
Chapter 2

An Inventory of Natural and Man-made Resources

This inventory examines the natural landscape and communities found in Mercer County – the environments in which residents live, work, and play – to identify and characterize natural features, nature-based recreation sites, active recreation sites, cultural resources, and the travel linkages between them.

The resources outlined in this chapter have been inventoried by various federal, state, and county agencies, as well as by private organizations. These studies have assessed the abundance, diversity, productivity, and general health of the county's forests, farmlands, waterways and habitat areas and wildlife; the location, facilities and services of public recreation areas; and the value of numerous historic and cultural sites. These documents provide data, analysis, and recommendations that relate to open space, greenways and recreation planning. This inventory reports the relevant findings of these existing studies.

Natural Resources

Natural resources provide us with the basic environments from which we create our communities – the various environments in which we live, work and play. The environments include land, water and riparian landscapes, as well as the vegetation and wildlife that inhabit them. In addition to their ecological value, these resources support community and economic pursuits that shape the quality of life experienced in Mercer County. The Land Resources and Water Resources Maps, developed for the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan, illustrate the location of these features in the county.

Land Resources – Soils and Topography

Mercer County lies within the Northwestern Glaciated Plateau section of the Appalachian Plateaus Physiographic Province. The county is characterized by “broad, rounded upland and deep, steep-sided, linear valleys that are partly filled with glacial deposits.”¹ The underlying rock is shale, siltstone, and sandstone.

Very steep slopes (grades over 25%) within the County are primarily found along the river and stream corridors, including the Big Bend area of the Shenango River, the Neshannock Creek in Lackawannock Township, Sandy Creek and at the south end of Lake Wilhelm. Soils on these slopes are particularly sensitive to disturbance and development, often contributing excess sediment to nearby surface waters.

Just over 42 percent of the County's land area, or 186,000 acres, are classified as hydric soils. Hydric soils are those that retain water during a portion of the year and are usually associated with wetlands. As a natural resource, hydric soils provide water storage and filtration that naturally regulates water sources and flows. These soils are susceptible to compaction and uneven settling when developed. These factors will ultimately impact land use decisions.

Prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide importance are abundant in Mercer County, although in many areas they are covered by woodlands. Prime agricultural soils have the quality, growing season, and water supply needed to economically produce a sustained high yield of crops with minimal additional inputs. GIS data compiled for the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan indicates that there are over 225,000 acres of prime soils in Mercer County – approximately 51 percent of the entire County. However, at the present time, one quarter - almost 58,000 acres - are currently covered by forests. Soils of statewide importance cover an additional 145,000 acres, of which approximately 37,000 acres are covered by woodlands.

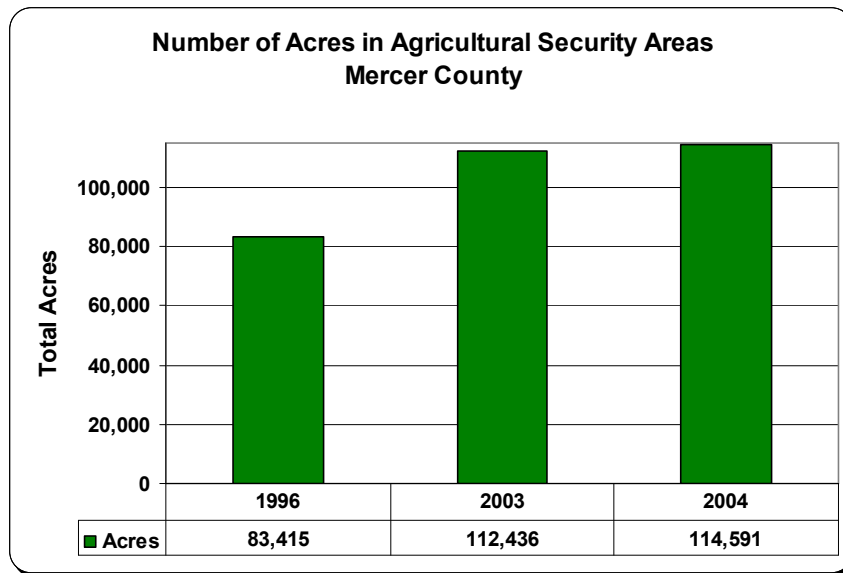
¹ PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey, 2000.

Extensive lands within Mercer County are engaged in agricultural production. Recent statistics indicate there are 1,030 farms in the County; 533 of which are full-time. There are over 166,000 acres in farms, with an average farm size of 162 acres. Dairy products, nursery and greenhouse crops, cattle and calves, corn for grain, and hay, silage field seeds and grass seeds are the top commodities. The market value of the agricultural products sold is over \$58,000,000, with an estimated annual impact on the economy of more than \$96,000,000.²

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Mercer County ranks 16th in total number of acres preserved (5,153 acres) and 20th in the number of farms preserved (29), when compared to the other 52 counties throughout the state that have purchased easements. However, the County is paying the 6th lowest average price per acre (\$743.45); significantly lower than the statewide average of \$2,127 per acre.

Mercer County landowners continue to enroll lands in the Agricultural Security Area Program. In 2004, Mercer County Agricultural Security Areas totaled 114,591 acres, an increase of approximately 37 percent since 1996. Penn State Cooperative Extension Service records indicate that 28 of the County’s municipalities have established Agricultural Security Areas (ASA). Combined, there are 1,277 properties that cover over 114,000 acres in Mercer County. This represents approximately 26 percent of the entire County. Delaware Township has the greatest number of properties (130) and total acreage (8,447) and Perry Township is second with 93 properties encompassing over 6,800 acres.

Figure 2-1 Agricultural Security Acres



²Mercer County Web Site; www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us

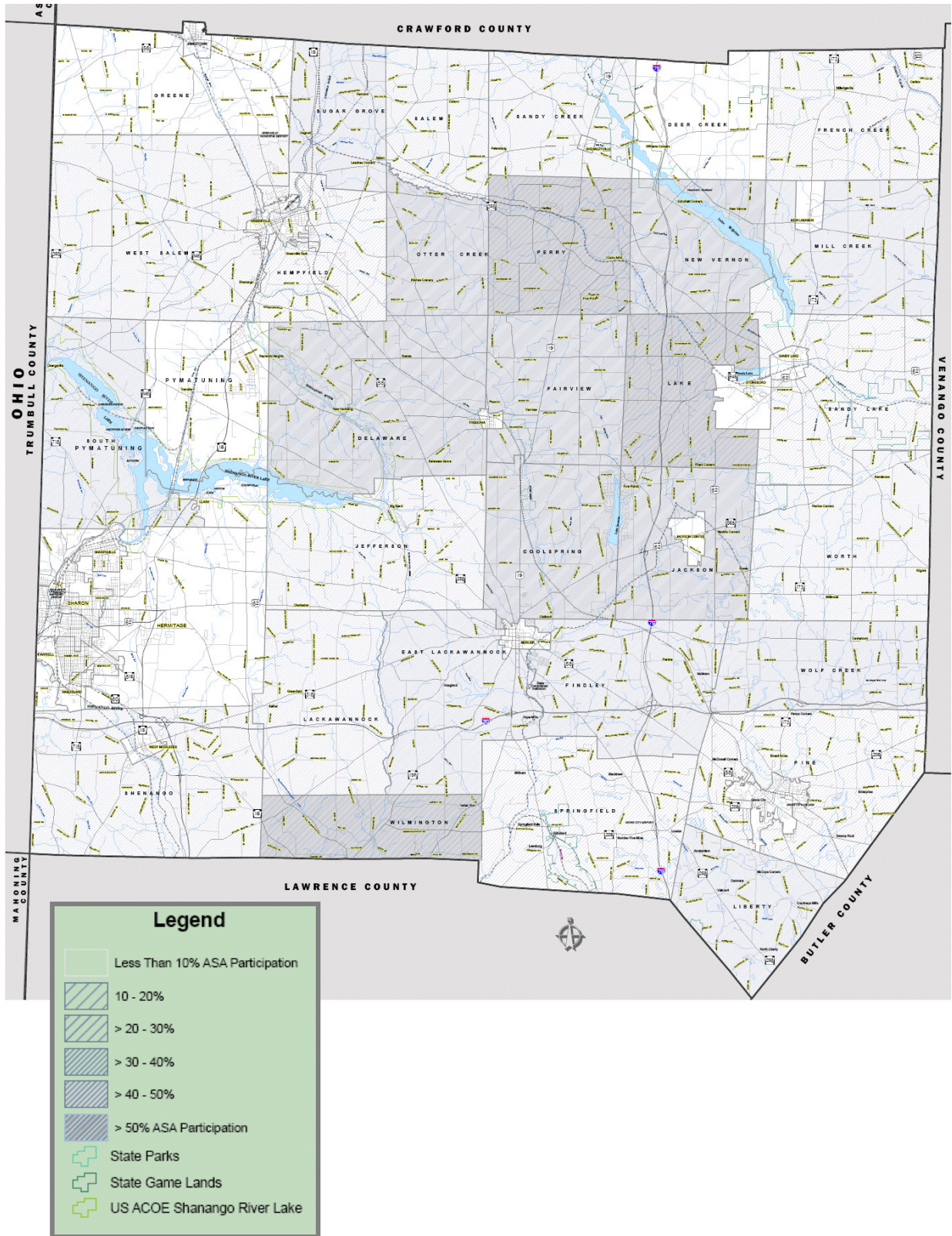
Table 2-1 summarizes the information regarding ASAs in the County and, in addition to the number of properties and acreage, includes the date they were established and their next renewal deadline. Additional information, including the specifics for creating an ASA can be found on the web at <http://mercer.extension.psu.edu/Agriculture>.

Table 2-1 Agricultural Security Areas by Municipality

	Township	Number of properties included in ASA	Number of acres included in ASA	Date ASA was Established	Renewal Deadline
1	Coolspring	61	5,741.5	March 2, 1992	2006
2	Delaware	130	8,447.0	October 2, 1991	2005
3	East Lackawannock	44	5,387.0	June 12, 1990	2004
4	Fairview	49	5,264.5	March 9, 1994	2008
5	Findley	74	4,316.5	Nov. 8, 2001	2008
6	French Creek	27	2,463.6	Sept. 10, 2001	2008
7	Hempfield	22	1,350.0	June 14, 1994	2008
8	Jackson	46	4,751.0	June 1, 1994	2008
9	Jefferson	36	4,034.0	April 28, 1990	2004
10	Lackawannock	43	3,792.0	July 15 1993	2007
11	Lake	46	5,083.8	May 10, 1993	2000
12	Liberty	30	2,944.0	Aug. 13, 1998	2005
13	Mill Creek	31	4,562.7	June 7, 1993	2007
14	New Vernon	46	4,723.9	July 8, 1993	2007
15	Otter Creek	43	3,366.0	Sept. 14, 1994	2008
16	Perry	93	6,836.8	April 6, 1994	2008
17	Pine	17	1,837.0	April 2, 2001	2008
18	Salem	10	1,804.0	Aug. 6, 2001	2008
19	Sandy Creek	28	2,242.0	Sept. 5, 1995	2009
20	Sandy Lake	32	2,753.7	April 10, 1995	2009
21	Shenango	62	3,938.9	June 11, 2001	2008
22	South Pymatuning	68	4,723.6	Feb. 9, 1998	2005
23	Springfield	37	3,086.0	Sept. 1, 1993	2007
24	Sugar Grove	44	2,828.0	Sept. 3, 1996	2010
25	West Salem	47	4,926.7	Feb. 14, 1995	2009
26	Wilmington	56	5,979.8	April 10, 1990	2004
27	Wolf Creek	25	3,738.0	Aug. 8, 1991	2005
28	Worth	30	3,669.0	July 6, 1993	2007
Total Properties and Acreage		1277	114,591.0		

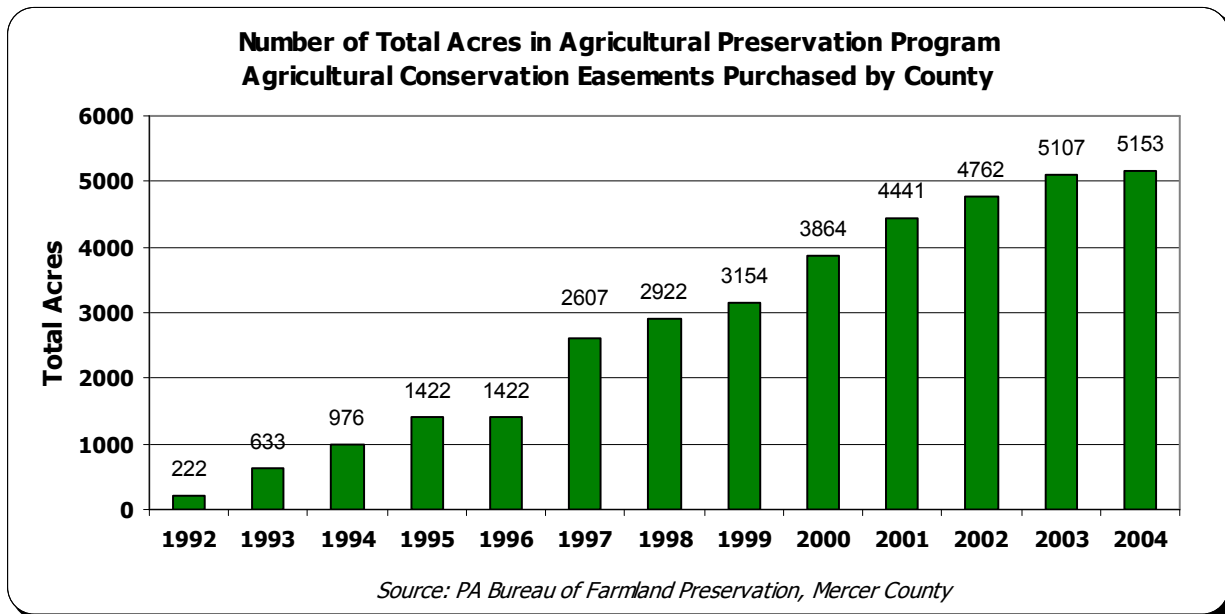
Source: Penn State Cooperative Extension Service

Figure 2-2 Municipal Participation Rates by Acreage



The purchase of conservation easements has been one of the tools that the County has used to help protect its most productive agricultural lands. This program involves the outright purchase of the development rights of individual properties. The property must meet specific criteria, including the presence of productive soils, in order to be eligible for consideration. Mercer County has purchased conservation easements for 29 farms totaling 5,153 acres as of May 2004, according to the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Board.

Figure 2-3 Conservation Easements in Mercer County



Water Resources – Surface Waters and Groundwater

Surface waters are critical to human and wildlife communities. They provide drinking water for terrestrial creatures and habitat for aquatic species. Some surface waters serve public water supplies while others support recreation and tourism.

Mercer County has an abundance of surface waters. In addition to numerous lakes, there are 1,135 miles of streams.

The Shenango River runs north/south in the western part of the County and is the major river in the County. In 1965, the US Army Corps of Engineers completed The Shenango River Lake project, which provides flood protection for the Shenango River Valley, as well as for the Beaver and Upper Ohio Rivers. The project also provides seasonal discharge regulation for water quality improvement and recreation opportunities.

In addition to the Shenango River Lake, Lake Wilhelm in Goddard State Park and Lake Latonka are the major water bodies.

Table 2-2 Waterways in Mercer County

Waterway	Tributary of...	Location
Shenango River	Shenango River	Jamestown, Greene Twp, West Salem Twp, Greenville, Hempfield Twp, Pymatuning Twp, Delaware Twp, Jefferson Twp, S Pymatuning Twp, Sharpville, Sharon, Farrell, Wheatland, Hermitage, Shenango Twp
Big Run	Shenango River	Greene Twp, West Salem Twp
Little Shenango River	Shenango River	Lake Twp, New Vernon Twp, Perry Twp, Salem Twp, Sugar Grove Twp, Hempfield Twp, Greenville Borough
Crooked Creek	Little Shenango River	Sugar Grove Twp
Neshannock Creek	Shenango River	Mercer Borough, border of East Lackawannock and Findley Twp, Springfield Twp
Otter Creek	Neshannock Creek	Otter Creek Twp, Delaware Twp, Fairview Twp, Coolspring Twp, Findley Twp, Mercer Borough
Cool Spring Creek	Neshannock Creek	Jackson Twp, Coolspring Twp, Findley Twp, Mercer Borough, Fairview Twp
Little Neshannock Creek	Neshannock Creek	Jefferson Twp, border between Lackawannock and East Lackawannock Twp
Little Neshannock Creek (West Branch)	Neshannock Creek	Hermitage, Lackawannock Twp, Wilmington Twp
French Creek	Allegheny River	French Creek Twp
Sandy Creek	Allegheny River	Sandy Creek Twp, Deer Creek Twp, New Vernon Twp, Mill Creek Twp, Sandy Lake Twp and Borough
Wolf Creek	Slippery Rock Creek	Worth Twp, Wolf Creek Twp, Pine Twp, Grove City Borough, Liberty Twp

Only the Little Sandy Creek in Mill Creek Township qualifies as a Special Protection Water and is currently considered a High Quality waterway. The Pennsylvania Chapter 93 Water Quality Standards classify all surface waters according to their water quality and protected water uses. Selected water bodies that exhibit exceptional water quality and other environmental features are referred to as “Special Protection Waters.” Certain activities in those watersheds that could adversely affect surface water are more stringently regulated in order to prevent degradation.

Designated use classifications found within Mercer County are warm water fisheries (WWF), cold water fisheries (CWF), and trout stock fisheries (TSF). Most of the surface waters in the county fall into the Warm Water Fish classification; however, the Neshannock Creek and its tributaries and the basin of the Little Shenango River are in the TSF classification. Wolf Creek and a small section of the Shenango River below the dam are in the CWF classification.

Surface waters across the county have been impacted by soil erosion and deposition. Soil erosion occurs as a result of exposure to forceful wind and water. It commonly occurs along poorly managed streambanks and on steep slopes. It is of particular concern to farmers as the loss of topsoil on croplands and pasturelands causes reduced soil productivity. Stream bank erosion is also a threat to farm productivity as fields shrink from the riverside edges; such erosion can be caused by mismanagement, improper sizing and placement of obstructions and riparian issues. Soil erosion results in pollution of stream beds and waters (two distinct aquatic habitats), deposition of sediment in streams, and reduced water quality for all uses.

The quality of the surface waters in Mercer County is assessed by PA DEP. The 2004 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report categorizes water bodies according to the extent to which their quality is adequate to meet all designated uses. The categorization scheme is expressed in the explanatory box below.

Impaired Stream Reaches in Mercer County include:

- The Shenango River from the Dam south into Lawrence County and also from Jamestown south to a point about mid-way through Greene Township.
- Bobby Run, a tributary of the Shenango in Hermitage, south to its confluence with the main stem.
- Crooked Creek from the Crawford/Mercer County line to its confluence with the Little Shenango River.
- A small portion of Sandy Creek from the dam on Lake Wilhelm south to Sandy Lake Borough.
- A section of the East Branch of Wolf Creek north of I-80 near Venango County Line.
- Wolf Creek from the northern boundary of Grove City south to its confluence with Barmore Run
- A small section of Barmore Run near Barmore Lake in Liberty Township.
- A small section of Mill Creek (a tributary of Cool Spring Creek) that crosses under I-79 in Findley Township.
- Yellow Creek (another tributary of Cool Spring Creek) from Jackson Center south to its confluence with Cool Spring near the Jackson Township line.

Additional information regarding water quality and impaired streams can be found online at www.emappa.dep.state.pa.us.

What is a water quality standard?

The Clean Water Act sets a national minimum goal that all waters be “fishable” and “swimmable.” To support this goal, states must adopt water quality standards. Water quality standards are state regulations that have two components. The first component is a designated use, such as “warm water fishes” or “recreation.” States must assign a use, or several uses, to each of their waters. The second component relates to the in-stream conditions necessary to protect the designated use(s). These conditions or “criteria” are physical, chemical, or biological characteristics, such as temperature, minimum levels of dissolved oxygen, and maximum concentrations of toxic pollutants.

It is the combination of the “designated use” and the “criteria” to support that use that make up a water quality standard. If any criteria are being exceeded, then the use is not being met and the water is said to be impaired.

What is a TMDL?

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) sets a limit on the pollutant loads that can enter a water body so the water body will meet water quality standards. The Clean Water Act requires states to assess streams and water bodies and compile a list of all waters that do not meet their water quality standards even after pollution controls required by law are in place. For these waters, the state must calculate how much of a substance can be put in the water without violating the water quality standard and distribute that quantity to all the sources of the pollutant on that water body. A TMDL plan may include load allocations for sources of pollution being discharged from treatment ponds on active mining operations, pollution load allocations for sources of abandoned mine drainage, and a margin of safety.

The Clean Water Act requires states to submit their TMDLs to EPA for approval. If a state does not develop the TMDL, the Clean Water Act states that the EPA must do so.

---DEP TMDL Factsheet

Classifications used in the 2004 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report

Category 1: Waters attaining all designated uses.

Category 2: Waters where some, but not all, designated uses are met. Attainment status of the remaining designated uses is unknown because data are insufficient to categorize a water consistent with the state's listing methodology.

Category 3: Waters for which there are insufficient or no data and information to determine, consistent with the State's listing methodology, if designated uses are met.

Category 4: Waters impaired for one or more designated use but not needing a TMDL.

Category 4A: TMDL has been completed.

Category 4B: Expected to meet all designated uses within a reasonable timeframe.

Category 4C: Not impaired by a pollutant.

Category 5: Waters impaired for one or more designated uses by any pollutant. Category 5 includes waters shown to be impaired as the result of biological assessments used to evaluate aquatic life use even if the specific pollutant is not known unless the State can demonstrate that non-pollutant stressors cause the impairment or that no pollutant(s) causes or contribute to the impairment. Category 5 constitutes the Section 303(d) list that EPA will approve or disapprove under the CWA. Where more than one pollutant is causing the impairment, the water remains in Category 5 until all pollutants are addressed in a completed/EPA-approved TMDL or one of the delisting factors is satisfied.

--PA Department of Environmental Resources

Eighteen waterbodies, or segments of waterways, in Mercer County have approved TMDLs. These waterbodies total 143.7 miles of stream or river and 3505 acres of lake area. Impairments are caused by a wide variety of known and unknown factors, as shown in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3

2004 INTEGRATED WATER QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT REPORT
 CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 305(b) REPORT/303(d) LIST

Mercer County (January 2005)

Source: DEP Northwest Regional Office

Category 4a: Streams With Approved TMDLs					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Acres	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	Year Listed	TMDL Approved
Shenango River					
20020111-1261-FIT	33.8	Source Unknown	PCB	1998	2001
		Source Unknown	Chlordane	1998	2001
Category 4b: Compliance					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Shenango River					
971023-0930-JJM		Package Plants	Nutrients	1998	
Category 4c: Streams Impaired By Pollution Not Requiring A TMDL					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Bobby Run					
970819-1220-JJM	4.1	Other	Other Habitat Alterations	1998	n/a
Cool Spring Creek					
970915-1235-JJM	1.8	Other	Water/Flow Variability	1998	n/a
Pine Run					
970918-0930-JJM	1.7	Habitat Modification	Other Habitat Alterations	1998	n/a
		Habitat Modification	Flow Alterations	1998	n/a
970918-0815-JJM	1.4	Habitat Modification	Other Habitat Alterations	1998	n/a
971023-0930-JJM	2.0	Other	Other Habitat Alterations	1998	n/a
Category 5: Impaired Streams Requiring TMDLS					
STATE WATER PLAN 16G - SANDY CREEK					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Sandy Creek					
20020619-1400-RLH	16	Upstream Impoundment	Nutrients	2004	2017
Sulphur Run					
20021030-1205-SMD	3.8	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	2004	2017
		Abandoned Mine Drainage	pH	2004	2017
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Bobby Run					
970819-1220-JJM	4.1	Other	Nutrients	1998	2007
Continued					

Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan

Category 5: Impaired Streams Requiring TMDLS (continued)					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Cool Spring Creek					
970915-1235-JJM	1.8	Agriculture	Siltation	1998	2007
Crooked Creek					
970714-1440-JJM	2.1	Hydromodification	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2007
		Hydromodification	Siltation	1998	2007
970721-0930-JJM	4.8	Hydromodification	Siltation	1998	2007
		Hydromodification	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2007
970715-1000-JJM	1	Hydromodification	Siltation	1998	2007
		Hydromodification	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2007
970715-0810-JJM	0.5	Hydromodification	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2007
Fox Run					
970911-1145-JJM	2.0	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	1998	2011
		Natural Sources	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2011
Little Shenango River					
970722-1415-JJM	1.8	Agriculture	Nutrients	1998	2007
Magargee Run					
980112-1030-JJM	1.1	Package Plants	Nutrients	2002	2007
Category 5: Impaired Streams Requiring TMDLS					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Mill Creek					
970916-1230-JJM	1.2	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	1998	2011
Neshannock Creek					
971010-0930-JJM	1.6	Agriculture	Siltation	1998	2007
Otter Creek					
970908-1130-JJM	2.7	Agriculture	Nutrients	1998	2007
		Natural Sources	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2007
Shenango River					
990506-1115-JJM	12.6	Other	Metals	1996	2007
		Other	Nutrients	1996	2007
990513-1345-JJM	8.6	Other	Metals	2002	2007
		Other	Nutrients	2002	2007
990625-1515-JJM	2.9	Other	Metals	2002	2007
		Other	Nutrients	2002	2007
971009-0930-JJM	0.9	Hydromodification	Nutrients	1998	2007
970729-1345-JJM	4.7	Hydromodification	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	1998	2007
Yellow Creek					
970910-1330-JJM	9.6	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	1998	2011
Continued					

Category 5: Impaired Streams Requiring TMDLS (continued)					
STATE WATER PLAN 20C - SLIPPERY ROCK CREEK					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Barmore Run					
20020626-1003-RMR	4.0	Animal Feeding Agriculture	Siltation	2004	2017
East Branch Wolf Creek					
20020611-1411-RMR	1.8	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	1996	2009
20020709-0951-RMR	1.2	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	1996	2009
STATE WATER PLAN 20C - SLIPPERY ROCK CREEK					
Segment ID	Miles	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
20020611-1525-RMR	3.5	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	2004	2017
Wolf Creek					
20020624-1635-RMR	2.8	Urban Runoff/Storm Sewers	Siltation	2004	2017
20020627-0759-RMR	1.8	Abandoned Mine Drainage	Metals	2004	2017
Category 4c:Lakes Impaired By Pollution Not Requiring A TMDL					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Acres	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Shenango River Lake (Reservoir)					
20011126-0007-LAK	3041.3	Other	pH	2002	n/a
Category 5: Impaired Lakes Requiring TMDLS					
STATE WATER PLAN 20A - SHENANGO RIVER					
Segment ID	Acres	Source of Impairment	Cause of Impairment	List Date	TMDL Date
Lake Latonka					
970601-0021-LAK	320	Source Unknown	Organic Enrichment/Low D.O.	2002	

Source: PA DEP

Maintaining groundwater recharge areas as open space is critical to protecting groundwater quality and supply for both rural areas and developed communities in the county.

Numerous factors affect groundwater movement and availability. Yields depend heavily on specific rocks within the group or formation. In Mercer County, they range from less than 5 gallons per minute (gpm) in the shales of the Shenango Formation to optimum yields of 100 to 300 gpm in the sandstone and limestone aquifers of the Pottsville and Cuyahoga Groups.

Groundwater quality is dependent on the interaction between the groundwater and the bedrock. The more soluble types of bedrock, such as limestone, allow more compounds to be dissolved in the groundwater, thus resulting in increased hardness values. In Mercer County, the Berea and Cuyahoga Groups tend to have hard water. In addition, excessive amounts of iron are often found in the groundwater of each of the geologic formations, particularly at shallower depths. Within the Allegheny, Berea, Cuyahoga, and Pottsville Groups, water within the aquifers that are 100 feet below the major drainage level may also contain brackish or salt water.

Integrated Land and Water or Riparian Resources

Riparian areas, such as floodplains and wetlands, provide critical ecological functions and serve economic and community interests. They offer unique habitat for flora and fauna, as well as intriguing sites for passive recreation. They also provide critical water storage and recharge areas in times of flooding, preventing downstream flood damage.

There are just over 27,718 acres of land within the 100-year floodplains of Mercer County. For regulatory purposes, a floodplain is defined by the 100-year, or base flood, which has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year.

There are over 22,000 acres of wetlands in Mercer County. Most are located along several of the County's primary waterways, including the Shenango and Little Shenango Rivers, the Little Neshannock Creek, Sandy Creek, and Wolf Creek. They are also found in pockets throughout Mercer County, particularly in the drainage basins of Wolf Creek and the Little Neshannock Creek.

Riparian areas are not uniformly regulated in Pennsylvania. Regulation of floodplains has focused on reducing the threat to human life and property caused by periodic flooding, but has not addresses the ecological function of such areas. Regulation of land use, including floodplains, lies with municipal government in Pennsylvania. The Federal Clean Water Act and similar state and local laws have led to the enforcement of wetland protection, which is the responsibility of both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Vegetation and Wildlife Resources

As living natural resources, vegetation and wildlife perform critical ecological functions and support economic and community pursuits. Vegetation stabilizes soils, filters pollutants from waters, converts gases, transports minerals, and provides wildlife habitat – both food an shelter. Vegetation lies at the heart of the forest products industry and, in combination with wildlife, provides the environment for hunting and trapping and numerous passive recreation experiences, such as hiking, biking, and viewing from scenic vistas.

Mercer County has an abundance of wooded land throughout the County. Data from the Penn State Cooperative Extension data indicates there are a total of 162,000 acres of woodlands – approximately 37 percent of the County's total land area. Deciduous Forest is the primary type, covering almost 155,000 acres. Coniferous and Mixed Forests make up the balance.

The abundance, distribution and connectivity of vegetative conditions have a significant impact on the rural character of Mercer County.

- During the 1990s, the total number of acres classified as undeveloped or open space increased slightly. due in part to land reverting from farmland to forest land.
- There is a significant concentration of woodland in the eastern part of the County.
- Forest health is impacted by the multiplicity of land owners and management objectives.

Table 2-4 Developed and Undeveloped Land in Mercer County, 1973-2003

	1973		1993		2003		% Change 1973-93	%Change 1973 - 2003
	Acres	% Total Area	Acres	% Total Area	Acres	% Total Area		
Total Developed Land	26,100	6.1	36,791	8.5	35,743	8.2	41.0	36.9
Total Undeveloped Land	404,903	93.9	394,209	91.5	400,689	91.8	(2.6)	(1.0)

Land, water and vegetation combine to support a variety of habitats in Mercer County.

There are three important bird areas in the county, according to the Important Bird Area (IBA) program of Audubon Pennsylvania, the state chapter of the National Audubon Society.³ The IBA program is one of several priority initiatives of PA DCNR. The important bird areas in Mercer County are:

- The **Barrows Heronry & Edward Brucker Sanctuary** (IBA #8) was recorded as two sites that are approximately 55 acres and is privately owned. Riparian and deciduous forest areas containing nest trees of Black Oak, beech, Shagbark Hickory, and Sycamore create a habitat for the largest Great Blue Heron colony in Pennsylvania. Committee members have stated that the herons have abandoned the Barrows site and continue to use the Bruckner site northeast of Greenville along the Little Shenango River corridor.
- The **Shenango Reservoir** (IBA #9) is 3,500 acres and is publicly owned. The Reservoir is a long, narrow body of water bisecting the west half of the county. This site is one of the most productive migratory stopovers for shorebirds in western Pennsylvania. From July through October as many as 30 species of shorebirds occur with Great Egrets, Bald Eagles, and Osprey occur regularly.
- The **Pennsy, Black, & Celery Swamps-State Game Lands 151 & 284** (IBA #10) is 1,373 acres that are both publicly and privately owned. This site is an extensive wetland complex with high quality emergent wetlands supporting significant numbers and a high diversity of characteristic breeding species, such as Pied-billed Grebe, Am. Coot, Com. Moorhen, Virginia Rail, Sora, and Marsh Wren. Some other species documented are American Bittern, Least Bitterns, King Rail, and Sandhill Cranes.

There are two important mammal areas in the county, according the Important Mammal Areas Project (IMAP). IMAP aims to ensure the future of Pennsylvania's wild mammals, both game and non-game species, through voluntary habitat management. IMAP is being carried out by the IMAP Partnership – a broad based alliance of sportsmen, conservation organizations, wildlife professionals, and scientists. The PA Game Commission passes wildlife funding to the alliance to maintain IMAP.

- The **Shenango Reservoir** (IBA #9) is 3,500 acres and is publicly owned. The Reservoir is a long, narrow body of water bisecting the west half of the county. This site is one of the most productive migratory stopovers for shorebirds in western Pennsylvania. From July through October as many as 30 species of shorebirds occur with Great Egrets, Bald Eagles, and Osprey occur regularly.

³ Important Bird Areas Sites Notes, Audubon Pennsylvania, 2005.

- The **Penny, Black, & Celery Swamps-State Game Lands 151 & 284** (IBA #10) is 1,373 acres that are both publicly and privately owned. This site is an extensive wetland complex with high quality emergent wetlands supporting significant numbers and a high diversity of characteristic breeding species, such as Pied-billed Grebe, Am. Coot, Com. Moorhen, Virginia Rail, Sora, and Marsh Wren. Some other species documented are American Bittern, Least Bitterns, King Rail, and Sandhill Cranes.

Both game and non-game wildlife species are important in maintaining a diverse and stable ecosystem. Principal game species in the county are white-tailed deer, black bear, snowshoe hare, gray squirrel, cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, turkey, and waterfowl. Furbearers of importance include beaver, muskrat, mink, and red fox. Songbirds, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals comprise non-game species within the County.

The Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) for Mercer County⁴ provides a preliminary report of the County's biodiversity. Completed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in June 2003, the inventory identifies and maps the most significant natural places in Mercer County. Plant and animal species, natural communities that are unique or uncommon in the County and areas important for wildlife habitat and scientific study were investigated. While the inventory does not protect these areas, it provides the necessary information to guide land acquisition and conservation decisions. It can also be referenced in the development of municipal comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, as well as in the review of development plans. Table 2-3 summarizes the results of the inventory, listing the Natural Heritage Areas "in order of their significance to the protection of the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the region."⁵ The entire report can be accessed online via the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission's website - www.mcrpc.com.

The NHI classifies: Biological Diversity Areas (BDAs), Landscape Conservation Area (LCAs), and Managed Lands. A BDA contains plants or animals of special concern at state or federal levels, exemplary natural communities, or exceptional native diversity. An LCA is a large contiguous area that is important because of its size, open space, habitats, and/or inclusion of one or more BDAs. Managed Lands are owned or leased properties with importance or potential importance to the overall maintenance and protection of ecological resources in the County and fall into three categories: Public, Private, and Dedicated Areas.⁶ The areas have also been ranked according to significance - exceptional, high, and notable. This ranking process elevates the most important sites and resources for priority action.

⁴ *Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory*. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, June 2003

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Table 2-5 Natural Heritage Inventory Sites

Site Name	Municipality	Site Importance
Exceptional		
Barmore Lake BDA	Pine Township	Isolated wetland that is the location of a Pennsylvania plant species of special concern and an animal species of special concern.
French Creek BDA	French Creek Township	Riverine community supporting many animal species of special concern.
French Creek LCA	French Creek Township	Watershed that contains numerous animal species of special concern, one plant species of concern and several natural communities.
Pine Swamp BDA	Worth Township	Headwater wetland complex that provides habitat for an exceptional natural community and several plant species of special concern.
Sandy Creek BDA	Sandy Lake Township	Wetlands along Sandy Creek and tributaries that are the location of a Pennsylvania animal species of special concern.
Sandy Creek LCA	Sandy Creek Township	Watershed that contains numerous important natural communities, and plants and animals of special concern.
Sandy Lake BDA	Stoneboro Borough	Glacial lake that is the location of numerous plant species of special concern and a natural community of special concern.
Shenango Lake BDA	Clark Borough	Impounded lake of the Shenango River that provides habitat for four animals of special concern and one plant species of special concern.
Shenango River BDA	Delaware Township	Aquatic habitat important to several animal species of special concern.
Shenango River LCA	Delaware Township	Watershed that supports numerous animal and plant species of special concern.
High		
Cranberry Swamp BDA	Deer Creek Township	Wetland complex at the headwaters of Black Run that is the location of two important natural communities
Crooked Creek BDA	Sugar Grove Township	Habitats for two animals of special concern, a natural community and a plant species of special concern are supplied by stream communities and floodplain pools.
Lake Wilhelm BDA	New Vernon Township	Habitats for two animals of special concern provided by the lakeshore.
Mercer Bog BDA	East Lackawannock Township	This site has a bog with a floating "peat island" that is the habitat of a plant species of special concern.
Millbrook Swamp BDA	Worth Township	This site is a wetland and contains an animal species of special concern
Sandy Creek Headwaters BDA	Sandy Creek Township	Fen and forested wetland that supports two natural communities and two plant species of special concern.

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Site Name	Municipality	Site Importance
Schollard Run BDA	Springfield Township	Open fields and wetlands that provide habitat for several plant and animal species of special concern. Also location of a ravine with a hemlock-northern hardwoods community.
Sharpsville BDA	Sharpsville BDA	Riverine habitat within the Shenango River that supports an animal species of special concern.
Urey Swamp BDA	Mill Creek Township	Headwater swamp of Mill Creek that contains a special natural community.
Notable		
Wolf Creek LCA	Liberty Township	LCA that is the location of high quality aquatic community.
Wolf Creek Wetlands BDA	Worth Township	Wetland along Wolf Creek that provides habitat for a Pennsylvania animal species of special concern.
Amsterdam BDA	Liberty Township	Roadside habitat and mature forested area that provides habitat for a plant and animal species of special concern.
Salem BDA	Sugar Grove Township	Mature forest that provides breeding habitat for an animal species of special concern.
Kashner Corners Swamp BDA	Otter Creek Township	Wetland in the headwaters of Otter Creek that holds a Wet Meadow and a Bottomland Oak-Hardwood Palustrine Forest.
Leesburg Station BDA	Springfield Township	Stream habitat along Neshannock Creek that provides habitat for an animal species of special concern.
Little Neshannock Creek BDA	Wilmington Township	Stream community and riparian area that provides habitat for an animal species of special concern.
Little Neshannock Creek BDA	Pine Township	Wetland that is the location of a natural community and a plant species of special concern.
County Significant		
Swamp Run Tributary BDA		Small, isolated wetland that is the location of a Pennsylvania plant species of special concern.
Wolf Creek Swamp BDA		Forested swamp in the floodplain of Wolf Creek recognized as a special natural community.
Deer Creek BDA		South-facing slope that is the location of a county significant natural community.
Shenango River Oxbow BDA		Wetland in the floodplain of the Shenango River that has a county significant natural community.

Source: Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory

Recreation Areas

The abundance, diversity and quality of natural resources in the county afford residents numerous resource-based recreational opportunities. In addition, several communities have acquired parkland and developed athletic and leisure facilities. These resource- and facility-based recreation areas are characterized below and illustrated on the supporting maps.

Federal Lands

The **Shenango River Lake** is the reservoir created by the Shenango River Dam, which was constructed by the US Army COE in 1965. The dam serves multiple purposes: flood control and seasonal discharge regulations for water quality improvements on the beaver and Upper Ohio Rivers, as well as recreation. The property includes 15,071 acres (589 acres above the dam) and 3,560 acres (5.5 square miles) of water surface during the summer pool stage. The Pennsylvania Game Commission manages approximately 3,000 acres for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Recreational facilities are located throughout the property and include:

- 14 recreation areas
- 334 picnic sites
- 413 camping sites
- 7 playgrounds
- 3 swimming areas
- 29 trail miles
- 1 fishing docks
- 7 boat ramps
- 1 marinas
- 328 marina slips

The boundaries of the Shenango River Lake are shown specifically on the Federal and State Lands Map and as base features on other project maps.

State Lands

The 2,856-acre **Maurice K. Goddard State Park**⁷ features the 1,860-acre Lake Wilhelm. The large lake, abundant wetlands, old fields and mature forests provide a diversity of habitats for wildlife, especially waterfowl and eagles and ospreys, and are popular with anglers. The park offers numerous opportunities for environmental education.

Many recreational activities attract state park visitors in all seasons.

- **Boating** - The Marina has 250 car parking spaces, 121 car/trailer-parking spaces, 241 slips, a four-lane boat-launching ramp, two courtesy docks, a marina building and fueling station. A boat rental concession in the Marina rents rowboats, pontoon boats, paddle boats, kayaks and canoes. In addition to the boat launch area at the Marina, there are seven other launches around the lake. Four are within the state park and three are in the state game lands.
- **Fishing** - An area called the "Rounded Point," near the Marina parking lot, has an accessible fishing pier.

⁷ DCNR website, <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/>

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- **Picnicking** - Picnic tables and charcoal grills are available throughout the park. Boat Launches 1, 2, 3, 4 and the Marina have restrooms and large picnicking areas.
- **Hunting** - Over 1,155 acres of Maurice K. Goddard State Park, plus Lake Wilhelm, are open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer and waterfowl. State Game Land 270 is adjacent to the park.
- **Trails** - The park has fourteen miles of designated hiking trails: a 12-mile a multi-use Trail, a 0.7 mile Falling Run Nature Trail, and the 1.25 mile Goddard McKeever Hiking Trail. All three offer cultural history sites and scenic views.
- **Winter Sports** - The parks facilities are popular sites for sledding, ice boating, ice fishing, ice skating, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing.

The boundaries of Goddard State Park are shown specifically on the Federal and State Lands Map and as base features on other project maps.

Table 2-6 Recreation Facilities on Federal and State Property, Mercer County

	Federal (US Army COE) Property	State Property	
	Shenango River Lake	Pymatuning State Park	Maurice K. Goddard State Park
Location	north of Sharon/ Hermitage along PA 18	north of Jamestown	New Vernon Township
Size (approximate acres)	15,071	21,122	2,658
Facilities			
Picnic Tables	X	X	X
Pavilions	X	X	X
Lodging/Cabins		X	
Camping	X	X	
Boat Access	X	X	X
Swimming Area	X		
Fishing	X	X	X
Hunting	X	X	X
Ice/Winter Sports		X	X
Walking/Biking Trails	X	X	X
Trails for motorized vehicles			X
Nature Center / Environmental Programs		X	X
Natural Areas		X	
All-purpose Fields	X		
Play Equipment	X		
Restrooms	X	X	X
Water / Electric	X	X	X
Concession Stand			
Orientation* (Passive/Active/Both)	B	B	B

- **Pymatuning State Park**⁸ is one of the largest state parks in the Commonwealth. Pymatuning State Park is located in southwestern Crawford County. The park office is located near the Crawford-Mercer County line about 1.5 miles north of Jamestown, Pennsylvania. The park encompasses at 21,122 acres, including the 17,088-acre Pymatuning Reservoir is the largest lake in the Commonwealth. Approximately three-fourths of the reservoir area is located in Crawford County and the remaining one-fourth is located in Ashtabula County, Ohio. Due to its proximity and facilities, Pymatuning State Park is popular with Mercer County residents and warrants a brief description in this plan.
 - Pymatuning has two natural areas. The 275-acre Blackjack Swamp provides habitat for unique natural communities. Clark Island, which lies in the the northern part of the reservoir, has 161 acres of mature hardwood and white pine forest.
 - Curriculum based environmental education programs are available to schools and youth groups. Teacher workshops are available. Group programs must be arranged in advance and may be scheduled by calling the park office. Programs are offered year-round.
 - **Boating** - Non-powered boats and boats to 10 horsepower are permitted. Boats with a motor in excess of 10 horsepower are permitted provided the motor is not used.
 - **Winter sports** - Ice boating is a popular winter sport. Ice fishing during the winter months is also popular. An accessible fishing pier is located at the Espyville Marina and the Shenango River.
 - **Hunting** - Controlled shooting is available in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Wildlife Management Area during the annual waterfowl season. Special areas are also established for duck hunting. Public hunting is available in many areas surrounding the controlled shooting section.
 - **Camping** - With 657, class A, campsites in three areas, Pymatuning is one of the largest camping areas in the Commonwealth. Approximately half of the campsites have electric hookups. Modern tent and trailer camping areas are available in the Jamestown, Tuttle and Linesville campgrounds. In addition, an organized group camping area is available for groups of up to 400 people. 25 modern rental cabins are available for year-round use.
 - **Picnicking** - Picnic tables and charcoal fireplaces are available in many areas. There are eleven picnic pavilions throughout the park.
 - **Swimming** - Four protected bathing beaches are generally open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. In addition, a protected beach for campers is located in the Jamestown Camping Area. Three of the beaches, Tuttle, Jamestown No. 1 and Linesville, have bathhouses with sanitary facilities and food concession stands or food vending machines.

There are no state forest lands in Mercer County. The closest state forests are Cornplanter State Forest (#14) in western Forest County and Kittaning State Forest (#8) in northern Jefferson County, Venango County, and southern Forest County. (DCNR)

⁸ Ibid.

There are five designated Pennsylvania Game Commission state game land areas in Mercer County:

- No. 270 – Sandy Creek and Deer Creek Townships
- No. 130 – Worth, Sandy Lake, Jackson and Lake Townships
- No. 151 – Liberty Township
- No. 284 – Springfield Township
- No. 294 – Coolspring and Fairview Townships

Other Hunting Sites

There are no public shooting ranges in Mercer County, though there are several sportsmen’s clubs with private practice ranges throughout the county.

County Parkland

Mercer County does not own any county parks or recreation land. The county leases lakefront property, the Chestnut Run Swim Beach, from the US ACOE. The 73-acre, 500-ft lakefront property was constructed in the 1970s. A 25-year lease agreement was just renewed with US ACOE in 2004, and will expire in 2029. Mercer County has established a cooperative agreement with MCRCOG to operate the facility on a day-to-day basis, and contributes \$5000 per year toward operations and maintenance.

Municipal Parkland

There are 78 municipal parks in communities of all sizes in Mercer County; only 5 facilities are located in the rural communities. Table 2-7 presents the name, location, facilities, size and type of each municipal park. These parks are all owned by public entities based on available information. This list encompasses facilities in both rural and urban areas; further assessment and recommendations will focus on facilities and provision in the rural communities.

There is a total of 13 acres of municipal parkland in the rural communities of the county. The parks range in size from less than one to five acres.

These parks serve a variety of active recreational purposes; there are

- 2 neighborhood parks; these are intended to serve small neighborhood populations
- 2 community parks; these are designed to serve multiple neighborhoods with additional facilities
- 1 special use (or single use) parks – such as ballfields

Table 2-7 Municipal Parks

Name	Municipality/ Location	Size (acres)	Benches/Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Sand Volleyball	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	All-purpose/ Football Fields	Shuffleboard	Walking/Biking Trails	Swimming Pool	Amphitheatre/Stage	Horseshoe Pits	Play Equipment	Restrooms	Water /Electric	Concession Stand	Orientation* (Passive/Active)	Classification	Other Specialized Facilities
Municipal Facilities in Rural Areas																						
Fredonia Park	Fredonia	1		X												X					N	
Jamestown Park	Jamestown	<1			X											X					N	
Sheakleyville Community Volunteer Fireman's Park	Sheakleyville	<5																			S	
Delaware Township Park	Delaware	1			X	X			X												C	
Lackawannock Township Park	Lackawannock	5	X	X	X			X	X	X						X	X				C	
Total		13	1	2	3	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	n/a	
Municipal Facilities in Urban and Multi-Municipal Planning Areas																						
Henderson Taylor Community Park	Clark	6.23	X	X		1/2				X						X	X	E		A	C	Municipal Bdg, Maintenance Garage
Southwest Gardens Park/Playground	Farrell	<1	X	X												X		X		A	N	
Emerson Avenue Playground		<1	X	X		2										X				A	N	
Veteran's Square		1.25		X						X											P	G
Greenville Riverside Park	Greenville	90-95	X	X	C2	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	PP	E	X	P/A	C	Recreation Center, Nature / Environ.Center
Columbia Park		7																			C	
York Street Park		0.5																			N	
Central Park		n/a																				C
Greenville Sports Complex	West Salem	45	X	X				X	X		X					X	X	X	X	P/A	R	

continued

Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan

Name	Municipality/ Location	Size (acres)	Benches/Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Sand Volleyball	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	All-purpose/ Football Fields	Shuffleboard	Walking/Biking Trails	Swimming Pool	Amphitheatre/Stage	Horseshoe Pits	Play Equipment	Restrooms	Water /Electric	Concession Stand	Orientation* (Passive/Active)	Classification	Other Specialized Facilities		
Grove City Memorial Park	Grove City	214	X	X		X			X	X		X	X			X	X	X		P/A	C			
McConnell Park		1	X			1/2										X						N		
Terrace Park		1	X			1/2										X							N	
Community Park		265																					C	
Rainey Avenue Park		1	X			1/2										X							N	
Union Park		1	X			1/2										X							N	
Stewart Avenue Park		1	X	P		1/2										X							N	
Hunter Farm Park		239	X	P		1/2			X				X			X							N	
Hempfield Township Municipal Park	Hempfield	174	X	X	X	X	N		X	X		X			X	X	PP	X			P/A	C		
Baker Avenue Park (Residential)	Hermitage	1+							X												P/A	N		
Buhl Farm Park		350	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X			P/A	R	free 9-hole golf, performing arts center, social hall
Rodney White Olympic Park		8	X	X	X				X			X				X	X	X				A	C	
Patagonia Little League		2.4							X								X					A	S	
Hickory Little League (Virginia Road)		11.5							X							X	X	X	X			A	S	
Hasenflu Area (Residential)		1.4																					N	
Whispering Pines		23																					C	
Holy Cross Grounds - Maple Drive		11.5																					P	
Linden Point - Trails		n/a																					P	
Holy Trinity Grove Church		11	X	X						X	X												P	

continued

Inventory of Resources

Name	Municipality/ Location	Size (acres)	Benches/Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Sand Volleyball	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	All-purpose/ Football Fields	Shuffleboard	Walking/Biking Trails	Swimming Pool	Amphitheatre/Stage	Horseshoe Pits	Play Equipment	Restrooms	Water /Electric	Concession Stand	Orientation* (Passive/Active)	Classification	Other Specialized Facilities	
Wesky McAfoose Community Park	Jackson Center	<1	X	X					X	X						X		X		A	C		
Jefferson Township Community Park and Zahniser Lodge / Play Ground	Jefferson Township	109	X	X	X	1/2	X	X	X			X				X	X	X		P/A	C		
Pine Grove Community Center	Pine Township	n/a																			C		
Little League Ball Fields		n/a																			S		
Pymatuning Township Park	Pymatuning	n/a	X	X					X	X						X	X	X			C		
Turner Craig Park	Sandy Lake	1+	X	X		1/2										X		E		P	N	Veterans Memorial	
B Street Playground	Sharon	<1	X													X				A	N		
Case Playground (school)		1								X						X					A	N	
Medical Center		0.1																				G	
Fourth Ward Residential		0.27																				N	
Mesabi Residential		1.05																				N	
Florence St. Residential		0.2																				N	
Quimby St. Residential		0.36																				N	
Wengler Ave.		2			X	X	X			X							X	X	X	A		N	
School St. (Residential)		0.52																				N	
Hickory St. (Residential)		1.1																				N	
Jefferson Playground		2			X					X								X	X			N	
Musser Playground (school)		<1															X					N	
Bicentennial Park		n/a		X													X					C	
North Sharon Playground		2				X				X							X	PP	X	X	A	N	

continued

Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan

Name	Municipality/ Location	Size (acres)	Benches/Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Sand Volleyball	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	All-purpose/ Football Fields	Shuffleboard	Walking/Biking Trails	Swimming Pool	Amphitheatre/Stage	Horseshoe Pits	Play Equipment	Restrooms	Water /Electric	Concession Stand	Orientation* (Passive/Active)	Classification	Other Specialized Facilities	
West Hill Playground (school)	Sharon	<1														X					N		
Veterans Park	Sharpsville	0.5	X	X														F			N		
Sharpsville Gardens (MCHA)		0.41		X													X					N	
7th St. Elementary School		0.86		X																		N	
Sharpsville High School Stadium		4.42																				N	
Sharpsville High School Practice Field		3.4																				N	
Pebbley Elementary School		1.09																				N	
George town Playground		0.2											X									N	
Canal Extension Lock Recreation Area and Rausch Cabin property		5	X	X																		C	fishing dock
Shenango Township Park	Shenango	3.84	X	X				X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X			C		
Kanady Field	South Pymatuning	1.38																			N		
Pymatuning Youth Association		6.61							X													N	
Williams Field		0.86																				N	
Township Recreation Area		3	X																			N	
McCullough Run Park		3	X						X	X	X		X				X	X	X	X	A	N	
Tamarack Road Fields (South Pymatuning Ballfields)		3	X	X					X	X							X	X	X	X	A	N	
Stoneboro Memorial Park	Stoneboro	<5	X	X	C1	X										X	E				C		
Ballfields (maintained by Knot Hole Little League)	Stoneboro	<5							X								X		X		C		

continued

Inventory of Resources

Name	Municipality/ Location	Size (acres)	Benches/Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Sand Volleyball	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	All-purpose/ Football Fields	Shuffleboard	Walking/Biking Trails	Swimming Pool	Amphitheatre/Stage	Horseshoe Pits	Play Equipment	Restrooms	Water /Electric	Concession Stand	Orientation* (Passive/Active)	Classification	Other Specialized Facilities	
Lackawannock-Shenango-West Middlesex Community Swimming Pool	West Middlesex	3-5	X	X			X						X			X	X	X	X	A	C	Skate Park	
Sweesy Field		1.1							X										X	A	S		
Kiwanis Community Park		3-5	X	X					X	X						X	X	X			A	C	
Beechwood Ave Playground	Wheatland	n/a	X	X						X							X					N	
Wheatland-Farrell Little League Field		5.75							X													C	
MCRCOG Fields on US ACOE Lands	South Pymatuning	n/a																				S	
MCRCOG Chestnut Run Swim Beach on US ACOE Lands	South Pymatuning	73																				S	
Total		1736	27	22	6	5	1	5	19	11	1	10	4	2	3	27	14	15	6	0			

Source: Gannett Fleming
Notes

C1 to be converted to a skate park
C2 to be converted to 2 basketball courts

N = not in use
P = planned

PP = Port-a-Pot

Classification: C = Community Park, N = Neighborhood Park, R = Regional Park

Mercer County is renowned for its public golf courses. The Mercer County Golf Trail Map lists nine courses and three hotels to cater to the golfers’ needs. In fact, Mercer was ranked in the Top 10 Best Golf Towns in the USA by Golf Digest.

Table 2-8 Golf Courses, Mercer County

Name	Location
Castle Hills Golf Course	New Castle
Buhl Farm	Sharon
Green Meadows Golf Course,	Volant
Greenville Country Club	Greenville
Oak Tree Country Club	West Middlesex
Pine Grove Golf Course	Grove City
Pine Hill Golf Course	Greenville
Spring Valley Golf Club & Lodge	Mercer
Tam O'Shatner Golf Course	Hermitage
Tanglewood Golf Course	Pulaski

Source: Mercer County

Other facility-based recreation is available to residents and visitors through quasi-public and private organizations. Quasi-public parks are those in private, non-profit ownership. Private facilities are for profit/commercial operations. These facilities are listed in Tables 2-9 and 2-10.

Table 2-9 Quasi-Public Recreation Sites

Name	Municipality / Location	Size (acres)	Benches / Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Soft ball Fields	Shuffleboard	Walking/Biking Trails	Swimming Pool	Play Equipment	Restrooms	Water /Electric	Concession Stand	Orientation* (Passive/Active)	Other Specialized Facilities
Brandy Springs Park / Swimming Pool / Golf Course	Mercer	52	X	X							X	X				P/A	Public golf course
Little League Field	Perry	<1						X									
Little League Field	Otter Creek	<1						X									
Private Ballfield	Wilmington	n/a						X									
Sandy Lake	Stoneboro	383	X	X													Beach
Hickory Little League Fields	Hermitage	n/a					X	X									
YMCA Shenango Valley	Hermitage	n/a					X										Indoor basketball
YMCA Grove City	Grove City	n/a															
Buhl Club	Sharon	n/a			X	X			X	Track	X		X	X	X	A	Indoor sports and recreation center, Nautilus

Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission; Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Table 2-10 Private Recreation Facilities

Name	Location	Facilities
Encounter Sports	Jefferson	Paintball
Olympic Fun Center	Hermitage	Indoor skating rink
Recreation Station	Hermitage	Batting cages, putt-putt golf, go-karts, hoops

Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission; Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Water Access Sites for Fishing and Boating

There 18 public and 2 private boat access points in the county. Eight public accesses are owned by the US ACOE at the Shenango River Lake; seven, by Goddard State Park; two by the Pennsylvania Game Commission at Lake Wilhelm in Goddard State Park; and one, by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission on the Shenango River. Additional access points are owned by local and county government, there are twenty through out the county.

- All sites site allows shore fishing except R.C. Marina and Lake Wilhelm - Old Launch - #1; only one site offers pier fishing, Marina Point.
- Six sites have access fees: Mahaney Access, Clark Recreation Area, R.C. Marina, Lake Latonka, and Sandy Lake.
- All sites have parking and all have boat ramps, except the Lake Wilhelm - Old Launch #1 and Marina Point.
- Eleven sites allow motorized boat without engine size limits. Seven sites have a twenty horsepower limit and two sites only allow unpowered boats.

Table 2-11 Waterway Access Locations

Number/ Name	Location/Waterway	Facilities					Owned By
		HP	FP	SF	P	LR	
164 – Mahaney Access	Route 18, left on Lamor Road to Sharpsville, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	COE
165 – Hartford Access	On Hartford Road, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	COE
166 – Parkers Landing	Off Seneca Road, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	COE
167 – Shenango Recreation Area	Route 18 north of the causeway, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	COE
168 – Golden Run	Route 258 East of Par Route 18, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	COE
169 – Clark Recreation Area	On Route 258 Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	COE
170 – R.C. Marina	Just above Sharpsville, Shenango River Lake	UL			L	Y	COE
171 – Big Bend	At Big Bend, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	S	Y	COE
172 – West Middlesex	South of West Middlesex, Shenango River Lake	UL		Y	S	Y	PFBC
173 – Lake Latonka	Northwest of Mercer, Lake Latonka	UL		Y	L	Y	Private
234 – Launch # 1	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20		Y	L	Y	State Parks
235 - Launch # 2	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20		Y	L	Y	State Parks
236 - Launch # 3	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20		Y	L	Y	State Parks
237 - Launch # 4	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20		Y	L	Y	State Parks
238 - Marina	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20		Y	L	Y	State Parks
239 – Long Boom – SGL 270	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	UP		Y	S	Y	PGC
240 – Sheakleyville Road – SGL 270	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	UP		Y	L	Y	PGC
241 – Lake Wilhelm – Old Launch # 1	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20			S		State Parks
260 – Marina Point	North of Sandy Lake on Route 173 and Georgetown Road in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm	20	Y	Y	L		State Parks
242 – Stoneboro Launch	Off Routes 62 and 358 Sandy Lake	UL		Y	L	Y	Private
<i>HP - Horse power (UL - Unlimited)</i>		<i>P - Parking (L- Large Area S - Small Area)</i>					
<i>FP - Fishing Pier</i>		<i>LR - Launching Ramp</i>					
<i>SF -Shore Fishing</i>							

Source: PA Fish and Boat Commission

Camping

The only public camping sites available in the county are those located at the Shenango River Lake (413 tent sites).

Trails

Mercer County has a limited number of recreational bicycle-pedestrian facilities. These facilities are shown on the Recreation Areas Map.

The **Shenango Trail** and two short side trails offer 8+ miles of public hiking trails from the Kidd's Mill Covered Bridge in Pymatuning Township to Big Bend in Jefferson Township. Nearly all of the trail is located on federally-owned lands of the Shenango Reservoir managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The trail follows the route of the historic Erie Extension Canal which operated mule-drawn cargo and passenger boats from the late 1830's to 1871. The trail is in good condition during fall, winter, and spring, but is a less pleasant hike in summer due to heavy vegetation, mosquitoes, and poison ivy.

Goddard State Park located in northeastern Mercer County has 21.5 miles of public hiking trails. They include a near-complete circuit of the lower half of Lake Wilhelm, a connector trail with nearby McKeever Environmental Learning Center, and an interpretive nature trail. Most of the trails are suitable for cross-country skiing and some are open to snowmobiles. Trails vary in condition from good to fair.

McKeever Environmental Learning Center is a modern environmental education center located on PA 358 west of Sandy Lake. It includes 3+ miles of hiking trails which provide nature walks through various parts of the center grounds. Trails are in good condition.

Seth Myers Nature Trail is an interpretive nature trail located in the Mahaney Recreation Area of Shenango Reservoir near Shenango Dam. It is about 1-mile long and is maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The trail is in good condition and is a popular short nature walk located close to the Shenango Valley urban area.

Other short hiking trails, both marked and unmarked, exist in municipal parks, church camps, etc. throughout the county. These include:

Riverside Park in Greenville has a 1-mile interpretive nature trail which includes a foot bridge over the Shenango River. The trail is maintained by the Greenville Area Leisure Services Association and is in good condition.

The **Hunter Farm Trail** is located in Grove City Borough. This facility was built using Transportation enhancement funds, and developed in two phases.

Sandy Lake and Stoneboro Boroughs are jointly building a 2.7-mile paved trail on the former Conrail railroad bed that connects the two boroughs.

In addition, the major population centers of the county do have sidewalk systems. On-going development and maintenance vary by community. In the future, years, it may become practical and necessary to further develop these modes of travel within the major population centers, specifically the Shenango Valley. The use of Transportation Enhancement funding will help facilitate the development of further trails for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the features of a community that make it socially and historically distinct from other communities. Such resources can foster a sense of unique identity, pride and connection within the community; they can also be a core resource for local tourism. Cultural resources typically include historic sites (and the people, stories and artifacts associated with them), museums, and community events, such as fairs and festivals.

Historic Sites

There are fifteen Mercer County listings on the **National Register of Historic Places** (see Table 5-1). An additional 26 properties, historic districts, or historic areas have been deemed eligible for listing by the National Park Service, the lead federal agency. Most of these are located in the County's boroughs and older communities.

The eleven listed properties include schools, churches, post offices, taverns, bridges and homesteads. Further details on these sites can be found in the Cultural Resources Profile of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan.

1. **Wendell August Forge**, located at 620 Madison Avenue in Grove City Borough believed to be the first to produce hand hammered aluminum wares. Today the forge is among the largest and oldest hand forge operations in the United States.
2. **Bridge in French Creek Township**, spanning French Creek on New Lebanon Road, is an intact example of a multiple span Pratt through truss bridge, a bridge type used frequently in northwestern Pennsylvania.
3. **The Frank H. Buhl Mansion**, located at 422 East State Street in the City of Sharon and built by Frank H. Buhl, the head of the Sharon Iron Company and one of Western Pennsylvania's leading philanthropists, is an example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style.
4. **The Mercer County Courthouse**, located in the "Diamond" in the Borough of Mercer, is a symmetrical Classical/Beaux Arts-styled building and served as a navigation point for early commercial aviation. The courthouse sits among several contributing historic resources, including the Mercer County War Memorial and the old Mercer County Jail, now the South Court House Annex.

Table 2-12 National Register/Listed and Eligible Properties in Mercer County, 2003

Municipality	Historic Name	Address	Listed	Eligible	Key No.
Coolspring Township	Zahnizer, George and Margaret, Farm	319 Tait Road		6/12/2003	116339
Delaware Township	New Hamburg Historical Area	Rte. 58/L.R. 43096; Shenango R. Banks, 7 mile South	12/02/1974		00601
East Lackawannock	Sharlow Farm	750 W. Middlesex Road		02/12/1987	088823
Farrell City	Farrell, J.A., Elementary School	1020 Spearman Avenue		07/24/1998	110198
Farrell City	Shenango Land Plan Historic District	Union Street, Pargny Avenue, Indiana Avenue		06/19/2001	116340
French Creek Township	Bridge in French Creek Township	L.R. 43074	06/22/1988		000050
Greenville Borough	Greenville Borough Building	125 Main Street		6/27/2003	
Greenville Borough	Greenville Commercial Historic District	Centered on Main Street, Canal Street & Clinton Street	08/10/2000		105794
Greenville Borough	Greenville Hall	Thiel College		12/16/1991	097642
Greenville Borough	U.S. Post Office, Greenville	55 Clinton Street		07/03/1984	064525
Greenville Borough	Waugh, A.P. & James, House	23 W. Main Street	04/23/1998		102195
Grove City Borough	August, Wendell, Forge	620 Madison Avenue	11/07/1996		102379
Grove City Borough	Chestnut Street Bridge	Chestnut Street		07/13/1994	102413
Grove City Borough	Grove City U.S. Post Office	117 E. Pine Street		07/10/1984	067751
Hempfield Township	Quaker Bridge	L.R. 43135	06/22/1988		000018
Hermitage City	Gibson Property	2245 Valley View		05/26/1995	103574
Hermitage City	Joseph, Bryan, Property	1460 N. Hermitage Road		05/26/1995	103567
Hermitage City	Kelly Road Bridge	T-388		11/28/1990	097021
Hermitage City	Western Pennsylvania Adolescent Center	1055 N. Hermitage		05/26/1995	103576
Jackson Township	King's Tavern	Cor. S.R. 2007 & S.R. 0955		04/07/1995	103306
Jamestown Borough	Campbell, James, House	403 Liberty Street		11/19/1982	001560
Jamestown Borough	Gibson House	210 Liberty Street	12/01/1978		000604
Jamestown Borough	Stone Arch Bridge, Jamestown & Franklin Railroad	Over PA Rte. 58		05/09/1990	096834
Jefferson Township	Big Bend Historical Area	Rte. 258/T-577; N. Bank Shenango R.: 6 mile Northwest	04/21/1975		000605
Lake Township	Bridge No. 1608	T-732		11/30/1993	101973
Mercer Borough	Courthouse, Mercer County		11/12/1998		102380
Mercer Borough	Houston's Building	110 N. Pitt Street		10/03/2001	118668
Mercer Borough	Lindsey, Christiana, House	313 E. Butler Street	01/15/1998		105471
Mercer Borough	Mercer County Jail	S. Diamond Street		07/20/1978	050939

Table 2-13 National Register/Listed and Eligible Properties in Mercer County, 2003 continued

Municipality	Historic Name	Address	Listed	Eligible	Key No.
Mill Creek Township	Bridge No. 1211	T-733, Plants Road		11/30/1993	101972
Pymatuning Township	Kidd's Mills Historic Area	Rte. 58/T-653; Shenango R. Banks, 5 miles South of	12/02/1974		000603
Sharon City	Buhl, Frank H., Mansion	422 E. State Street	12/02/1977		000606
Sharon City	Sharon Junior & Senior High School	36 Case Avenue		07/31/2001	116951
Sharon City	West Hill Historic District	State Street, Irvine Avenue, Hall Avenue		03/21/1990	096809
Sharpsville Borough	Erie Extension Canal, Lock No. 10	High Street Near Shenango River		06/29/1988	095508
Sharpsville Borough	First Universalist Church of Sharpsville	131 N. Mercer Ave.	5/29/2003		119107
Sharpsville Borough	Kelly Road Bridge	T-388		11/28/1990	097021
Sharpsville Borough	Pierce, Jonas J., House	60 Shenango Street	10/24/1996		102985
South Pymatuning Township	Orangeville	Orangeville, Both in Ohio and in Pennsylvania		01/04/1990	050940
Springfield Township	Johnston's Tavern	U.S. Rte. 19 – Six Miles East of Mercer	03/24/1972		000602
West Salem Township	Porter House	264 Porter Road Greenville		06/25/2001	116956

Source: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Bureau of Historic Preservation (2003)

5. **The Gibson House**, located at 210 Liberty Street in the Borough of Jamestown, was built with homemade bricks and contains elements of Georgian, Greek Revival, and Italianate styles of architecture. The Gibson House was reportedly used as an Underground Railroad site and visited by Mark Twain, who was a friend of its builder, Dr. William Gibson.
6. **Johnston's Tavern**, located six miles south of Mercer Borough in Springfield Township, was constructed of fieldstone in the country Greek Revival architectural style and was one of the few, early stage stops on the Pittsburgh-Erie Turnpike.
7. **The Christiana Lindsey House**, located at 313 East Butler Street in the Borough of Mercer, is noteworthy as one of Mercer Borough's large and stylistically ornate Victorian-era mansions, but it is truly significant because it is the only high-style Italianate residence in the borough and because of the abundance and quality of its stylistic details.
8. **The Jonas J. Pierce House**, located at 60 Shenango Street in the Borough of Sharpsville, is an outstanding regional residential example of the Second Empire style.
9. **The Quaker Bridge**, traversing the Little Shenango River on Williamson Road in Hempfield Township, is an intact example of a Pratt through truss bridge.
10. **James Waugh House** on 23 West Main Street in the Borough of Greenville, constructed in 1826 of locally produced orange red brick, is the oldest documented surviving building in the Borough of Greenville.
11. **The First Universalist Church of Sharpsville**, located at 131 North Mercer Avenue in the Borough of Sharpsville, was built between 1882 and 1884 in the High Victorian Gothic Style. Constructed by the industrialist Pierce family, who were instrumental in the development of the Borough of Sharpsville, the church at the time of its completion became home to the only Universalist denomination in Mercer County. The church contains thirty stained glass windows and the second pipe organ built in Mercer County and the oldest one still in existence. The church is the most recent listed property on the National Register.

There are four historic districts in the County. An historic district is a single geographic area of contiguous historic properties. The Greenville Commercial Historic District is a listed site. The Shenango Land Plan Historic District, and the West Hill Historic District are eligible sites.

1. **The Greenville Commercial Historic District**, located in the center of the Borough of Greenville, was designated in 2000. The district contains approximately 48 contributing buildings and 19 non-contributing buildings on nine acres of Main Street, Canal Street and a portion of Clinton Street. The majority of the contributing buildings were built between 1871 and 1890 (after major fires in 1871 and 1873) resulting in an architectural distinctive appearance characterized by brick materials and Italianate and other late 19th century stylistic influences. The district was important for its association with the

commercial life of the borough, from the era of the Erie Extension Canal to the railroads to iron manufacturing.

The County's three historic areas are the New Hamburg HA, the Big Bend HA, and the Kidd's Mill HA. All are listed sites and are connected by the Shenango Trail.

1. The **New Hamburg Historical Area** comprises 159 acres at the site of the Village of New Hamburg in Delaware Township. This area was once a shipping hub and iron furnace along the Erie Extension Canal local railroad. The bed of the railroad and the remains of the canal and towpath are still visible. Except for the Shenango Trail, the site is currently heavily overgrown.
2. The 209-acre **Big Bend Historical Area**, located at the eastern end of the Shenango Reservoir in Jefferson Township, was once a Delaware and Seneca Indian village that developed with the opening of the Erie Extension Canal in 1840. When the canal shut down in 1871, Big Bend virtually disappeared by 1900.
3. The **Kidd's Mills Historic Area**, located adjacent to Kidd's Mills Road in Pymatuning Township, comprises an area of about 33 acres and contains the only historic covered bridge in Mercer County and the sites of two grist mills. The covered bridge is the only remaining example in the eastern United States of a "Smith Cross Truss".

One additional property, **The Erie Extension Canal, Lock No. 10**, is worth noting for its significance in state history. The Erie Extension Canal, Lock No. 10, located along the Shenango River off High Street in the Borough of Sharpsville's Community Park, is noted as an eligible site on the National Register of Historic Places. The lock is complete except for its wooden gates and is the only extant masonry lock in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Fifteen state historical markers symbolize the significance of Mercer County sites in Pennsylvania history. Most of the markers were dedicated in the 1940s when the program began. The historical markers represent a wide range of historical categories ranging from Government & Politics, and Governors, to Transportation, Bridges, and Canals, to the Native American, Underground Railroad, African American, and Women, to Business & Industry, Buildings, Taverns. The most recent markers, Camp Reynolds and the Kidd's Mill Covered Bridge, were dedicated in the mid 1990s.

The vast majority of historical markers in the County are roadside markers. Several state historical markers are missing from their locations, and have not been replaced.

Table 2-14 Pennsylvania Historical Markers in Mercer County

Marker Name:	Dedicated:	Location:	Category:	Marker Text:
City Markers				
Mercer County	5/12/1983	County courthouse, at Courthouse Square, Mercer	Government & Politics, Government & Politics 19th Century	Formed March 12, 1800 from Allegheny County. The U.S. census reported 3228 residents in 1800. Named for General Hugh Mercer, Revolutionary hero killed at Battle of Princeton, 1777. Early iron and coal center. Mercer, the county seat, was incorporated 1814.
Roadside Markers				
Albert Bushnell Hart	4/30/1948	Pa. 258 at Clark	Professions & Vocations, Education	Distinguished scholar and historian, Harvard graduate and member of its faculty for sixty years, was born nearby, July 1, 1854, and lived here six years. He died July 16, 1943, at Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Bigler Graves	11/12/1946	Pa. 58 SE of Greenville	Government & Politics, Government & Politics 19th Century, Governors	Jacob and Susan Bigler, parents of two governors, are buried here. Their son William was Governor of Pennsylvania, 1852-55; and their son John, Governor of California, 1852-56.
Bigler Home	11/12/1946	Pa. 58 SE of Greenville	Government & Politics, Government & Politics 19th Century, Governors	Jacob and Susan Bigler, parents of two governors, lived nearby after 1822. In January 1852 their son John became Governor of California, and their son William became Governor of Pennsylvania.
Camp Reynolds	9/1/1994	Rte. 18 S of Greenville	Military, Military Post-Civil War	Site of a 3300-acre U.S. Army facility, 1942-45. Originally the Shenango Personnel Replacement Depot; renamed 1943. During World War II about a million troops passed through here; most were headed for Europe. A peak of 75,000 were housed here at one time; racial unrest flared up, July 1943. Here also were over 1800 German prisoners of war, 1944-46. After 1946 this became a scene of major civilian development.
Clay Furnace	1/20/1949	U.S. 62 W of Charleston	Business & Industry, Iron, Coal, Furnaces	First successful use of raw bituminous coal in place of charcoal, 1846; and of unmixed Lake Superior iron ore in 1856. Built 1845 by Vincent & Himrod; named for Henry Clay. Abandoned in 1861. The site is 2 miles away.
Erie Extension Canal	4/30/1948	Wasser Bridge Rd. (SR 4003) just E of Pa. 18, S of Greenville (Missing)	Transportation, Environment, Canals	Route of travel and trade, Pittsburgh to Great Lakes, 1840-1871. The old canal bed may be seen here in Clarksville and for about four miles eastward along the road to Mercer.
Erie Extension Canal	11/12/1946	Junction Pa. 18 & 518	Transportation, Canals	Route of travel and trade, Pittsburgh to Great Lakes, 1840-1871. Important to the western Pennsylvania iron industry before the rise of the railroads. The only remaining canal lock still stands in Sharpsville.

Marker Name:	Dedicated:	Location:	Category:	Marker Text:
Erie Extension Canal	11/12/1947	Wasser Bridge Road, .3 mile E of Pa. 18, S of Greenville (Missing)	Transportation, Environment, Canals	The channel is clearly visible from here. Part of the Shenango Line, from New Castle to near Conneaut Lake. Built by the State; formally opened to Greenville, Aug. 23, 1840. Run by the Erie Canal Co., 1844-70. Closed 1871.
Freedom Road	8/23/1948	U.S. 62 SW of Sandy Lake	Underground Railroad, African American, Women	In search of freedom, men and women brought from the South by the "Underground Railroad" settled near here about 1825 and later. After 1850, most of them went on to Canada. Their cemetery, still in use, lies a short distance above the road.
James Sheakley	3/6/1967	U.S. 19 at Sheakleyville	Government & Politics, Government & Politics 19th Century	Fourth Territorial Governor of Alaska, 1893-1897, James Sheakley (1829-1917), was born in Sheakleyville, which was named for his grandfather. Appointed by President Cleveland, he also served as United States Commissioner of Schools for Alaska, 1887-1892.
Johnston Tavern	8/24/1948	U.S. 19 N of Leesburg	Business & Industry, Buildings, Taverns	Kept by Arthur Johnston; licensed in 1827. Present building erected in 1831. Served travelers on the Pittsburgh-Mercer road, and stood conveniently near Springfield Furnace, in operation after 1837.
Kidd's Mill Covered Bridge	7/15/1995	SR 4012 5 miles S of Greenville	Transportation, Bridges	Built in 1868, spanning the Shenango River. The only remaining bridge in Pennsylvania with an all-wooden truss design patented by Robert Smith of Tippecanoe City, Ohio. The last historic covered bridge in Mercer County, extending 120 feet in length and restored in 1990.
Pymatuning	11/12/1946	Pa. 258 E of Clark (Missing)	Native American	Delaware Indian village on opposite river bank about 1764-1785. Name was once used for upper Shenango River, which flowed from Pymatuning Swamp, now Pymatuning Reservoir.
Shenango Town	3/14/1947	Pa. 118 SE of West Middlesex (Missing)	Native American	Wyandot and Delaware Indian town on nearby riverbanks about 1750-1785. Under control of Seneca Iroquois, of whom a few bands remained in this region until about 1812.

Source: PHMC

Additional Historical and Cultural Interest Sites

In addition to sites of state and national significance, there are a number of properties in Mercer County that signify County and local history or that represent cultural aspects of history not recognized by the National Park Service.

1. **Indian Cemetery**, located in French Creek Township, is the burial site of at least three Native Americans. One of these is alleged to be Guyasuta, an important Seneca Chief and guide for George Washington while Washington was attempting to convince the French in northwestern Pennsylvania not to settle on land claimed by England.

2. **Caldwell One-Room Schoolhouse**, located in Delaware Township at the junction of State Route 58 and Hamburg Road, was the last of more than 300 one-room schoolhouses in Mercer County to close, in 1960.
3. **The Columbia Theatre**, located in Sharon, was hailed as the "finest theatre between Pittsburgh and Erie," providing the ultimate in patron comfort and modern theatrical systems. For three generations, the Columbia Theatre was Mercer County's home for grand entertainment.
4. **The Avenue of Flags and Hillcrest Memorial Park**, located in Hermitage, is a 71-acre memorial park to the American hostages that were held in Iran between 1979 and 1981. The 444 flags remain today a symbol of American hope and pride.
5. **The Canal Museum** in Greenville was established in 1990 and pays tribute to the Erie Extension canal era from 1827 to 1871 with various displays of artifacts and historic information. The Museum was located on the exact location of Lock 22, a guard lock on the Erie Extension Canal.
6. **The Greenville Railroad Park and Museum** were founded in 1985. The Park and Museum is located on Main Street and boasts Engine 604, the largest switch engine ever built and the only one in existence world-wide; the Empire Car, one of 500 built in Greenville by the Greenville Metal Products Company; and the first parachute, invented in Greenville by the Slovakian Stefan Banic, a Greenville coal miner, and patented in 1914.

Further Historic Designation

Identifying structures or other resources as historic is one of the first steps in determining its significance. Resources must be at least fifty years old to be designated as "historic," using criteria established by the National Park Service.

The actual number of sites in Mercer County that meet guidelines for identification as "historic" is believed to be significantly greater than what has been documented to date. The Housing Chapter indicates that 42.3 percent of housing units are greater than 50 years old, however this percent does not represent commercial, industrial, government, or other public buildings over 50 years in age. Because these resources have not been researched and designated, they may not have received adequate consideration in community development policies.

There are no HARBs that administer review of structural and aesthetic improvements in the County's historic districts. Once a historic district has been designated, a community can establish an historic architectural review board (HARB) if it desires to maintain the visual character of the district in addition to recognizing its geographic location. Properties within the designated district are then required to meet specific guidelines when making structural and aesthetic improvements.

Community Resources

In addition to the resource and recreation based resources available in Bradford County, many other community features contribute popular destinations and linkages with neighborhoods and community centers. Schools and libraries are the educational hubs of a community. The transportation network is the current system serving pedestrian and vehicular travel. These resources are inventoried here for their potential integration with an open space and recreation network in Bradford County.

Schools

Many public school facilities provide outdoor athletic facilities, some of which are available for public use. There are 13 public school districts within Mercer County; the Crawford School District reaches into the county to serve French Creek Township. Most elementary schools have playgrounds for young children and most high schools have athletic fields, courts, and/or running tracks.

Table 2-15 Public School Districts

School District	Based in	Serving
Commodore Perry SD	Hadley	Sandy Creek, Salem, Otter Creek, Perry, Sheakleyville and Deer Creek
Farrell Area SD	Farrell	Farrell and Wheatland
Greenville Area SD	Greenville	Hempfield, Greenville, and Sugar Grove
Grove City Area SD	Grove City	Springfield, Liberty, Pine, Grove City, and Wolf Creek
Hermitage SD	Hermitage	Hermitage
Jamestown Area SD	Jamestown	Greene and Jamestown
Lakeview SD	Stoneboro	New Vernon, Mill Creek, New Lebanon, Sandy Lake Borough, Sandy Lake Township, Stoneboro, Lake, Fairview, Jackson, Jackson Center, Worth
Mercer Area SD	Mercer	Jefferson, Coolspring, East Lackawannock, Mercer, and Findley
Reynolds SD	Greenville	West Salem, Pymatuning, and Delaware
Sharon City SD	Sharon	Sharon
Sharpsville Area SD	Sharpsville	Sharpsville, Clark, and South Pymatuning
West Middlesex Area SD	West Middlesex	Lackawannock, West Middlesex, and Shenango
Wilmington Area SD		Wilmington
Crawford SD		French Creek

Source: PA Department of Education

Public school facilities that are commonly used for public recreation programs are listed in table 2-16.

Table 2-16 Public School Facilities Utilized by Recreation Programs

Name	Municipality / Location	Approximate / Estimated Size (acres)	Benches/Picnic Tables	Pavilions	Soccer Fields	Baseball/Softball Fields	All-purpose/ Football Fields	Walking/Biking Trails	Play Equipment
Hickory Middle School	Hermitage	16							
Artman Elementary	Hermitage	9							
Hermitage Elementary	Hermitage	9							
Delahunty Elementary	Hermitage	20							
Hickory Township Junior High School	Hermitage	30			X	X	X		
High School Playground	Farrell	0.4	X	X					X
Washington Elementary School Playground	Grove City	3							X
West Hill Elementary	Sharon	7.8							
Commodore Perry High School	Perry	15		X		X		X	X
Total		110.2							

Additional athletic and playground facilities are available at the 10 non-public school sites throughout the county, as shown in Table 2-20.

Table 2-17 Non-public School and Religious Institutions with Recreation Facilities

School Facility	Location	Approximate / Estimated Size (acres)
Kennedy Christian High School	Hermitage	19
Monsignor Geno Monti School	Farrell	<5
Notre Dame	Hermitage	<5
St. Joseph School	Sharon	<5
St. Michael School	Greenville	<5
Central Christian Church	Hermitage	1.4
St. Paul's Church	Hermitage	5
Holy Cross Orthodox Church	Hermitage	11.5
Holy Trinity Grove Church	Hermitage	11
TOTAL		50-70

Source: Mercer County

Libraries

Mercer County has 6 public libraries. There is a library in each of the county's major communities, as well as in Sandy Lake.

Table 2-18 Libraries

Name	City
Greenville Area Public Library	Greenville
Grove City Community Library	Grove City
Mercer Area Library	Mercer
Sandy Lake Community Library	Sandy Lake
Shenango Valley Com Library	Sharon
Stey-Nevant Public Library	Farrell

Source: PA Department of Education

Travel Linkages

Mercer County's transportation system is a complex infrastructure that includes highways, rail service, public transportation and a few hiking trails. It is through this infrastructure that people and goods travel within the county. These facilities are highlighted on the Transportation Infrastructure Map and shown as based features on other project maps.

The only state highway with significance to the recreational network is US 19, which is designated and promoted as BicyclePA Route A. BicyclePA Route A stretches 199 miles from Erie, PA to Greene County, PA, just north of Morgantown, WV. The northern half is generally flat while the southern half is gently rolling to hilly. The northern terminus connects to BicyclePA Route Z and the Seaway Trail.

Local roads are typically more suitable for bicycle and pedestrian use in rural areas. In addition, they may offer opportunities for scenic driving routes. Several communities in the northeastern region are working to designate Creek Road as a scenic byway.

The condition of bridges represents opportunities for enhancing and expanding recreational travel. Bridge improvement/replacement projects offer opportunities to integrate bike-ped lanes or to re-use bridge structures for bike-ped trail. An assessment of bridge conditions is provided in the Transportation Profiles of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan.

The rail network in Mercer County consists of only two freight routes that serve some portions of the county. These include the Class 1 carrier of Norfolk Southern, and the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad shows the location of these rail lines within the county. Other tail lines and spurs exist but are no longer in active use. Such corridors may represent opportunities for rail-trail conversion.

Transit service in the county is provided by the **Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS)** and **Mercer County Community Transit (MCCT)**, primarily within and between the major population centers. MCCT provides on-demand, shared ride services to all communities within Mercer County. The service operates between ten (10) and fifteen (15) routes daily, depending on demand.

The **Shenango Valley MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan** advocates additional bike-ped network development. Three specific routes have been proposed in the **Shenango Valley MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Action Plan 2001**:

- Highland Road/East-West Corridor - This roadway based bicycle-pedestrian corridor connects the Shenango River to Hickory High School. The main segment of the route follows Highland Road through residential and institutional areas.
- Sharpsville/Wheatland North-South Corridor - This roadway based corridor would connect the US Army Corps of Engineers Overlook in Sharpsville with the borough of Wheatland through Sharon and Farrell.
- West Middlesex/Sharon Shenango River Rail Trail - The Shenango Valley MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian plan documents the region's bicycle/pedestrian committee recommendation that the region explore the development of an off-road trail along the Shenango River south to New Castle. This segment could then connect to the Slavic Trail along the Mahoning River into Lowellville, Ohio.

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