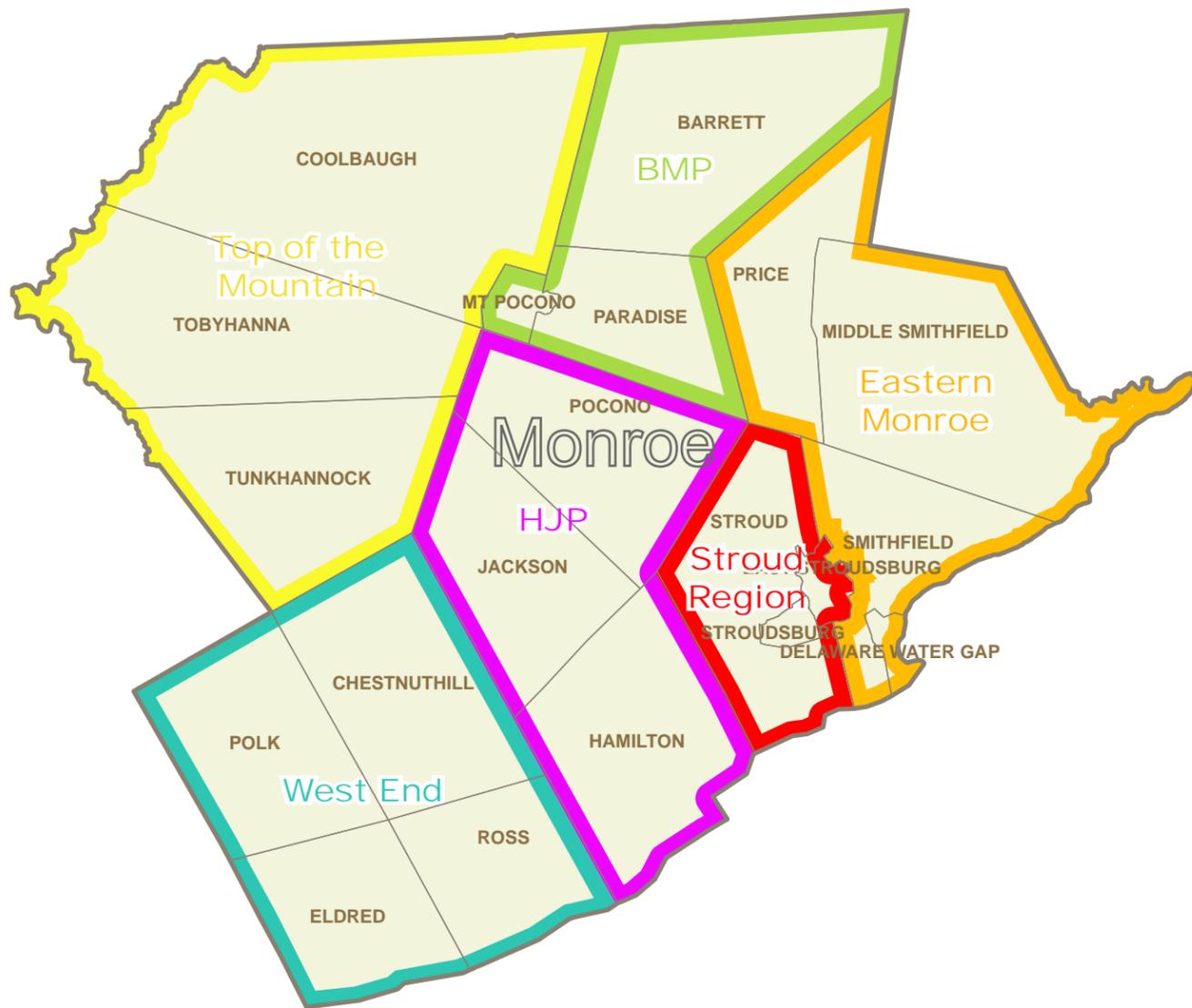


- Open Space and Recreation Planning Regions
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Highways
- Local Roads
- Streams
- State-Owned Lands
- County-Owned Lands
- Municipal-Owned Lands
- Semi-Private Lands
- Conservation-Owned Lands / Conservation Easements
- Agricultural Easements
- Conserved Lands

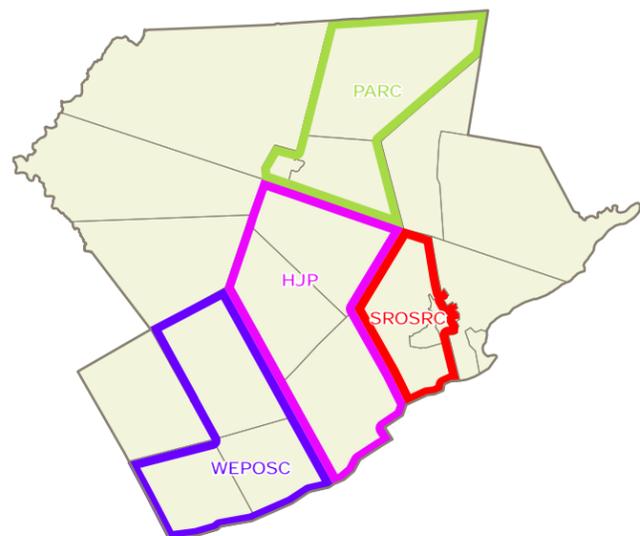
Acreage Tally:
19,974 Acres of Conserved Lands Since 2002

1 Conserved Lands Purchased with OS Bond Fund Assistance





Monroe County Recreation Planning Regions



Monroe County Active Recreation Commissions

- 418-acre Brodhead Hunting and Fishing Club - Conservation Easement
- 183-acre Rivers Edge and Mt. Nebo
- 7-acre Indian Chair Property
- 7-acre Breen Property
- 15-acre Marshalls Falls

Improvements / accomplishments since 2001:

- Middle Smithfield Township Park at Echo Lake Master Site Plan

- Soccer field at Middle Smithfield Township Park at Echo Lake
- Updated Signage at Middle Smithfield Township Park at Resica
- ADA access at Minisink Park in Smithfield Township
- Trees and ADA access at Waterfront Park
- Frisbee golf course at Rivers Edge
- 2.5 miles of trails connecting to Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
- Campsites
- Boardwalks over wetlands

HJP Recreation Commission

Acquisitions acquired with bond fund assistance:

- 4-acre Old Mill Extension
- 53-acre Expansion of Kettle Creek Wildlife Sanctuary
- 146-acre HJP Regional Park
- 102-acre Conklin Park
- 177-acre Lynch Property
- 20-acre Former Pohoqualine Fish Association
- 50-acre Hilliard Property
- 25-acre Conklin Park
- 86-acre Donofrio Property
- 22-acre Conklin Park
- 44-acre Ray Property
- 127-acre Learn Property
- 80-acre Bryson Property
- 59-acre Robbins Property
- 25-acre George and Olive Learn Conservation Easement

Improvements / accomplishments since 2001:

- Programming at Kettle Creek Nature Center
- HJP Regional Park Master Plan implemented
- Programming throughout the HJP Region by HJP staff

- Offering summer day camps, tennis lesson, yoga & nature classes
- Phases 1 & 2 underway with rain gardens and HC trail
- Solar powered, compost restroom installed
- Development of 1 acre dog park facility
- Formation of The Friends of HJP Park and Open Space Commission

Pocono Area Recreation Commission

Acquisitions acquired with bond fund assistance:

- 63-acre Pasold Farms Natural Preserve
- 168-acre Gravel Family Preserve
- 91-acre Mt. Wismer Preserve
- 479-acre Chestnut Mountain Nature Preserve
- 53-acre Fieldstone Farm Tank Creek Nature Preserve
- 60-acre Yankee Run Nature Preserve
- 33-acre The Knob
- 272-acre Upper Paradise Preserve
- 65-acre Skywood, Seven Pines and Ice Lake
- 777-acre Paradise Price Nature Preserve
- 389-acre The Kurmes Paradise Creek Nature Preserve
- 63-acre Nothstein Preserve
- 35-acre Knauf Preserve
- 241-acre The Henry's Crossing Nature Preserve

Improvements / accomplishments since 2001:

- Skywood Park Master Site Plan
- Seven Pines Master Site Plan
- Ice skating, fitness trail, sledding hills, and disc golf at Skywood Park.
- 2 baseball fields, parking lots, and rain gardens at Seven Pines
- Pavilion and playground at Oak Street Park

Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission

Acquisitions acquired with bond fund assistance:

- 136-acre Terra Greens Golf Club
- 7-acre Gregory's Pond Natural Area
- 60-acre Sloan Family Trust
- 198-acre Rogowicz Conservation Easement
- 31-acre Tott's Gap Trailhead
- 27-acre Joyce Property
- 49-acre Josie Porter Farm
- 123-acre Stonecrusher Property
- 32-acre Hartman's Cave
- 221-acre Glen Brook Golf Club
- 45-acre Kirkridge Property
- 79-acre Norton Farms
- 25-acre Peeney Property/Glen Park

Improvements / accomplishments since 2001:

- 2011 OS/R Regional Plan Update
- 2013-2015 Strategic Plan
- Terra Greens & Glen Brook Master Site Plan
- Glen to Glen Trail Feasibility Study
- Levee Loop Trail Master Plan
- Dansbury Trailhead
- Two Pools Bathhouses Renovations
- Levee Loop Trail Hard Surfacing
- Pocono Creek Pedestrian Bridge
- Day Street Community Center Renovations

Top of the Mountain Open Space Committee

Acquisitions acquired with bond fund assistance:

- 281-acre Hoodak Property
- 33-acre Wiley Preserve
- 35-acre Former Library Property
- 522-acre Maple Tract

- 130-acre Austin Blakeslee Natural Area
- 250-acre Camp Acahela Conservation Easement
- 1309-acre Blue Ridge Properties
- 119-acre Fern Ridge Nature Preserve
- 65-acre Moyer Property
- 50-acre Kim Property
- 91-acre Fern Ridge Nature Preserve
- 180-acre Haase Property

Improvements / accomplishments since 2001:

- The Village of Blakeslee Master Plan
- New ordinances to address better subdivision designs
- Brochure describing recreational opportunities in the region

West End Parks & Open Space Commission

Acquisitions acquired with bond fund assistance:

- 695-acre Pohoqualine Fish Association - Conservation Easement
- 244-acre West End Regional Park
- 95-acre Brink Farm
- 62-acre Marafino Property
- 29-acre Modafferi Property
- 25-acre Smith Property
- 244-acre West End Regional Park
- 51-acre Shiffer/Merwinsburg Hotel
- 253-acre Joshmor Property
- 9-acre Barthold Property
- 52-acre Romascavage II
- 77-acre Walter Mock Park
- 119-acre Eldred Beagle Club Conservation Easement
- 354-acre Alpine Property
- 411-acre Jonas Mountain Nature Preserve
- 4-acre Cherry Property
- 49-acre Haney Vanbuskirk Park

Improvements / accomplishments since 2001:

- West End Region Park Master Plan
- Phase 1 of the West End Regional Park
- Increased number of programs and participation
- Fund Raising
- Support of the Pleasant Valley Youth Association
- Ross Park Rest rooms
- Raingarden

ANNOTATED LIST OF PREVIOUS OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANS RELATED TO MONROE COUNTY

This section provides a brief overview of the considerable volume of plans and studies that have been completed for areas within Monroe County since the completion of the 2001 Open Space Plan to the present. The plans and studies are organized by categories based on their focus. A brief summary of each plan and its relevance to Monroe County open space and recreation resources is described below.

Open Space and Recreation Plans

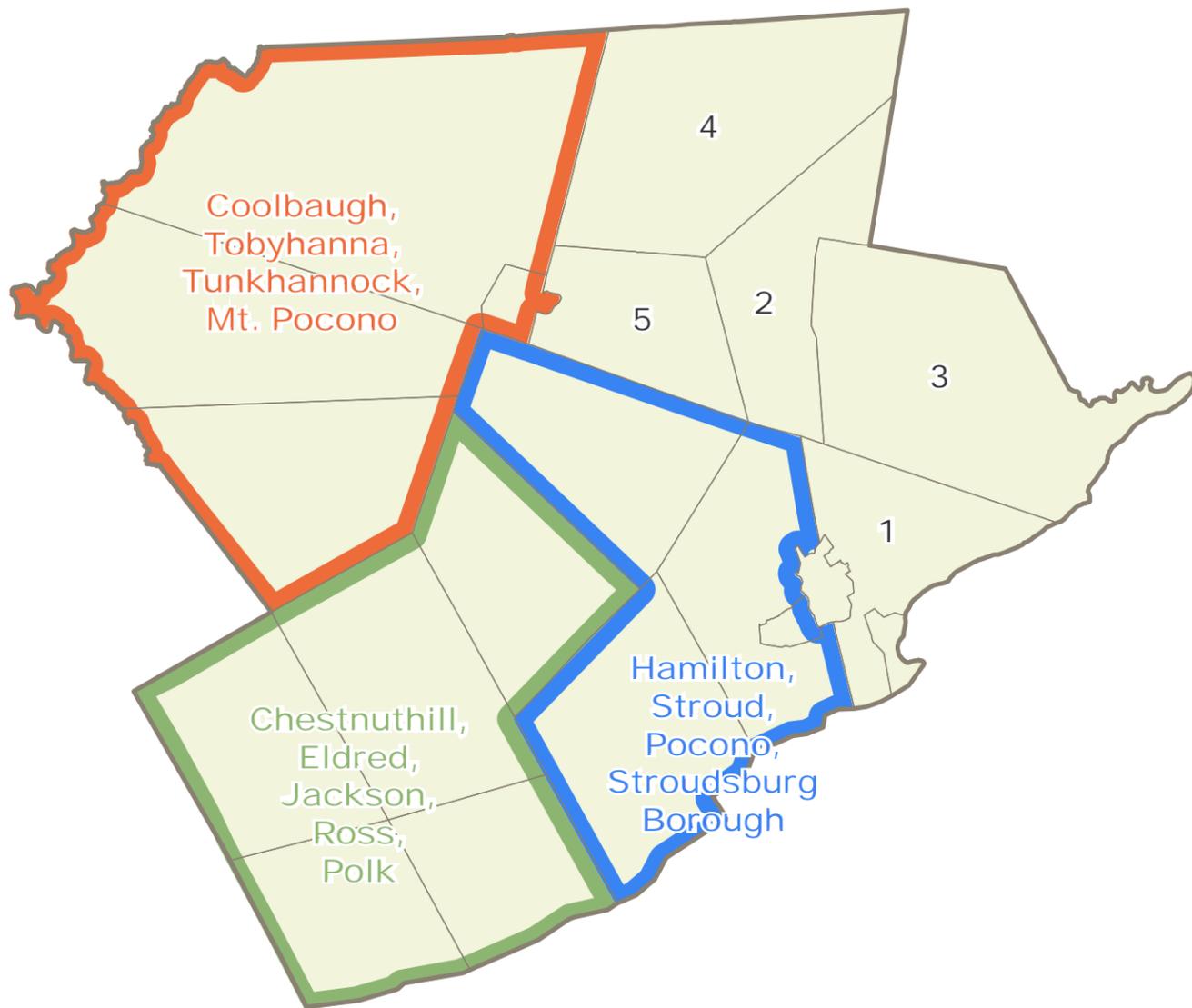
The following plans were reviewed for this report to identify previous planning accomplishments in Monroe County.

Monroe County Open Space Plan (2001) - An Action Guide to Preserving and Enhancing Monroe County's Green Infrastructure

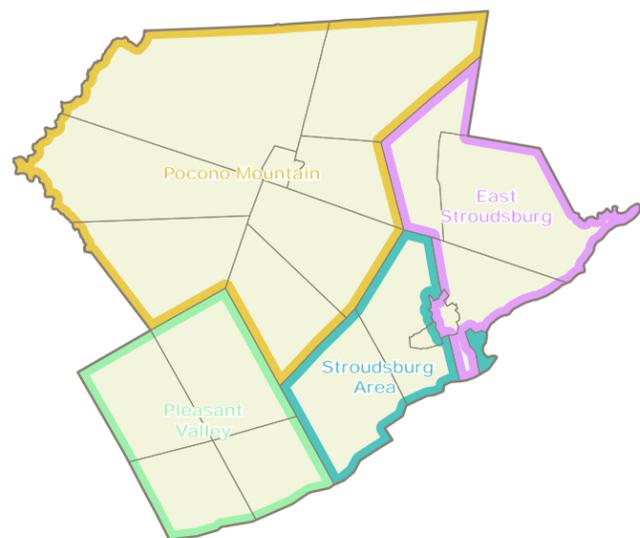
The 2001 Open Space Plan articulated a deep consensus vision for Monroe County and demonstrated leadership in Pennsylvania by a County blessed with abundant natural resources; a thriving recreation economy; and the wisdom to create a partnership



Brodhead Clubhouse



Monroe County Comprehensive Planning Regions



Monroe County School Districts

conservation strategy for future open space and parks development. Pennsylvania DCNR considers the 2001 plan as a model in the state of Pennsylvania.

Three years after a county referendum passed in favor of creating a \$25M bond issue for preserving open space, Monroe County completed its 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan to enable municipalities and other partners to make improvements that support the County vision for conservation of important open space resources.

Monroe County Open Space Needs Assessment: Next Steps to Continuing Success (2008)

The Monroe County Open Space Update Committee identified over 60,000 acres of important landscapes and farmlands that need protection in the next 10 years. Beginning in 1998, Monroe County has begun protecting open space, with every one acre preserved by Monroe County, three acres have been developed.

Monroe County was the second fastest growing county in Pennsylvania from 1990 to 2006. The protection of open spaces will ensure clean drinking water, healthy and productive farmland soils, and provide much wanted conservation that Pennsylvania voters have approved time and time again.

Monroe County Open Space and Recreation Plan compared to Recreation Commission and Multi-Municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans

The Monroe County Open Space and Recreation Plan of 2001 set the stage for Multi-Municipal Planning Regions to create plans of their own and establish Recreation Commissions. The four goals identified in the original 2001 Monroe County Open Space Plan were:

1. **“Create an open space system by acquiring priority lands with significant natural and cultural resources from a county-wide perspective.”**

With approximately 20,000 acres of open space preserved since 2001, the Multi-Municipal Planning Regions / Recreation Commissions have accomplished creating a significant open space system teeming with natural and cultural resources. The newly acquired open spaces and parks add to the already resource rich “patchwork quilt” of federal, state, conservancy and agriculture lands. As a resident or visitor of Monroe County, these lands provide the backdrop of a County abundant in green space.

2. **“Utilize the “Growing Greener” approach as a non-acquisition technique to help build the open space system by putting conservation into local plans and ordinances.”**

A large number of municipalities have adopted provisions for growing greener conservation by design. The majority of conservation efforts since 2001 have been spearheaded by municipalities in partnership with conservation groups that identify and conserve naturally valuable open space, farmland and stream corridors with most of the acquisitions having been by the municipalities in partnership with conservation groups.

3. **“Create a greenway system as a network of interrelated preserved lands and trails with public access where appropriate. Use the Monroe Greenway Project Feasibility Study as a demonstration and model greenway initiative for the County.”**

The priority of a county-wide greenway network has been echoed by the Multi-Municipal Planning Regions Open Space Plans, yet a comprehensive county-wide greenway system has not yet been constructed. The focus since 2001 has been to acquire lands that have significant natural and cultural value. Moving forward, connecting these properties should be a top priority for both the County and Regional Recreation Commissions.

4. **“Acquire the land necessary to create a county-wide system of parks and recreation areas.”**

All the Multi-Municipal Recreation Planning Regions have successfully developed at least one multi-municipal regional park in Monroe County since 2001. This is in addition to many developed municipal parks. The municipalities within Monroe currently own over 2000-acres of open space. This gives the 168,798 residents of Monroe County access to over 12-acres of developed and undeveloped park/open space land for every 1,000 residents. The 2001 Monroe County Open Space Plan recommended a range between 8-14 acres per 1,000 residents.

Regional Open Space and Recreation Plans (2002-2003)

The six regions were encouraged to conduct their own planning efforts, focusing at the local scale to identify high priority acquisition areas and create a network of park and recreation initiatives throughout the County. The following six Open Space and Recreation Plans were all prepared by Regional Open Space and Recreation Committees - as the precursor organizations to the Regional Recreation Commissions that were formed after each regional plan was completed. The new multi-municipal commissions were created to serve their member townships and boroughs with strategies to preserve priority of open spaces, natural features and recreation opportunities. The plans include:

- **BMP Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002)** - (Barrett Township, Mt. Pocono Borough, Paradise Township)
- **West End Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003)** - (Chestnuthill Township, Eldred Township, Polk Township, Ross Township)
- **Top of the Mountain Region Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002)** - (Coolbaugh Township, Tobyhanna Township, Tunkhannock Township)
- **Eastern Monroe Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002)** - (Delaware Water Gap Borough, Middle Smithfield Township, Price Township, Smithfield Township)
- **HJP Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003)** - (Hamilton Township, Jackson Township, Pocono Township)
- **Stroud Area Regional Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002)** - (Stroud Township, East Stroudsburg Borough, Stroudsburg Borough)

Greenway & Trail Plans

These plans identify greenways previously identified in the 2001 Open Space Plan and other local priorities and assess their feasibility and implementation. Collectively these plans and subsequent updates are the basis for the Monroe County 2014 Open Space, Greenway and Recreation Plan Update.

Upper Brodhead / Paradise Creeks Greenway Plan (2010)

This plan identifies potential trails linkages between areas that have significant cultural and natural importance to the local townships and boroughs along the Upper Brodhead and Paradise Creeks. Three of the main goals of the plan are to protect water quality within the Brodhead Creek sub-watershed; conserve land for various uses; and connect communities to natural and cultural resources.

The Greenway Project Feasibility Study (1999)

This feasibility study evaluated the potential for the development of greenway and trail connections in the area between Stroudsburg and Delaware Water Gap. The study area, which directly affects five municipalities in Monroe County, explains the potential to connect to a much larger regional greenway system. The study outlines cost estimates and guiding recommendations to make the greenway a reality.

Brodhead, McMichael, and Pocono Creeks Greenways Plan (2002)

This plan looks at the implementation potential for a greenway adjacent to the Brodhead, McMichael and Pocono Creeks within Stroud Township, Stroudsburg, and East Stroudsburg. A total of 40 miles of proposed trail alignments are segmented into 14 projects to increase the environmental, cultural, scenic, and recreational values of the Stroud Region.

Liberty to Water Gap Trail Feasibility Study (2013)

This study looks at the feasibility of connecting The Delaware Water Gap to the Hudson River Waterfront in New Jersey. Through the connection of six interlinked trails over 130 miles, this study identifies potential trail alignments, parking and access, signage and orientation, trail services, operation and maintenance, law enforcement, vegetation and snow removal, and acquisitions of right of ways. These goals are set to be accomplished by year 2024.

Site Development Plans

These plans are smaller in scale, but important to current and previous open space and recreation projects within the County.

Terra Greens and Glen Brook Regional Parks – Master Site Development Plan (2008)

This plan explores opportunities to preserve and enhance open space and recreation within the Stroud region by expanding recreation facilities at two existing golf courses. Passive recreation needs of the community, and possible linkages from the golf courses to municipal lands are identified that would protect natural resources and discourage unofficial uses within the golf courses.

The Village of Blakeslee Master Plan, Township of Tobyhanna (2011)

This plan is a shared vision that promotes and guides the economic development and walkable connectivity for the Village of Blakeslee in Tobyhanna Township over the next twenty years. Reducing unnecessary regulations; encouraging historically accurate forms and materials; and establishing new pedestrian and vehicular connections are recommended by the plan to improve the visual character of the area as a



Tank Creek Preserve



pedestrian-scaled, livable village oriented to walking, biking and shopping.

The Borough of Delaware Water Gap Village Study (2013)

This study is envisioned as a working document to guide the Delaware Water Gap Borough, its business owners, residents, and design professions who seek to develop specific properties along Broad Street and Main Street (SR611). The plan sets guidelines for improvements such as materials, signage and lighting, to improve the village character and foster growth.

HJP Regional Park Master Plan

Hamilton, Jackson and Pocono Townships Regional Park Master Plan outlines the development of a 146-acre wooded property for both passive and active recreation. Recently, matching grants funds from DCNR and DCED have allowed construction to start and programs to be created.

West End Regional Park Master Plan (2008)

Chestnuthill, Ross, Eldred, and Polk Townships West End Regional Park Master Plan outlines the development of a 244-acre active and passive recreation site. Through seven phases of construction, this regional park has the potential to serve multiple user groups needs and conserve the natural environment. The plan breaks down the cost of the park by item, offering potential matching funding opportunities to accomplish the goals.

Skywood Master Plan (2010)

This plans outlines the master plan of a 55-acre site located in Paradise Township and owned by multi-municipal PARC (Pocono Area Recreation

Commission). The plan organizes the site into four general areas to be built in three phases. By looking at the surrounding community; user groups; site resources; and history, this master plan develops suitable uses and the associated costs.

Austin T. Blakeslee Natural Area Master Plan (2006)

This plans outlines the master plan of a 30-acre site located in Tobyhanna Township purchased through the collaboration of Tunkhannock and Tobyhanna Townships. This plan outlines the site inventory, proposed activities and facilities, cost estimate and how to manage the site after construction of all recreation elements.

Conservation Plans

Conserving lands through private and non-public agencies is an important way for Monroe County to preserve its valuable open space for existing habitat and future generations.

Brodhead Watershed Conservation Plan (2002)

This conservation plan looks at the Brodhead Watershed reach of the Delaware Watershed that encompasses approximately half of the County. The plan is a long term tool to be used for guiding and prioritizing conservation efforts within the 285 square-mile Brodhead Watershed. The five goals listed in the plan are; "to maintain and improve surface and ground water quality; educate the public on issues of water quality, planning and habitat; encourage regulations outlined in the plan at all levels of government; manage, enhance and protect natural habitats; and preserved and interpret historic resources." Through municipal implementation of the goals and management objectives outlined in this conservation

plan, the watershed will provide cleaner drinking water and better recreation opportunities to its citizens while preserving natural habitats, resulting in a significant area that would sustain both people and nature for generations to come.

Cherry Creek Conservation Plan (2004)

This plan identifies and prioritizes actions to conserve the 13,314-acre watershed located within Monroe County. Through the protection of resources, improvement of water quality, creation of wildlife and recreation networks and the promotion of stewardship opportunities, the plan outlines the steps needed to preserve the character of the Cherry Creek watershed. By implementing action items that ensure future generations have the opportunity to participate in activities such as walking, hiking and bicycling and traditions such as farming, hunting, fishing and trapping the character of the area and environment is preserved.

Chestnuthill Township Forest Stewardship Plan (2004)

The main objective of this report is to inventory 125-acres of resources within Chestnuthill Township and establish an ecological baseline for the forest. This inventory includes vegetation type, diversity of plants and animals, forest health and prosperity. A 10-year forest management and stewardship plan outlines recommendations to increase the overall forest ecosystem health.

Comprehensive Plans

The open space and recreation element is one element of a municipal comprehensive plan, which provides guidance for municipal growth and zoning regulations.

Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Update (2014)

The Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Update serves as a guiding tool and integral part of the Monroe 2020 Plan to promote growth and prosperity by balancing environmental conservation and sustainable economic development. A task force of approximately 35 members served to create this update from the original 1999 comprehensive plan. Most of the goals of the original plan remain applicable. This plan updates population, transportation, utilities, storm water management, GIS data and economic development data. Additional sections provide new information and guidance on Monroe County policies including water supply, energy conservation, historic preservation, and housing; all of which impact open space and recreation planning. The 2014 Monroe County Open Space Greenway and Recreation Update is intended to be developed as an element of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Update.

The Economic Development Implementation Plan is an element of the 2014 Monroe Comprehensive Plan Update that outlines traditional strategies to support existing businesses; attract new industry; and generally increase economic activity in Monroe County. The economic plan generally acknowledges open space, recreation, and tourism as facilitators for economic development and describes them collectively as an “important factor” without detail. The plan does mention secondary economic development benefits that open space might have as natural “effluent” treatment areas in service to traditional residential / commercial land development. Such wastewater uses of open spaces may contribute to local groundwater

recharge, but may also limit other multiple uses of those lands.

Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans

The majority of municipalities within Monroe County have completed these plans since 2005. It is important to note that the boundaries for these multi-municipal comprehensive planning regions differ from the boundaries of the open space and recreation planning regions. Completed plans include:

- *Coolbaugh Township, Tobyhanna Township, Tunkhannock Township, Mt. Pocono Borough (2005)*
- *Hamilton Township, Stroud Township, Pocono Township, Stroudsburg Borough (2005)*
- *Chestnuthill Township, Eldred Township, Jackson Township, Ross Township (2006) (Note: Polk Township was incorporated into CJER.)*

These municipalities have their own comprehensive plans and are not part of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

1. *Smithfield Township (2001)*
2. *Price Township (2002)*
3. *Middle Smithfield Township (2007)*
4. *Barrett Township (2008)*
5. *Paradise Township (2013)*



ANNOTATED LIST OF PREVIOUS PLANS FROM ADJACENT COUNTIES

This section reviews plans and studies completed for the eight counties adjacent to Monroe County since the 2001 Open Space Plan was completed. The reports are organized by county and state, and provide a brief summation of each county's land size, population and county-owned open space and recreation opportunities that are easily accessible to Monroe citizens. This resource information is valuable to Monroe County, the regional commissions, municipalities and non-profit providers in considering future open space and recreation improvements that are near or adjacent to the County line.

Carbon County, Pennsylvania



Carbon County Comprehensive Plan & Greenway Plan (2012)

Carbon County is Monroe's neighbor to the west, with a population of 65,006 and land area of 381 sq mi. Similar to Monroe County there is a perception of abundant open space in Carbon due to the amount of preserved federal and state lands - including five State Game Lands, one State Forest and three State Parks (including the Lehigh Gorge, a State Park that serves as an East Coast travel destination.) Carbon County also has many nearby open space and recreation opportunities for Monroe County residents such as the Lehigh River Water Trail, Appalachian Trail, State Game Lands No. 129, Penn Forest Reserve and Wild Creek Reservoir. Carbon County-owned open space and recreation lands are comprised of:

- Mauch Chunk Lake Park (2,300-acre park containing a 330 acre lake)
- Land along the Lehigh River (North of Jim Thorpe)
- Delaware and Lehigh Heritage Corridor Trail
- Route 209 (a historic trail travel corridor)
- Beltzville State Park

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania



Open Space, Greenways & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties (2004)

Luzerne County is Monroe's neighbor to the north-west with a population of 321,027 and land area of 891 sq mi. Luzerne County has many accessible outdoor opportunities for Monroe County residents such as the Spruce Swamp State Forest Natural Area, Stage Game Lands No. 91 and the 3,412-acre Natural Lands Trust Bear Creek Preserve. Potential greenway connections to Monroe County include the "L" Trail which borders Monroe and the conversion of the former WB&E rail road right-of-way to a rail to trail. Luzerne County-owned open space and recreation lands are comprised of:

- Moon Lake Park (648 acres of fields and forest, including a 68-acre lake)
- Seven Tubs Natural Area (532 acres including seven geologic tubs carved out of the sandstone rock formation)

Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania



Open Space, Greenways & Outdoor Recreation Master Plan Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties (2004)

Lackawanna County is Monroe's neighbor to the north-west with a population of 214,477 and land area of 459 sq mi. Lackawanna has many adjacent open space opportunities for Monroe County residents such as the Spruce Swamp State Forest Natural Area and State Game Lands No. 135. Lackawanna County-owned open space and recreation lands are comprised of:

- McDade Park (126 acres of recreational amenities)
- Montage Mountain (140 acre ski and recreation area)
- Covington Park (some fields for recreation)
- Merli-Sarnoski Park (850 acres of land utilized for boating, fishing, hiking, baseball, soccer, picnicking, and swimming)

Other relevant Lackawanna County plans include:

- *Lackawanna River Watershed Atlas (2008)*

Wayne County, Pennsylvania



Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update (2010)

Wayne County is Monroe's neighbor to the north with a population of 51,955 and land area of 729 sq mi. Wayne County has State Game Lands No. 312 directly adjacent to Monroe County's Tobyhanna State Park, creating one contiguous "public open space corridor" for use by residents of both counties. In addition, similar to Monroe, Wayne does not own open space and recreation land but has federal, state, municipal and conservancy lands available for use by its residents.

Pike County, Pennsylvania



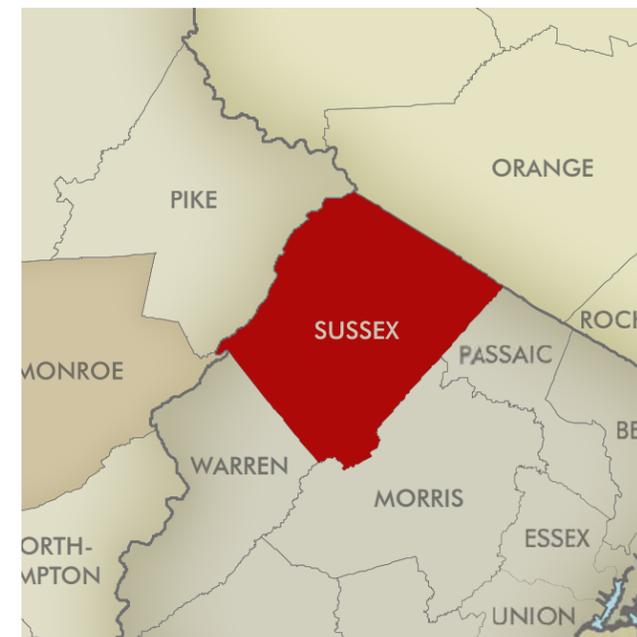
The Pike County Open Space, Greenways, and Recreation Plan (2008)

Pike County is Monroe's neighbor to the north-east with a population of 56,899 and land area of 547 sq mi. Pike also has many nearby overlapping and adjacent open space and recreation opportunities for Monroe County residents such as the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, McDade Recreational Trail, as well as state parks such as Pennel Run Natural Area, High Knob Area and Promised Land Park Bruce Lake Area that include many trails with some that may be possible greenway linkages to Monroe County. Pike County owns one 325-acre park that is adjacent to State Game Lands No. 209.

Other relevant Pike County plans include:

- *Pike County's Open Space, Greenways, and Recreation Plan Progress Report (2012)*
- *Pike Outdoors - A Public Lands Guide for Sportsmen & Outdoor Enthusiasts (2012)*
- *Pike County Comprehensive Plan (2006)*
- *Bushkill Conservation Study (2013)*

Sussex County, New Jersey

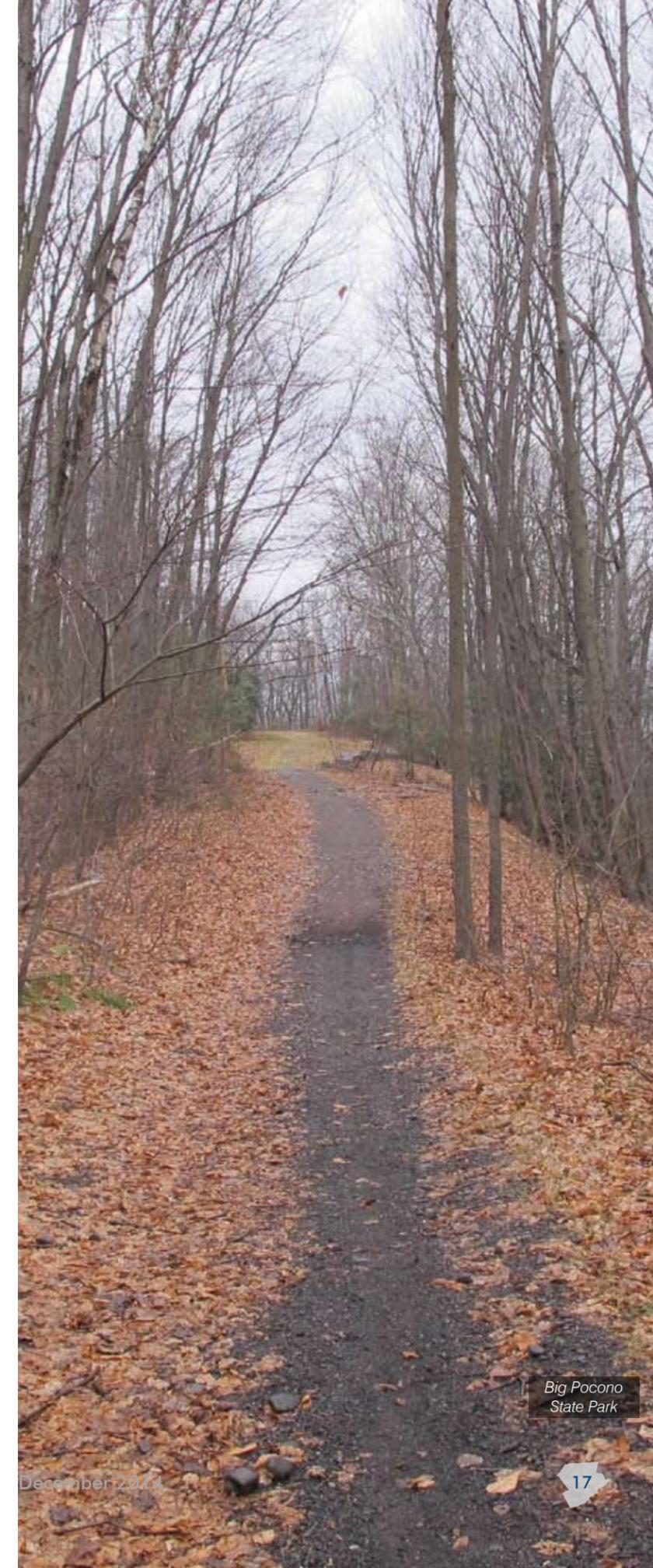


Open Space and Recreation Plan for the County of Sussex "People and Nature Together" (2003)

Sussex County, New Jersey is Monroe's neighbor to the north-east for only a few hundred yards at the Walpack Bend in the Delaware River. The county population is 147,442 and land area is 519 sq mi. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area includes both Sussex and Monroe Counties. Sussex owns only 1-acre of parkland, which is located in Newton's town square.

Other relevant Sussex County plans include:

- *Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update (2007)*
- *Delaware River Water Trail Sign Plan (2010)*





Warren County, New Jersey



Warren County Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (2008)

Warren County, New Jersey is Monroe's neighbor to the east with a population of 107,653 and land area of 356 sq mi. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area includes parts of both Warren and Monroe County. Similar to Monroe County, Warren County does not own any open space and recreation land but has federal, state, municipal and conservancy lands available for public uses.

Other relevant Warren County plans include:

- *Warren County Open Space Plan (1999)*

Northampton County, Pennsylvania



Northampton County Parks (2010)

Northampton County is Monroe's neighbor to the south with a population of over 299,267 and land area of 374 sq mi. Northampton County has many nearby overlapping and adjacent open space and recreation opportunities for Monroe County residents such as the Appalachian Trail, State Game Lands No. 168, Bear Swamp Park & Archery Complex, Minsi Lake Wilderness and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. With several existing and proposed north to south trails, Monroe County has many possible greenway connections into Northampton. Northampton County-owned or managed open space and recreation lands are comprised of:

- Bear Swamp Archery Complex (260-acre Regional Park)
- Louise W. Moore Park (106-acre Regional Park)
- Minsi Lake (the lake is owned by the PA fish commission in this 311-acre wilderness park.
- Weaversville County Park (200 acre conservancy land turned County Park)

- Northampton County Recreation Trail (77-acre linear trail)

Other smaller open space and recreation areas that are either owned or managed by Northampton County include: Frost Hollow Overlook, Fry's Run Park, Bodnarczuk scenic easement tract, Hit-Tuk Park, Archibald Johnson Conservation Area, Gertrude B. Fox County Park, McIlwain/Monocacy Meadow, Mt. Jack, Mud Run and Portland Waterfront Park.

Other relevant Northampton County plans include:

- *Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan (2007)*



LIST OF ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PLANS AND RESOURCES (BY DATE)

These plans and studies are relevant to Monroe County, and describe how the County fits into a larger, regional open space, greenway and recreation planning process.

Plans

- 1987 DEWA General Management Plan
- 1999 Delaware Water Gap Final Trails Plan
- 2000 Pocono Environmental Heritage Region assessment
- 2001 Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action plan for Creating Connections
- 2001 DEWA Trails Plan & General Management Plan Amendment
- 2005 The Lehigh Valley – 2030 Lehigh and Northampton Counties
- 2006 Delaware River Water Trail Concept Plan
- 2006 Northerly Crossings Corridor Congestion Mitigation Study
- 2007 Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan a Regional Greenways Plan for Lehigh and Northampton Counties
- 2009 Pennsylvania Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- 2009 DEWA Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
- 2010 Lehigh Valley Trails Inventory, Lehigh and Northampton Counties
- 2012 Delaware River Basin Wild and Scenic River Values

On-Line Planning Resources

- Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Pennsylvania Trails (<http://www.explorepatrails.com/>)

MAPPING INVENTORY

Monroe County has compiled extensive mapping resources that are managed by the Monroe County Planning Commission.

This study included a review of the inventory of relevant mapping data - almost exclusively in the form of GIS data files. Sources for this data include:

- Monroe County Planning Commission
- pasda.psu.edu
- state.nj.us/dep/gis
- wave.dep.state.pa.us

GIS Data Resource Library of Existing Natural and Cultural Resources

Existing Cultural Resource Data

- Political Boundaries
- Roads
- Drives
- Trails & Greenways
- Active and Abandoned Railroads
- Active Recreation Facilities / Regional Parks
- Pennsylvania Register Sites
- Historic Areas
- Agricultural Security Areas
- Utility Easements

Existing Natural Resource Data

- Streams with Quality Designations
- Scenic Streams
- Scenic Natural Areas
- Conserved Natural Areas
- Federal Owned Lands
- State Owned Lands
- Municipal Owned Lands

- Semi-Private Owned Lands
- Conservation Easements / Owned Lands
- Agricultural Easements
- Water Bodies
- Watersheds

Proposed Cultural Resource Data

- Trails & Greenways at County and Municipal Level
- Active Recreation Facilities / Regional Parks

Proposed Natural Resource Data

- Conservation Areas
- Conservation Corridors

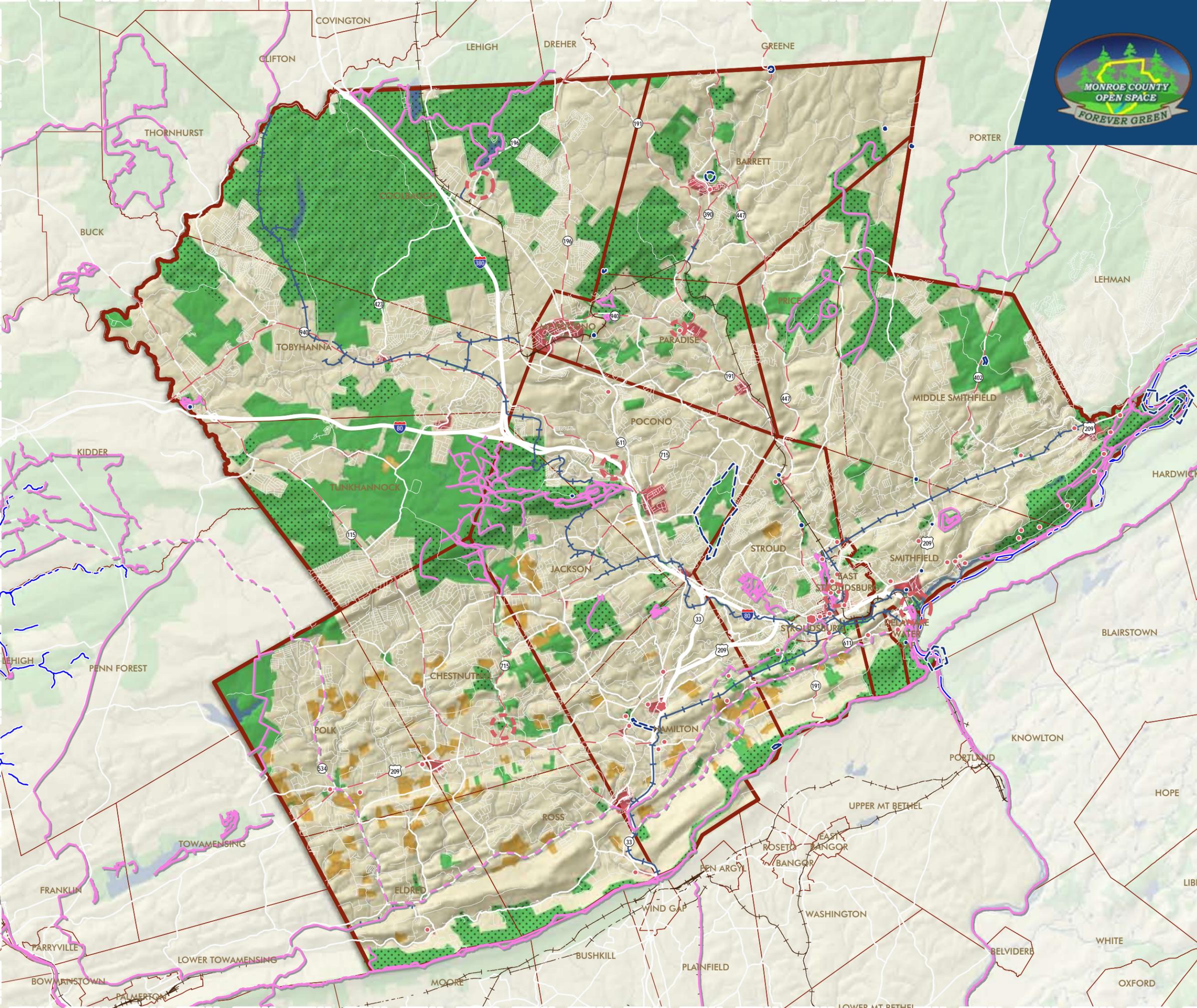
Natural and Cultural Resources Inventory

An inventory map was created to illustrate existing Monroe County cultural and natural resources. Major roadways, municipal and recreation commission boundaries are added for reference and data is displayed over a graphic representation of the county topography.

GIS data was compiled from multiple sources and manipulated to display areas of interest to the public such as scenic natural areas and drives; historic register sites and areas; regional parks; existing trails and bike routes; and publicly accessible conserved natural areas.



Update to the Monroe County Open Space, Greenways & Recreation Plan



Existing Cultural Resources

- Open Space & Recreation Planning Regions
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Highways
- Local Roads
- Scenic Drives
- Trails & Greenways
- Bike Routes
- Railroads - Abandoned
- Railroads - Active
- Regional Parks
- Pennsylvania Register Sites
- Historic Areas

Existing Natural Resources

- Streams
- Scenic Streams
- Scenic Natural Areas
- Conserved Natural Areas
- Publicly Accessible Conserved Natural Areas
- Conserved Agricultural Areas
- Water Bodies

Data Sources

Existing Monroe County GIS Data, PASDA, PADEP, NJDEP

2 Natural & Cultural Resources Inventory



North



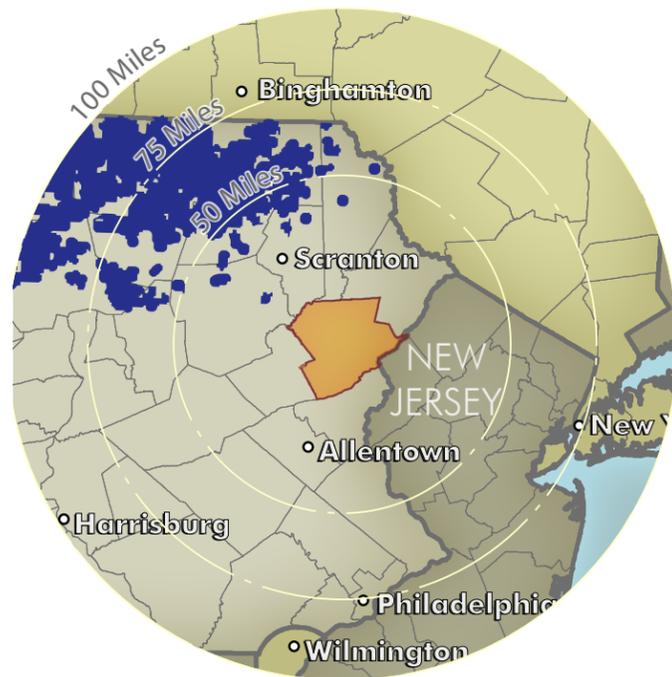
Pennsylvania has over

83,000 miles of rivers and streams...

400,000 acres of wetlands... and

“30 times as much fresh groundwater as surface water”

Penn Future Reports
Pennsylvania's Wetlands: Current Status & Recent Trends
DCNRs The Geology of Pennsylvania's Groundwater



Marcellus Gas Drilling Locations
Map Source: (www.npr.org)

Hydrology & Stream Designations

This map was created to illustrate the hydrologic systems of Monroe County at the watershed and sub-watershed levels with a focus on water quality designations of streams. Streams that are petitioned and upgraded receive special protections from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania through anti-degradation regulations. Stream designations include:

- EV (Exceptional Value)
- HQ (High Quality)
- HQ-CWF (High Quality-Cold Water Fishes)
- HQ-TSF (High Quality-Trout Stocking)
- HQ-WWF (High Quality-Warm Water Fishes)
- CWF (Cold Water Fishes)
- TSF (Trout Stocking)
- WWF (Warm Water Fishes)

Both High Quality and Exceptional Value designated streams receive special protection under Pennsylvania anti-degradation regulations, with the Exceptional Value designation receiving the maximum protection for a stream in Pennsylvania.

The importance of establishing water quality documentation; submitting upgrade petitions; and monitoring water quality of streams cannot be overestimated to protect Monroe County's environmental integrity.

The County is divided very clearly by the geological escarpment that runs from the southwest to the northeast and divides the Lehigh and Delaware Watersheds. The Lehigh Watershed in Monroe County is primarily the formation called the Pocono Plateau, a geological complex that holds and releases groundwater to the base flow of the Lehigh River and ultimately contributes to the quantity and quality of the entire lower reach of the Delaware River.

The Delaware Watershed includes critical protection

areas, generally located near the headwaters of the Delaware River tributaries and for much of the Plateau area that consists of perched wetlands.

More information, including step by step instructions for petitioning for a stream upgrade can be found online at: www.pennfuture.org/UserFiles/PDFs/PennFutureStreamHndbk09.pdf. This is included in the Appendix of this report. For additional information about stream designations and upgrade assistance contact the Brodhead Watershed Association by phone at 570-839-1120 and online at www.brodheadwatershed.org or the Brodhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited online at www.brodheadstu.org.

Marcellus shale gas drilling

Marcellus Shale is regulated within the State of Pennsylvania under Act 13. Portions of Act 13 were declared unconstitutional by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The judges found portions in violation of the state's Environmental Rights Amendment of the Pennsylvania Constitution. In particular the Court struck down provisions of Act 13 that excluded participation of local governments in the Marcellus shale facility approval process; and the facility owner from adherence to local ordinances.

Excerpts from Justice Castille's December 19, 2013 opinion state that:

“Act 13's primary stated purpose is not to effectuate the constitutional obligation to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's natural environment. Rather, the purpose of the statute is to provide a maximally favorable environment for industry operators to exploit Pennsylvania's oil and natural gas resources, including those in the Marcellus Shale Formation.”

... “at its core, this dispute centers upon an asserted vindication of citizens' rights to quality of life on their properties and in their hometowns, insofar as Act 13

threatens degradation of air and water, and of natural, scenic, and esthetic values of the environment, with attendant effects on health, safety, and the owners' continued enjoyment of their private property.”

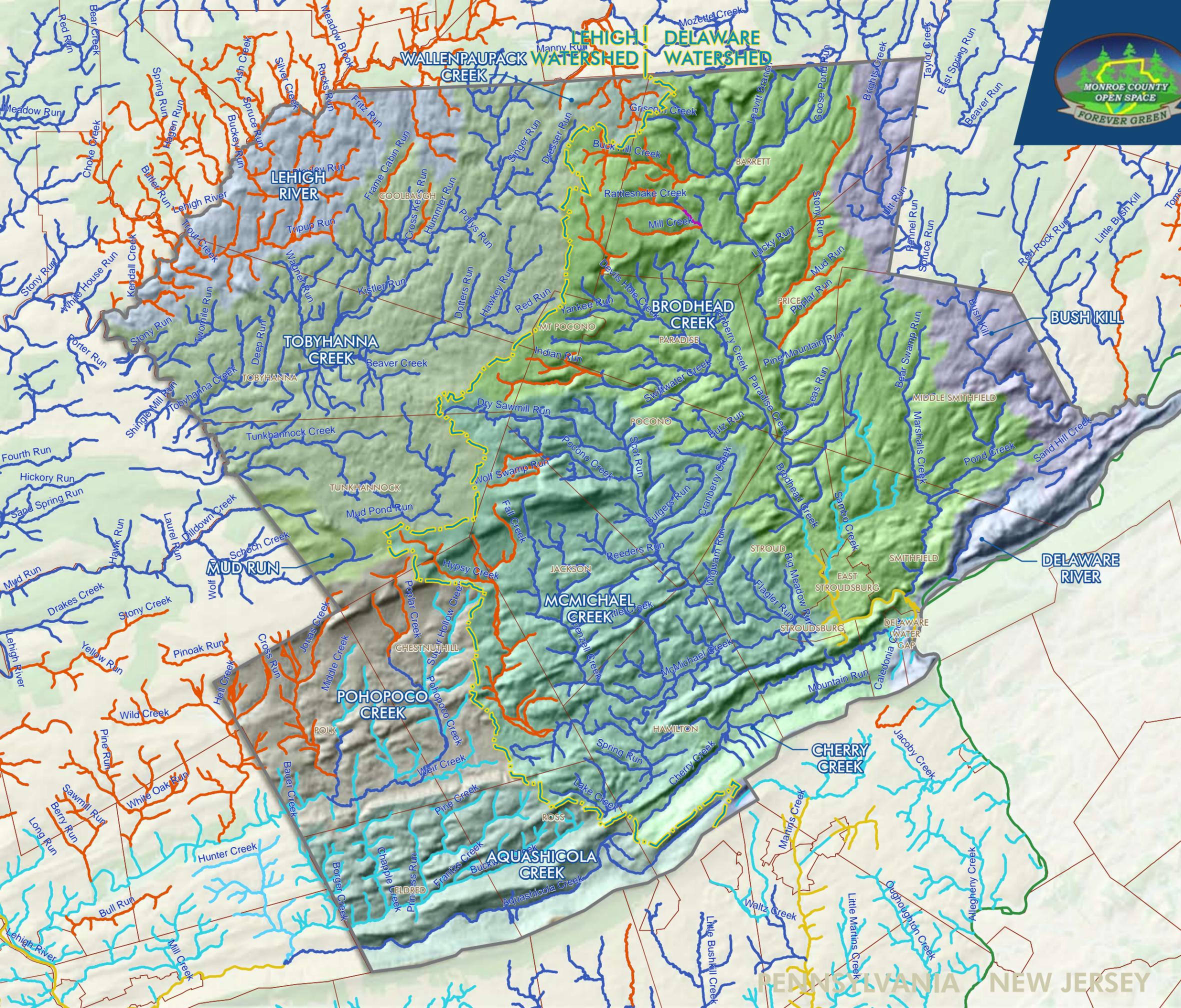
“By any responsible account, the exploitation of the Marcellus Shale Formation will produce a detrimental effect on the environment, on the people, their children, and future generations, and potentially on the public purse, perhaps rivaling the environmental effects of coal extraction.”

The Pocono Plateau is a unique geologic formation that is partially located in Monroe County and a major aquifer that contributes to the base flow of the Delaware River that is vital to human and ecosystem health for the entire watershed.

Proactive leadership by the Monroe County and its Planning Commission can include assistance to municipalities to enact smart zoning ordinances related to Marcellus shale activities.

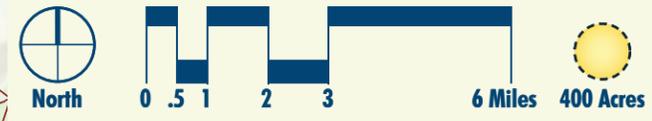


Update to the Monroe County Open Space, Greenways & Recreation Plan



- Boundaries**
- County Boundary
 - Municipal Boundaries
 - Watershed Divide Line
- Existing & Designated Streams - PA DEP**
- Maximum Protection
- EV (Exceptional Value)
- Special Protection
- HQ (High Quality)
 - HQ-CWF (High Quality-Cold Water Fishes)
 - HQ-TSF (High Quality-Trout Stocking)
- Additional Protection
- CWF (Cold Water Fishes)
 - TSF (Trout Stocking)
- Minimum Protection
- WWF (Warm Water Fishes)

3 Hydrology & Stream Designations





Mock
Preserve

OPEN SPACE

Methodology

GIS data layers were acquired from Monroe County Planning Commission (MCPC), PASDA, NJDEP, the 2001 Open Space Plan and the six Monroe County Regional Open Space and Recreation Plans were analyzed to understand:

- Existing conserved open space types and their levels of protection
- Open Space Areas of Interest for Preservation
- Farmland Areas of Interest for Preservation

Existing Open Space by Resource Type and Levels of Protection

Based on analysis of available GIS data, municipal data, land use regulations and legislation, these criteria were created with the intent of describing and comparing the “level of protection” that an open space parcel has - by asking non-subjective questions. The three criteria to determine the level of protection of an open space parcel were characterized as follows:

- Is the resource protected from mining and/or logging?
- Is the resource protected from future sale and/or development?
- Does the resource have exceptional cultural and/or natural value?

The levels of protection determined by these criteria are ranked into 3 tiers with 1 point given for a yes answer, 0 points given for a no answer and ½ point given for any type that you could answer both yes and no.

Tier 1-consists of parcel types that answered yes to all 3 criteria and represent a high level of protection.

Tier 2-consists of parcel types that meet at least 2 out of 3 criteria points and represent a moderate level of protection.

Tier 3-consists of parcel types that meet less than 2 criteria points and represent a low level of protection

Tier 1 Resource Types (high level of protection)

- National Wildlife Refuges
- National Recreation Areas
- National Scenic Trails
- National Wild and Scenic Rivers
- State Parks
- County-Owned Open Spaces
- Municipal Owned Open Spaces
- Municipal Services Lands
- Cemeteries (Public)

Tier 2 Resource Types (medium level of protection)

- State Forests
- Conservation Easements
- Agricultural Easements
- Development Restricted Parcels
- Water Authority Lands

Tier 3 Resource Types (low level of protection)

- State Game Lands
- Agricultural Security Areas
- Municipal-Owned Undeveloped Lands
- Utility Easements
- Private-Owned Open Spaces
- Act 319 Lands

Open Space Areas of Interest for Preservation

Available GIS data from the 2002-2003 Regional Recreation Commission Plans; the 2001 Open Space Plan; and conservancy data were used to identify valuable and vulnerable lands. This map was created to display “Areas of Interest for Preservation.” These areas consist of:

Existing and proposed

- Greenways
- Corridors for Conservation
- Areas for Conservation
- Regional / Municipal Parks

The Areas of Interest for Preservation map can be used as a tool by the County, its regional commission partners, municipalities and conservancy partners to further identify lands to be considered as priorities for habitat conservation and or recreational use. In the future, a weighted overlay analysis, similar to the one suggested in the 2001 Open Space Plan, can be completed in GIS by MCPC to identify the most appropriate parcels under consideration for conservation. Suggested weighted overlay criteria for future natural land preservation decisions include:

1. Locations within urbanizing areas (GIS data)
2. Locations within the lowest quartile of municipalities that are most deficient in publicly available open space. (Matrix: Levels of Recreation and Open Space Service – by Municipal Population)
3. Locations contiguous to Tier 1 or Tier 2 protected resources (Existing Open Space by Resource Type and Levels of Protection Map)
4. Property contains/ or is adjacent to a significant water body on the Pocono Plateau escarpment (ex. headwaters of subwatersheds.) (GIS data / Map: Hydrology)

6. Property contains an important historic or cultural resource (GIS data)
7. Property is within a “high ranking” natural area of interest (GIS data)

These criteria should be reviewed periodically and revised as needed by the Monroe County Open Space Advisory Board.

Farmland Areas of Interest for Preservation

The Areas of Interest for Preservation map can be also be used as a tool to further identify agricultural lands that are important to conserve. In the future, an analysis should be completed in GIS by MCPC to identify the most appropriate parcels to preserve. The suggested criteria to consider for future agricultural land preservation decisions are:

1. Parcels within Monroe County’s agricultural security area. (GIS data)
2. Parcels adjacent to an existing agricultural easement and or conservation easement (GIS data)
3. Properties larger than 10 acres (GIS data)
4. Parcel adjacent to a proposed greenway (Map: Greenways)

The importance of the Monroe Agricultural Preservation program and its future should be recognized as a priority for Monroe citizens within the County’s open space preservation goals. Farmland is recognized by the general public as an active land use, essential cultural activity, and beneficial as a benign and sustainable economic development sector. Commissioners should continue to support and encourage farmland preservation.

By adding the criteria of “parcels adjacent to a proposed greenway” potential preserved farmland may also serve as a link in a larger greenway / recreation

system. By defining within the easement agreement the potential as a recreation trail corridor through the property. The agricultural easement program can be used to preserve farmland and create the possibility for low-impact recreation use without negligible impact to food production.

Community supported farms and gardens: These enterprises promote local food security, ecological stewardship and are generally compatible with existing public recreation and open space uses. Monroe County should consider creating a sustainable agriculture model ordinance outlining allowable uses for sustainable farm enterprises.

Identified Areas of Interest for Future Preservation

The following areas, organized by region, were identified by Recreation Commissions and Multi-Municipal Planning Regions as areas of interest for future preservation during meetings held in 2013.

Eastern Monroe Multi-Municipal Planning Region

- Brodhead Creek Corridor
- Godfrey Ridge Corridor
- Cherry Creek Corridor
- Link Waterfront Park and Mt. Nebo in Smithfield Township
- Access from Rivers Edge to Brodhead Creek
- Connections to McDade Trail

HJP Recreation Commission

- 75-acres adjacent to Mountain View Park
- 2.6-acres adjacent to HJP Regional Park

Pocono Area Recreation Commission

- Trail link in-between Ice Lake and Seven Pines Park

Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission

- GPU property in Stroudsburg Borough.
- Purchase the Shiffer property in Stroudsburg Borough.
- Brodhead Creek Corridor
- Cherry Valley Corridor
- Godfrey Ridge and Godfrey Ridge Extension
- Pocono Creek/WB&E Corridor
- McMichael Creek Corridor
- Paradise Creek Corridor
- Flagler Run Corridor
- 9-miles of Trails and Bikeways
- 15-miles of Bicycle/Pedestrian Linkages
- Main Street / McMichael River Walk Trail

Top of the Mountain Multi-Municipal Planning Region

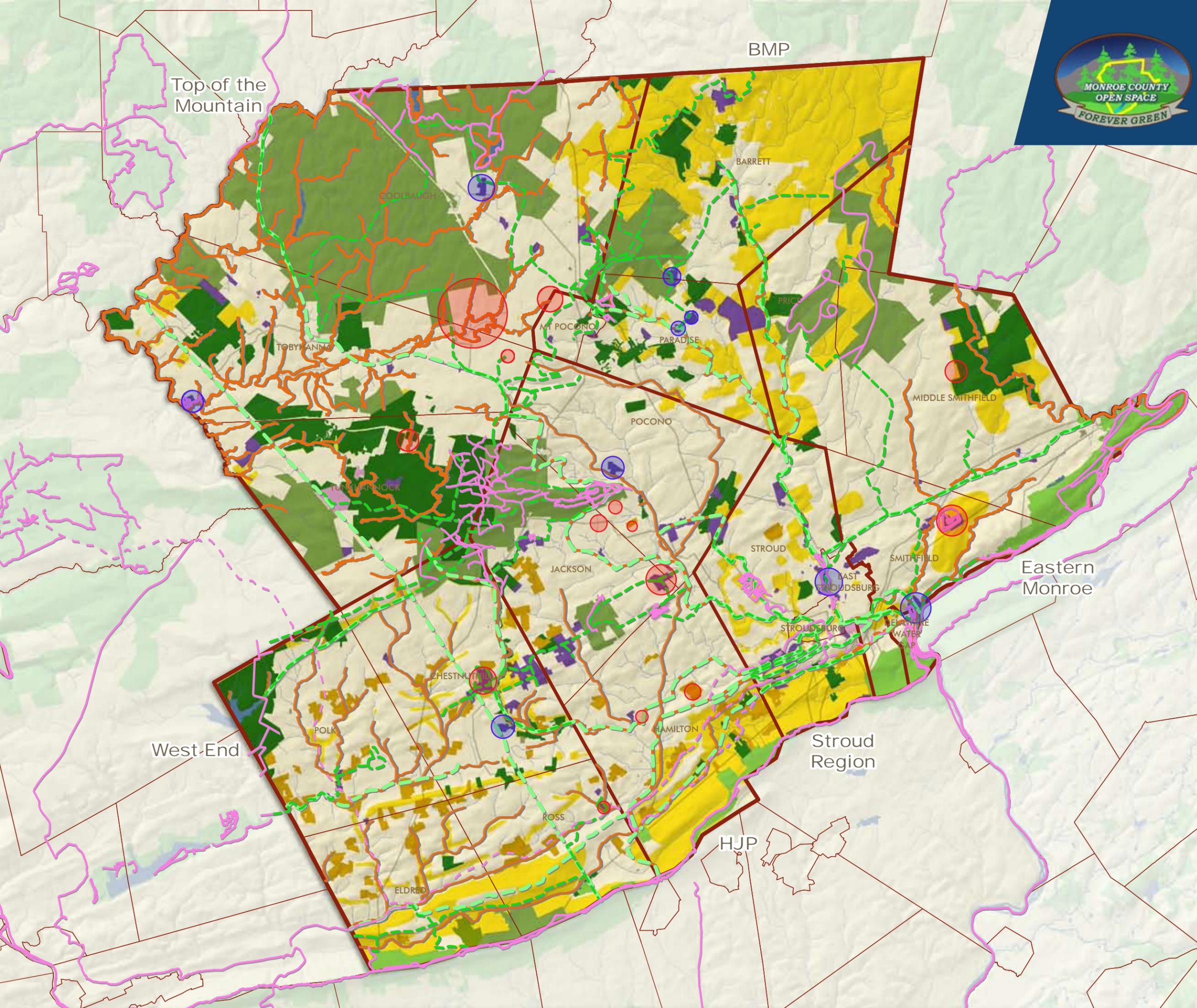
- WB&E Trail

West End Parks & Open Space Commission

- Regional Park



Update to the Monroe County
**Open Space, Greenways
 & Recreation Plan**



Existing Resources

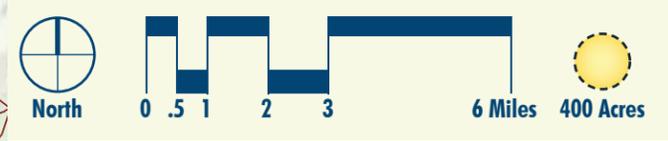
- Open Space & Recreation Planning Regions
- Municipal Boundaries
- Greenway & Trails
- Bike Routes
- Streams
- Regional Parks
- Federal Owned Lands
- State Owned Lands
- County Owned Lands
- Municipal Owned Lands
- Semi-Private Owned Lands
- Conservation Easements / Owned Lands
- Agricultural Easements

Identified Areas of Interest*

- County OS/R Greenways
- Municipal & Regional OS/R Greenways
- Conservation Corridors
- Regional Parks
- Conservation Areas

*Identified By:
 The 2001 Monroe County Open Space Plan
 The (6) six Open Space and Recreation Planning Regions 2002 plans
 Conservancies at the public meeting held in May of 2013.

5 Areas of Interest for Preservation





IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC CONSERVATION PLANNING BY MONROE COUNTY AND ITS PARTNERS

Monroe County has responsibility to protect resources for the benefit of its citizens and their heirs. Within that mandate, the County can serve multiple functions including:

Planner

Monroe County and its conservation partners are creating a comprehensive strategy for how open space and recreation investments can be integrated into all aspects of living, working and visiting Monroe County.

Coordinator

Monroe County can identify, target and support initiatives where public-private partnerships can achieve mutual benefits.

Catalyst

Monroe County can direct internal funds and support funding requests to other partners toward strategic projects.

Steward/Developer

The County retains the right to own and maintain open space and recreation resources.

Partnership Opportunities

Regional Recreation Commissions

- HJP Recreation Commission
- Pocono Area Recreation Commission
- Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission
- West End Parks & Open Space Commission

Capabilities and achievements

- Planning
- Programming
- Grant matching
- Maintenance
- Partnerships
- Regional Park development
- Municipal Park development
- Greenway development
- Open Space conservation
- Farmland conservation
- Recreation improvements

Development Agencies

- Pocono Mountains Industrial Development Authority
- Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Capabilities and achievements

- Environmental protection
- Recreation resource development
- Support for funding partnerships
- Marketing regional resources
- Visitor support services

Conservancies

- Natural Lands Trust
- Pocono Heritage Land Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wildlands Conservancy
- Buck Hill Conservation Foundation

Capabilities and achievements

- Protect natural and agricultural lands
- Upgrade stream designations

Hiking / Outdoor Clubs

- Pocono Outdoor Club
- Friends of Big Pocono
- Informal Mountain Biking Clubs
- Meetup.com groups
- Hunting Clubs
- Fishing Clubs

Capabilities and achievements

- Trail and open space maintenance
- Project leadership
- Land Protection





Potential Trails of Note

The former WB&E railroad corridor may serve as a central trail for Monroe County

The Pocono “Escarpment” Trail concept creates a potential “ridge line” hiking route that could tie together important natural areas, waterfalls and vantage points with resorts, businesses, enterprises and other regional attractions.

Cranberry Creek Preserve



Trail - Pocono Heritage

TRAILS & GREENWAYS

Available GIS data from the 2002-2003 Regional Recreation Commission Plans; the 2001 Monroe Open Space Plan; and recreation commission and conservancy data were used to identify potential greenways and trails county-wide. A map was created to compile and display all trail and greenway data available from all partners in one file.

Analysis of Existing Trail Networks

There are currently trail networks in Monroe County on federal, state, county and municipal-owned land. The only walkable greenways in Monroe County that extend beyond the County line are the 2,200 mile Appalachian Trail and the McDade Trail - extending into Pike County.

The Delaware River Water Trail runs through Monroe. The Delaware and Lehigh Canal Heritage Corridor exists to the west in Carbon County. The 355-mile Bicycle PA Route “V” runs through Monroe from the state line of New Jersey and across Pennsylvania to the state line of Ohio.

Other potential connections outside of the county include the Route “L” Trail in Lackawanna County and previously identified Lackawanna and Luzerne County Rail Trails, Plainfield Township Trail and the Paulinskil Valley Trail which is part of six interlinked trails from the Delaware Water Gap to Liberty State Park

In the Monroe County Citizen Internet Survey of 2013 (detailed in the Public Involvement section in the Inventory and Analysis of this Plan), citizens of various age groups were surveyed to understand their opinions and preferences on open space and recreation within Monroe County. One question in the survey asked what activities they most participated in. Each age group surveyed, from children under 10 to seniors over 65,

ranked trail-based activities as their favorite in the same order, with walking or jogging ranked above all other types of activities.

Potential / Missing Linkages

Monroe County currently has five “urbanizing” areas, but only two of those areas have more than one trail system within or adjacent to its boundary. This indicates that three out of five urbanizing areas in Monroe County have a significant lack of trails nearby. None of the urbanizing centers are linked to one another by greenways or trails. Linking urbanizing areas to each other and local destinations increases opportunities for Monroe County residents to access trails, improve their health, have options to driving, and contribute to their local civic and economic viability. Of the County’s six regional parks, only two have trails that connect to destinations outside their boundaries.

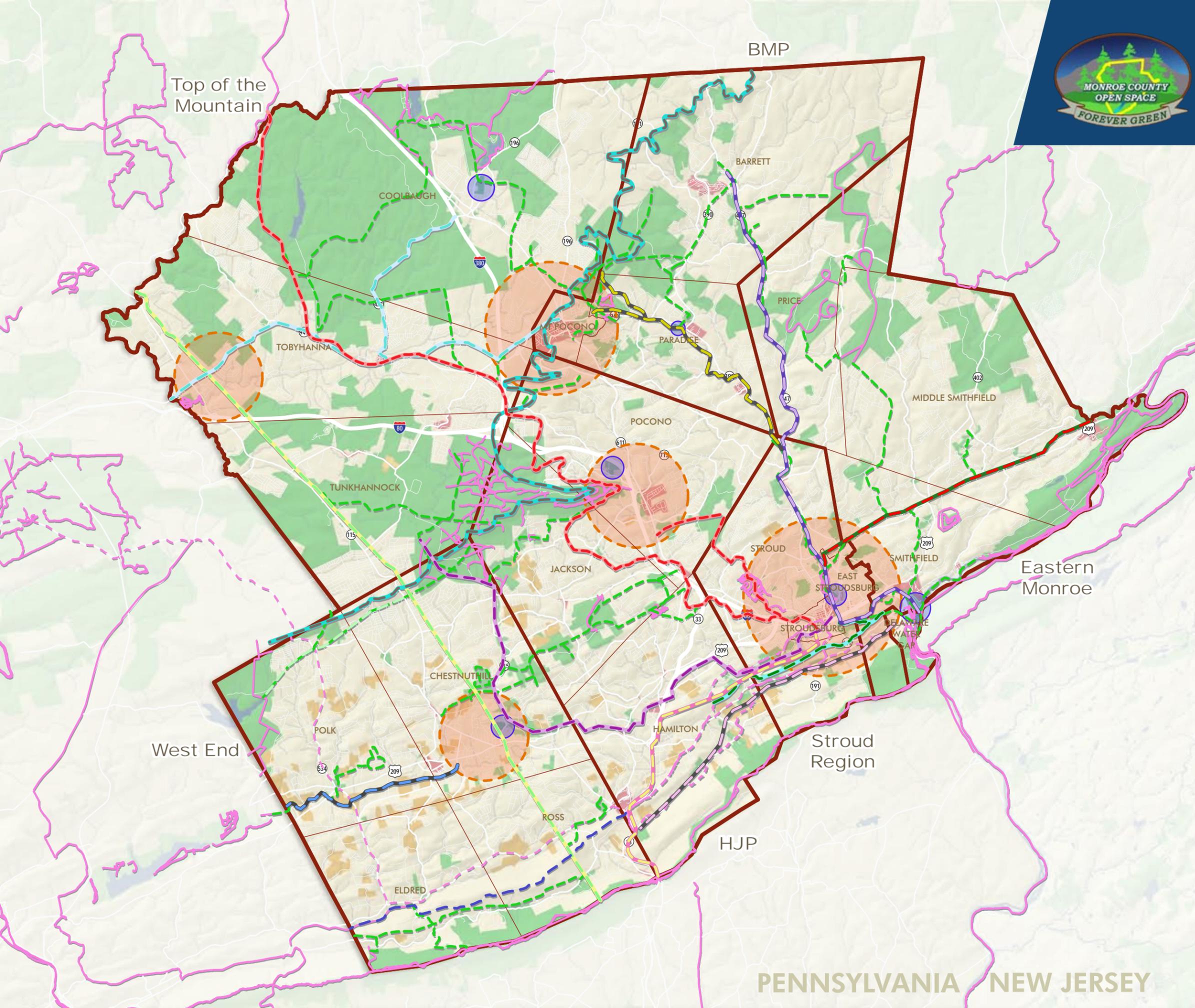
The 2013 Internet Survey for this report determined that 405 (65%) out of 624 total respondents who answered the question felt that there are not enough trail and greenway facilities within Monroe County. Supporters envision that Monroe can help create a trail network that would strengthen visitorship to the County and help local businesses. Monroe County has rail-to-trail conversion opportunities such as the former WB&E railroad corridor with the potential to serve walking, jogging, hiking and biking for a broad cross section of the local population.

Partnership Opportunities

- Trail Clubs
- DCNR online: Monroe can show “paper trails” to create future collaboration.
- PA trails.org: All Monroe trails should be identified
- Mt. Airy Resort 5-mile public access trail.

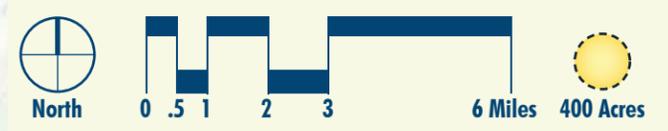


Update to the Monroe County Open Space, Greenways & Recreation Plan

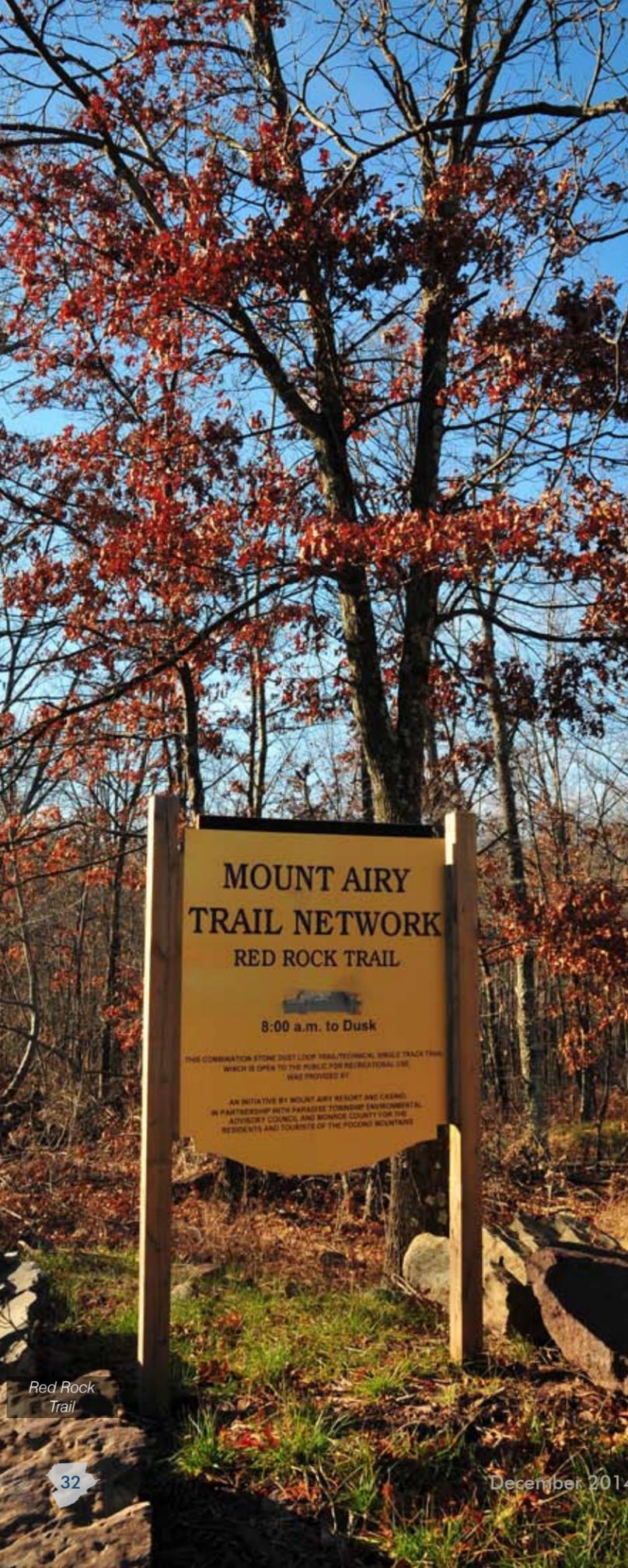


- Existing**
- Open Space & Recreation Planning Regions
 - Municipal Boundaries
 - Greenway & Trails
 - Bike Routes
 - Streams
 - Regional Parks
 - Historic Areas
 - Conserved Natural Areas
 - Conserved Agricultural Areas
 - Water Bodies
 - Urbanizing Areas
- Proposed**
- Chestnut Ridge
 - Cherry Valley
 - Delaware Valley RR
 - Delaware Valley Extension
 - Paradise Creek Corridor
 - Pohopoco / Weir Creek Corridor
 - Upper & Lower Brodhead
 - McMichael Creek Corridor
 - WB&E RR Grade
 - Escarpment Trail
 - Godfrey Ridge Extension
 - Proposed Bike Routes
 - Transcontinental Pipeline
 - Penn Forest Pipeline

6 Greenways, Trails & Bike Routes



PENNSYLVANIA NEW JERSEY



RECREATION RESOURCES

In 1983, the standard for open space and recreation was defined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). This standard identified the amount of recreation needed, by population, at a national average. The standard was later considered arbitrary and discarded in 1995 in favor of a standard called “Level of Service” (LOS), that allowed communities and municipalities to quantify the minimum acceptable amount of parkland to accommodate the recreation facilities desired by their populations. No usable recreation standards have since been recommended at the federal level by the NRPA or at the state level through the Pennsylvania 2009-2013 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The NRPA is currently attempting to create more credible recreation standards using its GIS based analytical program PRORAGIS to compare counties in its database. The more counties that participate, the more accurate the data becomes.

Until this becomes a reality, it is suggested that the Monroe County use level of service standards identified in the 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan. This standard is defined as 8-14 acres of municipal owned publicly accessible land per 1000 residents and should serve as the working standard for Monroe County while regional plans are being done.

The “Level of Open Space and Recreation Service per Municipal Population Matrix” in this Plan can be used as a tool by Monroe County and the recreation regions to quantify the level of service for each municipality and/or recreation region. The Citizen Internet Survey of 2013 may then be consulted to understand what recreation types are in greatest demand. By utilizing these two tools, each region can tailor its level of service based upon public opinion, current inventory and goals within its service area.

Level of Service by Municipal Population Matrix

The open space and recreation plans developed by the recreation commissions in 2001-2002 were reviewed and data pertaining to recreation and open space resources were compiled into a master matrix document to compare all recreation resources by municipality. The document can be used as a decision making guide for Monroe County partners to prioritize future open space and recreation improvements by understanding the total and average amount of public “access” opportunities that are available by resource type:

1. Recreation Element Types
2. Site Activities
3. Support Facilities
4. Trails

Recreation Element Types

Types of recreation elements are defined as a facility/built element within public open space primarily for recreation. Elements are tallied by individual types. In cases where an open space parcel overlaps two municipalities, both municipalities can include those recreation elements in their inventories. Types of recreation elements within Monroe County include:

- Field: Baseball
- Field: Softball / Little League Baseball
- Field: Soccer / Football / Lacrosse
- Field: Field Hockey
- Field: Multi-Use
- Field: Practice
- Court: Outdoor Basketball
- Court: Tennis
- Court: Outdoor Volleyball
- Track
- Playground

- Pond / Lake
- Swimming Pool / Spray Park
- Gymnasium

Site Activities

Access opportunities to site activities are defined as access to a type of activity that occurs on public open space. Access opportunities are tallied by type per open space parcel. For example, if an open space parcel has multiple locations serving the same type of activity (e.g. hunting) those activities are counted as one individual access opportunity within that open space parcel. In the case where an open space parcel overlaps two municipalities, both municipalities can include those site activities. Types of access opportunities to site activities within Monroe County include:

- Camp Sites
- Skiing
- Fishing
- Boating / Canoeing / Kayaking / Rafting
- Hunting
- Education: Environmental
- Education: Historical
- Dog Park
- Picnic Area with BBQ's

Support Facilities

Public access opportunities to support facilities are defined as access to a built element within public open space that supports its usability. Access opportunities are tallied by type per open space parcel. In the case where an open space parcel overlaps two municipalities, both municipalities can include those support facilities. Types of support facilities within Monroe County include:

- Open Pavilion / Gazebo
- Enclosed Structure for Public Use
- Security & Field Lighting
- Rest rooms
- Stage
- Stadium Seating / Benches
- Concession Stand
- Boat Ramp
- Parking
- Drinking Fountains

2010 Population	Municipality	Existing Acres Of Open Space ResourceTypes By						Open Space	Acre Per Person	Recreation		Recreation		Recreation		Recreation	
		Federal #2	State #2	County #1	Municipal #1	Semi-Public #1	Conservancies #1			Recreation Element Types	Average Number of Types Per 1000 Residents	Access Opportunity to Site Activities	Average Number of Access Opportunities Per 1000 Residents	Access Opportunity to Support Facilities	Average Number of Access Opportunities Per 1000 Residents	Miles of Trails	Average Mile of Trail Per 1000 Residents
The Barrett Township, Mt. Pocono Borough, Paradise Township Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002)																	
4,225	Barrett Township	0	4,234	0	21	3	95	4,353	1.03	4	0.95	3	0.71	4	0.95	0	0.00
3,170	Mt. Pocono Borough	0	0	0	18	0	0	18	0.01	2	0.63	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
3,186	Paradise Township	0	515	0	39	27	0	581	0.18	14.5	4.55	3	0.94	7	2.20	3	0.94
10,581	Total	0	4,749	0	78	30	95	4,952	0.47	20.5	1.94	6	0.57	11	1.04	3	0.28
West End Open Space and Recreation Plan - Chestnuthill Township, Eldred Township, Polk Township, Ross Township (2003)																	
2,910	Eldred Township	206	1,215	0	24	8	0	1,453	0.50	5	1.72	2	0.69	3	1.03	18	6.19
7,874	Polk Township	10	0	0	50	8	0	67	0.01	4	0.51	3	0.38	5	0.64	13	1.65
17,156	Chestnuthill Township	0	1,072	0	407	12	191	1,682	0.10	6	0.35	3	0.17	5	0.29	6	0.35
5,940	Ross Township	256	731	0	50	19	0	1,056	0.18	3	0.51	1	0.17	5	0.84	12	2.02
33,880	Total	472	3,018	0	531	46	191	4,258	0.13	18	0.53	9	0.27	18	0.53	49	1.45
Top of the Mountain Region - Coolbaugh Township, Tobyhanna Township, Tunkhannock Township Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002)																	
20,564	Coolbaugh Township	0	33,543	0	75	0	0	33,618	1.63	7	0.34	13	0.63	7	0.34	18	0.88
8,554	Tobyhanna Township	0	2,869	0	39	0	1,820	4,728	0.55	10	1.17	4	0.47	4	0.47	3	0.35
6,789	Tunkhannock Township	0	3,839	0	17	0	1,312	5,168	0.76	5	0.74	1	0.15	3	0.44	18	2.65
35,907	Total	0	40,251	0	131	0	3,132	43,514	1.21	22	0.61	18	0.50	14	0.39	39	1.09
Eastern Monroe Open Space and Recreation Plan - Delaware Water Gap Borough, Middle Smithfield Township, Price Township, Smithfield Township (2002)																	
746	Delaware Water Gap Borough	576	0	0	667	0	0	1,243	1.67	6	8.04	6	8.04	5	6.70	10	13.40
15,997	Middle Smithfield Township	1,319	2,661	0	22	0	125	4,127	0.26	13	0.81	7	0.44	2	0.13	24	1.50
3,573	Price Township	0	3,623	0	0	0	0	3,623	1.01	0	0.00	6	1.68	2	0.56	12	3.36
7,357	Smithfield Township	1,262	0	0	90	0	0	1,352	0.18	20	2.72	8	1.09	8	1.09	14	1.90
27,673	Total	3,157	6,284	0	779	0	125	10,345	0.37	39	1.41	27	0.98	17	0.61	60	2.17
HJP Open Space and Recreation Plan - Hamilton Township, Jackson Township, Pocono Township (2003)																	
9,083	Hamilton Township	1,198	0	126	28	0	0	1,352	0.15	8	0.88	1	0.11	6	0.66	15	1.65
7,033	Jackson Township	0	5,102	66	5	0	0	5,173	0.74	5	0.71	1	0.14	5	0.71	0	0.00
11,065	Pocono Township	0	729	0	371	5	427	1,532	0.14	9	0.81	4	0.36	7	0.63	27	2.44
27,181	Total	1,198	5,831	192	404	5	427	8,057	0.30	22	0.81	6	0.22	18	0.66	42	1.55
Stroud Area Regional Open Space and Recreation Plan - Stroud Township, East Stroudsburg Borough, Stroudsburg Borough (2002)																	
19,213	Stroud Township	281	0	0	85	0	0	366	0.02	13	0.68	4	0.21	0	0.00	9	0.47
9,840	East Stroudsburg Borough	0	0	0	88	0	0	88	0.01	13	1.32	3	0.30	5	0.51	2	0.20
5,567	Stroudsburg Borough	3	0	0	22	0	0	25	0.00	10	1.80	4	0.72	4	0.72	1	0.18
34,620	Total	284	0	0	195	0	0	479	0.01	36	1.04	11	0.32	9	0.26	12	0.35
169,842	Monroe County	5,111	60,133	192	2,118	81	3,970	71,605	0.42	157.5	0.93	77	0.45	87	0.51	205	1.21
Key																	
# 1	Quantities Taken From Recreation Commission Plans																
# 2	Quantities Taken From Monroe County Open Space GIS Data																
=	Surplus Above Monroe County Average																
=	Deficit Below Monroe County Average																
=	Monroe County Average																

Trails

Trails are quantified by the mile for each type of trail. In the case where a trail crosses into two municipalities, that trail length is split at the municipal line. Types of trails within Monroe County include:

- Trails: Walking & Jogging
- Trails: Hiking
- Trails: Road Biking
- Trails: Mountain Biking
- Trails: Horseback Riding
- Trails: Athletic Par Course

Level of Recreation Service Analysis

Level of Potential Open Space

Monroe currently has over 2000 acres of municipal-owned open space. This averages to over 12 acres of developed and undeveloped park/open space land for every 1,000 residents, which is within the recommended level of service range of 8-14 acres per 1,000 residents defined by the 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan. These open space lands, if not currently open to the public should be a top priority of recreation regions to develop in the future.

In addition to municipal-owned lands Monroe County

Level of Open Space and Recreation Service Per Municipal Population Matrix

As existing open space programs become more developed so will the number of site activities within the recreation regions.

Support Facilities

Monroe County residents have access to 87 support facilities within public open space. These infrastructure improvements increase comforts on site and allow more site activities to take place. Currently the recreation regions that have the most number of support facilities are HJP Recreation Commission (18 facilities), West End Parks & Open Space Commission (18 facilities) and Eastern Monroe (17 facilities.)

Trails

Monroe County residents have access to over 200 miles of trails within public open space and roadways. Currently the recreation regions that have the most number of trail facilities are Eastern Monroe (60 miles), West End Parks & Open Space Commission (49 miles), and HJP Recreation Commission (42 miles)

Additional Partnership Opportunities

Public Schools

The potential exists to negotiate use agreements with public schools in and around Monroe County to increase the level of access to recreation amenities such as gyms, play fields, trails and possibly swimming pools within the county. The 2002 multi-county open space and recreation plans indicate that this would more than double the amount of recreation element types accessible to Monroe citizens by adding an additional 175 recreation elements. It would also add 45 additional access opportunities to support facilities. It is suggested that the County might be a catalyst to bring schools districts together with recreation

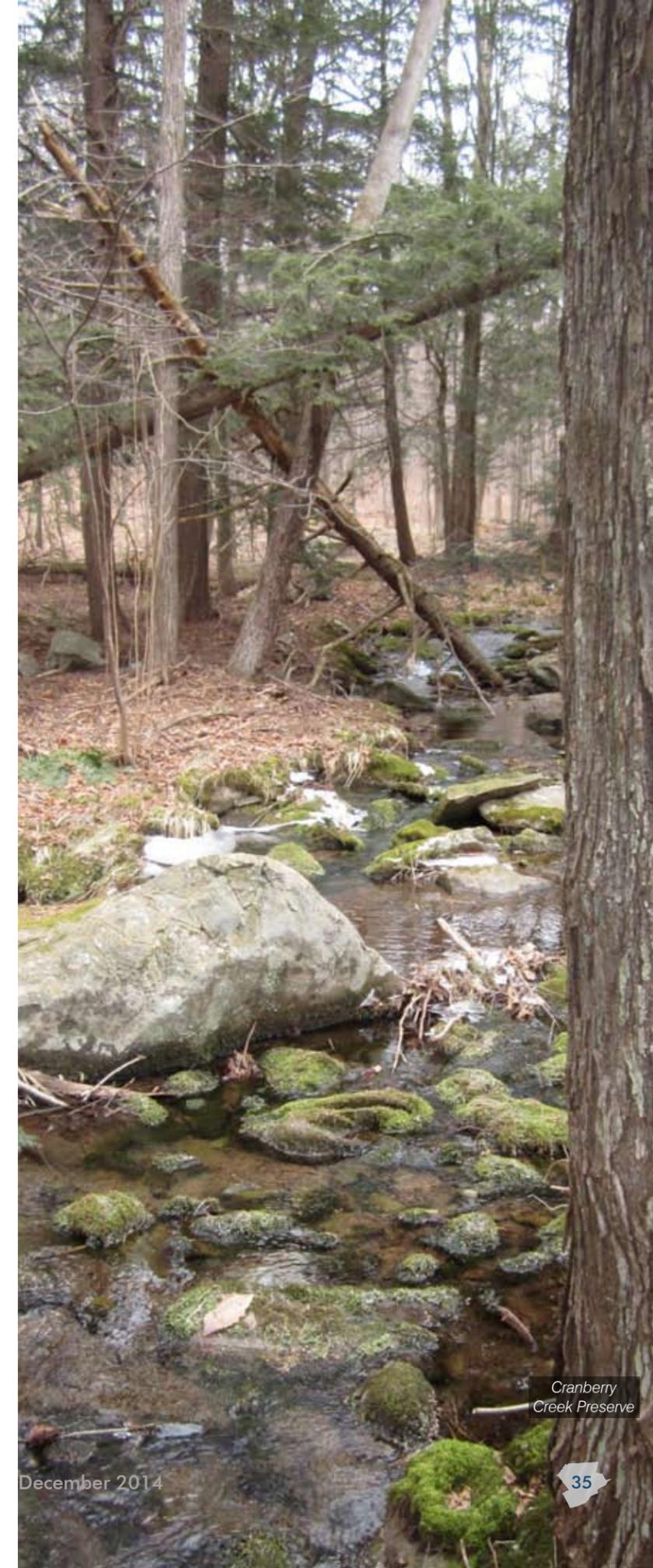
commissions to create a county-wide framework for cooperation, rather than each commission - district negotiated separately.

Existing Regional Parks and Their Amenities Available to the Public

The 2001 Open Space Plan proposed that Monroe County strive to conserve 20 acres of municipal- and county-owned parkland per 1000 residents by 2020. The 2002 multi-county open space and recreation plans indicated Monroe County as having approximately 2,400 acres of municipal-owned parkland within Monroe County. Current GIS data indicates that Monroe County now has approximately 4,600 acres defined as dedicated municipal-owned parkland. This 2,200 acre increase between 2002 and 2013 calculates to approximately 27 acres per 1000 residents, exceeding the original 2020 goal.

The following nine regional parks attract the widest circle of users:

- **Smithfield Township Minisink Park** (21-acre): includes 4 Soccer fields, 1 multipurpose field baseball, picnic area, playground, restrooms, series of loop trails (one of which crosses Cherry Creek Crossing in a step stone fashion), restrooms and a summer concession stand
- **Paradise Township "Roof"** (40-acre): includes baseball fields, basketball courts, playground and picnic pavilion.
- **Coolbaugh Township Park and Recreation Area** (75-acre): includes 5 baseball fields, 2 soccer fields, pavilions, trails, a skate park, and basketball courts.
- **East Stroudsburg Dansbury Park** (15-acre): includes tennis courts, basketball courts, softball fields, baseball fields, soccer fields, skate park, playground areas, a large pavilion, trailhead to a loop trail, summer concession stand, swimming pool including a splash park and a community center.
- **Pocono Township Mountain View Park** (81-acre): includes 3 ball fields, 1 soccer field, 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, 4 pavilions- including grills, well-equipped playgrounds, restrooms, and nature trails.
- **Chestnuthill Township Park** (34-acre): includes outdoor basketball courts, all purpose field, paved trail, volleyball court, playgrounds, pavilions and a civic center.
- **Austin T. Blakeslee Natural Area** (130-acre): includes many trails, a waterfall and wetland.
- **Seven Pines Park, Ice Lake and Skywood Park** (138-acre): includes many active and passive recreation features.
- **Brodhead Creek Park & Pinebrook Park South** (34-acre): include baseball fields, trails and access to Brodhead Creek.

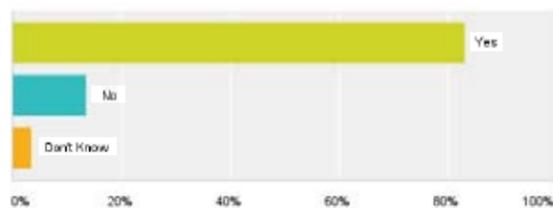


Municipality	2010 Population	Survey Monkey Respondents	% of Respondents per 1000 residents
Barrett Township	4,225	30	7.1
Mt. Pocono Borough	3,170	11	3.5
Paradise Township	3,186	30	9.4
Total	10,581	71	6.7
Eldred Township	2,910	6	2.1
Polk Township	7,874	20	2.5
Chestnuthill Township	17,156	58	3.4
Ross Township	5,940	17	2.9
Total	33,880	101	3.0
Coolbaugh Township	20,564	19	0.9
Tobyhanna Township	8,554	39	4.6
Tunkhannock Township	6,789	17	2.5
Total	35,907	75	2.1
Delaware Water Gap Borough	746	8	10.7
Middle Smithfield Township	15,997	30	1.9
Price Township	3,573	14	3.9
Smithfield Township	7,357	40	5.4
Total	27,673	92	3.3
Hamilton Township	9,083	47	5.2
Jackson Township	7,033	41	5.8
Pocono Township	11,065	49	4.4
Total	27,181	137	5.0
Stroud Township	19,213	76	4.0
East Stroudsburg Borough	9,840	20	2.0
Stroudsburg Borough	5,567	21	3.8
Total	34,620	117	3.4
Monroe County	169,842	593	3.5
=	Surplus Above Monroe County Average		
=	Deficit Below Monroe County Average		
=	Monroe County Average		

Percent of online survey respondents by municipal population

Q7 Do you think that more public parks, natural areas, open space areas and recreation facilities should be preserved or established in Monroe County?

Answered: 625 Skipped: 128



Sample of Citizen Internet Survey of 2013

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The master planning process created many opportunities for public input. All items presented to the Open Space and Recreation Board and the public were posted on the County project website for public review.

Committee Meetings

The study term was approximately nine months. The Monroe County Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) served as the project committee to guide this plan.

Purpose and Authority of the OSAB

The OSAB includes representatives from local environmental advocacy groups, recreation commission leaders and interested citizens. Nine meetings were held with the Committee over the course of this study. Minutes from these meetings are included in the Appendix of this report.

Workshops

Two workshops were held during the study process. The first workshop in January 2013 at the Monroe County Conservation District Environmental Education Center introduced the project and solicited information from the four active recreation commissions:

- Hamilton Jackson Pocono Recreation Commission (HJP)
- Stroud Region Open Space Commission (SROSC)
- West End Open Space Commission (WEPOSC)
- Park and Recreation Commission (PARC)

The second workshop occurred in May 2013 at the same location to solicit the opinions of local

conservancy groups regarding open space priorities for conservation through easements and greenways. These groups consisted of:

- The Nature Conservancy
- Natural Lands Trust
- Pocono Heritage Land Trust
- Brodhead Watershed Association
- North Pocono CARE

Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held during the study process. The first meeting in January 2013 at the Monroe County Conservation District Environmental Education Center introduced the public to the project and solicited opinions on open space and recreation. Minutes from these meetings are included in the Appendix of this report.

The second meeting was held in May 2013 at the same location to review results from the public internet survey and the preliminary recommendations of this Plan. Input from participants was recorded in the meeting minutes.

Citizen Internet Survey of 2013

Residents of Monroe County were able to participate by logging onto <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KKFKDRR> to take a preference survey. Internet survey responses were collected through the entire project term and complete survey data is included in the Appendix of this report. The Internet survey was designed to provide guidance for this study, as well as for future open space and recreation decisions within Monroe County. The results were not considered "statistically valid" but provided insights about the behavior, interests, and priorities of County residents regarding parks, open space and recreation. A review of the results follows.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Approximately 750 respondents across Monroe County participated in the study. Delaware Water Gap Borough and Paradise Township had the greatest participation by population ratio in the County. Coolbaugh Township had the least participation by population. Similar to municipal participation, some age groups participated more than others, with a majority of respondents between the ages of 35 to 64, and a minority between ages of under 18 to 34. The age response breakdown was:

- 30% are between the ages of 45 to 54
- 24% are between the ages of 54 to 64
- 22% are between the ages of 35 to 44
- 13% are 65 or older
- 6% are between the ages of 25 to 34
- 2% are between the ages of 18 to 24
- 2% are under 18

Almost 87% of all responses report that their households use the parks, natural areas, open space areas or recreation facilities in Monroe County. The household breakdown reveals:

- 36% are from 2-person households
- 24% are from 4-person households
- 19% are from 3-person households

Among various outdoor open space areas and recreation facilities, reported usage was highest for municipal parks and open space (80%), then state parks, game lands, and forests (76%), followed by the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (63%).

Respondents reported on average, participating in walking and jogging in 2012-2013 more than any other outdoor activities available in parks, natural areas, open space areas or recreation facilities. Walking and jogging were ranked as the highest participation activity for adults (87%), for seniors (17%), and ranked second

for children 10 to 18 (29%) and for children under 10 (19%).

The second most favored activity by all age groups was hiking, a close second behind walking and jogging. Festivals and special events, environmental education sites and programs, were the next highest ranked activities.

Respondents reported that children under 10 years of age participated heavily in activities relating to playground equipment (68%), and were very involved in team sports (36%) similar to children 10 to 18 years in age. Older children participated in swimming (45%), festivals and special events (28%), and environmental education sites and programs (28%).

Adults accounted for over 75% of respondents in this survey and chose to participate in hiking (88%), festivals and special events (86%), and environmental education sites and programs (76%). This age group also preferred picnicking (89%) and dog walking (88%).

Seniors 65 and older follow the overall trend in Monroe County by choosing activities such as environmental education sites and programs (19%) followed by festivals and special events (16%), and hiking (13%).

The lowest participation for all age groups was in horseback riding, geocaching, hunting and individual sports.

Recreation Activities Participation and Satisfaction

Of the 626 survey respondents who answered the question, 431 (69%) reported that their household recreation needs are being met. Of these, they considered the “best provided for” activities as skiing and winter sports, followed by hiking, fishing and picnicking. “Reasonably well provided for” activities were considered festivals and special events, followed by walking and jogging, environmental education

sites/programs, picnicking and then hiking. These reasonably well provided for activities correspond with what residents of Monroe County see as their most participated in activities.

Respondents whose needs are not being met expressed that, “the most poorly provided for” activities include road biking, swimming, mountain biking, festivals and special events, adult sports leagues and horseback riding. Of the respondents who felt Monroe County needed more playing fields, the types most requested were soccer, followed by baseball, and softball. In addition to fields, 65% believe there are not enough trail and greenway facilities within Monroe County.

Open Space and Recreation Program Priorities

The survey determined that 520 (83%) of the 626 respondents who answered the question think that more public parks, natural areas, open space areas and recreation facilities should be preserved or established in Monroe County. Over 81% of respondents feel that public parks, natural areas, open space areas and recreation facilities are important to the quality of life in Monroe County.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) believe that the visitor recreation economy is important or very important for Monroe County and 90% also believe that there are economic benefits in drawing recreation visitors to the area. Of the 626 respondents who answered the question, 456 (73%) said that they are willing to pay additional taxes, ranging from \$10 to \$100 more per year to support public parks, natural areas, open space areas and recreation facilities within Monroe County, for use by Monroe County residents. 21% of respondents oppose a tax increase and 6% say they “don’t know” if they support such a tax increase.

Regional Commissions and Municipal Meetings

Four recreation commissions in addition to individual townships were contacted by the consultant team. Discussions included updates to their planning regions 2002-2003 open space and recreation plans and current planning goals concerning open space and recreation. Input was solicited to understand what changes can advance the missions of the regional commissions moving forward into year 2020.

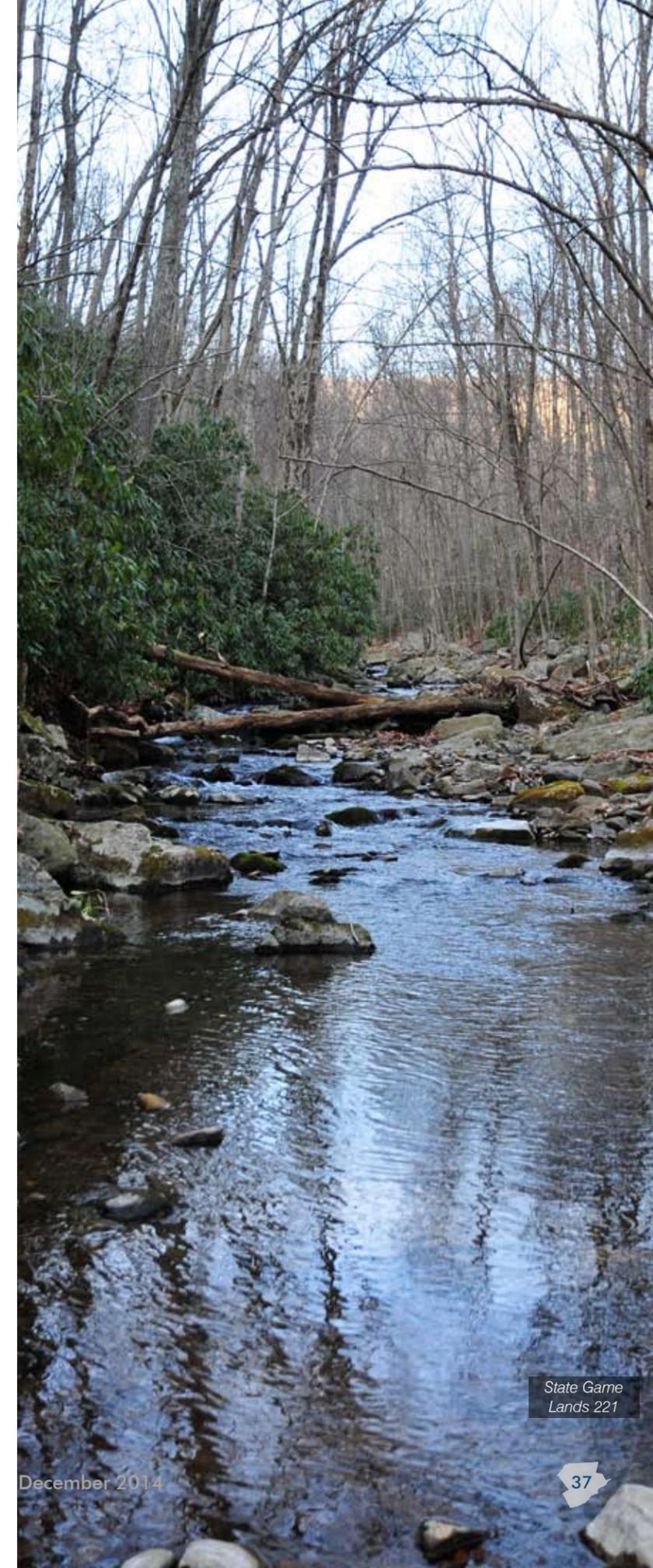
Eastern Monroe Recreation Commission

Two meetings were attended with representatives of the Eastern Monroe Recreation Commission. Current planning goals were discussed for Delaware Water Gap Borough, Middle Smithfield Township, Price Township and Smithfield Township. Currently all parks are maintained by the individual municipalities. The Eastern Monroe Planning Region is considering formalizing their commission, meeting together on a quarterly basis to discuss happenings. Additional current planning goals include:

- Create an ordinance requiring dedication of land or fee in lieu of land from residential developers
- Develop endowment funds for open space
- Publish a local parks and recreation brochure for the public
- Apply for Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission grant money to place launch facilities on the Delaware River
- Develop a Pump Track at Rivers Edge Park

HJP Recreation Commission

One meeting was held with representatives of the HJP Recreation Commission. Current planning goals were discussed for Hamilton, Jackson and Pocono Townships. Currently the municipalities are interested in acquiring lands and easements that would facilitate





trails and greenways along natural and man-made corridors to protect resources, connecting parks, schools, community areas, and neighborhoods. Additional current planning goals include:

- Acquire open space, especially contiguous lands
- Expand partnerships
- Partner with the Pocono Area Visitors Bureau to help advertise their parks and facilities
- Develop an all inclusive park for children with disabilities

Pocono Area Recreation Commission (PARC)

Two meetings were attended with representatives of the Pocono Area Recreation Commission. Current planning goals were discussed for Barrett Township, Mt. Pocono Borough, and Paradise Township. The Commission recently surveyed its residents for the Skywood Park Master Plan. Currently the Pocono Area Recreation Commission is looking to bring back a director to lead the group. Other changes may include a seven member board and possible name change away from PARC. Additional current planning goals include:

- Revamp the Intergovernmental Agreement
- Institute a formal orientation program for Park & Recreation Board members
- Publish a Master Plan for Ice Lake Park
- Examine the feasibility of constructing an indoor recreation center
- Increase public access to waterways along Brodhead Creek, Hardytown Run, Cranberry Run, Ice Lake, Yankee Run, Devil's Hole Creek and Paradise Creek
- Construct a Dog Park at Skywood Park
- Raise a flagpole at Seven Pines
- Link open space to Pocono Mountain Schools by trails
- Fix storm water issues in Field of Dreams in Mt Pocono Borough

Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission (SROSRC)

One meeting was attended with representatives of the Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission. Current planning goals were discussed for Stroud Township, East Stroudsburg Borough, and Stroudsburg Borough. The Commission recently surveyed its residents for the 2011 Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Plan Update and the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. Current planning goals taken from the Commission's 2013 Strategic Work Plan include:

- Develop advocacy campaign targeted to businesses and other commercial enterprises to educate on the compatibility and synergy of "open space" with "economic development."
- Develop large venue programming for civic tourism and economic impact. Capture engagement of residents as well as tourists.
- Develop physical connections and infrastructure enhancing and linking: parks, trails, open space, and greenway facilities mapping the most popular trip originations and destinations using context-sensitive design.
- Explore joint Regional Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) to help conserve and protect natural and cultural resources while promoting landscape connectivity. Enlist assistance of Audubon PA.
- Assist with a possible Monroe County Open Space Bond Referendum
- Develop an interpretive master plan along greenway corridors and the Stroud Region Bike/Ped Network as a means to create awareness and educate citizens of the many unique natural resources contained in the Region.
- Inventory both publicly and privately preserved lands and waters with respect to their geographic/ecologic systems and interpretational potential to encourage greater regional planning and intentional cooperation for landscape-scale connectivity.
- Identify the shared purposes among existing

regional master site plans and project studies to integrate key goals that meet related and multiple objectives, and elevate those to a higher priority.

- Develop and promote a clearinghouse or central database of regional leagues and healthful activities in the region.
- Develop and invest in more health and wellness programming and partnerships to build a sense of community. Incorporate programming into Stroud Kids Summer Camp.
- Develop more connective infrastructure in the parks, trails, and greenways and promote their health and wellness benefits and public usage with appropriate signage and other publicity; develop a network of "wellness" trails.
- Pursue grants for infrastructure improvements and programming for special needs, underprivileged and disadvantaged populations.
- Partner with Fitzmaurice, Developmental Educational Services, Burnley, MHMR, Criminal Justice Advisory Board, Equilibrium, and other agencies to tailor and offer programming and community service projects that more closely meet the needs of their clients.
- Develop and promote Kovarick Parklands as a natural play area for unstructured self-directed outdoor recreation.
- Develop Levee Loop Trail in the "flats" area in partnership with Developmental Education Services (DES) of Monroe County, Inc. and tie in to their recently acquired property (the former Sebring's Powerhouse).

Top of the Mountain Open Space Committee

Two meetings were attended with representatives of the Top of the Mountain Open Space Committee. Current planning goals were discussed for Coolbaugh, Tobyhanna, and Tunkhannock Townships. Currently the Top of the Mountain Multi-Municipal Planning Region is planning to work with Monroe County to identify large undeveloped parcels that need protection and to establish a greenway throughout the region with

connections to adjacent areas. Other current planning goals include:

- Improve parcels acquired to create more passive recreation opportunities
- Begin quarterly meetings with other recreation commissions to spotlight open space and recreation accomplishments
- Encourage municipalities to continue to pool resources to accomplish tasks
- Open up lines of communication between all municipalities, non profits, land trusts, and Monroe County
- Create a database for whom to contact for Eagle Scout projects and Girl Scout Silver Awards
- Establish a “friends of” group
- Apply for DCNR grants
- Adopt zoning regulations to protect villages

West End Parks & Open Space Commission (WEPOSC)

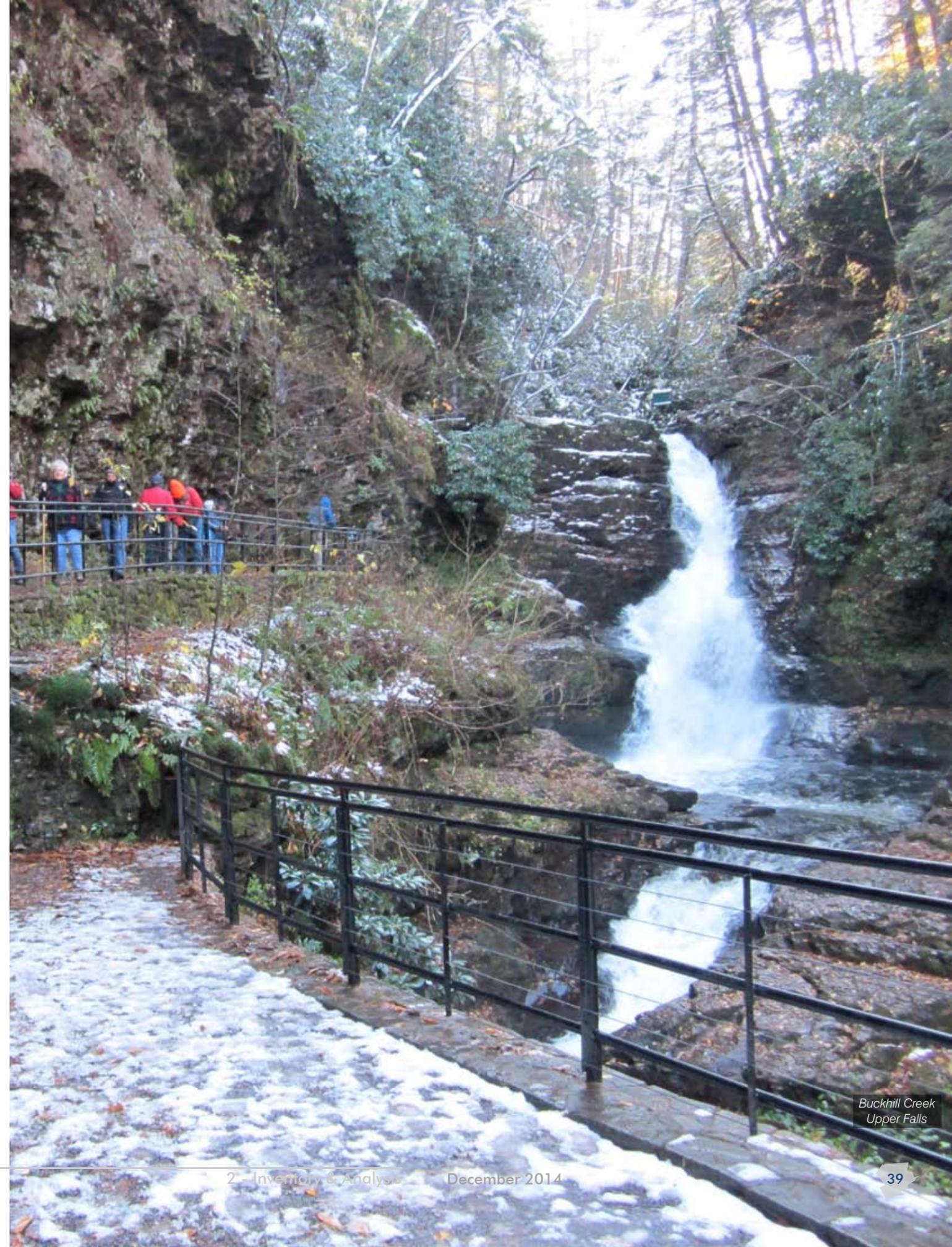
A survey questionnaire was completed by representatives from Chestnuthill, Eldred, Polk and Ross Townships. The Commission recently surveyed 142 of its residents and found the top three priorities are to: provide more sports facilities & natural areas; provide more hunting and fishing areas; and preserve more natural resources. Currently the West End Parks & Open Space Commission is planning to work with participating public bodies to enhance recreation through planned public park improvements. Other current planning goals include:

- Increase programming
- Fund raise to further develop the West End Regional Park.
- Apply for a LSA-Monroe County to further develop the West End Regional Park.
- Increase the “Friends of WEPOSC” membership with representation from the entire West End area

Site Visits

Areas visited by the study team include:

- PA Bicycle Route V
- Eldred Township Utility Corridors
- Chestnut Ridge Trail
- State Game Lands No. 168
- Cherry Valley
- Minisink Greenway
- Delaware Water Gap
- Pine Mountain Run
- Sky Top
- Dixon R. Miller Recreation Area
- State Game Lands No. 129
- Long Pond Preserve
- Tannerville Cranberry Bog
- Mt Airy Red Rock Bike Trail
- State Game Lands No. 221 (Devils Hole)
- Kurmes Preserve
- State Game Lands No. 127



Buckhill Creek
Upper Falls

“Monroe County is estimated to be responsible for 60% of all tourism spending within the Pocono Mountains Region”

2011 Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism in Pennsylvania

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Models

The following studies are models for understanding how open space and recreation are essential to the immediate and long-term economic health of Monroe County.

Nature-Based Placemaking

Nature-Based Placemaking (NBP) is a model developed by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) that illustrates how nature, community and economy are interrelated. This model was developed specifically for Pennsylvania and is a practical conceptual template for planning specific locations in Monroe County. NBP confirms the following approaches to develop its model:

- DCNR Conservation Landscape Initiatives - (PA)
- Main Street Four-Point Approach® - (PA)
- Elm Street Five-Point Approach - (PA)
- Civic Tourism
- Ecological Economics
- Triple Bottom Line Theory

By combining these theories and approaches, the PDC model illustrates how sustainable development can promote nature, community and the economy to create a Total Quality Experience (TQE)

Economic Studies and Reports

The Outdoor Recreation Economy (2013)

Monroe County's Return on Conservation Study

This study, by author John Rogers for the Pennsylvania Audubon Society, seeks to quantify the values of natural landscapes along the Kittatinny Ridge that run the length of the southern border of Monroe County. Monroe County considers the importance of the region's environment and open space, so it is essential that people recognize the role that trees, fields, forests, streams, native vegetation and wildlife play in providing critical environmental services called “natural capital.”

First, natural landscapes serve as green infrastructure providing important economic services that are sometimes ignored, including: flood protection, water supply, pollination, pest control, soil formation, erosion control, reduced stormwater, greenhouse gas reduction, carbon storage/sequestration and habitat. The second, and slightly more recognized recreational factor, is the generation of economic activities that are based on the natural environment of a place like Monroe County.

Having a value for natural capital helps inform decisions for infrastructure, economic development, business,

land use, public health, and quality of life choices. It is also an incentive for strategic conservation management. Determining a value for total natural capital illustrates there is an annual, bottom-line contribution to the county's economy that exceeds \$1 billion based on this analysis. These numbers approach the level for tourism revenues in total dollars. As the population of the county grows, so to should natural capital. If natural capital is not protected, these services will need to be paid at great cost by the county and businesses that benefit from them today, at little to no cost.

The Outdoor Recreation Economy (2012)

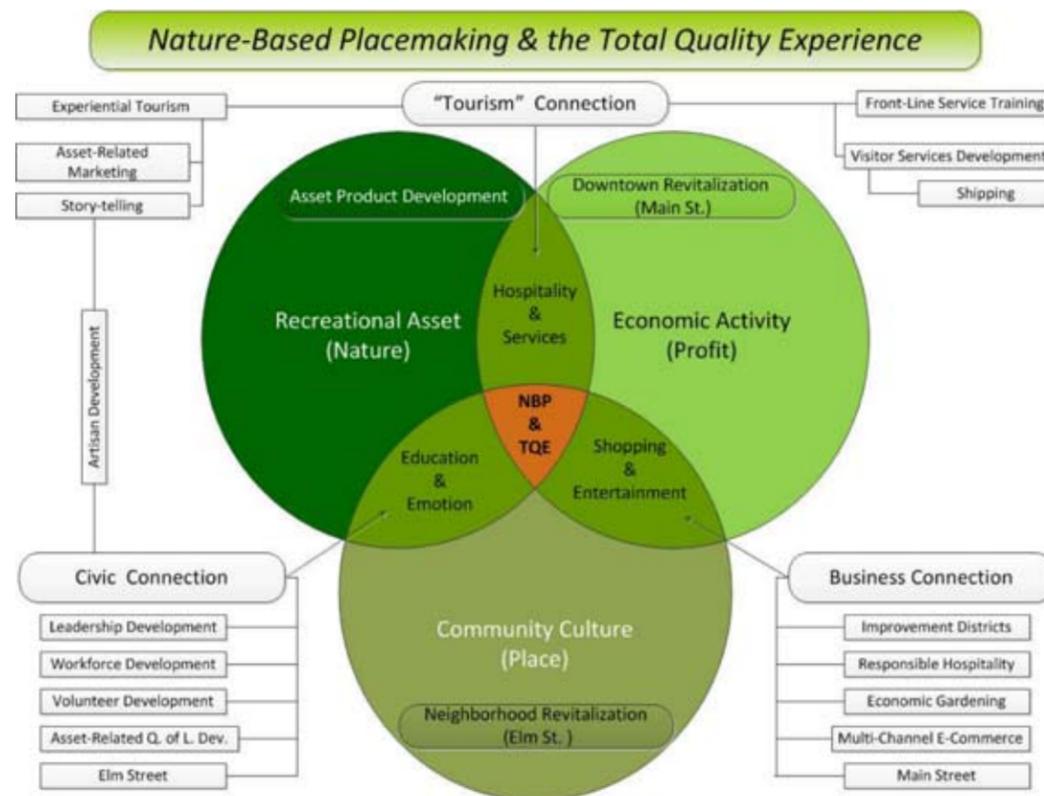
This study developed by the Outdoor Industry Association calculates recreation spending at the national level to be a \$646 B/year industry. This business sector is an overlooked economic giant within the United States, supporting 6.1 M direct jobs. This total includes \$126 B in product sales and \$520 B in trips and travel. Most importantly, US recreation spending grew 5 percent between 2005 and 2011 while most sectors contracted.

The Poconos Visitor Report (2012)

This study by Longwoods International looks at the Pocono Mountains Region (Monroe, Carbon, Pike and Wayne Counties) and breaks tourist populations into two types: overnight users and day users. Overnight users to Monroe are estimated to spend approximately \$1.3 B in five categories: transportation (8%), recreation (13%), food and beverage (21%), shopping / retail (14%), and lodging (44%).

Day users are estimated to spend approximately \$936 M in four categories: transportation (15%), recreation (32%), food and beverage (31%), shopping / retail (22%).

Recreation spending for overnight (\$174M/year) and



day users (\$301 M/year) in the Pocono Mountains Region is a \$475 M/year industry.

According to the *2011 Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism in Pennsylvania report*, Monroe County is estimated to be responsible for 60% of all tourism spending within the Pocono Mountains Region.

60% percent (Monroe County) of \$475M/year (Pocono Mountains Region), equates to a \$285M/year tourist/recreation industry.

This \$285M/year figure represents only the tourism industry spending in Monroe County. To calculate the local recreation expenditures, a ratio taken from the *Economic Significance and Impact of Pennsylvania State Parks study* was used. This ratio defines spending percentages as 62% for tourists and 38% for local residents.

This calculation estimates Monroe County's tourism spending as a \$285M/year (62%) industry. Adding local population expenditures of \$175M/year (38%) to the tourism spending equals a total recreation economy of \$460 M/year.

The Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism in Pennsylvania (2011)

This study by Tourism Economics divides Pennsylvania into 11 tourism regions - with Monroe County part of a 4-county sub-region called the Pocono Mountains region that also includes Carbon, Pike and Wayne Counties. The Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau is the official state Tourist Promotion Agency (TPA) for the region. The Pocono Mountains region generates 7.7% of annual visitor spending in Pennsylvania, which totals to \$2.5 B per year with Monroe County alone generating \$1.5 B, or 60% of the total visitor spending in the 4-county Pocono Mountains region.

The Monroe County \$1.5B/year travel and tourism industry data is split into five categories:

- Transportation (30%),
- Recreation (21%),
- Food and beverage (20%),
- Shopping / retail (18%),
- Lodging (12%).

These categories are based on consumer survey data and calculate that recreation spending alone in Monroe County is a \$315M/year industry.

To calculate the local recreation expenditures, a ratio from the *Economic Significance and Impact of Pennsylvania State Parks study* was used. This ratio defines recreation spending percentages as 62% for tourists and 38% for local residents.

This calculation estimates Monroe County's tourism spending as a \$315M/year (62%) industry. Adding local population expenditures of \$200M/year (38%) to the tourism spending equals a total recreation economy of \$515 M/year.

What is the Natural Landscape Worth to the The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania (2011)

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the Green Space Alliance (GSA) studied five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania (Chester, Delaware, Philadelphia, Montgomery, Bucks) to quantify the economic values of protected open spaces such as parks, farms and natural areas. Economic benefits identified include direct benefits such as increased property values and economic activity, as well as indirect values such as ecosystem services and health benefits. Monroe County or the Pocono Mountains region could complete a similar study to quantify the value of its open space.

The Economic Significance and Impact of Pennsylvania State Parks (2010)

This study prepared by the Pennsylvania State University Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management analyzes the amount of revenue each state park within Pennsylvania receives annually by day users and overnight users. Three types of day users are identified in the study:

- Local day users (who live within 50 miles of the park and make up 56% of visitation and 38% of total day spending);
- Non-local day users who live more than 50 miles from the park and make up 28 % of visitation and 38% of total day spending);
- Non Pennsylvania resident day users (who live more than 50 miles from the park and make up only 16% of visitation and 24% of total day spending).

Focusing down to Monroe County, residents make up approximately 38% of all recreation spending within its 3 state parks: Gouldsboro, Tobyhanna and Big Pocono. This percentage can be used to understand the tourist breakdown of (62%) vs. local resident (38%) recreation spending within Monroe County, and correlates to other studies.

Economics of Greenway and Trail Systems

Greenway and trails systems are documented to provide both direct and indirect benefits to local communities by connecting residents and tourists to businesses. One popular example is the Great Allegheny Passage rail-to-trail system that runs between Pittsburgh, PA and Washington, DC with an estimated 800,000 trips annually, and estimated at over \$40M in direct annual spending (Forbes Magazine). *The Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Study* completed in 2008 by Campos found that there is a favorable perceived economic impact concerning the trail with

over 60% of total local business respondents reporting that their sales had increased at least somewhat as a direct result of the trail.

Greenways and trails also can be catalysts for corporate business collaborations as demonstrated by the Medical Mile Trail in Little Rock, Arkansas. This trail was funded and supported by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the Heart Clinic Arkansas, and the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department. The fund-raising effort exceeded the original \$350,000 goal in three months and ultimately rose to \$2.1M with a health theme to raise awareness of trails as catalysts for exercise, smoking cessation and better nutrition.

Recreation spending in Monroe County totals between \$460M and \$515M per year, with local residents contributing a minimum of \$175M per year (40%)



OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Monroe County has many opportunities for private partnerships to accomplish its open space and recreation goals. Potential partnerships are organized by types and each discussed by: partners; common objectives; investment targets; and pilot projects. Types of partners may include:

- Travel / Tourism / Hospitality
- Recreation Providers
- Health Care
- Developers – Residential / Community
- Developers – Commercial
- Banking
- Manufacturing
- Utilities / Energy
- Agriculture
- Field Sports
- Competitive Sports
- Service Organizations

Travel / Tourism / Hospitality

Partners

- PMVB / members
- Camelback
- Mount Airy trail network
- Non-PMVB providers
- Outfitters

Common Objectives

- Environmental protection
- Recreation resource development
- Support for funding partnerships
- Marketing regional resources
- Visitor support services

Investment Targets

- Link private and public resources physically
- Advocate greenway and trail development

- Market greenway and trails
- Support tourism and recreational development

Pilot Projects

- WB&E Rail-Trail development (East Stroudsburg to Tobyhanna / State Game Lands)
- Minisink Greenway Trail Link development (PennDOT Welcome Center to McDade Trail)
- Trail Linkage development (Skytop to State Gamelands)
- Appalachian Trail Gateway (at Delaware Water Gap)
- Monroe / Pike Gateway (at Bushkill Village, McDade Trail Bridge over Bushkill Creek)

Recreation Providers

Partners

- Private recreation providers
- Open space public and recreation partners.
- Hunting & fishing clubs

Common Objectives

- Develop recreation resources
- Support funding partnerships
- Market regional resources
- Visitor support services.

Investment Targets

- Families
- Targeted age group categories

Pilot Projects

- Large scale recreational projects
- Development of land and water trails
- Unique visitor experiences not obtainable in public sector such as: wilderness guides, outward-bound type experiences, zip-lines, skiing, paint-ball, water parks, Pocono Raceway, golf courses, river liveries hotels restaurants, water parks

Health Care

Partners

- Pocono Medical Center
- Geisinger Health System
- Service providers

Common Objectives

- Health, wellness and prevention
- Exercise
- Senior and youth access
- Education

Investment Targets

- Development of walkways and trail connections to neighborhood population centers
- Access to healthy local foods

Pilot Projects

- Glen to Glen Trail development
- Trail bridge from East Stroudsburg Borough to Glen Park
- Making preserved land available for sustainable commercial agricultural enterprises

Developers – Residential / Community

Common Objectives

- Conservation zoning
- Open space preservation
- Water quality
- Transportation improvements
- Local access to recreation and nature
- Quality of life improvements
- School quality

Investment Targets

- Infill development within existing villages
- Urban revitalization
- Brownfield development

Pilot Projects

- Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg area
- Foreclosed bank properties
- Resort areas

Banks

Potential Partners

- ESSA
- FNB of Palmerton

Common Objectives

- Financing conservation developments
- Public service
- Quality of life

Investment Targets

- Foreclosed bank properties
- Infill village properties
- Conservation development proposals

Pilot Projects

- Godfrey Ridge Conservation
- Foreclosed properties with issues getting back on the market
- Creating lending programs specifically tailored to Pocono related industries
- Micro-loan programs for small entrepreneur enterprises such as recreation and farming

Manufacturing

Potential Partners

- Sanofi Pasteur
- Vigon International
- Others?

Common Objectives

- Environmental protection (air, water, land)
- Public health
- Access to public amenities for employees and regional residents
- Education
- Quality of life

Investment Targets

- Walkways
- Trails
- Green public infrastructure

Pilot Projects

- Route 611 corridor pedestrian and bike mobility improvements

Education

Potential Partners

- ESU
- NCCC
- School districts

Common Objectives

- Environmental education
- Greenway and trails
- Urban open space

Investment Targets

- Linkages around campus
- Student internships
- Sponsor public forums

Pilot Projects

- WB&E Rail-Trail development
- Glen Park trail linkage

Utilities / Energy

Potential Partners

- PP&L
- Met Ed
- UGI
- Gas pipeline mining generation
- Transmission companies
- Sponsorships

Common Objectives

- Environmental protection, environmental education, sustainable energy, quality of life improvements

Investment Targets

- Trail development / linkages, signage

Pilot Projects

- Make transmission ROWs available for trail uses

- Sponsor mountain bike event on network of utility ROWs ("Pocono Power MB Race")

Agriculture

Potential Partners

- Small farms
- Timber industry
- Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
- Pennsylvania Farmers Union
- Conservancies

Common Objectives

- Renewable resource industries
- Maintain working landscapes critical to the regional food system
- Encourage sustainable agriculture
- Habitat protection and species preservation

Investment Targets

- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Subsidizing land availability for small farmers
- New and aspiring farmers
- Market or community supported farms
- Community gardens

Pilot Projects

- Commercial farming leases on public and preserved land

Field Sports

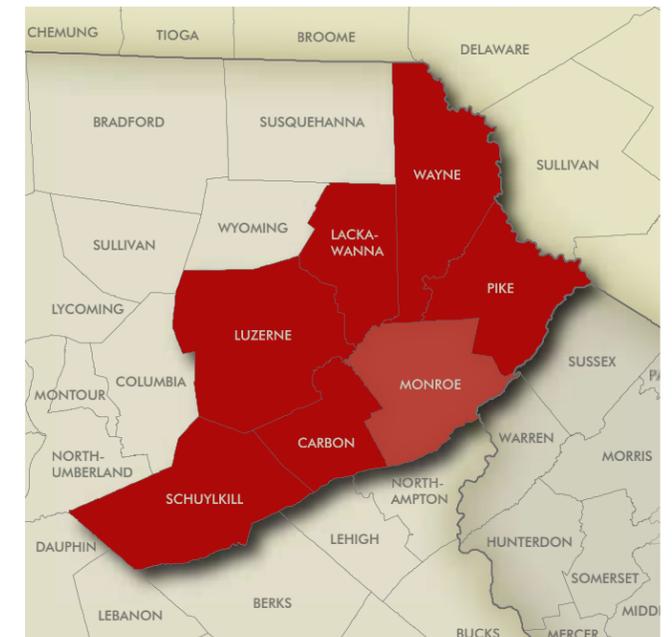
Potential Partners

- Outfitters
- Sporting goods stores
- Hunters
- Fisherman

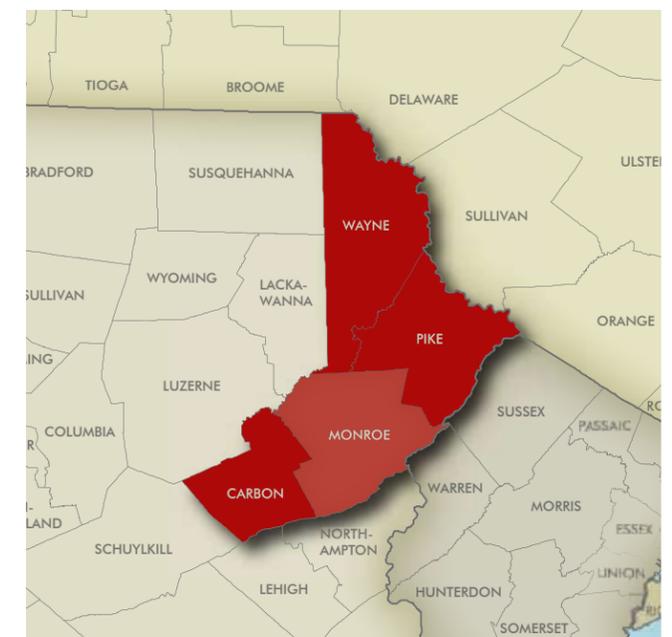
Common Objectives

- Sustaining renewable resources
- Environmental education

Investment Targets



NEPA Region



PMVB Region



Kurmes Preserve



Tank Creek Preserve

- Improve access to hunting and fishing areas

Pilot Projects

- TBD

Competitive Sports

Potential Partners

- Sports clubs

Common Objectives

- Provide high quality sports facilities, attract tournaments to Monroe County

Investment Targets

- Swimming complex
- Soccer fields complex
- Tennis complex

Pilot Projects

- TBD

Service Organizations

Potential Partners

- YMCA
- Red Cross
- United Way
- Fire departments
- Bushkill Outreach
- Conservancies
- Private Pocono camps and clubs

Common Objectives

- Public health and services
- Quality of life

Investment Targets

- Parks
- Community centers
- Linkages to recreation – via walking, bicycling and transit
- Facilities to serve emergency purposes

Pilot Projects

- TBD

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS (BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT)

Monroe County has demonstrated over the past 12 years that it has the intent and creativity to enter into productive partnerships with government and non-profit agencies at all levels to accomplish its conservation and recreation goals.

There are high expectations in the Monroe community that these County successes will continue. Monroe County’s history of financial commitment to its “Forever Green” initiative is a model statewide. The policy established by Monroe County is to invest its “green” funds as a catalyst, rather than as a primary open space owner or recreation provider.

Monroe County and its partners have made this strategy work with remarkable success and have generated expectations that the County will continue a similar investment plan for the next decade.

Over the past 12 years, Monroe County, invested \$25M plus interest in an open space bond fund plus \$11M additional funds to leverage over \$78 M additional in non-county funds from federal, state, regional and local partners.

Municipal Multi-Municipal Recreation Planning Regions

The 20 municipalities within Monroe County are organized into six open space and recreation planning regions, four of which have active planning commissions:

- Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission
- Hamilton, Jackson, Pocono Park and Open Space Commission
- West End Park & Open Space Commission
- Pocono Area Recreation Commission

The planning regions that do not have active commissions include:

- Eastern Monroe Open Space and Recreation Planning Region
- Top of the Mountain Open Space and Recreation Planning Region

These regions and commissions have identified many local open space and recreation priorities such as conservation areas and corridors, greenways and regional parks and have the power to be the drivers behind projects within their planning region, connecting funding to potential projects.

Monroe County

Monroe County Open Space Funds

\$36 million in County funds has been raised since 1998 (\$25 million bond and \$11 million in supplemental funds), and invested in recreation improvements and acquisition of open space in Monroe County since 2001. These county funds have leveraged an additional \$78 million through the investment by allied funding partners.

The initial pool of County funds has been fully invested.

Monroe County Hotel Tax

Counties within Pennsylvania use income derived from state hotel taxes to fund recreation and tourism capital improvements.

Either or both county income tax and county hotel tax may be considered as potential revenue streams that are dedicated to the acquisition, operation, maintenance, and capital improvements of open space and recreation initiatives by its surrogate partners, the regional recreation commissions.

State

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Common Objectives

DCNR manages three state parks in Monroe County: Big Pocono State Park, Gouldsboro State Park and Tobyhanna State Park that together comprise of over 8,500 acres. It also manages seven State Forest parcels that together comprise of over 10,000 acres within Monroe County. DCNR is currently engaged in a lease-management partnership with Camelback Ski Area for Big Pocono State Park where the private recreation provider helps maintain the park.

DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) has worked directly with Monroe to help establish the County's multi-municipal recreation commissions. DCNR has partnered with Monroe to provide "block grant" type state funding to the County for awards to preferred local projects. DCNR also funds the Pocono Forests and Waters Program – which is open to eligible applicants/projects in Monroe County. DCNR can actively endorse Monroe County preferred funding applications to other agencies such as PennDOT, DCED and other partners. Major trail projects are a priority for DCNR. Check DCNR

Investment Targets

- Trail connections
- Land conservation
- Recreation improvements

Pilot Projects

- Develop the WB&E RR ROW as a cross-county Rail-Trail
- Help complete McDade Trail in Monroe County
- Assist NPS to build McDade Trail Bridge over Bushkill Creek
- Partner with DEWA, Middle Smtihfield and Lehman Township and Pike Co to conserve Bushkill Village as a major public recreation hub





Paradise
Creek

- Help create trail link between McDade Trail to Delaware Water Gap (Minisink park)

Potential Funding Sources

The Pennsylvania DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) provides funding for communities and nonprofit organizations to acquire, plan and implement open space, conservation and recreation resources, including trails. DCNR accepts grant applications annually—usually in April. Eligibility criteria includes projects using “green” technology or practices. State funds can be used for discrete projects or as a match to federal funds. DCNR requires a 50–50 match (cash or in kind services) to its grant awards. For more information: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/indexgrantsinstruct.aspx>

Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape Initiative

Monroe County and its preservation and recreation partners are eligible applicants under this DCNR program that focuses on helping to fund projects that link conservation, recreation, and heritage with appropriate economic development activities, regional marketing and education initiatives. <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cli/pocono/index.htm>

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

Common Objectives

For Monroe County and its municipalities, civic, recreation, conservation and some transportation improvements are eligible through DCED from Gaming Commission revenues generated at Mount Airy Casino.

Investment Targets

- Pedestrian bridges
- Trails
- Walkways/sidewalks
- Signage

- Bushkill Village Conservation improvements
- Recreation facility improvements

Pilot Projects

- Develop the WB&E RR ROW as a cross-county Rail-Trail
- Complete McDade Trail in Monroe County
- Build McDade Trail Bridge over Bushkill Creek
- Partner with DEWA, Middle Smtihfield and Lehman Township and Pike Co to conserve Bushkill Village as a major public recreation hub
- Create trail link between McDade Trail to Delaware Water Gap (Minisink park)

Potential Funding Programs

The DCED Community Revitalization Fund is a state program that supports local initiatives to stabilize communities and enhance local economies. This agency has an open application period throughout the year, but applications should be submitted as early as possible in the fiscal year after June 30. The grant program covers a wide range of eligible uses including acquisition of land, buildings, and right-of-ways; trail, civic, and recreation projects; programs and developments that build capacity of the local community and relevant local organizations to better serve the needs of the community, and other reasonable and necessary expenses related to community-based activities. Active support of the district state senator and state representative is critical in a successful grant application.

The DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Monroe County is a funding program for Monroe County and adjacent counties including Carbon, Lackawanna, Northampton, Pike and Wayne. These funds, required under the Gaming Act, cover a wide range of eligible projects including public interest, economic development and community development projects. The grant selection process analyzes multiple criteria when choosing which programs to fund including the economic impact, local financial support and financial

need. Applications are due November 1st.

For more information on both of these grants visit: <http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/funding-detail/index.aspx?proglid=228>

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

Common Objectives

- Transportation improvements

Investment Targets

- Pedestrian and bicycle improvement to roadways
- Trail and greenway improvements (Transportation Alternatives
- Air quality improvements

Pilot Projects

- WB&E Trail development,
- Minisink Greenway link to McDade trail,
- Replace River Road Bridge over the Brodhead Creek (Smithfield Township) PennDOT owner
- Bushkill Village visitor improvements,
- Route 611 sidewalk improvements

Potential Funding Sources

- PennDOT administers the MAP21 program that funds Transportation Alternative projects such as trails and greenways.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Grants

The Growing Greener II Program

The Growing Greener II Program is an environmental grant program established under the Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Act. Funds are distributed among four state agencies: the Department of Agriculture to administer farmland preservation projects; the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for state park renovations and improvements; the Pennsylvania Infrastructure

Investment Authority for water and sewer system upgrades; and the Department of Environmental Protection for watershed restoration and protection, abandoned mine reclamation; and abandoned oil and gas well plugging projects.

Grants are available to a variety of eligible applicants, including counties, municipalities, county conservation districts, watershed organizations, and other organizations involved in the restoration and protection of Pennsylvania's environment. These grants support local projects to clean up "non-point" sources of pollution throughout Pennsylvania.

Examples of Growing Greener projects include local watershed protection and restoration projects, such as riparian buffer planting and stream bank restoration. It may also be possible to coordinate Growing Greener grants with other grants for trail construction. For more information: <http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/growinggreener/site/default.asp>

The Pennsylvania Environmental Education Grants Program

The Pennsylvania Environmental Education Grants Program funds schools, nonprofit groups and county conservation districts to develop new, or expand current environmental education programming. Projects range from creative, hands-on lessons for students and teacher training programs, to ecological education for community residents. Educational resources, including exhibits, educational signage, and demonstration projects, also qualify for funding. For more information: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental_education/13903/grants/588549

PENNVEST

PENNVEST oversees the administration and finance of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) for the state of Pennsylvania. The CWSRF program provides funding to projects throughout Pennsylvania for the construction and maintenance of wastewater treatment facilities, storm water management projects, nonpoint source pollution controls, and watershed and estuary management. The program offers low interest loans with flexible terms to assist a variety of borrowers that include local governments, municipalities, and privately owned entities and to establish partnerships to leverage other funding sources. For more information: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/funding_programs/9322

ACT 13 Marcellus Legacy Fund Programs

The Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) is responsible for allocating funds through the ACT 13 Marcellus Legacy Fund Programs. These programs can fund various types of projects, including restoration streams affected by abandoned mine drainage; restoration / protection of streams impaired by polluted runoff; documentation of baseline water quality data; development (including planning, repair, acquisition, and rehabilitation) of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects; plugging abandoned wells; and mitigation of flood areas.

One specific program within the ACT 13 Marcellus Legacy Fund Programs is the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program that is applicable to Monroe open space and recreation initiatives. This grant program requires a 50% match. Monroe County is eligible as an applicant even though the nearest Marcellus Shale drilling site is approximately 50 miles away. Monroe County has received and should continue to receive an annual allocation directly from the PUC from the Act 13 Impact Fees for greenway and recreation improvements. For more information: <http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/commonwealthfinancing-authority>.

Regional

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)

Common Objectives

- Water quality and supply
- Water protection and regulation

Investment Targets

- Pocono Plateau groundwater protection

Pilot Projects

- River Trail signage system

Potential Funding Sources

- TBD

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA)

Common Objectives

- Quality of life
- Education
- Economic development improvements

Pilot Projects

- WB&E Trail development
- Minisink Greenway link to McDade trail
- Replace River Road Bridge over the Brodhead Creek (Smithfield)
- Route 611 sidewalk improvements

Potential Funding Sources

- Business loans
- Administers grant application process for PennDOT
- Trails as economic development
- Sustainable Tourism Initiative

Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB)

Common Objectives

- Environmental well-being
- Economic development improvements

Investment Targets

- Greenway / scenic drive cleanup

Pilot Projects

- Wayfinding / interpretive signage





The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Easement Purchase Program enables local governments to purchase conservation easements on agricultural lands. To qualify, these lands have to be part of an Agricultural Security Area (ASA). The security area list is updated annually and parcels within the lists are ranked against other parcels according to several criteria such as:

- Size of parcel
- Continuity to other easements
- Soil quality
- Land use

The Monroe County Agricultural Land Preservation Program is funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Monroe County Open Space Bond. Since 1998, annual state funding committed to preserving farmland in Monroe County has been at least 200% to 300% greater than the County's own annual investment in agricultural lands.

Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (DRJTBC)

Common Objectives

- Transportation improvements within bridge jurisdictions

Investment Targets

- Transportation-related improvements within bridge "host" municipalities through its dedicated Compact Authorized Investment funds
- Bus facilities and route improvements with MC transit authority

Pilot Projects

(if CAI is reauthorized)

- Delaware Water Gap Village improvements
- River trail signage on bridges

Potential Funding Sources

- Reauthorize Compact Authorized Investment program

Federal

State and federal elected officials have historically included "earmark" items into legislation for worthy projects in their districts. A conversation between county and municipal officials and legislators about important consensus projects is the way to begin this process. Legislative funding should be targeted toward capital improvement projects. Most times funding is directed through a federal agency. A review of potential public-sector partners include:

National Park Service (NPS) / Department of the Interior (DOI)

Common Objectives

DEWA is a major federal recreation resource in Monroe County.

Investment Targets

- Recreation development
- Habitat conservation
- Cultural conservation

Pilot Projects

Several projects related to Monroe County have been identified in previous studies, including:

- McDade Trail / Bridge over the Bushkill Creek
- Bushkill Village cultural landscape conservation
- Minisink Trail linkage – McDade Trail to Delaware Water Gap

Potential Funding Sources

- Federal Highway Administration
- Power line Impact mitigation funds (DEWA)
- DCNR funds (as state partner)

Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge / US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Common Objectives

Preserving land and water for wildlife habitat

Investment Targets

- Habitat conservation

Pilot Projects

Several projects related to Monroe County have been identified in previous studies, including:

- Two national wildlife preserve properties
- Multiple wetland reserve easements

Potential Funding Sources

- National Wildlife Refuge Friends Grant Program
- Other?

Department of Defense (DoD)

Common Objectives

- Potential conservation, recreation and community development partnerships at Tobyhanna Depot

Investment Targets

- Recreation services
- Habitat protection and restoration,

Pilot Projects

- TBD

Potential Funding Sources

- DoD "green" initiatives
- Other?

Federal Grants

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) provides federal funds under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). MAP-21 is the successor to the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

In Pennsylvania, the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) administers several MAP-21 bicycle and pedestrian related programs, including TAP funds. Typically, a non-federal match is required to be 20% of the federal grant award. A strategy preferred by PennDOT is for the local partner to prepare construction documents and obtain necessary environmental clearances, property control documents and utility relocations plans as the local match to fund these “pre-construction” tasks - so that the project is “construction ready” using TAP funding. The costs to prepare these does not necessarily need to be exactly 20% if all needed documentation can be completed for less. For more information: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/summaryinfo.cfm>

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides federal funds under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). MAP-21 is the successor to the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Funds are allocated to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the FHWA funded by the federal fuel tax. In Pennsylvania, the RTP is administered by the PA DNCR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation in consultation with the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board, which is composed

of both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users.

Match requirements for Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program Grants are 80% grant money, up to a maximum of \$100,000, and 20% project applicant money. “Soft match” (credit for donations of funds, materials, services, or new right-of-way) is permitted from any project sponsor, whether a private organization or public agency.

Eligible applicants include federal and state agencies, local governments and private organizations. Funding may be used for the development of urban trail linkages near homes and work-places; maintenance of existing recreational trails; development of trail-side and trail-head facilities; provision of features that facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities; acquisition of easements for trails, or for trail corridors identified in a state trail plan; acquisition of fee simple title to property from a willing seller; and construction of new trails on state, county, municipal, or private lands. For more information: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/>

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The US Environmental Protection Agency awards grants of \$50,000 or less through its regional offices, and grants up to \$100,000 through national offices.

Grant programs that require matching funds present an opportunity for the townships or non-profit partners to target fund-raising efforts with other organizations.

Foundations and institutions represent another potential sources of funding for education-related site improvements and programming. Grants are available to support student field trips, provide teacher training in science, and provide other educational opportunities. Education tied to research may increase the pool of potential funds.

PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Advertising

Monroe has an abundance of cultural and scenic resources that highlight the character of the County. The Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau is the primary marketer for promoting Monroe County “green” and recreation assets through advertising specific events through web links, web cams, and e-mail blasts.

Existing Signage Systems

Multiple signage systems are in use in Monroe County. During the course of the 2013 open space planning, Monroe County was assessing its options to develop a system to identify and visually “unify” signage for open space and recreation resources funded by the County program. Existing systems include:

- Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation
- Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau
- National Park Service; (DEWA)
- PennDOT
- The Nature Conservancy
- Pocono Heritage Land Trust

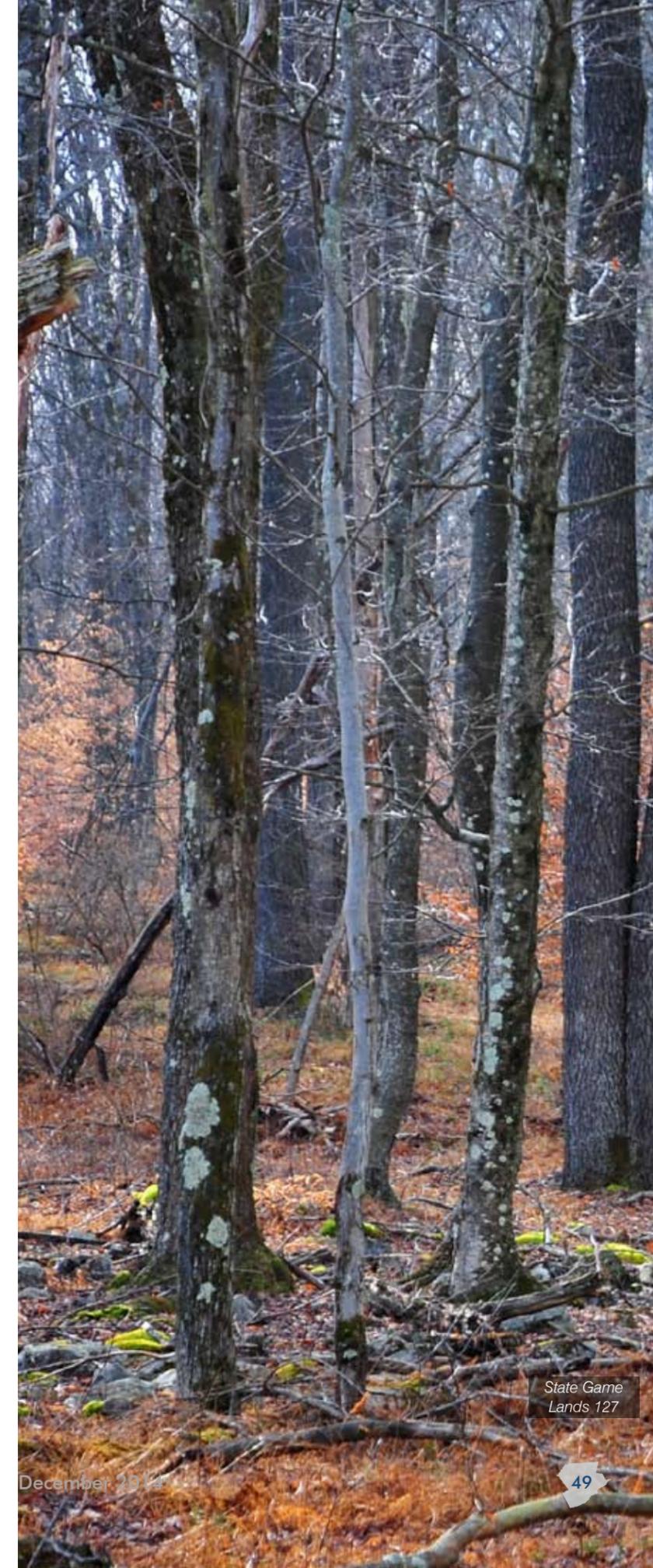
A signage system has also been developed for the Delaware River Water Trail by the Delaware River Greenway Partnership including directional, identification and interpretive signs.

Mapping

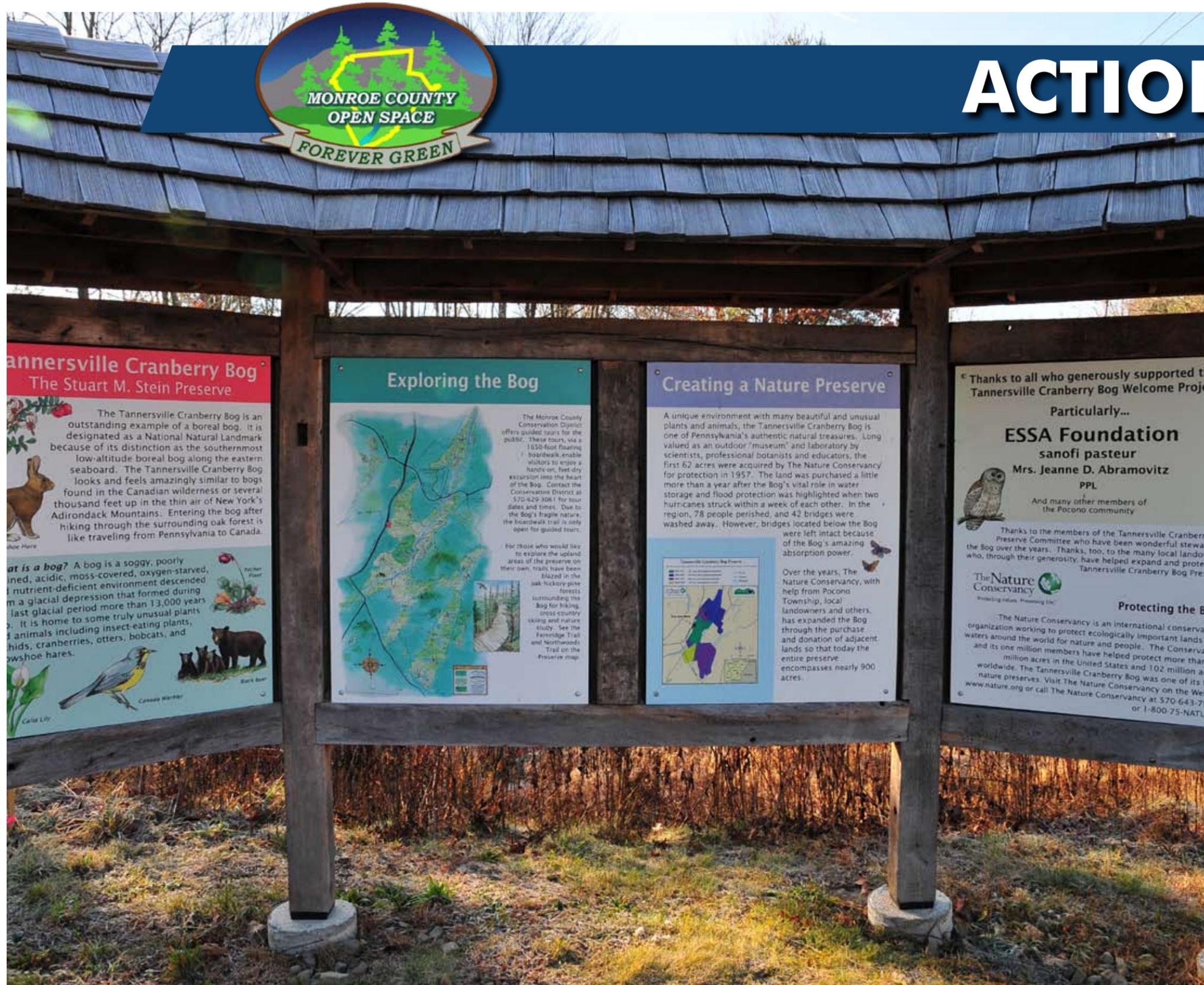
- NPS-DEWA
- PMVB

Development

The Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC) markets the Monroe County “quality of life” assets to potential businesses considering relocation to Monroe County. PMEDC works with all clients to ensure that new development proposals meet green targets.



ACTION PLAN 3



SYNOPSIS OF THE 2001 PLAN GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The original Monroe County Open Space Plan presented a rational strategy that was championed by a broad coalition, who together achieved successes beyond the original goals.

As Monroe County looks forward, consider past achievements:

Acres Protected

The Monroe County goal in 2001 was to “preserve” a total 4,000 acres by 2020. In fact, 20,000 acres were preserved by 2013 – a total five times greater than the original goal and seven years ahead of the original 20-year horizon.

Funding Achievements

In 1998 Monroe County passed a bond referendum for \$25M to finance the original Monroe County Open Space and recreation funding program. The County then contributed an additional \$11M for a total of \$36M which leveraged an additional \$78M in non-county matching funds for open space preservation and recreation improvements. Between 2001 and 2013 a total of \$114M was invested in Monroe County open space and recreation resources.



Red Rock Trail

Open Space Advisory Board

This dedicated volunteer citizen board meets monthly more than a decade after its creation to advise Monroe County Commissioners on recreation and open space issues.

Recreation Regions

Six recreation regions were envisioned and formed within Monroe County. Four regional commissions actively operate in 2014.

Existing Resources

A clear recommendation from the public and regional recreation commissions was to focus County resources toward improvements to lands that are already in public ownership or protected.

Additional Acquisitions

Missing trail and greenway linkages were considered priority actions for the County to support.

Preservation of additional open space for recreation and conservation was not opposed, but future acquisitions should be assessed critically according to specific criteria - such as if physical linkages can be created between properties, or if acquisition of the parcel is critical to protect high value water, soil, forest or habitat resources that are at-risk.

Recreation Industry

The former “honeymoon” tourism industry of the Pocono Mountains has re-branded itself and transformed since 2001 to capitalize on the regional beauty and promote nature-based, outdoor recreation attractions of Monroe County and the region – both public and private.

Water Quality

By 2014, over 848 stream miles are under some form of protection in Monroe County, largely as a result of citizen volunteers working with local watershed associations who advocate, monitor, and work tirelessly to secure stream quality designations from the Commonwealth. This 2014 Plan identifies the importance of protecting Monroe county’s water resources and encourages additional stream monitoring and water quality designation upgrades.

Development Pressures

As of 2014, the severe economic downturn that began in 2008, has not reversed in the Pocono Mountains region – essentially halting the development boom that originally catalyzed citizen actions to create the first Monroe County Open Space Plan in 2001. The slack market has prompted observers to remark that if there was ever a time to acquire open space in Monroe County, it's now.

Strategic Partnerships

The Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau and Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation are dedicated partners in Monroe County recreation and open space efforts and both work closely with the Monroe County Planning Commission to advance strategic initiatives that were identified in the 2001 Plan, such as undertaking the WB&E Rail-Trail Feasibility Study as a comprehensive assessment of creating a multi-use regional trail corridor across the length of Monroe County.

Leadership

Monroe County has been widely commended as

a state-wide model of leadership by DCNR as the Pennsylvania agency partner that funded both Open Space and Recreation plans, as well as providing technical support to create the regional recreation commissions.

PRIORITIES

The essential County goals set forth in 2001 have changed very little in the Monroe community consciousness. Twelve years later, public support remains as strong as ever, with priorities shifted slightly to refocus future conservation and recreation efforts. This evolution is understandable and strategic.

Conserving Open Space and Habitat

Acquisition of environmentally critical parcels that were available for sale at a reasonable price was a major priority of the Monroe County conservation program in first decade of the 21st Century. This strategy was difficult because the county program was starting from scratch and any property to be acquired needed to have a willing seller who would negotiate a sale or conservation easement. The result of “starting up” the program was a collection of protected parcels that were important individually, and offered a general county-wide geographic distribution, but most were not physically linked to each other.

In 2013, the Monroe community, through participation in the survey, expressed a general consensus that important lands should still be acquired, but a strong emphasis should be placed on acquiring parcels that are contiguous to protected parcels – as a means to buffer and increase the environmental value of existing protected lands, and to extend protected “corridors” for both humans and other species. An important criterion in the 2014 plan for assessing future “areas of interest for preservation” is a parcel's contiguity with other conserved parcels.

Farmland Preservation

Prime agricultural lands are often the most attractive properties for housing and commercial development. Continuing to invest through the Monroe County Agricultural Land Preservation Program is the funding tool to ensure that a percentage of the County's irreplaceable farmland resources are preserved for their culture, the environmental sustainability, and for the economic benefits as the Pocono region continues to develop.

Connecting Greenways and Trails

Over the past 12 years, Monroe County and its regional and municipal partners have made significant progress in planning and constructing trails and greenways at the municipal and multi-municipal level. In 2014, the Monroe community recognizes these hard-earned achievements and seeks the County to rank trail improvements that extend and connect these relatively short individual trail segments as higher priority projects.

Creating greenways to protect stream and wildlife corridors is often easier than establishing human trail linkages across the formidable natural and infrastructure barriers in Monroe County. Areas of higher density populations, like the greater Stroudsburg region are priorities for local trail investments – especially where a regional recreation commission like the Stroud Regional Open Space and Recreation Commission has achieved remarkable results in developing trails.

Multi-use, rail-to-trail conversions are considered the most valuable trails – because they serve the most broad resident and visitor populations, and offer greater potential for spin-off economic development. The 2001 Plan identified the former WB&E RR right-of-way as a potential 40+ mile trail corridor that would begin near Stroudsburg, and if fully developed, would allow riders to reach Lackawanna County first then Luzerne County.

Monroe County has yet to conduct an assessment of the practical feasibility and potential economic value of converting the historic transportation route to a trans-county trail to serve both local users and the regional recreation industry. The Monroe County emphasis on economic development in 2013-14 makes the WB&E corridor "feasibility study" the highest priority collaboration for all recreation and economic partners in 2015. All partners – DCNR, MCEDC, PMEDC, PMVB, conservation and recreation clubs and the general public understand this urgency and have expressed support for the study as a county "economic" and "quality of life" opportunity in the form of a recreation trail.

Protecting Water Resources

Monroe County is divided along the line of the Pocono Plateau "escarpment" that separates the Delaware and Lehigh River watersheds. Both are critically important, but need different approaches to management and protection.

Great work has been accomplished to increase the level of stream quality designations in many areas of Monroe County. One example is the Brodhead Watershed where Mill Creek, Stony Run, Buck Hill Creek, Swiftwater Creek, McMichael Creek, Cranberry Creek have all been upgraded. The western side of the County is where multiple tributaries run into the Lehigh River. Other streams such as Tank Creek, Yankee Run and the middle Devils Hole Creeks in the Paradise subwatershed are currently being evaluated for upgrade petitions.

Also at risk is the vast Pocono Plateau groundwater reserve that serves the local population on wells, but also serves as a reservoir and year-round source of base flow to the Delaware River surface water system. Impacts to quantity or quality of the Pocono Plateau water supply will affect the entire downstream

waterway. Clearly the threat of pollution is a potential problem, but the short-cutting of water from wells to stream-discharge by water treatment plants does not recharge the aquifer.

The headwaters of the streams that run down the escarpment to the Delaware were considered especially important to protect as water sources. Protection of tree canopy is highly critical to maintaining high water quality, especially in the steep mountain reaches.

Conservancy partners are considered to be highly knowledgeable about identifying parcels for protection that are critical to maintain canopy cover and water quality.

Supporting Recreation Commissions to Improve Recreation Facilities and Services

The multi-municipal recreation regions and commissions are the backbone of the Monroe County recreation system since 2001 and need to be supported in the next decade. The Monroe model for serving as catalyst, technical advisor, and funding partner to municipal partners has given local governments the capability of securing funding to match state DCNR funds for regional park and open space initiatives.

Monroe County can revisit its Hotel Tax legislation to consider ways this perpetual income stream can contribute annually to operations of the regional commissions who serve as the front line representing the county recreation partnerships to residents and the visiting public.

There is every reason for the County to continue its policy and expand its support to enable the regional recreation commissions to remain as the primary recreation providers in service to County residents. Strong support for the existing commissions is the





best incentive to encourage inactive commissions or unaffiliated municipalities to reactivate or join with adjacent commissions.

Recognizing the Economic Value of Natural Lands

Monroe County of all the northeastern Pennsylvania counties is a prime laboratory to advance the science of valuating open space. Monroe has all the important factors – including significant remaining green areas; proximity to growth areas; critical environmental resources; heavy visitor demand, a thriving environmentally-based economy, and an alert local population.

If there was a region in Pennsylvania to specifically study the economic impact of open space, Monroe should be high on the list. This type of study could be jointly funded by DCNR and DCED – to link environmental quality to sustainable economies.

Continuing the Legacy of Monroe County Funding for Open Space and Recreation

The 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update could facilitate future discussions on a second open space bond referendum by Monroe County to continue funding priority conservation and recreation projects with its municipal partners.

The record of the first bond-funded program – by all metrics – is an unequalled success. The first seven years of the program were during a period of rapid land development growth and increasing prices for land goods and services. Since the crash of 2008, the visitor and recreation economy has rebounded faster than most other regional industries.

Monroe environmental attractions bring dollars into the region, and the strength of the Monroe County visitor and recreation economy is documented by state statistics for the PMVB region. Monroe County accounts for 60% of all PMVB region travel/tourism income.

Other state statistics show that Monroe County residents themselves account for approximately 40% of all outdoor recreation spending inside the County.

If visitors are lured to travel to Monroe and spend money based on the attractive environment, and local residents spend significant percentages of their own incomes on outdoor recreation in their own county, why would Monroe County not continue to strategically invest in open space and recreation initiatives that satisfy their constituents and generate imported income?

The 2013 internet citizen survey results showed that 456/626 of Monroe County respondents are willing to pay between \$10 and \$100 per year in tax increases to continue funding Monroe County open space and recreation programs.

FUNDING PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

This list includes funding partners and programs to consider as tools for continuing Monroe County open space and funding initiatives.

Monroe County

OS/R Bond issue

Capital Budget

County Hotel Tax

Direct Act 13 funds

State

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

- C2P2 Grants

Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape Initiative

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

- DCED Community Revitalization Fund
- Monroe Local Share Account Gaming Funds

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

- Map21 Program

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Grants

- The Growing Greener II Program

Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

The Pennsylvania Environmental Education Grants Program

PENNVEST

- Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

ACT 13 Marcellus Legacy Fund Programs

Regional

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA)

Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB)

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program

Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (DRJTBC)

Federal

National Park Service (NPS) / Department of the Interior (DOI)

Department of Defense (DoD)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONROE COUNTY OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION 2014-2024

Funding

Recommit to funding open space and recreation resources by Monroe County

Secure another bond dedicated to open space acquisition and recreation improvements.

To create a meaningful pool of county funding that can be used to continue leveraging funds from other sources, a new bond issue for open space and recreation investments should be considered at a minimum level of the previous \$25M bond of 2001, with a horizon to invest those funds within ten years. Without this local commitment, other partners – who have invested historically at the rate of \$2 to every \$1 invested by the County – will have little incentive to keep investing in Monroe.

Continue to actively engage funding partners

Engage DCNR at staff, policy and legislative levels.

DCNR is and should continue to be the primary partner to improve Monroe County's recreation and open space assets. The Monroe County Planning Commission; the multi-municipal commissions; and the regional conservancies all need to continue serving as frontline emissaries to DCNR staff. The County Commissioners are in a unique position, especially when collaborating with other Pocono County Commissioners, to deliver policy recommendations to DCNR administrators. State representatives from the Monroe region can negotiate with the DCNR secretary and help formulate legislation that protects and increases funding for open space and recreation as wise investments in Pennsylvania.

The Camelback-DCNR partnership for maintenance of a state park is model statewide and has great potential to be expanded – especially in terms of developing the WB&E Rail-Trail.

Actively seek other public agency partnerships

Monroe County's proactivity in creating funding partnerships over the past 12 years should continue – spearheaded by the leadership of the County Planning Commission, in close partnerships with the regional commissions and regional conservancies. The OSAB can consider creating a subcommittee that is dedicated specifically to funding development – and work from the county's perspective as a catalyst and clearinghouse for funding. State and federal agencies are continually revising and creating new programs that are aimed at changing priorities.

Actively seek private-sector partnerships

An OSAB funding subcommittee would obviously continue to track public funding opportunities, but also would be proactive to create new opportunities – especially with private sector partners where relationships need to be deepened and corporate initiatives more closely integrated with local open space and recreation initiatives. The OSAB funding subcommittee could be supplemented with other local leadership who bring assets and skills needed to negotiate long-term partnerships with regional philanthropic foundations and businesses committed to Pocono Mountains community development.

Seek funding funds from the DEWA powerline mitigation settlement to fund critical acquisition and trail linkage projects in Monroe County

Partnerships

Support and fulfill the goals of the multi-municipal Recreation Commission system in Monroe

The decentralized system created by Monroe County to administer recreation and open space through multi-municipal commissions needs to be supported by Monroe County in several ways – including; continued County funding for acquisitions and capital improvements; a perpetual funding source dedicated to operations and maintenance, and concerted strong encouragement of leadership in regions where commissions do not yet exist or are in initial stages of development.

Strengthen bonds with schools, non-profits, and adjacent counties to improve green resources and services that serve Monroe.

In many cases, recreation facilities and services are provided by entities other than local, state and federal partners – such as school districts. A subcommittee of the OSAB could be formed to create a formalized link between the County Planning Commission and the school districts. Such a subcommittee would be chaired by an OSAB member and populated by representatives from school districts and other relevant partners. The committee could meet once or twice annually and be tasked with keeping an inventory of collective resources and identifying improvements that increase public access and how they can be accomplished.

Inter-county projects require specific champions on both sides of the common line and elected officials who work together across district boundaries to

make regional projects happen. Examples of such partnerships exist across the state and important demonstrations of leadership exist in Monroe and Pike counties.

Other similar projects that need an “institutionalized” champion in the OSAB include: the trail between Portland and Delaware Water Gap (Northampton); Bushkill Village Rehabilitation (Pike); and the development of the WB&E Rail-trail (Luzerne,) among others. A dedicated subcommittee chair of the OSAB can focus on systematically promoting and advancing these partnerships.

PennDOT – Seek stronger partnerships with PennDOT District 5 and Central Office

Proactively educate PennDOT and NEPA regarding Monroe County priority transportation alternative projects.

Develop a county policy to include pedestrian / bike improvements within all state highway projects. Major highway corridors such as Routes 209 and 611, and bridges are especially important to identify needs for future improvements. A subcommittee of the OSAB can be created to identify a detailed list of needed pedestrian / bike improvements needed within the County, and then work with the regional commissions and municipalities to ensure that the needed improvements are identified specifically in municipal plans.

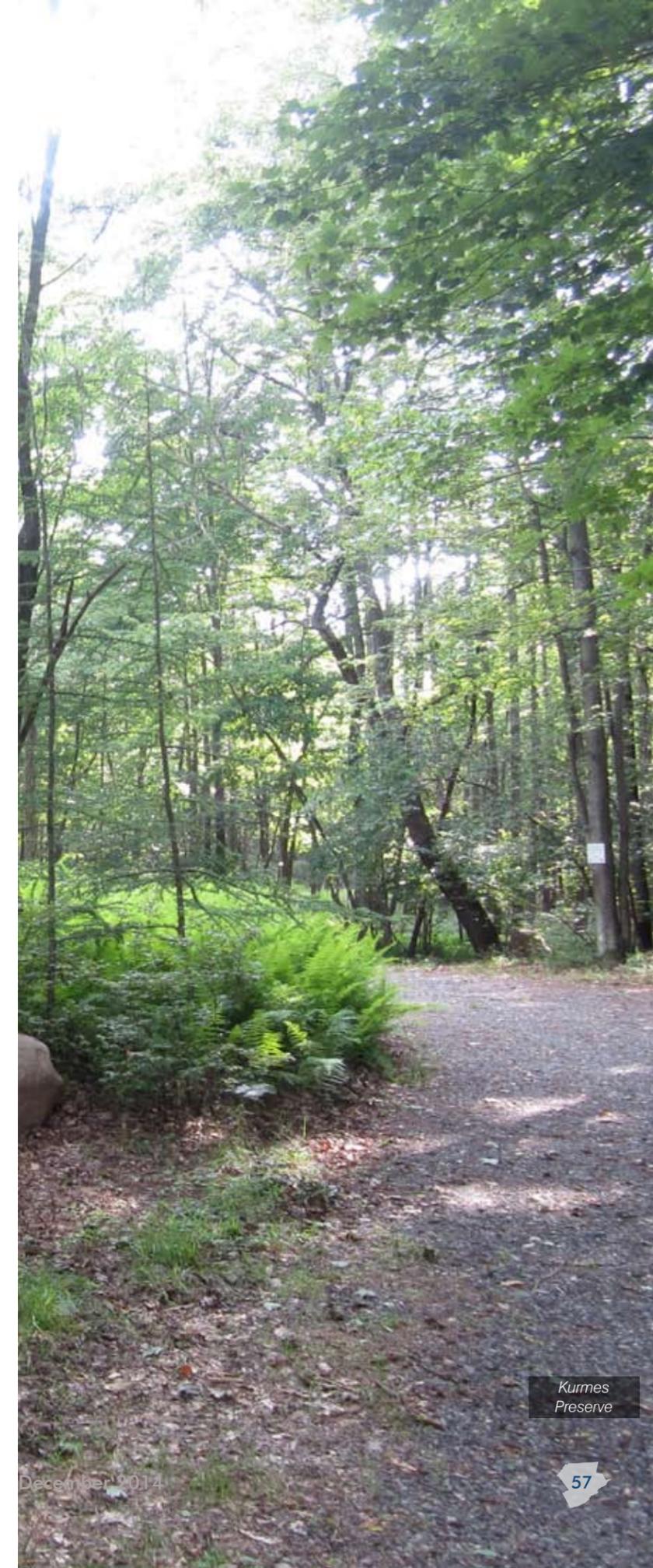
Resources

Continue Strategic Open Space Acquisitions

Clearly the work to create an integrated network of greenways, trails, parks and protected critical environments is not completed by Monroe County. At the heart of continuing investments in conservation and green resources is additional financial commitments by the County toward its priority interests, including: protecting unprotected critical environmental resources; connecting missing parcels of greenways; linking missing segments of trails; and creating needed new public green spaces within the suburbanizing areas of the county. All are recognized by the Monroe public as investments that they are willing to support through taxes. Acquisition targets can be identified by the OSAB, and commission and non-profit partners can be encouraged to negotiate easements or purchases. Ultimately, specific future acquisitions will depend upon several factors, including; funding available, and county priorities including; potential connectivity with previously conserved properties; the ability to provide recreation; existing conservation measures protecting potential acquisitions; and the economic impact of conservation of specific parcels. Exact targets for acreage acquisition should not be imposed on the OSAB for the next ten year horizon, considering many variables such as land values, availability, policy changes, and discretion needed to rank acquisition projects against trail and park projects within finite funding reservoirs.

Trails – focus on study/development of a central “spine” rail-trail and create critical linkages

Significant trail segments have been completed and have begun within Monroe County, but the public seeks existing trail sections to be “connected” and additional trails to be developed. The OSAB will have great discretion regarding what trails to promote,





since the wide variety of trail types often serve diverse user groups and the differences in trail types can limit specific user groups on certain segments – such as on-road routes and mountainous foot trails.

WB&E Trail

Monroe County should direct its Planning Commission, working with the OSAB, to make the feasibility study of the former WB&E RR grade one of its highest priorities for the county open space and recreation program. This potential trail development was identified in the 2001 MC Open Space Plan and continues to present multiple potential benefits to Monroe County that deserve the next level of investigation.

The potential importance of the WB&E trail development cannot be overestimated to Monroe County – after considering several factors. Physically, the former railroad grade once traversed the entire county at a gradient that is ideal for serving the widest spectrum of trail users. Some sections have been interrupted and will need a critical assessment of possible alternative re-connections. However much of the remaining alignment is separated from roadway traffic, and will require property ownership analyses. The total potential length of a WB&E trail (approximately 30 miles) gives it the possibility to attract statewide and multi-state users – if it can be completed to function as a multi-use “spine” trail. The historic RR alignment that snakes up the Plateau, around Camelback mountain, and through the new Kalahari water park site presents opportunities for linkages to spur trails, and other public and private recreation resources – with economic development potential that most other rural through-trails do not have.

A WB&E Trail would serve both County residents and attract visitors. The alignment, its potential length, and adjacent destinations give a WB&E trail the possibility to serve as “transportation” facility, as well as a recreation

resource and sustainable economic generator. The results of the feasibility study will include how those multiple aspects of green infrastructure improvements can attract funding partnerships from multiple sources. The feasibility study is an essential investment by Monroe County and will identify a strategy for a phased system development, and should include a projection of potential economic benefits.

Of all existing and conceptual trails in Monroe County, the WB&E trail offers the greatest potential to unite all major partners around a signature County green infrastructure and sustainable economic development program.

The groundwork for a Monroe County partnership was begun during the 2014 Open Space update – through initial discussions with the Camelback Ski Area, PMVB, local elected officials, and DCNR. Monroe County can serve as the applicant for DCNR funding for the initial feasibility study of the former grade and subsequent interruptions between the Stroudsburg area and the Luzerne County line. Clearly, MC needs to commit funding as the 50% to negotiate DCNR funding toward the feasibility study.

Glen to Glen Trail

Monroe County should make specific segments of this trail corridor as priorities due to its proximity to dense, urban populations, and the continued planning and development accomplishments of its sponsor – SROSRC. – this trail “system” is short, but complex in terms of the multiple types of trail facilities that are required to create a “through” trail system. Acquisition of easements and/or parcels along the Godfrey Ridge are high priorities – given the current disposition of the parcels and their environmental importance along the ridge corridor – with its potential to protect habitats as well as to create a multi-use trail public segment. Another priority in this corridor is the need to conduct a

study of the feasibility of creating a bridge linkage over Brodhead Creek to connect the densely populated East Stroudsburg neighborhoods to Glen Park and the Godfrey Ridge corridor.

Parks

Support the needs identified by the regional recreation commissions

These needs may include additional land acquisitions, park improvements, and operations and management improvements. This report includes criteria for the OSAB to assess needs and priorities within each of the six multi-municipal regions.

Gateways

Focus resources on initiatives at three major gateway locations to Monroe County

Delaware Water Gap; Blakeslee, and Bushkill Villages – Monroe County can recognize and encourage its municipal partners in the villages of Delaware Water Gap; Blakeslee, and Bushkill to continue planning and implementation of initiatives that make improvements in these communities, such as: pedestrian and civic amenities for residents; town center open space and recreation improvements; and visitor services that support sustainable economic development in Monroe.

Farmland

Monroe County should continue its strong commitment to farmland preservation and local sustainable food production as a major component of open space preservation and should consider creating a sustainable agriculture model ordinance that municipalities may adopt.

Opportunities may exist where protected agricultural lands can also be used compatibly to support passive trails, in ways that do not diminish the primary uses or covenants of the farm parcels.

Access

Improve public access to preserved lands and implement ADA accessibility where possible.

The County can promote actions at public open space sites that improve access into preserved lands – including trail connections, parking improvements, and basic service amenities.

Water

Seek and support initiatives that protect surface and groundwater resources

Especially important are projects that protect forested lands as sources of well recharge; upper watershed parcels as stream water quality protections, and riparian buffers as erosion control and habitat protection.

Education

Identity

Create and implement a Monroe County “branding” system.

Monroe County should use its “Forever Green” logo as the basis for a unified signage system that should be implemented at all recreation and conservation sites that have received County assistance.

Promotion

Work with partners to actively promote Monroe County environmental accomplishments within the Pocono region.

The OSAB should conduct its good works with the clear intent to promote vital information as part of every initiative – as an integral process to keep the public informed and deepen partnerships. Potential partners with skills to help craft and tell the Monroe County environmental stories include; PMVB, DCNR, and NEPA.

Communications

Subcommittees within the OSAB can systematically maintain a network of active and personal communications with the broad partnerships in Monroe County.

Usage

Begin to survey/poll residents on their current frequency, type, and interest in expanding usage of open space lands.

Sustainable Environmental - Economic Development Projects

Actively Support Green Infrastructure

Monroe County has demonstrated that its investments in green infrastructure are essential to protecting its core product of the region – the natural environment. The wise financial investments by Monroe County into open space and recreation infrastructure over the past 12 years have also produced direct revenue returns of 2:1 for every dollar invested by the County.

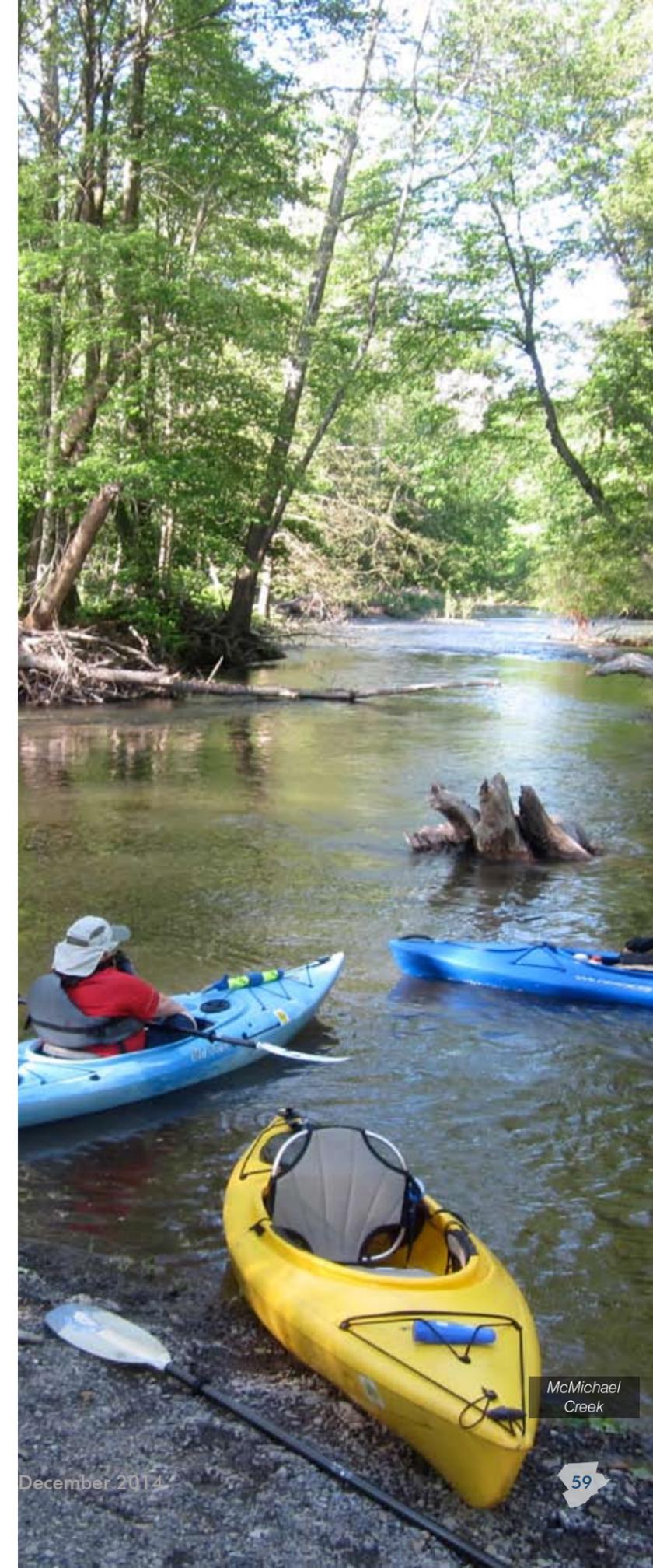
The green project with the greatest potential for uniting partners from all public and private sectors in Monroe County is the development of the WB&E Trail. Wise investment will be made toward a comprehensive feasibility study of this project.

Policy / Management / Catalyst

Adopt the 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Consider an Open Space referendum question on the ballot for Monroe County voters

Empower the OSAB by delineating specific subcommittee chairs and specific subtasks





APPENDIX 4

APPENDIX LIST

Plans / Studies Completed

Meeting Minutes and PowerPoints

**Monroe County Citizen Internet
Survey of 2013**

Stream Redesignation Handbook

