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## Chapter 4

# An Assessment of Needs, Threats and Opportunities

Planning for the future of any natural resource or man-made feature must contain an assessment of current conditions in order to draw relevant conclusions about the need for change. An assessment measures how the various features meet the needs of the community. In some instances, the measurement is compared to accepted standards; in others, it is subjectively compared to community values. This chapter reports the planning and programming efforts of rural communities and the needs of Mercer County residents, identified through the Greenways Committee, survey responses and focus group.

## **Standards and Approaches**

Recreation and open space analyses compare the available facilities and services with the needs of local residents. The analysis can address the number, type and distribution of facilities, the land area required for these facilities, as well as open space lands needed for nature-based or passive recreation. Analyses may also reference accepted standards a measure of services or lands provided. The result is a determination of what additional or expanded facilities and land areas are needed to meet the identified needs.

Historically, these analyses were based on rigid numeric standards for total land acreage. But today, recreation planners are spending more time exploring the specific wants and needs of residents to program recreation *and open space* investments in ways that residents will appreciate and utilize and that will sustain or improve their quality of life. Land acreage is still important but now as a measure of progress over time rather than as the golden rule. In other words, recreational analyses are increasingly needs-based, facilities-driven and land-measured.

### **Standards**

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What's come to be known as the municipal park standard – 10 acres per 1,000 residents – was initially intended as a guide or reference for the amount of public recreation land a local community should provide. It originally included a second component that addressed open space as well, by recommending an equal area (10 acres) in parkways, large parks (regional, county, state, or national), and forests within or adjacent to the community. Unfortunately, this second component lost emphasis over time and the simple ratio of 10 to 1,000 became a quick and easy measure of recreation service without much consideration for the unique factors of communities – population density and distribution, the presence of natural resources in the community, and access to state and federal parks, forests, and game lands. These characteristics strongly influence a community's needs for different types of recreational facilities. Today, many recreational planners still reference the historical "standards" as a measure of comparison to similar kinds of communities, but they place greater emphasis on meeting the unique needs of residents for both active and passive (nature-based) recreation through various approaches.

### **Approaches**

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A **formula-based approach** is the most general approach to recreational analysis and still relies on ratios to determine a suggested total acreage. Some communities still use the well-known and easy-to-remember 10 acres per 1,000 residents ratio, without or without provisions for regional parkways, large parks and forests. Other communities have increased or decreased the value of the ratio based on their residents' level of interest in public recreational lands. Still other communities have defined an acreage range per 1,000 residents, such as 8-14 acres per 1,000 residents, to give themselves flexibility in meeting their goals. Regardless of the number or range selected, the formula-based approach should result in a suggested ratio that can be modified based on the community location, growth patterns, and other factors.

A **facilities or service-based approach** focuses on what kinds of facilities are desired and how many are needed to serve the current and projected populations. This approach requires detailed data on facility locations, user trends and population change to identify and project trends in residents' recreational activities. Open space can be addressed in this approach, but again the emphasis is on function of the open space (intensive recreation, leisure/passive recreation, resource management, water supply/quality, etc.), not simply its total land area. Separate guidelines or standards for facility design are applied once the needed facilities are identified.

A **systems approach** integrates recreational sites and corridors into the overall community development pattern. This approach enables communities to minimize duplicate facilities, if desired, and emphasize bicycle and pedestrian linkages for fitness and travel. These linkages enable residents to walk, bicycle, or skate between recreational sites and other community destinations, such as neighborhoods, schools, and libraries. The systems approach marries well with growth management techniques as it reduces the amount of recreational land needed by interconnecting recreational sites with bicycle-pedestrian routes, and sustaining natural resource corridors with linear open spaces (greenways). In some communities, the recreation network links sites of cultural and historical interest as well, supporting both tourism and recreation initiatives.

Regardless of which approach is used to analyze recreational open space lands, the context of the type of community should be considered. For example, urban residents living in dense neighborhoods tend to rely on public parks as the outdoor place to play sports, exercise, relax and socialize with neighbors. On the other hand, rural residents may have space and opportunities to do these kinds of activities on their own property. As a result the type, number and size of recreational facilities can vary widely from community to community, as shown in table 4-1.

**Table 4-1 Relative Differences in Facilities in Urban and Rural Communities**

Facility Type	Urban		Rural	
	Relative # of facilities	Size of facility	Relative # of facilities	Size of facility
Pocket or mini park	Many	1 ac	Few to Several	1 ac
Neighborhood park	Many	5 ac	None	Not applicable
Community Park	Several	25 ac	1	5 ac
Athletic Complex	1 or none	50+ ac	1 or none	10-15 ac

*Source: Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1996*

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has traditionally published recreation guidelines as well as facility classifications, as shown in Table 4-2. These classifications can be used to characterize the kinds of parks, recreation and open space lands a community already has, and to identify the kinds of additional facilities that are desired.

**Table 4-2 Parks, Open Space and Pathways Classifications**

<b>Parks and Open Space Classifications</b>				
<b>Classification</b>	<b>General Description / Function</b>	<b>Location Criteria</b>	<b>Size Criteria</b>	<b>Application of Level of Service (LOS)</b>
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting	Between 2500 sf and one acre	Yes
Neighborhood Park	The basic unit of the park system. Serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus on informal active and passive recreation activities.	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers	5 acres (minimum); 5-10 is optimal	Yes
School Park	Facilities located on school property and available to the public	Determined by the location of school district properties	Variable	Yes – but should not count school only uses
Community Park	Serves as the recreational and social focus of the community. Focus on formal or organized active and passive recreation activities, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces	Based upon site features/limitations; usually serves two or more neighborhoods and a ½ to 3 mile distance	Variable to accommodate desired uses; usually between 30 and 50 acres	Yes
Large Urban Park	Serves broader purposes than a community park in an urban setting. Provides large gathering space for a significant portion of the community.	Variable, based on site features / limitations	Variable to accommodate desired uses; usually 50 acres (minimum); 75 or more is optimal	Yes
Natural Resource Area	Land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics or buffering	Based on resource availability and opportunity	Variable	No
Greenways See also <i>Greenways Classifications</i> below	Links the components of the park system together to form a continuous park environment	Based on resource availability and opportunity	Variable	No
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities into fewer. Larger sites strategically located throughout the community	Strategically located based on site suitability, access, land use plan, etc.	Variable based on facilities provided; usually 25 acres (minimum); 40 to 80 acres is optimal	Yes
Special Use	Specialized or single-purpose facilities	Variable based on use	Variable	Depends on type of use
Private Park/Recreation Facility	Facilities that are privately owned yet contribute or the public park and recreation system	Variable	Variable	Depends on type of use

**Table 4-5 Parks, Open Space and Pathways Classifications (continued)**

<b>Greenway Classifications</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>General Description / Function</b>	<b>Description by Type</b>
Conservation Greenway	Protects ecological functions, by interconnecting natural systems, namely wildlife habitat	Riparian Buffer: serves to protect ecological functions, namely wildlife habitat Landscape Corridor: linear or non-linear area managed for specific conservation objectives
Recreational Greenway	Provides informal, low impact recreation uses; most commonly as trails, but also for hunting, fishing, wildlife watching and cultural/historic site interpretation	
Greenbelt	Interconnects conservation lands that wrap around a community	
<b>Pathway Classifications</b>		
<b>Classification</b>	<b>General Description / Function</b>	<b>Description by Type</b>
Park trail	Multi-purpose trail located within greenways, park, and natural resources areas	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trail for pedestrian or bicyclists/in-line skaters  Type II: Multi-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and in-line skaters  Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians; may be hard or soft-surfaced
Connector trails	Multi-purpose trail that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Serves both transportation and recreation functions	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trail for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters located in an independent right of way, e.g. old railroad bed  Type II: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trail for pedestrian or bicyclists/in-line skaters located within a public road right of way
On-Street Bikeways	Paves segments of roadways that safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic	Bike Route: Designated portions of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists  Bike Lane: Shared portion of the roadway that provides separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists, such as paved shoulder
All-Terrain Bike Trail	Off-road trail for all-terrain (mountain ) bikes	Single-purpose loop trail usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas
Cross-County ski trail	Trail for traditional and skate-style cross-country skiing	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resources areas
Equestrian Trail	Trails developed for hardback riding	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resources areas; sometimes developed as multi-purpose trails with hiking and all-terrain biking where conflicts can be controlled

*Source: Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1996; Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trail How-To Manual, 1998.*

## **Public Participation in Assessing Resources and Programs**

### **The Greenways Committee**

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The primary and on-going source of public input was the Greenways Committee. The committee included municipal representatives, citizens, and representatives from many of the environmental and recreation organizations that will help implement the comprehensive plan.

The Committee met several times during the plan's development to review and discuss issues, goals, and strategies for the plan. Members were invited to participate in two stakeholder workshops (November 2003 and November 2004), along with representatives from various county, regional, and local government organizations, as well as local interest groups.

Through the various meeting, the Committee members:

- Reviewed and added to the initial list of natural, cultural, and recreation assets, the issues related to these topics, and the agencies and organizations that would be able to provide key data, project, and plans
- Identified existing recreation "hubs and spokes" (destinations and linkages) and prospective new "hubs and spokes"
- Identified priority outcomes for the Greenways Plan, including:
  - Induce a paradigm shift in social behavior
  - Address agriculture
  - Keep moving
  - Communicate results through interim public input, final review, and plan marketing
- discussed what it found most interesting, surprising or unusual among the Mercer County resident responses to the 2002 DCNR Resident Recreation Survey
- discussed that a mathematical approach to analyzing available recreation opportunities provides a solid basis for planning and should be exceeded where there additional opportunities are available and affordable
- Reviewed and recommended revisions for the draft vision statement and goals for the Greenways Plan
- Reviewed, revised and prioritized the draft strategies and implementation partners

### **Stakeholder Workshops**

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As one of the public participation activities of the comprehensive planning project, a Stakeholders' Workshop was held in the fall of 2003 to identify key assets of Mercer County and to prioritize the variety of issues that impact the daily lives of the county's residents. This workshop approach enabled representatives of various public and private sector organizations to discuss their concerns and aspirations for Mercer County in a focus group format, whereby they could hear firsthand which other organizations have similar missions and programs. The six "focus group" topics centered on the elements of the comprehensive plan, including:

- Economic Development,
- Housing and Community Development,
- Community Facilities and Services,
- Land Use,
- Transportation, and

- Natural/Historic Resources and Recreation

The results of the focus group sessions were summarized and presented to the Greenways Committee for review and validation. The final prioritization of the issues identified in these meetings is presented in Table 4-1.

**Table 4-3 Prioritization of Natural/Historic Resources and Recreation Issues**

Natural/Historic Resources and Recreation Issues	Vote Tally
Water resources	15
Development Pressure	14
Loss of forests and agricultural lands due to parcelization	10
Historic rail corridors – historic and recreation value	10
College/Universities as a cultural resource	9
Need/Opportunity to develop natural/historic/recreation resources	3
No big picture plan at state or county level for agricultural preservation	2
Historic Boroughs with multiple resources/historic structures	2
Public and private agencies and the people in them	1
Lots of open space where it is increasingly hard to distinguish between urban and rural	1
Dispersed historic sites and uncoordinated conservation efforts, making for funding challenges	1
State Parks – Goddard St. Park/Lake Wilhelm	0
Lack of Army Corps Management at Shenango Lake	0
Cost of historic preservation	0

Source: Gannett Fleming

Stakeholders discussed development pressure on rural lands. They stated that living the American dream have changed from owning one acre to owning four acres, thus “rural” living consumes and converts larger areas of land. They also explained that utility companies increase development pressure when they place utility corridors through rural areas, suggesting that these lands are available for development. Finally, they stated that the recreational use of game lands has increased, requiring more stringent enforcement to maintain resource management objectives.

The loss of forests and agricultural lands due to parcelization was another priority concern. Stakeholders indicated that overall resource health suffers when the number of landowners for the same size woodland increases, due to the variability and potential conflict of management interests.

Water resources were viewed as one of the counties strongest assets and the resource with the greatest potential for greenways, recreation, and tourism development, as well as scenic beauty.

The county has over 1400 miles of streams that related to history and community development, as well as extensive natural and man-made lakes. Stakeholders indicated that wetlands are being directly and indirectly impacted by development and stronger efforts are needed to help landowners and developers conserve these areas.

Stakeholders proudly mentioned the vast number of historic resources in the county. They explained that several communities have multiple historic sites, which enhances the overall character of the community. They stated that conservation and interpretive efforts are somewhat haphazard and not well-coordinated, though progress has been made recently. They suggested that the countywide efforts pursue historic rail lines as recreational and conservation linkages between major communities.

Finally, stakeholders indicated that the colleges and universities located in the county are important untapped resources for professional expertise and as cultural destinations that enhance quality of life in the county.

### **Mercer County Surveys Results**

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#### **From Surveys associated with the Pennsylvania Statewide Recreation Plan**

Among the recommendations of the *Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections* was an action item to complete a Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan. Pennsylvania's Recreation Plan, a five-year prioritization of the Commonwealth's recreation needs that will be used to guide funding. Public involvement included two resident surveys, among other input events.

The first was an eight-page written survey, conducted by The Pennsylvania State University in the fall/winter of 2002/2003. A public opinion "needs" survey was conducted to solicit the population's views and opinions regarding the most pressing recreation resource needs that Pennsylvania is facing. Over 21,000 surveys were sent to a random mailing list of Pennsylvania households. Because of increased emphasis on promoting planning at the county level, the random sample size of the survey was increased significantly to collect statistically reliable information at the county level.<sup>1</sup>

The second was a telephone survey conducted by the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin and Marshall College. A random telephone survey was also conducted to determine current recreation participation trends. The 2003 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey was designed to closely resemble earlier outdoor recreation participation surveys with long-range planning in mind. The sample size for this survey was also increased to collect information at the county level. The 2003 Recreation Participation Survey was conducted between April and November of 2003 and included more than 7,100 Pennsylvania residents over the age of five.<sup>2</sup> DCNR has not yet made the county level data available from this survey.

Select questions and their associated responses were reviewed from Mercer County's subset of the written survey, as reported in the appendix. The following conclusions can be drawn from the surveys' results:

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Recreation Plan 2004-2008.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Written Survey

- **Outdoor recreation is more important than indoor recreation for Mercer County residents.** Residents report spending on average 9.3 hours of each week recreating – more than 7 of those hours are spent outdoors. Across Pennsylvania, the average for total time spent recreating was 8.9 hours, and the ratio of time spent out door to indoor was nearly 2 to 1. Statewide, outdoor recreation was reportedly more important to those of higher income; indoor recreation was more important to non-white residents.<sup>3</sup>
- **Residents participate in more activities at public facilities than at private facilities.** Participation at public facilities is estimated at 67% (35% local, 24% state, and 8% federal); local facilities are the most commonly used public recreation facility. 38% of residents’ recreational activities away from home take place at a private or commercial facility, such as a fitness club or gym.

**Question 3a. What percentage of your recreational activities away from home takes place at the following facilities?**

	Mercer County	Northwest Region	Pennsylvania
Local	35%	42%	43%
State	24%	26%	20%
Federal	8%	9%	10%
Private/Commercial	38%	26%	28%
Don't Know	1%	n/a	n/a

- **Residents find recreation more enjoyable and fulfilling in small groups.** Residents tend to gather in groups of 2 to 3 persons for recreational activities (36%) or groups of 4 or more (37%); only 13% reported independent recreation activity as typical to their routine. This may reflect an increasing concern for safety in recreation areas, as well as public spaces in general.
- **County residents use PA public recreation facilities much more than out-of-state public facilities in other seasons.** Residents’ use of public recreation facilities within PA is three to four times higher than use of out-of-state facilities. This may be due to Mercer County’s location on the Pennsylvania-Ohio border, where “out-of-state” facilities are only a few miles away.
- **Recreation areas used most often by residents are located within a 35-minute travel range.** This would include all of Mercer County and portions of Butler, Crawford, Lawrence and Venango Counties, as well as eastern Ohio.
- **Recreational demand can be expected to increase slightly over the next five years.** A majority of residents indicate that their indoor recreational activities will remain about the same over the next five years. This is consistent with statewide findings that residents of rural Pennsylvania are less likely increase their recreational participation than residents of urban communities. Of those who do expect a change, 58% expect an increase in recreational activity. In regard to outdoor recreation, the percentage of residents who think their recreational activity will remain about the same is nearly equal to those who expect and increase (41% and 39%, respectively).

<sup>3</sup> The statewide survey did note that survey responses from non-whites were very low and that additional inquiry into the recreational needs of this segment of the state population is needed.

**Question 6. The following problems often cause people not to recreate. Please check any that kept you or your family from participating in recreational activities in the past year:**

	Mercer County	Pennsylvania
Facilities too far away	17%	23%
Facilities too crowded	13%	23%
Facilities poorly maintained	15%	12%
Lack of facilities	24%	20%
Areas not safe	7%	8%
Lack of information	18%	25%
Lack of access for disabled people	8%	3%
Insects or animal pests	10%	12%
Pollution problems	2%	4%
Fees and charges	15%	19%
Not comfortable with other users	5%	5%
Personal health problems	15%	16%
Not enough time	39%	50%
Not enough money	21%	23%
Don't have the skills	2%	4%
No one to recreate with	2%	10%
Other	4%	9%

- **Residents would recreate more if they had more time and if more facilities were available at an affordable cost and made known in currently unserved areas.** Residents' participation in recreational activities is hindered by these top five causes: not enough time (39%), lack of facilities (24%), not enough money (21%), lack of information (18%) and facilities too far away (17%). These responses were also among the top six statewide, though the percentages were different. Facility fees and license fees for hunting and fishing were noted by committee members as the typical "costs" for public recreation. The increasing cost of facility fees and fuel for travel and motorized activities was also given as a disincentive for some recreation activities. Committee members also suggested that residents have a personal threshold for how much they are willing to spend on recreational activities, regardless of their affluence.
- **The presence of public recreation facilities is not very important in personal decisions of where to live and work.** This may reflect that public recreation areas are taken for granted, i.e. residents assume that such facilities are available, or that facilities are well-distributed among the county's population centers.
- Residents were generally satisfied with the diversity of recreation activities available near where they live. Residents favored increases in these facilities over the status-quo or improvements for
  - Sledding Areas
  - Ice Skating areas
  - Skateboarding and Rollerblading areas
  - Wilderness Areas
  - Indoor pools
  - Environmental Education areas
  - Natural Areas
  - Cabin Rentals

While some of these facilities seem quite specialized for general public recreation, these responses are quite similar to those reported at the state level, specifically including sledding areas, ice skating areas, indoor pools and skateboarding and rollerblading areas. In addition, the fact that Mercer County has three environmental education centers and thousands of acres of natural areas suggests that perhaps more publicity for existing facilities is needed prior to substantial investment in additional facilities.

**Question 9. From the following list of recreational areas, please check those near where you live that you think are adequate, should be increased, or should be improved:**

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Trail/Street/Road Activities</b>								
Walking Paths (indoor and outdoor)	45%	27%	9%	19%	47%	12%	41%	16%
Jogging and Fitness Trails	36%	23%	10%	31%	50%	12%	38%	27%
Hiking and Backpacking Trails	28%	25%	4%	14%	43%	13%	44%	34%
Equestrian Trails	16%	8%	7%	66%	63%	9%	28%	56%
Bicycle Paths	22%	28%	8%	42%	37%	13%	49%	31%
Mountain Bike Trails	8%	20%	10%	62%	50%	12%	38%	51%
Off-Road Motorcycling Trails	14%	18%	8%	60%	64%	10%	26%	59%
ATV Trails	19%	21%	8%	52%	61%	9%	31%	58%
Four-Wheel Driving Trails	18%	17%	4%	61%	64%	8%	27%	60%
Scenic Drives	23%	20%	8%	48%	48%	13%	40%	35%
Greenways	20%	8%	6%	65%	44%	14%	42%	50%

Across Pennsylvania, younger residents tended to express needs for trails and street/road based activities. Regionally, the northeast and southwest regions were supportive of trail and street/road based investments.

## Assessment of Needs

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Viewing/Learning Activities</b>								
Environmental Education Areas	28%	32%	9%	30%	37%	13%	50%	33%
Heritage Parks/Historical Sites	32%	25%	7%	35%	51%	17%	33%	27%
Outdoor Performance Areas	21%	26%	11%	42%	46%	13%	40%	40%
Wildlife Areas	37%	31%	7%	25%	38%	15%	48%	30%
Natural Areas	30%	31%	11%	28%	37%	14%	49%	28%
Wilderness Areas	30%	33%	8%	29%	37%	14%	48%	33%

Across Pennsylvania, residents with some post-secondary education tended to express needs for viewing and learning activities. The northwest region reflects the lowest level of need in these activities.

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Group Sports</b>								
Baseball Fields	39%	11%	18%	32%	73%	11%	16%	33%
Softball Fields	37%	10%	13%	39%	71%	10%	19%	35%
Football Fields	39%	15%	9%	36%	76%	10%	14%	37%
Soccer Fields	34%	14%	14%	38%	70%	9%	21%	39%
Basketball Courts	22%	22%	9%	47%	63%	13%	23%	38%
Volleyball Courts	18%	23%	12%	47%	57%	9%	34%	46%
Lacrosse Fields	15%	8%	8%	69%	69%	8%	23%	57%

Across Pennsylvania, lower income residents tended to express a higher level of need for group sports facilities. Responses were low in the northwest region, compared to other regions across the state.

<b>Individual Sports</b>								
Skateboarding and Rollerblading Areas	7%	37%	8%	48%	40%	9%	51%	42%
Handball Courts	22%	15%	3%	60%	63%	5%	32%	55%
Tennis Courts	28%	15%	6%	51%	56%	11%	33%	40%
Archery Ranges	19%	26%	4%	51%	53%	5%	41%	52%
Rifle and Handgun Ranges	15%	25%	9%	52%	57%	7%	36%	49%
Horseshoe Pits	19%	13%	5%	62%	55%	6%	39%	53%
Golf Courses	51%	8%	2%	38%	76%	6%	18%	37%
Disc Golf Courses	17%	8%	25%	75%	75%	2%	22%	61%

Across Pennsylvania, younger residents expressed needs for improved and increased facilities for individual sports. Activities in this category also scored high across the northwest region.

*Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan*

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Winter Sports</b>								
Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Areas	22%	23%	6%	48%	61%	9%	30%	42%
Sledding Areas	8%	55%	5%	42%	32%	9%	59%	39%
Cross-Country Ski Areas	20%	25%	3%	51%	48%	7%	44%	47%
Ice Skating Areas	13%	37%	5%	45%	40%	7%	54%	39%
Ice Hockey Rinks	19%	22%	4%	54%	58%	5%	37%	51%
Snowmobile Trails	23%	17%	5%	54%	56%	7%	37%	53%

Again, younger residents of Pennsylvania expressed higher levels if need in winter sports than other age groups. Residents of the northwest region led the state in reporting needs for these kinds of facilities.

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Hunting / Trapping Areas</b>								
Big Game	35%	19%	42%	42%	69%	7%	24%	47%
Small Game	37%	17%	4%	42%	66%	8%	25%	48%
Waterfowl	37%	13%	3%	53%	70%	7%	24%	51%

The need for hunting and trapping sites increased with educational level for resident responses across the state.

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Swimming</b>								
Indoor Pools	20%	33%	10%	37%	38%	10%	52%	33%
Outdoor Pools	31%	18%	15%	36%	48%	14%	39%	32%
Lake and Stream Swimming Areas	26%	20%	15%	39%	39%	17%	44%	39%
Snorkeling and Scuba Areas	10%	15%	8%	67%	47%	9%	44%	57%

Improvements and increased swimming facilities were reported as needs by younger residents than older.

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Social Activities</b>								
Picnic Areas	42%	15%	22%	21%	49%	16%	35%	23%
Playgrounds	30%	22%	20%	27%	49%	19%	32%	27%
Sitting and Passive Areas	34%	22%	10%	34%	48%	13%	38%	30%
Senior Centers	33%	25%	13%	29%	46%	13%	41%	37%
Community Recreation Centers	22%	21%	12%	45%	38%	12%	50%	38%
Dog Parks	13%	26%	4%	56%	45%	8%	47%	48%
Open Play Areas	23%	21%	13%	43%	43%	12%	45%	42%

*Assessment of Needs*

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Camping</b>								
Campgrounds (with hookups)	23%	21%	15%	41%	52%	10%	38%	45%
Campgrounds (without hookups)	32%	12%	12%	45%	53%	13%	35%	47%
Cabin Rentals	23%	30%	8%	39%	40%	10%	51%	46%

Across Pennsylvania, younger residents tended to express needs for camping facilities.

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Boating and Floating</b>								
Boating Areas (non-motorized)	46%	11%	3%	40%	55%	9%	37%	46%
Boating Areas (limited horsepower)	47%	8%	5%	40%	61%	8%	32%	49%
Boating Areas (unlimited horsepower)	38%	11%	6%	45%	69%	7%	24%	51%
Canoe and Kayak River Access	24%	28%	3%	45%	50%	8%	43%	49%
Water Trails	22%	17%	6%	55%	48%	9%	43%	53%

Across Pennsylvania, older residents tended to express needs for boating and floating sites.

	Mercer				Pennsylvania			
	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response	Adequate	Increased	Improved	No Response
<b>Fishing Areas</b>								
Warmwater	39%	6%	3%	52%	59%	11%	30%	51%
Coldwater	36%	5%	4%	55%	60%	10%	30%	50%
Ice	35%	6%	41%	59%	74%	7%	20%	59%
Anadromous (e.g., Shad, Salmon)	19%	6%	2%	73%	65%	10%	25%	63%
Special Regulation Areas	25%	2%	2%	71%	67%	8%	24%	64%

- **Teen recreational programs are needed more than other program types in Mercer County.** Residents support expansion of teen programs (52%), cultural arts (theater, dance, music) (40%), before/after school programs (34%), preschool programs (32%), and senior programs (30%) over other program areas. These program needs repeat those reported at the state wide, namely teen programs and before and after school programs.
- **ADA recreation facilities and programs and facilities/programs specifically for seniors' needs are not in high demand.** There was no notable consensus among the few suggested facilities and programs. Across Pennsylvania, parking, fishing and trails were reported most needed for residents with disabilities, while walking trails, senior programs, and indoor facilities, e.g., YMCA, were noted as priority needs for seniors. Committee members noted that residents have not demanded additional ADA facilities, though such facilities are utilized immediately once they are available, i.e. the accessible fishing pier at Goddard State Park.

- **Residents are more satisfied with State Game Lands than any other recreation facility type;** all types, including municipal parks and private facilities received predominantly positive responses. Generally, residents would like facilities to be more convenient (more in general) and better maintained (clean). Comments under State Game Lands indicated a perspective of “unused land.” Comments under federal facilities noted that the Allegheny Forest is too far away. State and federal facilities received the highest quality rating from residents of the northwest region.
- **Residents tend to believe that open space is not threatened by development where they live and there is enough protected open space.** Responses across Pennsylvania reflected greater concern for development pressure and need for open space protection. Across the northwest region, 35% of residents stated that there was enough protected open space where they live.
- **Residents identify value in greenways and trails that connect neighborhoods and other elements of the community.** Across Pennsylvania, residents from higher income levels were typically more supportive of greenways as community connections. This support was lowest in the northwest region.
- **Residents tend to disagree that streams and rivers are in good condition.**
- **Residents’ perception of access to waterways is good.**
- **Maintenance, policing, and environmental quality are better than adequate but not exceptional in residents’ minds.** Residents of the northwest region rated environmental quality higher than most other regions across the state.
- **Residents believe ...**
  - ...there are generally enough public recreation areas close to home. Residents across Pennsylvania disagreed.
  - ...more public transportation to recreation areas is needed; the same was reported across the state.
  - ...local government and the state should do more to publicize their respective public recreation opportunities,
  - ...maintaining existing facilities is more important than adding new ones; maintenance of existing facilities was also the number one priority at the state level and in the northwest region.
  - ...municipalities should join together in park and recreation planning and programming, and
  - ...local recreation programs for youth reduces crime; 60% of the northwest region agreed.
  - ...parks, natural areas, greenways, and trails increase the value of nearby properties, though the percentages of agreement for increased property values was much lower in the northwest region than in the rest of the state.
- **Residents generally agree that local municipalities should have a permanent source of funding, and the state should increase its funding, based on tax revenue for park and recreation opportunities.** Across Pennsylvania, support was higher for increasing state funding than assuring local funding; in Mercer County, residents felt more strongly that dedicated local funding is needed.

- **The internet is a good resource for increasing public awareness of recreation opportunities.** Nearly half of County residents use the internet for information on recreation activities.

### **Recreation Planning**

There has been no community or site recreation planning in the 16 rural municipalities of Mercer County. Lackawannock and Pymatuning Townships have applied for and received grants for community park improvements. These grants were made to these small municipalities even though no formal recreation planning has been completed.

**Table 4-4 Recreation Development/Improvement in Rural Mercer County**

<b>Municipality/Agency</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Lackawannock	Township Park	Installation of benches and goals for soccer fields; playground development	\$20K
Pymatuning Township	Community Park	Playground Development	\$35K

Source: Mercer County Regional Council of Governments

In contrast, local recreation planning has taken place in the urban and regional planning areas. Several municipalities have completed comprehensive recreation, park and open space plans or master site plans for specific facilities. These include:

1. The City of Hermitage – a comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan, 2002; master site plans for various parks;
2. City of Sharon - a comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan, 2000;
3. City of Farrell- a comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan, 1998;
4. Jefferson Township – 3 phases of master site plan for township park

These communities have been implementing these community and site plans, seeking grant funding from DCNR’s Bureau Conservation and Recreation. Other nearby communities have also received DCNR funding for recreation development and improvement. These grant awards total over \$1.3 million dollars, demonstrating DCNR’s interest and investment in urban parks and recreation, due in large part to the grant writing and administrative support of MCRCOG. These grants are summarized in Table 4-5.

Grove City has also been planning, seeking and receiving grant funding for recreation facilities and programs.



**Table 4-5 Recreation Development/Improvement in Urban Mercer County**

<b>Municipality/Agency</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
Mercer County Regional Council of Governments (MCRCOG)	Shenango Valley Softball Complex and Lackawanna-Shenango-West Middlesex Community Pool	Phase I – resurface the access drive; landscape	\$80,000
MCRCOG	Shenango Valley Softball Complex	Phase II – construct 2 youth soccer fields and nature trail	\$156,000
MCRCOG	Shenango Valley Softball Complex	Phase III – construct 1 regulation soccer field; add horseshoe pits, ½ basketball court; upgrade concession stand	\$76,000
MCRCOG	Chestnut Run Swim Beach	Upgrade water/wastewater facility; add playground	\$60,000
MCRCOG	Lackawanna-Shenango-West Middlesex Community Pool	Feasibility Study	\$40,000
City of Hermitage	Whispering Pines Park	Master Site Plan (2000), Phase I construction	\$17,000
City of Hermitage	Linden Pointe Trail	Construction	\$100,000
City of Hermitage	Rodney White Park	Phase I and II Construction	\$148,000
Clark Borough	Henderson Taylor Community park	Phase II and III Development	\$28,000 \$33,000 \$20,000
City of Farrell	Veterans' Square and Emerson Avenue Playground	Playground Development	\$35,000
Hempfield Township	Township Park	Playground Development	n/a
Jackson Center	Wesley McAfoose Community park	Playground Development	\$32,000
Jefferson Township	Township Community Park	Master Site Plan and Phase I Development	\$60,000
City of Sharon	N/A	Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan	\$35,000
City of Sharon	City Playground	Phase I Playground Renovation (ongoing renovation)	\$45,000
Shenango Township	Township Park	Various Improvements	\$60,000
South Pymatuning Township	McCullough Run Community Park	Track resurfacing; ADA bleachers	\$60,000
West Middlesex Borough	Recreation Complex	Playground Development	\$20,000
West Middlesex Borough	West Middlesex Regional Skate Park	Park Development	\$60,000
Buhl Farm Trustees	Buhl Farm	Baseball field renovations and fencing	\$150,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 1,315,000</b>

Source: Mercer County Regional Council of Governments

## **Recreation Administration, Management and Maintenance**

Mercer County does not have a recreation department or recreation staff, nor is there need or support for developing one. The county leases land for only one facility, the Chestnut Run Swim Beach, and transfers operations responsibility to the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments (MCRCOG). Furthermore, the County is not interested in acquiring any additional “county” recreation facilities.

The MCRCOG has a park and recreation specialist, a position that was established in 2002 through DCNR’s circuit rider program. The program provides collaborative funding for the first four years of a new recreation staff position: 100% for the first year, 75% for the second year; 50% for the third year, and 25% for the fourth year. The balance of the funding is provided locally by MCRCOG through program fees and contract service fees.

The park and recreation specialist assists municipalities in applying for grant funding and administering awarded grants. The park and recreation specialist provides services to MCRCOG municipalities as part of their member services; other municipalities and organizations receive assistance on a contract basis.

The park and recreation specialist is responsible for hiring and managing summer staff for the three MCRCOG-operated facilities; facility maintenance; administration of programs and services; and budgeting.

The quality of recreation facility maintenance was not an issue raised by the stakeholders, committee members or the public, “lack of facility maintenance” did score higher in Mercer County than it did across Pennsylvania in the DCNR Resident Recreation Survey. When asked, stakeholders did mention that maintenance of recreation facilities is very limited and that safety inspections for playground and other equipment have not occurred. In most rural and small communities, park maintenance consists of the road department or public works department picking up trash and mowing grass.

Stakeholders also indicated that municipalities are working to supply their own residents with basic recreation facilities, when they could be working together to provide a larger network of more diverse facilities, and perhaps receive a higher percentage of funding for projects in recognition of their cooperation. Existing partnerships, namely those with school districts, are very positive, as they often provide indoor facilities for year-round, or at least winter, programs.

## **Recreation Programming**

There are no formal recreation programs offered by rural municipalities for residents. Fortunately, rural residents are able to participate in recreation and leisure programs offered by other communities, at same or slightly higher fees, when charged. Residents who wish to participate in these programs must travel to these other communities, though this has not been an issue to date. Residents of Mercer County are willing to travel to nearby communities or across the county for recreation and other services. Stakeholder did note that these public and private programs provide a reasonable variety of recreation and leisure opportunities for children and youth but few for adults and seniors.

Overviews of programs offered in other communities are described below.

The **City of Hermitage** has the most extensive recreation program and facilities. The program includes athletic activities, sports camps, arts and crafts programs, bus trips and tours, and (business) skill development classes. The program is primarily run by volunteers, though paid staff provide administrative leadership.

The **City of Farrell and the Borough of Wheatland** comprise a single school district and collectively provide an 8-week summer playground program. The program provides playground-based activities for children in grades K through 12, including warm lunches. The playgrounds are staffed by college students paid through dedicated finds from property assessments from the two municipalities and the Farrell Area School District. The recreation commission sponsors recreation activities for junior and

senior high school students in the winter months. The commission is working to develop a year-round recreation program for all ages, including arts and crafts and indoor swimming. The commission expects to charge nominal fees for its programs in the future.

The **City of Sharon** also has a summer playground program with paid college student staff. Its recreation board is funded by the City.

The **Greenville Areas Leisure Services Association** offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor leisure programs for residents of all ages at the Recreation Center at Riverside Park in Greenville.

The **MCRCOG** operates three facilities: Chestnut Run Swim Beach, the Shenango Valley Softball Complex, and the West Middlesex Community Pool.

The **Chestnut Run Swim Beach** property, a quasi-county facility, is located at the Shenango River Lake and leased to Mercer County by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Season passes provide additional funding for facility operations. Due to regulations from the Pennsylvania Department of Health that stipulate the ration of water area to guard staff, only half of the lakefront can currently be used at one time. The other portion of the property can be used for land-based activities, such as volleyball. The increasing cost of operation and underutilization of the Swim Beach have been raised as a concern by the county and MCRCOG, resulting in the appointment of a marketing panel to develop programs or projects that will increase awareness and usage of the beach toward a self-sustaining facility.

The **Shenango Valley Softball Complex** primarily serves Hermitage, Sharon, Farrell, Wheatland and Shenango.

The **Community Pool** is located in West Middlesex and primarily serves the communities of Lackawanna, Shenango and West Middlesex.

Other organizations offer recreation activities beyond those available from municipal government. The **Shenango Valley YMCA** and the **Grove City YMCA** operate as community recreation centers and offer activities for youth from age 5. The **F.H. Buhl Club** offers activities including swimming lessons for all ages; paid memberships generate revenue for the facility. The major communities of Hermitage, Sharon, Farrell/Wheatland, Greenville, Grove City, Sharpsville, and West Middlesex each have Little League and/or girls softball organizations, as well as soccer associations for youth. These organizations are primarily run by volunteers.

## Facility-based Recreation Analysis in Mercer County

### Countywide Analysis

Mercer County residents have access to nearly 20,000 acres of park and open space lands. The vast majority of the public open space lands are state park and game lands and federal lands, totaling 18,145 acres.

Using the formula-based approach to compare three figures with the county's estimated 2004 population (119,791) demonstrates that for every 1,000 residents in the county, there are

- 1.45 acres of municipal and community parkland
- 15.15 acres of state land
- 0.37 acres of other park land and scenic vistas open to public access

for a total of 16.98 acres of public park and open space lands per 1,000 residents. Based on simply on these numbers, the availability of total public park and open space land is quite moderate to low in Mercer County, and relies heavily on the availability of state and federal lands.

**Table 4-6 Parks and Public Open Space Acreage**

Parks and Public Open Space	Acreage	Acres per 1,000 residents*
<b>Public Parks</b>		
Urban Municipal/Community Parks	1,736.00	1.45
Rural Municipal/Community Parks	13.00	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,749.00</b>	<b>1.46</b>
<b>State Open Space</b>		
State Parks	2,658.00	
State Game Lands	416.62	
Federal Lands	15,071.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,145.62</b>	<b>15.15</b>
<b>Privately-Owned Parks and Open Space</b>		
Private Parks	445.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>445.00</b>	<b>0.37</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,339.62</b>	<b>16.98</b>

Source: Gannett Fleming

\* Based on an estimated 2004 population of 119,797 residents

**Analysis for Rural Communities**

Calculating park land needs for the rural municipalities based on the mathematical formula of 10 acres per 1,000 residents results in the need for an additional 232 acres. Rural residents' recreation needs are, in large part, met through public school facilities, quasi-public facilities, and state and federal lands. As such, the need for neighborhood and community parks is low. Therefore a reduced "standard" of recreation land presents a more realistic and achievable goal for increasing the amount of neighborhood and community park and open space land. Modifying the calculation rate to 3 acres per 1,000 in recognition of the vast state and federal lands available reduces the need for additional park land to about 60 acres.

**Table 4-7 Projected Need for Municipal Park and Open Space Land**

Rural Public Parks and Open Space	Current Acreage	Acres / 1,000 residents*	Add'l acres needed to reach		
			10 acres / 1,000 residents*	5 acres / 1,000 residents*	3 acres / 1,000 residents*
Rural Municipal / Community Parks (*based on a 2000 population count of 24,564 residents)	13.00	0.05	232.64	109.82	60.69

Source: Gannett Fleming

**Future Population and Projected Recreation Demand**

State projected growth for Mercer County from 1990-2000 did not occur. County population projections available from the Pennsylvania State Data Center were prepared prior to the Census 2000. The projections indicated that moderate growth at a rate of 1.1 percent would occur from 1990 to 2000, and would continue at similar rates until the projection horizon of 2020. The 2000 Census demonstrated that such growth did not occur.

Population projections were prepared by Pennsylvania for its 67 counties between 1990 and 2000. These projections have not been updated since the 2000 Census, but were considered as one projection for Mercer County's future. These projections indicate that Mercer County could expect an additional 859 residents (a 0.7 percent increase) in population by 2010, and another 1,457 residents (a 1.2 percent increase) from 2010 to 2020. This 2010-2020 projected growth rate nearly matches that of Pennsylvania (1.3 percent).

**Table 4-8 Pennsylvania Population Projections for Mercer County, 2000-2020**

Jurisdiction	Census	Projection					% Change		
	April 1, 1990	July 1, 2000	July 1, 2005	July 1, 2010	July 1, 2015	July 1, 2020	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2020
Mercer	121,003	122,293	122,560	123,152	123,872	124,609	1.1	0.7	1.2

Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center

**Mercer County’s total population could continue to decline.** Independent population projections, based on 1990 and 2000 census data and utilizing an average of four projection methods, indicate that Mercer County’s population will continue to decline at a decreasing or slowing rate over the next 15-20 years. 2003 estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate this is occurring.

**More current independent population projections were considered for Mercer County** and its 48 municipalities. These independent projections are based upon population trends from 1990-2000.

**Future growth in Mercer County will concentrate in the eastern portion of the County, namely in the Mercer and Lakeview regions.** The rural communities will lose population.

**Table 4-9 Independent Population Projections for Rural Mercer County, 2005-2025**

Jurisdiction	Census Counts	Population Projections						% Change		
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2000-2010	2010-2020	2000-2020
Mercer County	121,036	120,293	119,981	119,711	119,256	118,938	118,638	-0.9	-0.6	-1.1
<b>Rural Municipalities</b>	<b>25,033</b>	<b>24,546</b>	<b>24,314</b>	<b>24,091</b>	<b>23,831</b>	<b>23,598</b>	<b>23,370</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	<b>-2.0</b>	<b>-3.9</b>
Deer Creek	513	465	442	419	396	374	352	-14.9	-10.8	-19.6
Delaware	2,065	2,159	2,206	2,253	2,295	2,339	2,381	6.3	3.8	8.3
Fredonia	683	652	637	622	606	591	576	-7.0	-5.0	-9.4
French Creek	789	764	752	740	726	714	702	-4.9	-3.5	-6.6
Greene	1,247	1,153	1,107	1,062	1,016	972	929	-11.8	-8.5	-15.7
Jamestown	761	636	576	518	461	406	353	-27.5	-21.6	-36.2
Lackawannock	2,678	2,561	2,504	2,447	2,387	2,330	2,274	-6.8	-4.8	-9.0
Pymatuning	3,737	3,782	3,804	3,827	3,841	3,859	3,876	1.6	0.8	2.0
Otter Creek	583	611	625	639	652	665	677	6.6	4.0	8.8
Perry	1,468	1,471	1,473	1,474	1,473	1,473	1,472	0.1	-0.1	0.1
Salem	678	769	815	862	907	953	999	17.9	10.6	23.9
Sandy Creek	806	848	869	890	909	929	948	7.2	4.4	9.5
Sheakleyville	145	164	174	183	193	202	212	17.5	10.4	23.4
Shenango	4,345	4,037	3,887	3,740	3,588	3,444	3,302	-11.1	-7.9	-14.7
Sugar Grove	987	909	871	834	796	760	724	-12.4	-8.9	-16.4
West Salem	3,548	3,565	3,573	3,582	3,584	3,588	3,592	0.5	0.2	0.6

Source: Bondata, 2003

**Future growth in Mercer County is possible.** These projections reflect recent trends as well local and County policy and initiatives, and should be considered only as potential, not necessary outcomes. Alternative outcomes could be realized with modifications to policy and initiatives throughout Mercer County.

**Though population projects estimate a slowing declining number of residents, the need for municipal parkland may still increase.** The needs and desires of current residents may change; for example, the amount of recreation residents “do” may change, and their interests in select

activities may change. In addition, new residents with different interests may move into these communities as others leave.

### **Future Youth and Senior Population**

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Using Pennsylvania’s projections for population, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania projected the distribution of future population among the under 20 and 65 and older age groups. These projections suggest that Mercer County’s population under 20 years of age will decline from 26.5 percent to 23.8 percent of the County’s total population, and the County’s 65 and older population will grow from 18.1 percent to 18.5 percent of the County’s total population by 2020. The direction of these trends is the same for surrounding counties and the state. Mercer and Butler Counties are projected to have the most dramatic decrease in under 20 population (a change of -2.7 percent) while Trumbull County, Ohio is projected to have the most dramatic increase in residents 65 years and older (a change of 5.2 percent).

	Projected Total Population 2010	Projected Total Population 2020	Population Under 20 Years Old, 2000	Projected Population Under 20 Years Old, 2020	Population 65 Years Old & Older, 2000	Projected Population 65 Years Old & Older, 2020
Pennsylvania	12,407,523	12,569,017	26.60%	24.70%	15.60%	18.40%
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>123,152</b>	<b>124,609</b>	<b>26.50%</b>	<b>23.80%</b>	<b>18.10%</b>	<b>18.50%</b>
Butler	171,066	177,837	27.50%	24.80%	14.30%	18.90%
Crawford	90,315	93,048	28.00%	27.00%	15.60%	19.80%
Lawrence	86,452	83,259	25.90%	25.70%	19.30%	21.00%
Venango	53,140	50,852	26.80%	24.30%	16.80%	22.00%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

### Applied Approaches to Open Space and Recreational Lands in Pennsylvania

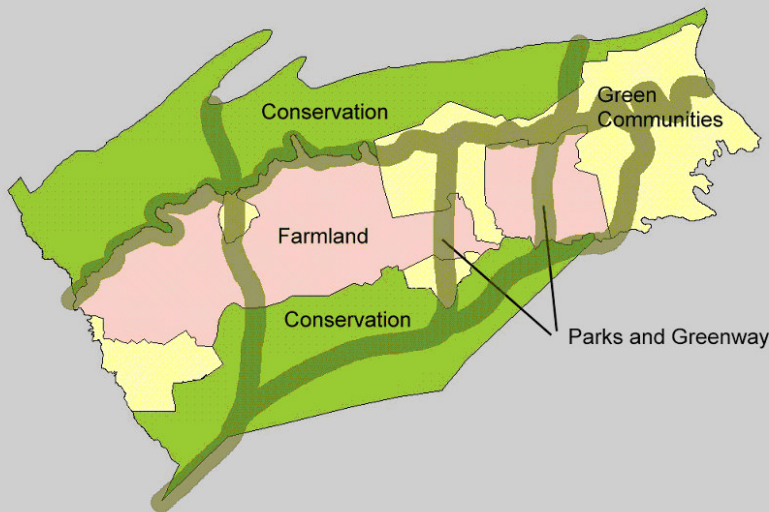
As stated above, every community looks at recreation and open space differently. Pennsylvania's open space and recreation initiative is gaining ground across the state. A handful of counties have completed and adopted some form of open space and recreation plan, and many others are in progress. Below are a few of the approaches being proposed and implemented across the state.

**Monroe County** adopted its Open Space Plan in 2001. The plan's primary goal for open space is to protect 50% of what was open space in 2001, and for parkland, an aggressive 20 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents by 2020. The county's approach to accomplishing these goals includes countywide and multi-municipal efforts in five defined regions. Each 20 acres of parkland is conceived as comprising 10 acres of county land and 10 acres of municipal/regional land. The county is to provide one 200+ acre county park featuring passive or nature-based recreation activities such as fishing, boating, and hiking, and one sports complex in each of the five multi-municipal regions.

**Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties** developed a two-county Open Space, Greenways, and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan in 2004. The plan aims to conserve agrarian lands, greenways, highlands, and natural areas. It prioritizes lands for conservation action, based on technical criteria.

**Cumberland County's Open Space Plan** is nearly complete. This plan integrates strong support for private land management with targeted county investment in open space preservation and planning assistance to multi-municipal partnerships to accomplish its ultimate goals: "Conservation" 75% of mountain ridges and hillsides from development through voluntary management and select regulation, preservation of 50% of "Farmland" in the valley, designation of 5% of developed community areas as greenspace ("Green Communities"), and 100% protection of the Parks and Greenways network. The county is finalizing its short term action plan to focus investment for the next 1-20 years.

#### Cumberland County Open Space Preservation Concept



**Lycoming County** is in the process of developing a greenway, open space and recreation plan. In its draft state, the plan acknowledges the vast open space that exists in Lycoming County as the Tiadaghton State Forest. It places emphasis on connecting existing parks to the open spaces with land and water trails and greenways.