

# Pennsylvania Outdoors

*The Keystone for Healthy Living*

2009–2013 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



[www.paoutdoorrecplan.com](http://www.paoutdoorrecplan.com)





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National Park Service – Joe DiBello, Jack Howard, David Lange and Roy Cortez





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We should work with wisdom and haste to put this plan into action.



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## Pennsylvania Outdoors: The Keystone for Healthy Living

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

September 14, 2009

Dear Outdoor Enthusiast,

Pennsylvania's rich outdoor heritage and remarkable scenic beauty make it a natural for recreation of all kinds, for hunters pursuing elk in the PA Wilds to kayakers negotiating the rough waters of the Youghiogheny River. Pennsylvania's scenic parks, vast network of trails, community greenways and bicycle paths offer our citizens stunning ways to be active outdoors.

This outdoor recreation plan calls on each of us to engage in efforts to improve our recreational resources, to make a personal effort to be more active and to take a greater role in being stewards of our natural resources. Perhaps most importantly, this plan offers a strategy to ensure that the next generation of Commonwealth citizens – our youth – continue to conserve our park and forestlands, lead efforts to make communities more hospitable to walkers and bikers, and hand down the great tradition of Pennsylvanians spending time outdoors to their children.

In the decade ahead, Baby Boomers will retire and look to spend their leisure time exploring our natural bounty. We hope that more young people of all walks of life will seek refuge and recreation in our outdoors. Traditional recreations like hunting and fishing – still huge engines of economic growth – will have new participants. And cutting edge recreation – like bouldering and geocaching – will expand our vision of what it means to be active outdoors.

The *Pennsylvania Outdoors: The Keystone for Healthy Living* was developed with extensive input from citizens and experts across the Commonwealth. It is an inspiring and practical guide for working together to nurture our lands and our lives. We should work with wisdom and haste to put this plan into action.

Sincerely,

Edward G. Rendell  
Governor



## Executive Summary

### Pennsylvania Outdoors: The Keystone for Healthy Living

Every five years, states across the nation are required to produce a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to remain eligible to receive federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF). The plan is designed to direct the use of LWCF funds that may come to the state. The required elements of the plan include a statewide assessment of outdoor recreation needs and supplies, as well as an action plan for future steps to help enhance outdoor recreation. Additional requirements include an update on the status of the state's wetland resources (Appendix A), and extensive opportunity for public participation.

The 2009-2013 plan for Pennsylvania, entitled *Pennsylvania*

*Outdoors: The Keystone for Healthy Living*, is divided into two sections. The first half presents the findings of four original research efforts conducted for the plan. The second half presents a series of recommendations and action steps that were developed from the research findings and from extensive public and stakeholder input.

The planning effort for this document began in 2007. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCNR), the state agency designated as the plan liaison, began to identify the research needed to understand the state of the state's outdoor recreation needs over the next five years. DCNR contracted with researchers from The Pennsylvania State University to conduct the following in-depth survey efforts:

- 1) Resident Survey that asked residents across the Commonwealth how they recreate, what they would like to see changed, and — in a series of questions new for this plan — how they think about conservation in terms of personal commitments and resource needs;
- 2) State Park Visitor Survey that included lengthy interviews at six geographically dispersed parks across the Commonwealth;
- 3) Trail Gap Survey that asked major trail organizations in the state to identify critical gaps and areas of the state in need of trails, along with a survey of trail “experts” on key issues and priorities related to trail development; and
- 4) Facilitated interviews with urban youth and members of the Baby Boomer generation on their perceived needs and priorities for outdoor recreation.







The plan's second half presents 28 programmatic and 5 funding recommendations action steps. These recommendations were crafted with the assistance of the plan's Technical Advisory Committee and refined by public input, and are organized thematically under four goals:

- Strengthen Connections Between Outdoor Recreation, Healthy Lifestyles and Economic Benefits in Communities;
- Reconnect People to the Outdoors and Develop a Stewardship Ethic Through Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Experiences;
- Develop a Statewide Land and Water Trail Network to Facilitate Recreation, Transportation and Healthy Lifestyles;
- Enhance Outdoor Recreation Through Better State Agency Cooperation.

The required elements of the plan include a statewide assessment of outdoor recreation needs and supplies, as well as an action plan for future steps to help enhance outdoor recreation.

Finally, a series of appendices included on a disk at the back of the plan provides more in-depth information on outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania through complete research reports, the Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report that helped frame this

plan, a public input report, and a series of case studies and best practices showcasing ongoing efforts in the state that represent exciting and innovative approaches to enhancing outdoor recreation.



## Introduction

### Pennsylvania Outdoors: The Keystone for Healthy Living

Pennsylvania has always been an outdoor state. Families here have enjoyed traditional outdoor pursuits like fishing, hunting, camping and boating across generations, and the state's whitewater rivers, notably the Lehigh and Youghiogheny, have lured thrill-seekers from around the world. Forests spanning the Allegheny and Appalachian Mountains cover two-thirds of the state. Rivers like the

Susquehanna and Delaware remain among the country's most scenic, fed by 80,000 miles of streams.

Pennsylvanians today benefit from a long proud history of natural resource conservation. Public ownership protects two million acres of state forest land, one-and-a-half million acres of game and wildlife lands, the half-million acre Allegheny National Forest and 117 state parks.



Hundreds of county and local parks provide additional opportunities for walking, picnicking, bicycling, canoeing, fishing, swimming and more.

Today the Keystone State faces many challenges as it continues to conserve lands and waters while working to meet the outdoor recreational needs of a changing population in a time of global change. Pennsylvania's people are more diverse and their life experience is more urban than a generation ago. Simultaneously, Pennsylvania's population is aging. Over a quarter of its citizens (3.4 million) are considered "Baby Boomers," born between 1946 and 1964. As they reach retirement in growing numbers, their outdoor recreational preferences and needs will strain some resources and facilities, influence others, and help shape recreation policy over the next three decades. These societal shifts, coupled with intensified development pressure on rural landscapes and open space everywhere, global climate change and economic recession, make it imperative to plan carefully for the future if Pennsylvania is to meet the recreational needs of its people and conserve its natural heritage.

Pennsylvania actually started a comprehensive examination of outdoor recreation two years before the 2009 plan process began. In March 2007, Governor Edward G. Rendell commissioned a three-day symposium, called the Governor's





Conference on the Outdoors. At the Governor's invitation, leaders in conservation, recreation, health, education, nutrition, policy, and technology came together to discuss issues and trends and began a dialogue that ultimately produced the Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report (Appendix B), defining the most critical issues in outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation facing the state. That report identified the need to further improve the public's access to the outdoors, provide better and more centralized recreation information, foster an appreciation of "greener"

lifestyles and economies, and an imperative to preserve Pennsylvania's rich outdoor heritage while encouraging and accommodating new outdoor users, particularly youth and minority groups.

The 2009-2013 plan represents an effort to refine recommendations and develop implementable programs and projects stemming from the initial findings of the Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report and build on the findings of previous plans and a wide variety of state and county level strategic planning efforts. Its recommendations were developed through a vigorous and extensive engagement of the public and recreation experts, as well as original and collected research. Four public surveys on recreation and associated public attitudes are presented in this plan. Conducted among visitors to state parks, self-identified trail groups, the state's population at large, and among distinct targeted demographic groups—urban youth and Baby Boomers—the resulting data are analyzed in this plan by the Pennsylvania State University researchers who conducted the work. Full research reports are provided on the accompanying disk at the back of the plan as well as other public input gathered through stakeholder meetings and agency staff interviews.

The research findings reflect one of the most sobering and challenging issues that recreation professionals



face today —that today’s children spend far less time outside than their parents and grandparents did as children, and, consequently, may be less likely to develop an affiliation with and appreciation for the natural world. In his landmark book, *Last Child in the Woods*<sup>1</sup>, author Richard Louv called the growing isolation of children—and all Americans—from the outdoors “nature-deficit disorder.” He diagnosed among its diverse causes urban sprawl, community and school design that denies access to natural landscapes, hectic family

schedules, fear of strangers and ubiquitous indoor electronic distractions.

Over the same recent span that Pennsylvania’s and America’s children have suffered from “nature-deficit,” health experts note a simultaneous rise in childhood obesity. Nearly 20 percent of Pennsylvania elementary school children are overweight and rates in some counties, and among some population groups, are even higher. Diabetes, often linked to obesity and once rarely seen in children, is also on the rise among Pennsylvania’s youth, as

are attention-deficit and depression. These trends are reflected in the new research presented in this plan, as are recommendations to address them. Summaries of interviews with agencies, partners, the public and recreational professionals reveal like concerns.

Addressing these challenges will require creativity, cooperation, and economic efficiency. Five years ago, the state’s economy was comparatively robust. Since that time, Pennsylvania, the nation and world have slid into a serious economic recession. As

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<sup>1</sup> Louv, R., *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (2005).



a result, the plan recommendations reflect the reality of reduced state, federal and local funding for outdoor recreation needs. A common thread through these recommendations is doing more with less, and working across state agencies and at different governmental levels to make funds go farther.

There are many encouraging signs discovered through this planning process as well. As revealed in the research for this plan, state residents consider state parks to be more important than ever for recreation. New recreational activities, like geo-caching, are using hand-held technologies to bring young, electronically-oriented Pennsyl-

vanians outdoors in creative ways. Traditional outdoor activities, while declining, show potential for recruiting new adherents.

Pennsylvania is also clearly a leader in recreational trail development.

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Surveyed state residents consider state parks to be more important than ever for recreation.

Cooperative efforts among state agencies, trail advocacy groups, local communities and private businesses have transformed nearly 100 different sections of abandoned railways, in every region of the state, into community or regional trails, and have designated nearly 2,000 miles of

water trails for paddlers. One notable success is the Great Allegheny Passage, a 150-mile dual-purpose hiking-biking trail built on abandoned rail rights-of-way and connecting Pittsburgh and Cumber-

land, Maryland. More than 130 miles of the Passage are within Pennsylvania, where hikers and bikers enjoy world-class scenery along the mountain valley of the Youghiogheny River.

Despite challenges, the 2009-2013 planning period is an exciting time, rife with potential. This plan is a blueprint for action. The recommendations and action steps presented here are a compilation of the best ideas from a broad set of participants, crafted by a writing team lead by DCNR and informed by public input, debate, and university research. These recommendations are meant to stimulate action and further refinement, and to inspire all of us to do more to enjoy and protect Pennsylvania's natural and recreational treasures. As you read through the following chapters, consider finding a quiet spot somewhere outdoors to ponder this plan. It's a good way to start.



## Public Participation Process

### Pennsylvania Outdoors: The Keystone for Healthy Living

The SCORP process places a strong emphasis on public participation in plan development, according to the requirements of the LWCF Act of 1965, as amended. The Governor's Office has designated DCNR its state liaison officer for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the act and conducting and coordinating public participation for Pennsylvania. Over the course of the plan's development, from early 2008 through July 2009, DCNR staff worked closely with fellow state agencies, county and local government representatives, federal partners including the National Park Service, and non-governmental organizations to gather and absorb extensive public comment.

#### State Agency Interviews and Input

To begin the update process of the 2009-2013 plan, interviews were conducted with 12 state agencies to understand recreation planning and information needs, and to identify cooperative opportunities. Key staff from the following state agencies participated: Aging, Agriculture, Community and Economic Development, Corrections, Education, Environmental Protection, Fish and Boat Commission, Game Commission, Health, Historical and Museum Commission, Transportation, and Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

The information collected during the interviews provided the foundation for the planning process. This

initial step was critical to the development of an inclusive and relevant process and also helped shape the direction of the plan's research agenda.

In addition, the state agency interviews helped establish a genuine relationship with the policy and recreation program staff who would continue to participate throughout the duration of the planning process. Outreach to agencies who had not traditionally participated brought an exciting new perspective, which can be clearly seen within the plan's recommendations.

The interviews proved to be an invaluable step in laying the groundwork for a plan built on shared goals and agency missions. As a communication and outreach tool, the interviews jumpstarted a collaborative forum that continued throughout the planning process, and will guide the plan's implementation.



#### Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was created to advise and guide the planning process, and to champion the plan's implementation. The 50+ member TAC is comprised of agencies and organizations with an interest in, and responsibility for, outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania. State and federal agencies, municipal recreation departments, non-profits, state-level associations, and related academia were represented on the committee, and a number of TAC members also served on the Governor's Outdoor Task Force which first identified many of the issues the plan was developed to address. The full list of members can be found on page 2 .







The TAC met five times during the yearlong planning process, at important stages where advice and direction were needed. Each meeting followed a similar format, where research was presented in the morning session and the afternoons were designed to collect formal input.

In their time together, TAC members crafted areas of focus for the plan, provided detailed input on the Resident Survey, articulated actions the new plan must include to meet current issues, participated in writing teams, and developed and reviewed plan recommendations. This group of engaged, truly committed individuals provided the well-rounded voice needed for the plan. Because of their collective success, a main recommendation of this plan is to keep the TAC together throughout the life of the plan to monitor and track progress.

### Writing Teams

As an off-shoot of the TAC, smaller and more focused writing teams were assembled for each goal of the plan. These teams were charged with crafting recommendations and actions steps in response to the research findings and agency and public input. Representatives of the TAC, as well as other interested recreation

and planning professionals, worked together for approximately four months to prepare the recommendations included in the plan. Similarly, they served as agents for their organization's point of view and as excellent resources for understanding existing strategic plans and reports, program models and best practices to help strengthen the plan's direction and focus.

### Interactive Website – [www.paoutdoorrecplan.com](http://www.paoutdoorrecplan.com)

In an effort to reach as many citizens as possible, a new website was launched in May 2009 to provide a two-way communication mechanism for the plan. The website serves as a clearinghouse of information, as all research documents and reports can be easily accessed for reading and sharing. Similarly, draft recommendations and plan summaries were posted for public review. The Comments section allowed individuals to comment on the draft information and recommendations. These comments were posted on the website to maintain the transparency of the process. The website will continue through the 5-year life of the plan, to facilitate ongoing input as well as highlight plan accomplishments and best practices.

### Stakeholder Meetings

Recognizing the need to provide a face-to-face opportunity for the public to respond to the plan, DCNR held three stakeholder meetings:

- June 1, 2009 – North Pittsburgh
- June 2, 2009 – State College
- June 3, 2009 – Center Valley

The three-hour meetings featured an overview of key research findings by the Pennsylvania State University research team, as well as presentations on the draft plan recommendations by writing team leaders. Following the presentations, attendees rotated through stations reflecting the four goals of the plan to provide detailed comment. Each meeting ended with an open forum for discussion, and allowed the opportunity for more in-depth conversation. The meetings were well attended by a broad array of outdoor recreation groups, particularly trail advocates.

In addition to the three public meetings, presentations were made to various existing committees and groups to gather comments on the plan. The DCNR Recreation Advisory Committee played an ongoing role throughout the planning process. Similar presentations were made to the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (CNRAC), Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee (SAAC), Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB), and via teleconference to stakeholders in the Pennsylvania Wilds. All meetings provided opportunities for information sharing and input, both in person and through the web.



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This planning effort included an integrated university research program. This section of the plan describes the research projects designed and implemented in support of the 2009-2013 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan.

## research and findings:





what Pennsylvanians say about outdoor recreation

PA Department of Environmental Protection  
MERIT AWARD  
For the outstanding contribution to the  
state's outdoor recreation system  
by the  
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
for the year 2013  
by  
George F. Schwenke, Jr., P.E.

Researchers from Penn State University conducted four separate but related research projects for this plan:

- Pennsylvania Resident Survey
- State Park Visitor Survey
- Pennsylvania Trail Gap Study
- Facilitated Discussions

A resident survey is typically conducted in conjunction with the statewide planning process, in order to identify the outdoor recreation participation patterns and needs of a state's population. For the previous 2004-2008 Pennsylvania plan, two separate resident surveys were conducted, a mail survey and a telephone survey. For the current plan, the planning team reached an early decision to do a single survey effort, and the mail survey was selected as

State Park surveys are not typically conducted in a SCORP planning context, but were included in this case to provide a more comprehensive foundation for future recreation planning in Pennsylvania.

the most cost effective and appropriate method. The survey instrument was designed to collect key data from the previous mail and telephone surveys, and adjusted with extensive input from the TAC and the DCNR planning team to meet the objectives of the current planning cycle.

State Park surveys are not typically conducted as part of this planning process, but were included in this case to provide a more comprehensive foundation for future recreation

planning in Pennsylvania. The State Park survey documents the public's use of state parks and its preferences for park planning and management. This information was deemed necessary because State Park users' behaviors and attitudes had not been studied in Pennsylvania since 1997.

The Trail Gap Study was included in this effort due to the importance of trails to both the recreation and physical activity needs of the state's population. This project surveyed trail advocates from key





trail organizations throughout Pennsylvania to shed new light on gaps in the statewide trail network and reveal attitudes that will help shape trail building strategies and funding policies in the future.

The facilitated discussion group project was designed to collect information from people who are typically under-represented in recreation surveys. It addressed the challenges posed by changing demographics by focusing on the views of two distinct population groups—urban youth and Baby Boomers.

The following sections summarize the background, methods, and key findings and implications of each of these four studies. Study results highlighted here were used in developing the plan's recommendations.

While key findings are highlighted in these brief reports, more detailed information, tables/figures, open-ended comments, and implications can be found in the full study reports available at [www.paoutdoorrecplan.com](http://www.paoutdoorrecplan.com), and on the disk attached to this report (Appendices D, E, F and G).



# Pennsylvania Resident Survey

## Methods, Findings and Conclusions

### Study Background and Objectives

Pennsylvania's population of approximately 13 million people is diverse in its ethnic and racial composition, its distribution across urban and rural regions, and in its exposure to outdoor recreational experience. Understanding the recreational behaviors of the state's population, during a time when outdoor demands appear to be both changing and growing, and when public finances are stressed, is essential if Pennsylvania is to effectively balance the outdoor recreational demands of its people with its responsibility to protect and restore its natural resources.

Seeking to ground the 2009-2013 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan in that understanding, DCNR engaged Penn State's Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism

Management to study and report on residents' outdoor recreational activity, attitudes and opinions.

In addition to outdoor recreation patterns, the survey also examined Pennsylvanians' views on land and water conservation, and the development and management of recreational facilities. The survey included questions on the following topics:

- Overall Recreation Participation
- Favorite Outdoor Recreation Activities
- Recreation Area and Facility Needs
- Outdoor Recreation and Physical Activity
- Perceived Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation
- Demographics

### Survey Methods

Data were collected through a mail/internet survey of the population of Pennsylvania from November 2008

to February 2009. A representative sample of Pennsylvania residents was purchased from a firm specializing in survey sample development. The sample proportionally represented six DCNR planning regions and the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, the state's two largest urban centers. Researchers sent questionnaires, developed through collaboration with the TAC and DCNR staff, to 1,600 residents in each region and the two cities (12,800 total), based on an expected response rate of 20-25 percent. That target would provide approximately 350 completed responses per region and glean statistically valid data at the 95 percent confidence level. So that Pennsylvania's recreation planners could make comparisons and analyze trends, the survey included numerous questions from previous plan research efforts.

Participants were invited to mail their questionnaires in prepaid, business reply envelopes or to complete the survey online. A total of 2,648 completed surveys were returned, representing a response rate of about 21 percent.

### Key Findings

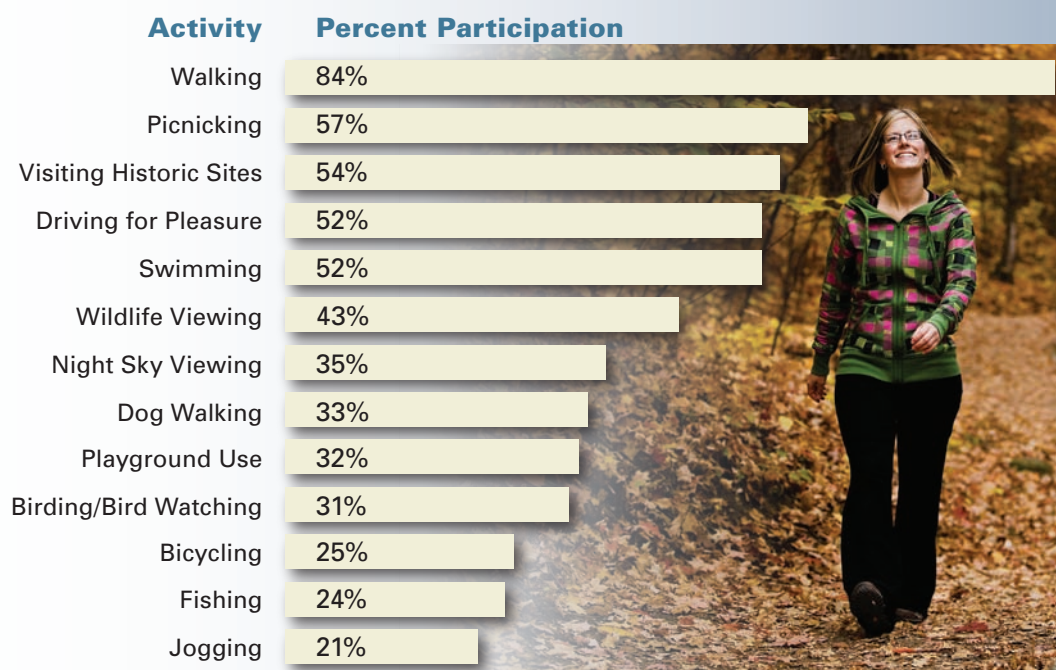
Results showed that many Pennsylvanians are active outdoor recreationists, participating frequently in a variety of activities on both public and private lands and waters, and that they hold definite preferences in regard to their state's outdoor future.

The survey asked residents to indicate recreational activities they had engaged in during the past year (Table 1).





**Table 1.** Participation Rates for Most Popular Outdoor Recreation Activities



Walking, driving for pleasure, bicycling and jogging were reported as the most popular uses of trails and roads, while swimming and fishing attracted the most participation among water-based pursuits.

Respondents said picnicking, dog walking, playground use and camping were the most popular land-based recreational activities. And although license sales have declined in recent years, 14 percent of respondents indicated they or someone in their household had hunted in Pennsylvania during the past year. Hunting was much more popular among rural residents and was less so among urban residents, especially Philadelphians.

Recreationists in Pennsylvania appear to be growing more interested in outdoor learning. Visiting historic

sites, wildlife-viewing, night sky-viewing, and bird-watching were all enjoyed by at least a third of survey respondents.

Outdoor recreation participation rates were generally consistent with past state and nationwide surveys. Some changes seem evident for boating-related activities, however. Canoeing (13%) and kayaking (10%) in Pennsylvania appear to be growing in popularity, up from a combined 9 percent in 2003, with about as many participants as power-boating (12%), down from 21 percent in 2003.

Pennsylvanians recreate outdoors frequently, as well as in diverse ways. Survey respondents averaged 20 visits to outdoor recreation areas over the past year, and nearly a quarter said they participated in outdoor recreation more than 10 hours per week.

Most importantly for future recreation planning, 31 percent of respondents said they expected their outdoor recreational activity to increase over the next five years.

- Younger people and those with higher incomes were more likely to expect their outdoor recreation activity to increase.
- About half of the Baby Boomers (age 44-62) expect to increase their outdoor activity, compared to just one-quarter of their older counterparts.

Pennsylvanians are willing to travel considerable distances to experience the outdoors but, according to respondents, most recreational activity continues to take place close to home.

Parks or trails account for a notable portion of Pennsylvanians'

physical activity. Nearly three-fourths of survey respondents indicated that they walk or ride a bike in their neighborhood. They are more likely to walk or bike for fun or fitness than for commuting to work or shops, parks or other places in their community. Over two-thirds of those with school-aged children indicated that their children never walked or biked to school. However, nearly half stated they would like their children to walk or bike to school more frequently.

Areas managed by local and county government account for the largest portion (43%) of away-from-home outdoor recreation activity (Figure 1). State managed areas, such as state parks, state forests and state game lands, provided a setting for 27 percent of activity, while federal facilities like the Allegheny National Forest, Gettysburg National Military Park, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and U. S. Army Corps of Engineers flood control

facilities accounted for eight percent. Respondents reported seeking 16 percent of their outdoor recreation on private or commercial recreation areas. Pennsylvanians appear willing to travel the greatest distances for traditional outdoor activities like fishing, camping and boating.

Preferred locations for recreation varied for different segments of the population.

- Residents of Philadelphia reported much higher rates than other Pennsylvanians of using local and municipal areas.
- Women were more likely to use local and municipal areas while men allocated more of their outdoor recreation to state-managed areas.

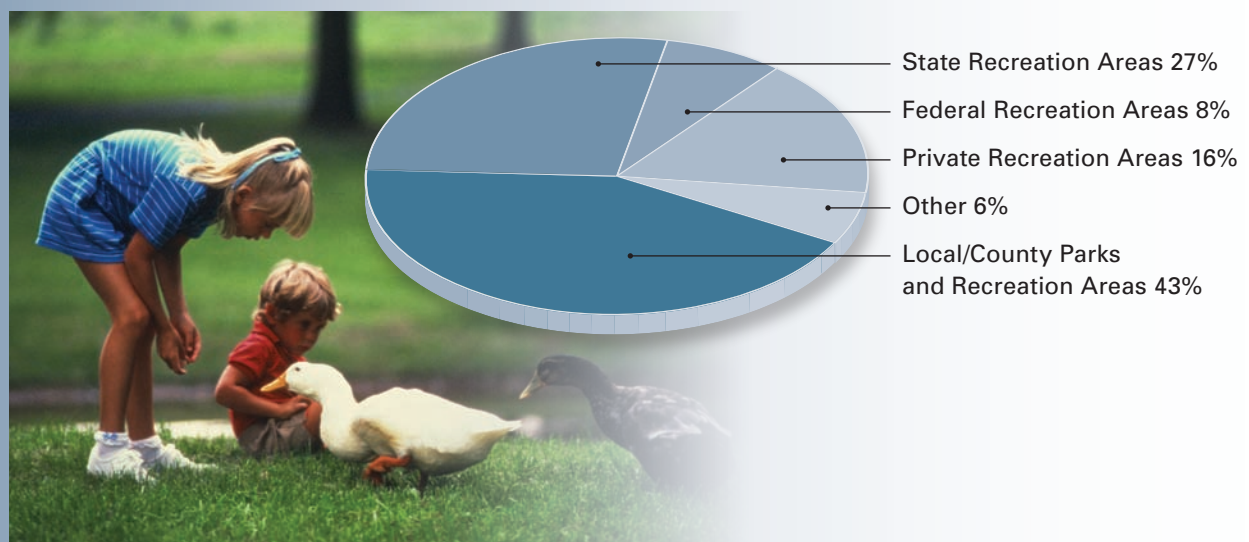
Pennsylvanians clearly view outdoor recreation as an enjoyable way to improve their health and well being. When respondents were asked to cite benefits they receive from outdoor recreation, nearly half of their

answers involved something related to physical or mental health. Typical health-related responses included benefits such as exercise, physical fitness, relaxation, mental health, stress relief and peace of mind.

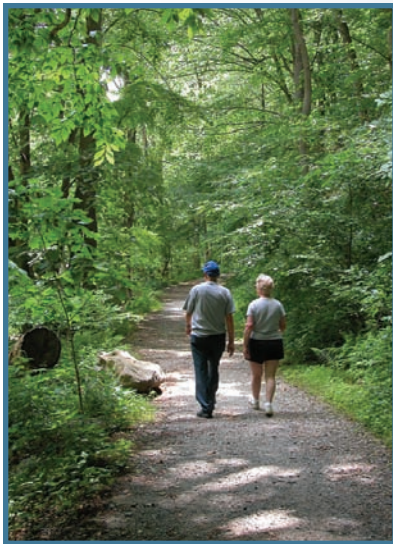
Interestingly, place-related benefits, such as experiencing nature, fresh air, and enjoying the outdoors garnered about equal numbers of responses as social benefits, including spending time with family and being with others. Both place-related and social benefits accounted for 15 percent of total responses.

As have numerous other recent studies of outdoor activity, this research found that time constraints related to work and school commitments are the most important factors limiting Pennsylvanians' outdoor recreation. Nearly half (48%) of respondents indicated that demands of a busy schedule prevented them from participating more often in outdoor pursuits.

**Figure 1.** Location of Away-from-Home Recreation Activity







A significant number of respondents (15%) cited age, health issues or a physical disability as the most important factor limiting their outdoor recreation.

- The older generation (pre-Baby Boomers) was much more likely to mention health constraints as factors limiting their recreation participation (37% compared to 8% of Baby Boomers and 6% of post-Boomers).

Residents surveyed did not cite travel distance as a serious obstacle to outdoor recreation. Only four percent of respondents said travel requirements, in general, kept them

from enjoying outdoor activities as much as they would like. However, the survey followed a summer with the highest gasoline prices in American history and nearly half of survey participants (47%) said that the cost of gasoline had influenced their outdoor recreation participation recently. Their most common responses involved traveling less, staying closer to home, and participating less often in outdoor recreation activities. About one-fifth also indicated they have cut back expenses in other areas to continue their participation in outdoor recreation activities, indicating a strong commitment to these activities.

Pennsylvanians spend considerable amounts of money on equipment and other costs of participating in outdoor recreation. Activities showing the highest economic expenditures include boating, camping, and driving for pleasure. All of these activities may involve costly capital expenditures as well as fuel costs.

Assessing the availability and adequacy of existing recreation areas and facilities is essential to effective recreation planning (Table 2).

When asked what kinds of recreational facilities should be provided more widely, or in greater numbers, respondents cited bicycle lanes more often (69%) than any other type of recreational resource (respondents could name multiple types of facilities). Similarly, a desire for more bicycle paths or trails was indicated by over half (55%) of survey participants. Between half and two-thirds of respondents expressed a desire for more natural or wild lands, envi-

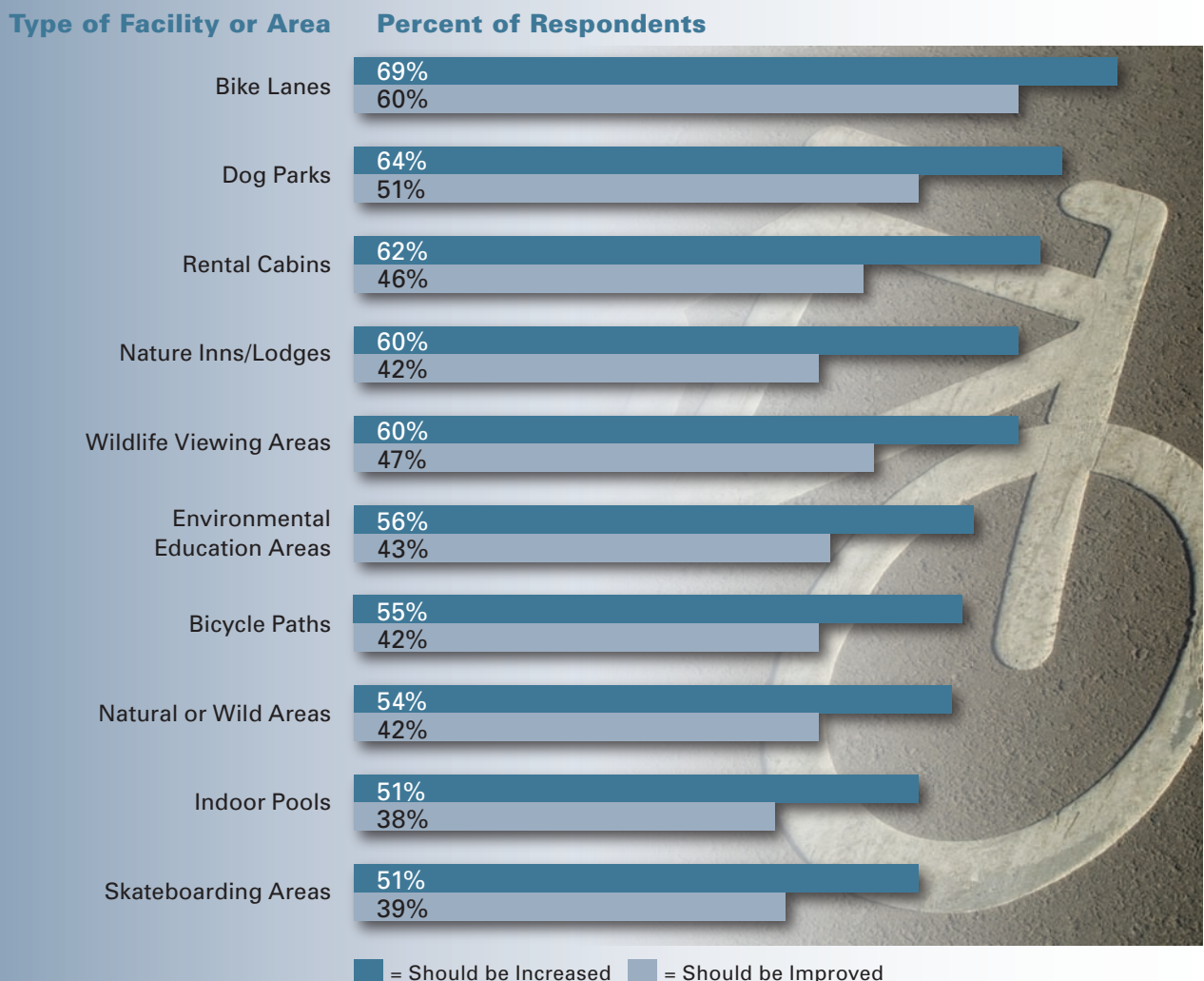
ronmental education areas, wildlife viewing areas, rental cabins, nature inns/lodges and dog parks.

Facility needs varied for different segments of the population.

■ Residents of suburbs and towns were the most likely to indicate a need for more bicycle paths, bike lanes, and mountain bike trails.

■ Urban residents were most likely to indicate a need for a variety of types of areas and facilities, including picnic areas,

**Table 2.** Top Ten Areas/Facilities That Should be Increased or Improved





playgrounds, tennis courts, golf courses, and sporting facilities such as basketball and volleyball courts and soccer, baseball, and football fields.

Across all types of recreational sites and facilities, respondents expressed a need for more facilities more often than a need to improve existing sites. For example, while 55 percent of respondents asked for more bicycle paths, only 42 percent indicated that existing bike paths need to be improved. Among existing facilities, bike lanes along roads and streets received more requests for quality improvement (60%) than any other recreational asset.

Generally, Pennsylvanians appear satisfied with the various types of recreation areas and opportunities available to them. Respondents reported the highest satisfaction with state areas, specifically, state parks, state forests and state game lands, all of which were rated as satisfactory by more than 60 percent of survey participants. Federal, county, municipal and private facilities were all rated as satisfactory by over half of respondents.

Likewise, about 60 percent of Pennsylvanians surveyed agreed that the general environmental quality of existing public recreation areas near them is good, and that these areas are well maintained. However, over one-third feels that public recreation areas are not adequately policed.

Despite the high level of satisfaction with existing facilities, a majority of respondents to the survey felt they needed more information about



the availability of recreation areas and opportunities. Pennsylvanians rely heavily on informal sources of information about recreation opportunities in the state. About two-thirds say they learn about places to go and things to do outdoors from friends, relatives, and other word-of-mouth sources. A majority of respondents, however, did report that newspaper and magazine articles, at times, provided information they had used in exploring recreation opportunities, while 42 percent reported using

the Internet. Maps and brochures were the favorite type of information sought, mentioned by half of the respondents.

Results indicate strongly that Pennsylvanians want state and local governments to do more to protect and restore the state's environment. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated support for an improved permanent source of state funding for park and recreation resources, and for increasing public awareness of the importance of river conserva-



tion. Reconnecting communities to riverfronts won similarly high support.

When asked to prioritize recreation and conservation program categories, respondents ranked maintaining existing park and recreation areas, protecting wildlife habitat and wild resources, acquiring and protecting open space, restoring damaged rivers and streams, and connecting residential areas with schools, workplaces and commercial districts as most deserving of public funding.

Clearly, however, Pennsylvanians see themselves as partners with government in conserving natural resources and landscapes. More than 90 percent of respondents agreed that it is important for citizens to play a role in conserving lands and waters, and only one in ten felt that their individual actions make no difference in conservation. Results suggest that

most Pennsylvanians feel they have the knowledge to make wise environmental choices and nearly 80 percent said they “do their part” to conserve natural resources.

Nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvania residents believe it is very or extremely important to build more greenways/trails and to build

effects of public lands on their surroundings. More than 80 percent feel that trails and greenways increase the value of nearby properties and nearly all believe that parks and natural areas exert a similar influence on property values.

Residents, however, see the state’s landscapes, particularly near their

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More than 90 percent of respondents agreed that it is important for citizens to play a role in conserving lands and waters.

pedestrian and cycling paths between places of work, schools, and shopping areas. Three-fourths of Pennsylvanians indicated they would be more likely to use a trail if it was within easy walking distance from where they live, but only about half felt that their community is a safe and easy place to walk.

Pennsylvania residents expressed strong positive opinions about the

homes, as vulnerable to undesirable change. A majority of residents surveyed reported that “there is not enough protected open space near where I live,” and “open space near where I live is threatened by development.” Only about one-third feels that “there are enough public recreation areas close to where I live.” Providing and maintaining public lands, such as state forests and parks,



protecting wildlife habitat, and conserving natural resources and restoring damaged rivers and streams are high priorities among respondents.

Pennsylvanians expressed strong interest in environmental programming as a component of outdoor recreation. Nearly three-fourths of respondents rated environmental and conservation programs, as well as recreation programs at parks and recreation areas, as very or extremely important. When respondents were asked what recreational resources they would like to see offered more widely, wildlife viewing areas, environmental education centers, and nature inns/lodges were among the most frequent responses.

## Conclusions and Implications

Recreational planners considering the 2009-2013 span of the current plan should note the high priority placed by the public on development and maintenance of trails for walking and bicycling, with specific emphasis on linking communities with natural areas and outdoor recreation resources. Wide public support for trail-related facilities, expressed through this research as well as surveys of active trail users, helped shape one of the major goals of the current plan—to develop a statewide trail network that facilitates recreation and utilitarian uses of Commonwealth trails.

Similarly, there is a clear need for integration of recreation and transportation planning, as trails and paths for walking and biking emerged as some of the greatest

facility needs expressed by the respondents. Local, state and federal public recreation providers can maximize the benefits of their investments by planning together, coordinating grant giving, and capturing efficiencies through shared facilities, staff and training resources.

Survey results also suggest planners can realize an opportunity to promote outdoor recreation to a wider audience, in view of the general public association of outdoor activity with better health. Pennsylvanians place a high value on outdoor places and activities from the standpoint of personal benefit, viewing these resources as an important component of a healthy lifestyle.

Planners should also note the public desire for more open space conservation. This apparent public support could enable resource management agencies to seek fiscally appropriate ways to supplement the state's public land base, particularly if a land acquisition makes it possible to improve public access or close a gap in an existing recreational trail. Pennsylvania residents' commitment to outdoor recreation suggests there would be public support for investment in developing new recreation facilities, and maintaining or improving existing ones.

Finally, public survey response supports a larger investment in nature-based educational programming on existing recreational lands and waters.



# State Park Visitor Survey

## Methods, Findings and Conclusions



### Study Background and Objectives

Pennsylvania's state park system offers residents and visitors 117 diverse parks, in settings ranging from near wilderness to urban downtowns. Owing to past recreation planning, and significant public investment, nearly every state resident lives within 25 miles of at least one state park. Sixty of the state's 67 counties hold state park acreage—roughly a quarter-million acres. Each year, across all four seasons, Pennsylvania's state parks host the outings of more than 34 million state residents and visitors. State parks represent a major proportion of outdoor recreation available in Pennsylvania, and these

parks offer DCNR an interface with the public through which it can promote conservation awareness, outdoor ethics and physical activity.

Planning efforts such as the *DCNR Blueprint: Shaping a Sustainable Pennsylvania*, the *Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report*, and this *2009-2013 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan* have all identified the need to document both the public's use of state parks and its preferences for park planning and management, as well as ongoing evaluation of the state parks product.

State park user behaviors and attitudes, however, had not been studied, specifically, in Pennsylvania, since 1997. To acquire a more contemporary perspective on park use, Penn

State's Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management surveyed state park visitor and trip characteristics, and collected evaluations of park services and opinions on park management. Specific information and issues addressed in this study included:

- Visitor socio-demographics, trip characteristics, and physical activity levels
- Visitor motivations and perceived benefits of visiting state parks
- Evaluation of state park facilities and services
- Preferences for state park management actions
- Program participation and evaluation
- Conservation practices, values, and beliefs

### Survey Methods

To conduct this survey, researchers intercepted and interviewed visitors at six Pennsylvania state parks during summer 2008 (Memorial Day through Labor Day). The parks selected for this study were selected to represent different regions of the Commonwealth, as well as different sizes and park amenities: Ohiopyle (SW), Pymatuning (NW), Greenwood Furnace (SC), Parker Dam (NC), Ridley Creek (SE), and Lackawanna (NE). Researchers and the collaborative team developed a systematic sampling plan to survey visitors on different days of the week (weekday vs. weekend) and at different locations within each park (overnight areas and day-use areas). Prior to interviewing visitors, researchers visited each study park



and sought park manager input on survey content and the best sites to intercept and interview park visitors. Following these pre-survey meetings, graduate research assistants were trained in interview procedures. Graduate research assistants approached park visitors in various locations for pre-determined intervals and requested their participation in this 25 to 35-minute survey. Only adults over the age of 18 were eligible to participate. Of 1,396 visitors contacted, 1,139 agreed to participate for an overall response rate of 82 percent. Response rates varied across parks with Ohiopyle having the lowest response rate (58%) and Parker Dam and Greenwood Furnace exhibiting the highest response rates (97%).

## Key Findings

### Visitor Demographics, Trip Characteristics, and Physical Activity Levels

State park visitors represented a wide range of age groups and socio-economic levels, but were less likely to be racially diverse. For example, visitors were more likely to be 36 to 50-year-old Caucasians with some advanced education and whose household incomes were \$60,000 or less. A majority of visitors contacted (64%) were day users. Results indicate that:

- Day users were less likely to be physically active than overnight park users, were less likely to engage in a wide range of conservation practices, and less likely to feel that they shared the same goals/values with state parks.

- Day users, however, visited study parks more frequently than overnight users (6 times per year for an average of 3.6 hours versus 3 times per year and an average of 4 nights per visit for overnight visitors).
- Day users, passive recreationists (picnickers, beach/pool users), lower income, and minority visitors were more likely to say that the proximity of the study park to their home was excellent and were more likely to visit only that state park (and visit more frequently than other groups).

Group size averaged five people, but a majority (56%) visited in groups of one to three people. Visitors were most likely to visit state parks with family only (57%).

Picnicking, beach use/swimming (both pool/lake), relaxing, camping, hiking, and fishing were the activi-

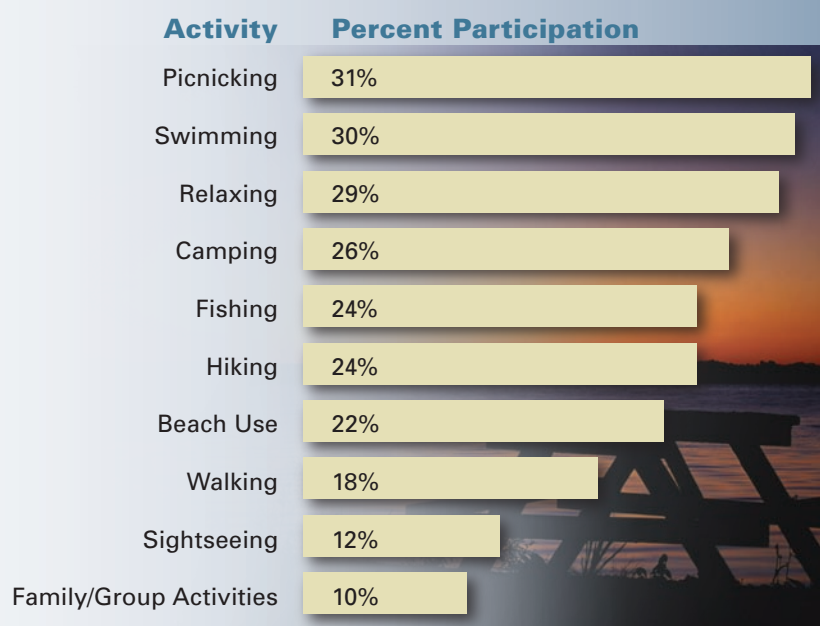
ties most frequently cited state park activities (Figure 2).

A majority of visitors (63%) reported that they engaged in some form of moderate physical activity during their visit. Moreover, almost half of all visitors (49%) reported that they were more physically active during their state park visit than in their daily lives.

Physical activity levels and perceived health benefits depended on a number of visitor characteristics, trip patterns, and visitor perceptions.

- Inactive park visitors were more likely to be older with lower levels of educational attainment and lower household incomes.
- Physically active visitors were more likely to visit other parks, to say that their park visit resulted in both physical and mental health benefits, and expressed wider approval of park facilities, natural features and services.

**Figure 2.** Top Ten Activities Participated In During State Park Visit



- Physically active visitors were also more likely than inactive visitors to perceive that state park management goals are consistent with their own views.

### State Park Visitation Motivations and Benefits

State parks provide opportunities for a number of experiences and benefits. Having fun, reducing stress and anxiety, and connecting to the outdoors were key reasons that respondents cited for their visit. There were differences in the importance placed on these experiences depending on visitor and visitation characteristics.

- Visitors with higher incomes and younger visitors were more likely to report that providing a sense of adventure and challenging their abilities were important reasons for visiting that state park.
- Minority visitors were less likely than caucasian visitors to say that connecting with nature, connecting to the outdoors, and providing a chance to be alone were important reasons for visiting state parks.
- Anglers, campers, walkers, and bicyclists were more likely than other visitors to say that learning about the natural environment, connecting to the outdoors, and providing a chance to be alone were important reasons for visiting state parks.

- Walkers and bicyclists were also more likely to say that improving physical health and fitness were important motivations for their state park visit.

### Visitor Evaluation of and Satisfaction with State Park Facilities and Services

Visitors expressed high satisfaction with their state parks and evaluated most services/amenities favorably. In particular, they felt that state parks were scenic, provided a welcoming environment, and were a good value for the money invested in their visit. Park signage, restroom cleanliness, and the visibility of park staff were

slightly less likely to receive high ratings (Table 3). Small variations in visitor facility ratings associated with demographic or activity characteristics were apparent. For example:

- Female visitors were more likely to rate scenic beauty, employee responsiveness, and park trails favorably and they also indicated higher overall satisfaction levels. However, females were less likely than males to rate staff visibility favorably.
- Education and income also influenced visitor attitudes and perceptions. For example, visitors with higher education and income levels were more likely to rate

**Table 3.** Top Seven Rated State Park Amenities and Services

State Park Facility, Amenity, or Service	% Rating as Good or Excellent
Scenic beauty of this park	97%
A welcoming environment	95%
Value for money invested in this State Park visit	95%
Courteousness of park employees	94%
Cleanliness of this park	94%
Perceptions of personal safety	92%
Responsiveness of park employees	92%





the quality of outdoor recreation programs favorably. However, visitors with lower education and income levels were more likely to rate the park's proximity to their home favorably.

- Younger visitors were more likely than older visitors to rate trails favorably, but less likely to approve of park signage.

### Preferences for State Park Management Actions/Policies

Visitors were also asked to rate the importance of various strategies/actions to improve state park facilities, services, and overall visitor experiences. Overall, visitors gave

the highest priority to building connective trails, both within state parks and to nearby communities, increasing the number of facilities to provide more active use of parks, and improving visitor and interpretive services (Table 4). Making the parks more pet friendly and increasing the number of outdoor recreation programs were less likely to be perceived as important priorities across the overall sample. There were, however, differences in these preferences across various groups, such as:

- Younger visitors were more likely than older visitors to support increasing the number of outdoor recreation programs, making

the parks more pet friendly and building connective trails and were also more supportive of developing facilities to provide more active park use, and improving visitor and environmental interpretation centers.

- Bicyclists were more likely than other recreationists to support building connective trails, developing facilities to provide more active park use, improving visitor and interpretation centers, and improving the quality of overnight accommodations.

### State Park Program Participation and Conservation Behaviors

In response to DCNR's ongoing efforts to better connect Pennsylvanians and Commonwealth visitors to a variety of outdoor experiences and conservation issues, this survey gathered information on state park program attendance, and conservation beliefs and behaviors.

State park program participation across the study sample was modest at 13 percent; however, visitors who did attend state park programs said that they were very important to their overall visit. These program participants were more likely to say that their visit inspired them to engage in committed types of conservation behaviors and were more likely to perceive that they shared the same goals/values as state parks.

**Table 4.** Top Five Preferences for Future State Park Strategies/Efforts

State Park Strategy/Effort	% Important or Extremely Important
Build trails to connect areas within the park	74%
Increase the number of facilities that provide more active use of this park (e.g., trails, canoe launches, playgrounds)	67%
Build trails from parks to nearby communities	58%
Improve the visitor and environmental interpretation centers	54%
Improve the quality of overnight accommodations	46%





Visitors were asked a number of questions concerning their conservation behaviors and attitudes and the extent that their state park visit inspired them to engage in conservation activities. Of particular interest were visitors' perceptions that their individual actions made a collective difference in conserving the environment. Here, 9 out of 10 state park visitors believed that their individual actions made a difference in conserving the environment.

In terms of specific conservation activities that state park visits inspired, respondents were more likely to engage in well-established conservation activities (recycling, removing litter). Visitors were also more likely to engage in simple conservation actions on a regular basis (e.g., changing to energy efficient light bulbs, recycling, reducing water consumption).

Only a small minority of visitors said that their state park visit motivated them to take on more committed actions such as advocating for environmental issues, building trails, donating to conservation causes, or joining a friends group.

Conservation attitudes and behaviors were also compared across different state park visitor groups. Some key differences by age group emerged. For example:

- ▣ Younger visitors were more likely than older visitors to say that state park visits inspired them to recycle, build or maintain trails, or clean up litter and were also more likely to recycle, reduce water consumption, volunteer outdoors, and use alternative transportation on a regular basis.

### State Park Visitor Open-Ended Comments

Finally, state park visitors were asked a series of open-ended questions concerning if, and how, their outdoor recreation patterns have changed over the last few years, what they viewed as the primary purpose of state parks, and if there was anything that state parks could do to improve facilities and services.

- ▣ When asked how their recreation patterns had changed over the last few years, respondents reported changes in their level of activity and the affordability of travel. At the time this survey was conducted, gasoline prices appeared to impact outdoor recreation patterns in several ways. The influence of gasoline prices is seen clearly in results of the Residents Survey.



- Visitors' perceived purpose of Pennsylvania state parks fell into five overlapping themes: conservation, escaping/relaxing, family recreation, affordable place to recreate and a place to exercise and improve health.
- The following were recurring suggestions for improvement to state parks: improving general park maintenance, maintaining and building parking lots, stocking fish, providing bilingual signage, improving ADA access, advertising and promoting park programs, adding more playgrounds, and employing lifeguards.

## Conclusions and Implications

Survey results provide a sense of who the state park visitor is, their visitation patterns, their approval of park facilities and services, and their conservation attitudes and behaviors. These findings can be useful in in-

forming efforts to improve state park management, programming, and in conveying to the public a message of natural resource stewardship. Several strategies or actions could be considered in light of these findings.

While the percentage of visitors who attended educational and recreation programs in state parks was low, attendance at these programs did appear to positively influence visitors' conservation attitudes and encourage them to engage in stewardship or conservation behaviors and projects. Thus, state park programs and messaging can be one of several ways to develop environmental awareness among park visitors, and, to some extent, the wider public.

Since a majority of visitors are day users (and these visitors were less likely to engage in conservation practices and participate in state park programs), there is an opportunity to further expand conservation messaging and programming to these

day-user audiences. Careful planning, however, is needed to ensure that such efforts complement rather than impair the enjoyment of day users' visits.

The fact that Pennsylvanians primarily visit state parks with their families suggests the DCNR Bureau of State Parks could increase visitation and improve the experience of current park visitors by planning for greater staff visibility during weekends, holidays and other times of peak family use in order to convey a greater feeling of security, particularly among female visitors or young families who may be likely to visit with children.

Building trails, especially to connect parks to existing trails and nearby communities, drew support from a wide range of visitors. Park planners should assess opportunities to provide significantly enhanced recreational benefits through building relatively short sections of connector trails where the possibility exists.

Similarly, parks can heighten their appeal to visitors by providing more active uses of these parks such as building or improving the condition of trails, canoe launches, playgrounds, etc. and by seeking ways to accommodate pets without conflicting with other visitors' experiences.

Improved attention to restroom cleaning and appearance as well as better signage at key facilities (e.g., trails, restrooms, campgrounds, day use areas) could further enhance the attractiveness and usability of state parks to families.



# Pennsylvania Trail Gap Study

## Methods, Findings and Conclusions

### Study Background and Objectives

The trail gap analysis study was intended to be the first step in a long-term process shedding new light on gaps in the statewide trail network and revealing attitudes that will help shape trail building strategies and funding policies over the next five years or more.

The first phase of the study began in September 2008, when DCNR and Penn State collected detailed descriptions of critical gaps, disconnections and areas devoid of footpaths, right-of-ways, and off-road vehicle tracks in Pennsylvania's rapidly growing network of trails. Twenty-one major trail organizations statewide were

initially asked to submit descriptions of their top 10 priority trail gaps. These organizations were selected based on their extensive experience in planning, building and maintaining the major trails that comprise the "backbone" of a statewide trail network described in *Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections*, adopted in 2001.

While the study's first phase was designed to identify physical locations of gaps on major trails, the second phase was designed to assess location-based priorities, social factors and organizational barriers to filling the gaps. Two hundred eighty-two expert advocates sampled from a limited number of trail club leaders and affiliate

organizations voiced their opinions on key issues and priorities related to trail development. Though these individuals did not represent average residents or even avid trail users, they provided insights into the attitudes of many of the Commonwealth's most active trail planners, builders and custodians.

### Phase 1: Pennsylvania Trail Gap Inventory

The DCNR-Penn State study team identified 21 statewide or regional trail advocacy organizations and asked a contact person (typically an officer) from each organization to identify up to 10 important trail gaps and voids in their trail system. (For the purposes of this study, a gap was defined as "a missing link or connector between existing trails" and a void was defined as "a geographic area with insufficient trails available.")







Participants included one statewide and several regional rails-to-trails organizations; regional greenway commissions; National Scenic Trail organizations; statewide groups representing equestrians, hikers, mountain bicyclers, off-highway/all-terrain

vehicle riders and snowmobilers; and one regional organization representing cross-country skiers.

Participants documented each trail gap or void by logging onto an online data-collection site to upload as much of the following information as possible:

- Contact information for the organization and individual submitting the information
- The name/location of the trail gap or void
- A detailed narrative description of where the gap or void is located
- A narrative explanation of why the gap or void is important
- A description of land ownership in the area of the gap or void
- The location and characteristics (including trail name, uses, and access points) of existing trails in the area
- (If applicable) Surface material, tread width, and corridor width of existing trails that would be linked by filling the trail gap or void
- (If applicable) Contact information for organization(s) responsible for managing and maintaining trails in the area that would link to the gap or void

Finally, participants were asked to submit copies of available maps or other documents that would help specify the location and characteristics of the gap or void.

The research team contacted all potential participants via e-mail and/or postal mail in August 2008, and encouraged them to consult with officers and board members of their organizations to identify up to 10 important gaps and voids on land-based trails in the geographic area where the organization operates and to submit this information. Participants could access the online data-collection site from August through December 2008.

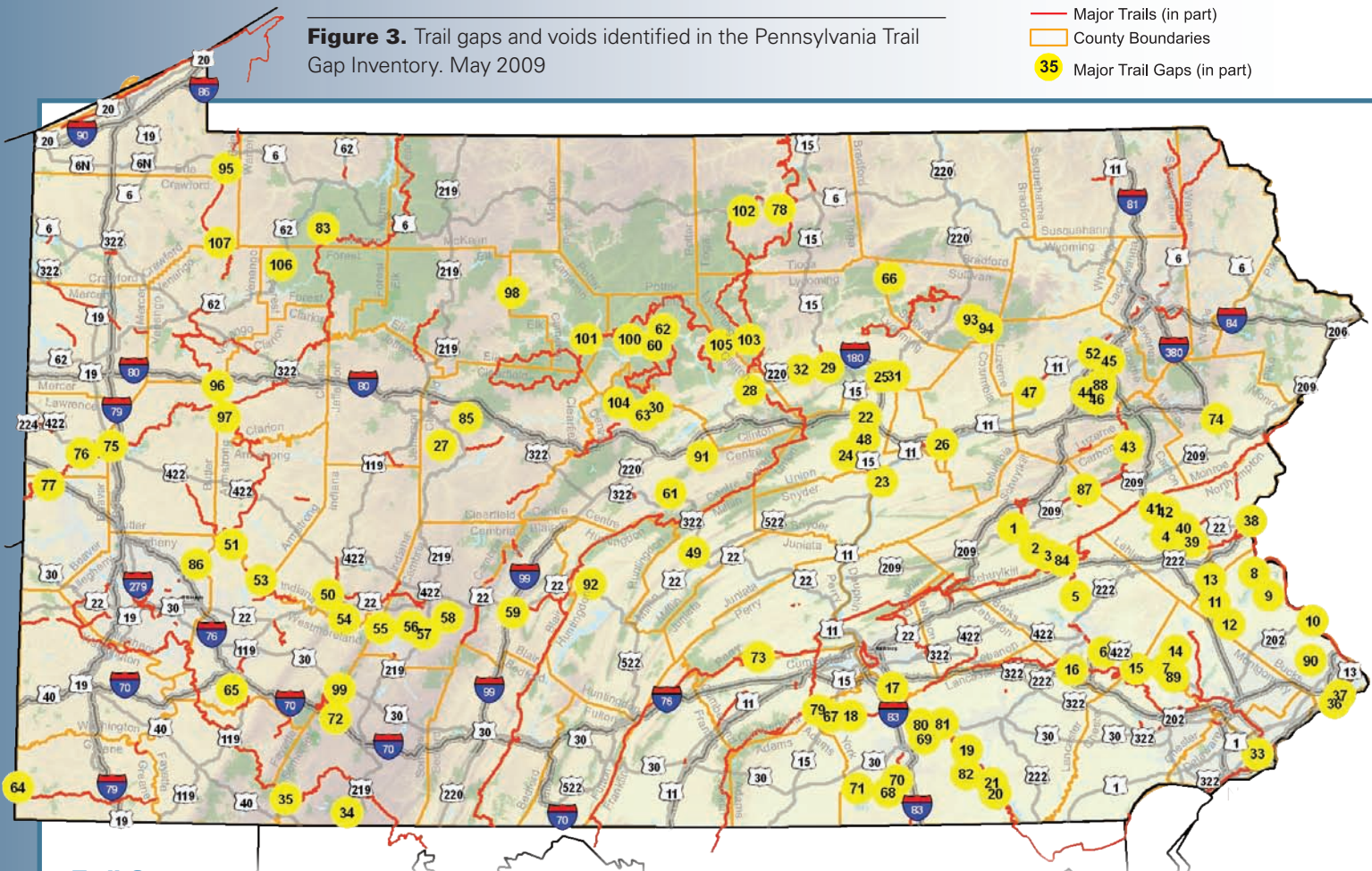
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## Legend

- Major Trails (in part)
- County Boundaries
- 35 Major Trail Gaps (in part)

**Figure 3.** Trail gaps and voids identified in the Pennsylvania Trail Gap Inventory. May 2009



## Trail Gaps

- 1** Schuylkill River Trail, Landingville to Pottsville.
- 2** Schuylkill River Trail, Auburn to Landingville.
- 3** Schuylkill River Trail, Auburn Area.
- 4** Schuylkill River Trail, Hamburg to Kernsville.
- 5** Schuylkill River Trail, Reading to Hamburg.
- 6** Schuylkill River Trail, Birdsboro to Gibraltar.
- 7** Schuylkill River Trail, Montgomery & Chester counties.
- 8** PA Highlands Trail Network, Riegelsville to Nockamixon State Park.
- 9** PA Highlands Trail Network, Ralph Stover State Park to Nockamixon State Park.
- 10** PA Highlands Trail Network, Doylestown to Ralph Stover State Park and Nockamixon State Park.
- 11** PA Highlands Trail Network, Nockamixon State Park to Quakertown to Green Lane Park.
- 12** PA Highlands Trail Network, Nockamixon State Park through Perkasie and Sellersville to Green Lane Park.
- 13** PA Highlands Trail Network, Bethlehem to Coopersburg to Quakertown.
- 14** PA Highlands Trail Network, Green Lane Park to Pottstown.
- 15** PA Highlands Trail Network, Schuylkill River Trail from Pottstown to French Creek State Park.
- 16** Horse-Shoe Trail where roads are currently being substituted.
- 17** PA Highlands Trail Network, Conewago Recreational Trail across Susquehanna River to co-align with Mason-Dixon Trail.
- 18** PA Highlands Trail Network, Mason-Dixon Trail System where roads are currently being used.
- 19** Atglen-Susquehanna Trail, Creswell Station in Washington Boro Village, Manor Twp., to River Park in Columbia Borough.
- 20** Atglen-Susquehanna Trail, Creswell Station in Washington Boro Village, Manor Twp., to Brenner Hollow Road, Conestoga Twp.
- 21** Conestoga Trail, extension to Maryland border.
- 22** Warrior Run Pathways Project, Dewart Village through Watsontown Village and Allenwood Twp. to White Deer Twp.
- 23** Sunbury Riverfront Trail.
- 24** Lewisburg to Mifflinburg Rail Trail.
- 25** Muncy Heritage Park and Nature Trail, Port Penn Village.
- 26** North Branch Canal Trail.
- 27** Clearfield/Grampian Rail Trail to Bilgers Rocks.



- 28** Connection between Lock Haven and Pine Creek Trailhead in Jersey Shore.
- 29** Connection between Williamsport Riverwalk and South Williamsport Recreation Area / Little League World Series Complex.
- 30** Bricktown Trail, connect several small communities in Centre and Clinton counties.
- 31** Downtown Muncy to Muncy Heritage Park and West Branch Susquehanna River.
- 32** Connection between Pine Creek Trailhead in Jersey Shore and River Walk in Williamsport.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania makes no guarantee or warranty concerning the accuracy or completeness of information contained in this geographic data or any accompanying documentation.



**33** Schuylkillbanks between Fort Mifflin and Schuylkill River Park.

**34** Connections between the Great Allegheny Passage and Deep Creek Lake, MD.

**35** Connections between the Great Allegheny Passage at Meyersdale and Big Savage Mountain, U.S. Rte. 40, and the Youghiogheny River, MD.

**36** Delaware and Lehigh Canal, Bristol Borough.

**37** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, intersection of towpath and PA Rte. 13 near Tullytown; the Levittown Shopping Center; and intersection of the towpath and the CSX high-speed rail crossing in Falls Twp.

**38** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Riverside Park to Hugh Moore Park via Glendon Bridge.

**39** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Hanover Canal Park to Lehigh Canal Park.

**40** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Catasauqua Borough to Northampton Borough.

**41** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Slatington Borough to Whitehall Twp.

**42** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Bertsch Creek (Lehigh Twp.) to Northampton Borough.

**43** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Glen Onoko to Jim Thorpe.

**44** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Glen Summit.

**45** Delaware and Lehigh Canal Trail, Seven Tubs to Mountaintop.

**46** Black Diamond Trail, Glen Summit.

**47** Susquehanna Warrior Trail, Berwick to Wilkes-Barre Levee Trail along the west bank of the Susquehanna.

**48** West Branch RiverWalk, a proposed trail between Lewisburg and West Milton.

**49** Juniata RiverWalk, westward extension from Lewistown's Victory Park to proposed turn-around.

**50** West Penn Trail and Hoodlebug Trail, connection to Ghost Town Trail.

**51** Kiski Valley Trail, Freeport to Leechburg to Apollo.

**52** Connection between Tubs and the Levee trails.

**53** Main Line Canal, Roaring Run Trail and West Penn Trail connection.

**54** Main Line Canal, Blairsville and Seward connection.

**55** Main Line Canal, Johnstown and Seward connection.



**56** Path of the Flood Trail, between Staple Bend Tunnel and Franklin trailhead.

**57** Path of the Flood, South Fork Borough to South Dam Abutment of Flood Memorial.

**58** Main Line Canal, link Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site in Cresson Twp. to Ehrenfeld Borough.

**59** Lower Trail, extension from Flowing Spring (Frankstown Twp.) through Canal Basin Park (Hollidaysburg) to the Six-Through-Ten Trail.

**60** Spur trail from South Renovo to Bloody Skillet Trailhead.

**61** Rothrock State Forest to Bald Eagle State Forest.

**62** Spur trail from Renovo to Whiskey Springs ATV Trailhead.

**63** Link Snow Shoe Rail Trail (Clarence) to Bloody Skillet ATV Trail (Orviston).

**64** Replace lost access to Warrior Trail segment near mile 3.

**65** Additional trail segments for Laurel Ridge Cross Country Ski Center.

**66** Connector between Loyalsock forestry trails in Cabbage Hollow area to State Game Lands #12 trails in Sunfish Pond area.

**67** Additional trails are needed in northern York County.

**68** Heritage Rail Trail County Park, link Seven Valleys Borough to Hollow Creek Greenway and the Glatfelters Station Trailhead.

**69** Heritage Rail Trail County Park, link municipalities east of the Rail Trail to county's rail trail system.

**70** Hanover Trolley Trail, Spring Grove Borough to Heidelberg Twp.

**71** Hanover Trolley Trail, Spring Grove Borough to Penn Twp.

**72** Link existing trails in Laurel Ridge State Park, Laurel Hill State Park, and Forbes State Forest.

**77** North Country National Scenic Trail, South Beaver Twp. to Big Beaver Twp.

**78** Mid State Trail, Charleston Twp.

**79** Mason Dixon Trail System, linking to Camp Tuckahoe.

**80** Mason Dixon Trail System, Codorus Creek to Gut Road.

**81** Mason Dixon Trail System, north of Wrightsville Village in Hellam Twp.

**82** Mason-Dixon Trail System, Paper Mill Road and PA Rte. 74 in the vicinity of Muddy Creek.

**83** Northern Allegheny Mountain Bike Association, singletrack mountain bike trail from Chapman State Park to Hearts Content National Scenic Area.

**84** Appalachian Trail, construct bridge for the trail over active train tracks near the confluence of the Schuylkill and Little Schuylkill rivers.

**85** Sandy-Du Bois proposed trail system connections to Bilger's Rocks Natural Area, Clearfield/Grampian Rail Trail, Moshannon State Forest, Elliot State Park, Parker Dam State Park.

**86** Pittsburgh to Freeport.

**87** Jim Thorpe to Tamaqua.

**88** White Haven to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.

**89** Pottstown to Valley Forge.

**90** New Hope to Philadelphia.

**91** State College to Lock Haven.

**92** Lower Trail, Alfarata Trailhead to Huntingdon Borough.

**93** Connect State Game Lands #13 trails to Ricketts Glen State Park trails and to State Game Lands #57 trails.

**94** West of Lake Jean along SR487.

**95** Corry to Spartansburg.

**96** Emlenton to Foxburg.

**97** Parker to Upper Hillville.

**98** West Creek Recreational Rail Trail, St Marys to Emporium

**99** Between Rte 30 and Laurel Mountain State Park.

**100** Link trails west and east of Kettle Creek, between Kettle Creek State Park and Westport.

**101** Montour Run to Jerico/Sinnemahoning.

**102** Ansonia Area east to Armenia Mountain near Troy.

**103** North and west of Jersey Shore along Rte 44 north to Waterville and then to SGL 75 east of Slate Run.

**104** Black Moshannon area to Kato area south of the West Branch Susquehanna River to South Renovo.

**105** Grugan Hollow Road area (south and west of Haneyville) to Left Hand Sugar Camp Rd.

**106** Tidioute/Tionesta area crossing of the Allegheny River.

**107** Titusville to Centerville.



**73** Tuscarora Trail, PA Rte. 74 to McClure's Gap.

**74** Big Pocono State Park, access to trails from the south.

**75** North Country National Scenic Trail, McConnells Mill State Park to Moraine State Park.

**76** North Country National Scenic Trail, Shenango Twp. to Slippery Rock Twp.



Trail group representatives documented a total of 107 gaps and voids in 41 counties distributed throughout the state. Spatial data has been recorded in DCNR's geographic information system (Figure 3).

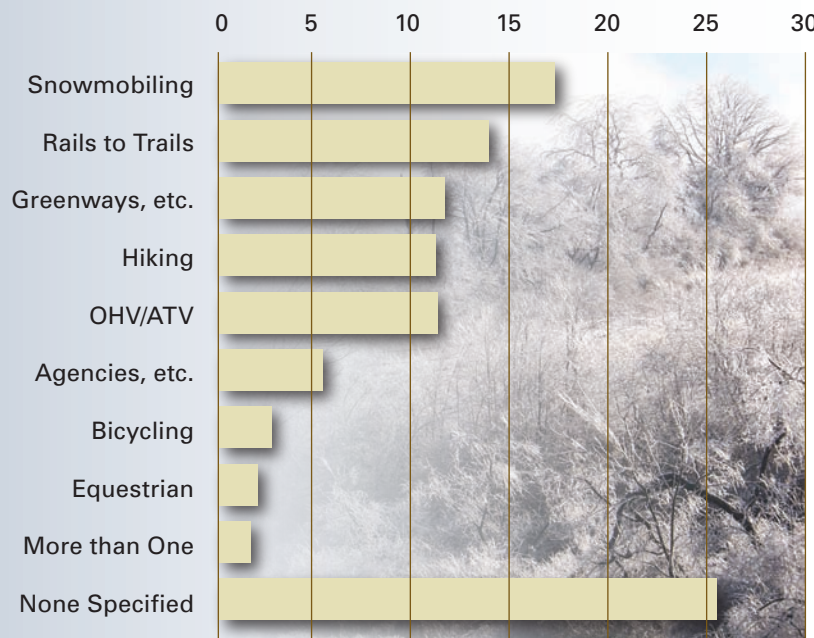
Gaps and voids were identified in greenways systems, regional heritage trails, rail-trails, regional and long-distance hiking trails, including National Scenic Trails, OHV/ATV trail systems, cross-country ski trail systems, snowmobile trail systems, and mountain bicycling trails. It is important to note that the trail gaps uncovered in this study represent only a starting point in identifying trail gaps in Pennsylvania. As other gaps are revealed and described by other trail planning advocates and stakeholders, they will be added to DCNR's database in an ongoing statewide trail gap management strategy, facilitating a more systematic approach to planning and completing the Commonwealth's trail network.

### Phase 2: Pennsylvania Trail Gap Priorities Survey

This survey was conducted to assess the importance of factors that influence priority-setting in trail development decisions and to identify effective strategies for developing

and maintaining trails. The study population included 530 individuals identified as advocates for Pennsylvania trails. Participants were affiliated with trail user groups, trail planning organizations such as rails-to-trails, regional greenways, heritage areas or

**Figure 4.** Primary Affiliation of Participants in Trail Gap Priorities Survey





**Figure 5.** Participation in Trail-based Activities by Respondents in Trail Gap Priorities Survey



conservancies, and public agencies, advisory committees, or advocacy groups (Figure 4).

These individuals were asked to complete a questionnaire that solicited their perspective on priorities for filling trail gaps and voids. The questionnaire also asked participants to indicate the relative importance of various factors influencing trail development. This questionnaire

included importance rating scales for nine geographic priorities, eight social or experiential priorities, and eight organizational priorities, as well as questions about experience and recommendations for trail development and maintenance, affiliation with trail-based organizations, and participation in trail-based activities. The questionnaire was available to potential participants

from late November 2008 through early February 2009.

### Key Findings

A total of 282 responses were received (53% response rate). Survey respondents were also asked how often they participated in 16 different trail-based activities (Figure 5). On average, they reported participating “frequently” in trail work and walk-

ing; “occasionally” in day-hiking and bicycling; and “rarely” in 12 other trail-based activities.

Survey participants were asked to rank the importance of geographic, social or experiential, and organization issues related to trail planning and development. Among

geographic issues, respondents assigned the highest importance to providing connections between existing trails, closing a gap within an existing trail; and building trails that connect communities to each other (Table 5). Respondents assigned less importance to six other issues.

**Table 5.** Importance of Geographic Issues Related to Trail Development.

<b>Geographic Issue</b>	<b>Cumulative Importance Points<sup>a</sup></b>
Providing connections between existing trails	210
Closing a gap within an existing trail	167
Building trails that connect communities to each other	153
Building trails that access open space (parks, forests, game lands, etc.)	93
Providing trails that connect neighborhoods, shopping areas, and workplaces within communities	65
Providing convenient trailheads and access points	57
Building trails that provide access to remote areas	32
Providing trails within walking distance of users’ homes	31
Connecting neighborhoods to schools	24

<sup>a</sup> Participants ranked one issue as “Most important” and one issue as “Second.” The “Cumulative importance points” column represents an overall importance rank.

**Table 6.** Importance of Social or Experiential Issues Related to Trail Development.

<b>Social or Experiential Issue</b>	<b>Cumulative Importance Points<sup>a</sup></b>
Providing access to outstanding natural scenery	241
Providing trails that accommodate more than one user group	226
Providing trails that are accessible for users with disabilities	99
Providing access to opportunities for solitude	72
Providing easy opportunities	64
Providing access to historic or other cultural resources	56
Providing challenging opportunities	34
Providing trails that can be accessed by public transportation	33

<sup>a</sup> Participants ranked one issue as “Most important” and one issue as “Second.” The “Cumulative importance points” column represents an overall importance rank.





Among social or experiential issues, respondents assigned the highest importance to providing access to outstanding natural scenery and providing trails that accommodate more than one user group (Table 6). Six other social or experiential issues were assigned less importance.

Among organizational issues, respondents assigned the highest importance to securing trail rights-of-way that otherwise would be lost to development, taking advantage of landowners' willingness to allow trail development, and ensuring a high level of local

support (Table 7). Five other organizational issues ranked much lower in importance.

Many participants felt that it was important to take full advantage of landowners' willingness to allow trail development near or within their properties; close gaps on existing trails; provide connections between trails; provide access to outstanding natural scenery; and establish trails that accommodate more than one user group.

Respondents were then asked to identify trail-related responsibilities that "make the most sense for your organization to accept."

Researchers used content analysis to group the answers into themes. Among individuals whose primary organizational affiliation was with one of the trail user groups (hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, etc.), operational responsibilities were identified most often, including (in descending order):

- Trail maintenance and stewardship activities,
- Trail management activities,
- Trail construction, and
- Supplying user information such as maps and brochures.

**Table 7.** Importance of Organizational Issues Related to Trail Development.

Organizational Issue	Cumulative Importance Points <sup>a</sup>
Securing trail rights-of-way that otherwise would be lost to development	260
Taking advantage of landowners' willingness to allow trail development	170
Ensuring a high level of local support	146
Maximizing local economic development	73
Establishing trail maintenance partnerships with private organizations	66
Establishing private funding partnerships for maintaining trails	40
Establishing private funding partnerships for building trails	36
Establishing trail construction partnerships with private organizations	33

<sup>a</sup> Participants ranked one issue as "Most important" and one issue as "Second."  
The "Cumulative importance points" column represents an overall importance rank.

Among individuals whose primary organizational affiliation was with one of the greenways, heritage areas, conservancies, or public agencies, or an advisory or advocacy group, organizational responsibilities were identified most often, including (in descending order):

- Advocating and promoting trail development,
- Coordinating and/or assisting local groups,
- Supervision of design, contracting, and construction,
- Developing and maintaining relationships with landowners,
- Fundraising, and
- Planning trail development.

Respondents were also asked to reply to two open-ended questions and describe their own experience addressing the need to fund trail development and maintenance. Content analysis of responses to these two questions revealed similar themes. The theme that occurred



most often was seeking diverse funding sources — federal, state, local, and private money. Individuals described going about this differently, however. Some advocated seeking federal or state money first, and then using it to attract local and private funds, while others advocated the opposite. Other common themes included building and coordinating community or regional support; recruiting volunteers; and fund raising. Rather than describing their own experiences seeking funding, some respondents chose to suggest

“solutions” to the funding challenge. These suggestions included simplifying DCNR’s grant writing process and/or providing more support; increasing the availability of federal transportation enhancement funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; and (particularly among individuals affiliated with motorized trail use) trail user fees, a dedicated fuel tax, and dedication of registration fees entirely to trail development and maintenance.



# What Urban Youth and Baby Boomers Say about Outdoor Recreation in Pennsylvania

Methods, Findings and Conclusions

## Study Background and Objectives

To ensure that Pennsylvania's 2009-2013 Outdoor Recreation Plan reflected the needs of all the state's residents, and that it addressed challenges posed by demographic

shifts, the planning team sought out the views of two distinct population groups—urban youth and Baby Boomers. Many young people in large cities depend on neighborhood recreational facilities for outdoor activity and play, but facilities avail-

able to them often face unique issues of maintenance, safety or over-use that diminish their value to the community. Unless these issues are considered and addressed, the state's urban youth may not enjoy the same access to outdoor recreational benefits as other Pennsylvanians.

Baby Boomers, adults born during the post-World War II years of 1945-1964 make up about 27 percent (3.4 million) of Pennsylvania's population. Currently at ages ranging from the mid-40s to the mid-60s these residents are retired or are approaching retirement. Baby Boomers tend to have higher incomes than other age groups and are more accustomed to travel than their parents. As more Baby Boomers leave the workforce, their outdoor recreational behaviors and expectations will exert growing influence on recreation resources, facilities and recreation demand. Planning for this approaching swell of mobile, relatively affluent recreationists is essential if the state is to offer quality outdoor experience amid a responsibly managed outdoor resource base.





Both groups' views were sought through a series of facilitated discussions held during late summer-early fall 2008. This summary describes the design and findings of those sessions. Findings are organized around strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that emerged in these discussions.

### Facilitated Discussion Design and Structure

The facilitated discussions described here involved urban youth, especially African-American and Hispanic youth, and Baby Boomers. More than 130 people participated in these discussions (93 youth; 43 adults), and each session lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. Each of the sessions invited discussion on a common set of questions designed to identify outdoor recreation issues and needs relevant to participants. The core questions used follow:

1. We are interested in your involvement in outdoor recreation activities. In what ways do you currently enjoy the outdoors? Are you able to participate in these activities locally or must you travel to do them?  
If you travel, what specifically do you look for in these places?  
Do you find it difficult to find the outdoor recreational activities you seek?
2. Have your outdoor recreational activities changed in recent years?  
If yes, how have these activities changed? What has changed in your lives?  
What has changed about where you recreate?  
If you miss these activities, what could be done to facilitate your outdoor recreation again?
3. We are interested in providing diverse outdoor recreational activities for Pennsylvanians. What facilities and/or opportunities would you like to enhance your outdoor recreational opportunities?  
Trails, water access, playgrounds?  
Solitude?  
Cultural amenities (signage, facilities, age)?
4. When you think about or participate in outdoor recreational opportunities, who do you prefer to recreate with?  
Is the presence of other people an issue when you participate in outdoor activities?  
Do you feel "crowded" when you visit outdoor facilities?
5. Would you like to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently than you currently do? If so, what keeps you from participating more often?



## Key Findings-Youth

Discussions with young people from the state's two largest cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, indicate that safety, access and knowledge of recreational opportunities are important concerns among urban youth. The following quote, and others throughout the summary, are from participants in these discussions and provide an indication of their range of interests.

*"Walking around is something I liked to do because everybody was always outside, but now you're stuck going to only certain places around here. You have your different sections—you know like their ward, their hilltop, whatever you want to call it. You didn't have worries about where to walk around, or where to walk to. But now you're like...let's not go over this way. Because you don't know what*

*drama is going on over there. I miss walking. You can, but you can't do what you used to, when you could walk forever"...*

All youth groups articulated several common issues. Comments suggest that state parks would be more attractive to youth if "non-traditional" outdoor activities were offered as park programs. The 2008 Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report also recognized this potential for engaging youth in outdoor recreation at parks, calling for "planners and professionals to 'redefine' outdoor experience to embrace technologies that may have greater relevance for younger generations, like geocaching and podcasts."

*"And just a little bit more things to do at the park... A lot of us aren't as young, so we don't get as easily entertained as younger children do. So they have those swing sets, and everything like that. We need something that can catch our interest and make us want to go there more."*

*"I wish they had a paint program. We dance. Or, kids who like to sing, let them sing. Or kids who like reading poems; they should have a book club there."*



There was consistent support among youth groups for improved facilities for organized sport, such as soccer, football, tennis and basketball. Support for such facilities among young people was mirrored in the state park user survey described elsewhere in this plan. Playground equipment suitable for both small and older children, and swimming pool facilities were also mentioned frequently.

*"I wish there was heavier equipment for when the big kids are playing on things. I'm not trying to be funny, but there are really big kids who are breaking things at the park."*

Similarly, youth discussion group participants indicated a desire for more adult supervision at parks, and called for better maintenance of restroom facilities. These comments reflect youths' concerns for safety in recreational settings.

*"When I moved out here, my mom felt a little more safe than where we used to live. I was always kept in the house with my younger siblings and my older siblings, and I didn't really go out and interact with other kids, like I'm doing now. I didn't get to do that when I was younger."*

*"The kind of things that would make me feel uncomfortable like really unsanitary bathrooms. That is definitely something big... Writing on the walls and stuff like that... it's not like art. It is just stuff kids just decide to do when they're bored. Not really some place where parents want to take their kids."*

For many youth from urban, suburban and more rural areas, the need to travel to park facilities restricted their recreational opportunities. Discussions in less intensely urbanized areas, such as York, revealed that youth want access to ATV and dirt bike trails. The growing popularity of





these activities, some youths noted, encourages the illegal use of recreational vehicles on public lands not intended for that purpose.

### Key Findings-Boomers

The Boomer groups raised additional issues. Adults clearly identified the need for more nature education programs in state parks and better distribution of information about those programs. Easier access to web-based information about facilities, programs and trails was also deemed important. These concerns mirror a recommendation of the Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report, which suggested a "master database for wildlife-based nature tourism and events and programs on wildlife viewing."

*"Well actually I think I've seen this at some of the state parks, but you know signage that lets people know about the wildlife that is there, or the type of flowers you might see in spring. The types of birds, and things like that."*

Boomer groups also mentioned outdoor recreation access issues. As people age, physical abilities decline and road access inside parks to trails, specific sites, and camping areas becomes more important. Similarly, they want walking, hiking and bicycling trails of varying difficulty and expressed the need to create a standardized system for rating and indicating access and difficulty of these trails.



Both groups expressed a desire for more hiking and bicycling trails. They also spoke about the need for expanding opportunities related to winter sports and activities.

*"My outdoor recreation probably changed as I got older because you can do less. Well, like I can't walk too well, so I don't have the long walks I used to do."*

*"I have traded my backpacking and hiking for working out at the Y. Well it is something I can do on my own, and my partner doesn't like to do the backpacking and hiking thing."*

As did youth groups, Boomers emphasized the need to maintain state park facilities, especially restrooms and trails. They also noted that they had the time to both recreate

and provide voluntary services in state parks. These groups said their engagement with state parks would likely increase if rental equipment, such as kayaks and canoes, and educational programs were more widely available. Related to this point was their enthusiastic interest in gaining access to more cabins and campsites (primitive and developed) for use throughout the year. Finally, the Boomer groups were strongly in favor of managing state parks and state forests as a mechanism for conserving outdoor spaces in the Commonwealth.

### Common Findings

Several issues were identified by both age groups. Both expressed a desire for more hiking/bicycling trails. They also spoke about the need for expanding opportunities related to winter sports and activities, especially cross country and downhill skiing. In all facilitated discussion groups, the preference for outdoor activities involving others was highlighted. Many individuals indicated they would use parks more if they could bike, hike or camp with others. Both groups liked to go camping but prepared campsites are difficult to find and/or reserve.

Interestingly, both youth and Boomers shared a commitment to improving youth enjoyment of the outdoors in safety and comfort. Boomers expressed this objective for all children, while youth groups invoked it in the name of their family members and friends. Both groups spoke in depth about their impression of criminal activities in outdoor public places, and both called for better security and more conspicuous patrols to protect legitimate park users from violence or theft.

*"I am thinking you will have to convince the mothers that it is a safe place for the kids to go. Because kids don't go places these days without their parents. When we were young, you would leave in the morning and come back for lunch and then you had to be back for dinner."*



*"You've got to make it interesting for them. Otherwise they are not going to go."*

*"That is why I mentioned we need to target our kids now. Who remembers back in the sixties, the 'Don't be a litterbug campaign?' The streets were dirty, who were the ones affected by that campaign? It wasn't our parents, it was us."*

*"We need programs that get the kids outside. So they learn to love the natural resources and the forest and things like that. You know future generations will be called on to preserve them."*

### Conclusions and Implications

Conducting these discussions provided a gauge of some of the concerns, frustrations, satisfactions, and opportunities of two specific segments of Pennsylvania's park users. From both the youth and Boomer perspective, state parks provide extensive outdoor recreational activities and opportunities. Clearly, both groups find value in these things but indicate a need for developing intensive recreation activities such as winter sports, water-focused activities, and specific kinds of trails for access by people with limited abilities. Moreover, the Boomers indicated a willingness to serve as volunteers to help provide some of these activities for other adults and youth. Simultaneously, youth expressed a call for



more supervision and adult involvement in their outdoor recreation activities. It seems clear that efforts to link adults' interest in volunteer leadership with youths' desire for greater supervision and safety can help satisfy the concerns of both groups.

Another major concern raised by both groups centered on transportation needs. Getting folks to the parks is critical to park use and people's enjoyment of parks. As Boomers reach more advanced ages, they are more reluctant to drive by themselves, seek new social interactions, or experience new and different things. For youth, many simply do not have access to transportation despite their willingness to participate in outdoor recreational activities. Even if they manage to get to the parks, they may not enjoy adequate introduction to outdoor activities and may not feel safe there. By using innovative ways to address the transportation, safety



and outdoor instruction issues, opportunities could develop for both groups. For example, state parks could develop a program which partnered adults ( Boomers) as outdoor mentors with interested youth (perhaps without transportation or an outdoor-capable adult in their life). Outdoor mentoring programs

currently run by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to responsibly introduce youth to hunting and fishing have proved widely popular for youth and mentors alike. A mentoring arrangement could also be designed to include travel to and from the park.

Perception of safety in the parks is a major issue and is not likely to improve without significant innovative and cooperative effort. It is important to note that both youth and Boomer groups raised this concern in concert with their impressions of the unattractive conditions of many park restrooms and facilities. Bringing youth and Boomers together, with participation from park staff, may help to generate a sense of communal responsibility for the repair, care, and maintenance of park facilities.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the planning process focuses heavily on collecting quantitative data which addresses issues identified by park staff, resource professionals and experienced outdoor recreationists. Through these discussions with identified subgroups of the population, this plan has made a good initial effort to assemble qualitative information, and should expand this process by engaging other groups in different areas of the state to gain a better and more complete understanding of uses, opinions, concerns, and beliefs about outdoor recreation opportunities.





**Goal 1:** Strengthen Connections Between Outdoor Recreation, Healthy Lifestyles and Economic Benefits in Communities..... 48

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**Goal 4:** Enhance Outdoor Recreation Through Better Agency Cooperation .....83

The following recommendations and underlying action steps were developed with input from multiple stakeholders and from research conducted by Penn State. They are grouped into four broad goals that emerged during the 18-month planning, investigation and public input process, and reflect some of the key recreation-oriented concerns in Pennsylvania at this time.

## goals and recommendations:





a five-year action plan

## GOAL 1:

### Strengthen Connections Between Outdoor Recreation, Healthy Lifestyles and Economic Benefits in Communities

Outdoor recreation opportunities have enhanced the quality of life for Pennsylvanians in all parts of the state. Communities with a reputation for providing park and recreation services are known to attract businesses and have healthier economies and residents.

Pennsylvania's Recreation Plan 2004-2008 called for investing in our recreation and natural assets to help revitalize older communities, strengthen regional tourism and economic development, and encourage healthier communities. The current plan makes recommendations that build on the previous Pennsylvania Recreation Plans, new survey information, and develops new approaches to support these types of programs and investments.

Pennsylvania has made recent progress in establishing strategic regional partnerships and investing in regions with outstanding natural landscapes like the Pennsylvania Wilds and the Laurel Highlands. New studies are beginning to document the economic benefits of this model. For example, a 2008 study<sup>2</sup>







documented \$12 million in 2007 alone in direct economic impact from the Great Allegheny Passage, a 132-mile abandoned railway turned trail and one of Pennsylvania's premier recreational destinations.

Recent nationwide and state-level studies are finding outdoor recreation facilities and services result in favorable health and economic outcomes for individuals and entire communities<sup>2</sup>. There is growing acceptance that access to and participation in outdoor recreation results in increased physical activity, lower rates of obesity, decreased stress, lower health care costs and better community cohesiveness. While

Nearly three-fourths of Pennsylvanians surveyed indicated that they walk or ride a bike in their neighborhood.

Pennsylvania health and recreation advocates have made progress in understanding and conveying the benefits of outdoor activity and recreation, there is still a need to better document and strengthen the role of outdoor recreation and conservation in Pennsylvania's economy and in the health and quality of life of our residents. This plan's recommendations offer many creative and collaborative ways to continue and expand the good work.

<sup>2</sup> 2008 Trail Town Economic Impact Study (Phase II: Trail User Survey), Progress Fund and Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau, 2009

<sup>3</sup> Kaczynski, A. T., & Henderson K. A. (2007). Environmental correlates of physical activity: A review of evidence about parks and recreation." *Leisure Sciences*, 29(4): 315-354. Rosenberger, S., Sneh, Y., Phipps, T. T., & Gurvitch, R. (2005). A spatial analysis of linkages between health care expenditures, physical inactivity, obesity and recreation supply. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 37(2), 216-235



## Parks Add Value

2008 research undertaken for the Philadelphia Park Alliance by the Trust for Public Land shows that Philadelphia parks generated \$18 million in added property tax revenue and \$689 million in increased equity for homeowners near parks. To view the report go to [www.philaparks.org](http://www.philaparks.org).





## Challenges

### Pennsylvania's Obesity Crisis

Obesity continues to be a public health concern in Pennsylvania and the entire nation. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports obesity prevalence doubled among adults between 1980 and 2004<sup>4</sup>. After 25 years of increases, obesity prevalence has leveled off but remains high at 34 percent of adults over 20 years of age. A 2007 study<sup>5</sup> determined that 18 percent of Pennsylvania elementary school children are overweight, and rates in some counties and among some demographic groups are even higher.

Less than half of all Americans met the CDC's recommendation of at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days<sup>6</sup>. It is recommended that children get 60 minutes of physical activity per day but most do not. Fewer children walk or bike to school than a generation ago. Over 46 percent of Resident Survey respondents would like their children to walk or ride their bikes to school more frequently.

<sup>4</sup> Obesity Among Adults in the United States — No Statistically Significant Change Since 2003-2004, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007), available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db01.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> PA Healthy Kids, Pennsylvania's Strategy for Balancing Nutrition and Exercise in KIDS, 2006 Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, available at <https://www.state.pa.us/papower/lib/papower/PAHealthyKidsCompendium.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Physical Activity for Everyone, available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>



Biking and walking are popular activities but *safe* opportunities to bike/walk have been constrained by lack of adequate infrastructure, increased traffic, housing patterns, and longer distances to schools. Lack of nearby greenspace, particularly in Pennsylvania's urban areas, fear of strangers and general fear of the outdoors have all been identified as impediments to children playing outside and as contributors to childhood obesity. These are just some of many negative consequences of suburban sprawl and a general reliance on the automobile.

### Connecting Health and Recreation

There was considerable input within the TAC about the need to better connect health and recreation providers who tend to operate in administrative silos; historically these organizations have had little in common or reason to partner with each other. The Keystone Action Zones (2006-2008) was Pennsylvania's first statewide effort to create new community partnerships at the county level and involved public health, recreation and education professionals working to improve awareness and use of close-to-home parks and trails. After three years, however, evaluations indicated that county-level partnership implementation was difficult for most to administer successfully. More specifically,

coordination with schools, unfamiliar partnerships between health and recreation, and the voluntary nature of participation were significant program implementation barriers. Some county-focused programs did exhibit measurable success, notably the Department of Health-funded Steps to Healthier Pennsylvania Counties initiatives in Fayette, Tioga and Luzerne counties.

At the state level, there has been little interaction between agencies. Some, like DOH and DCNR are just starting to better understand each other's health and outdoor recreation related initiatives. Several statewide nonprofit organizations are doing great work but coordination is limited.

### Message Confusion

At the national level, the National Recreation and Park Association is advancing its program: Step up to Health; It Starts in Parks. The YMCA promotes YMCA: Activate America. The CDC's Healthy Communities Program supports ACHIEVE communities. All national organizations have a common goal — creating healthier communities through healthier citizens. While there is considerable encouragement from state agencies and funders to coordinate programs and initiatives, TAC members expressed concern that so many initiatives may be confusing to communities. The public can become overwhelmed by the various messages, funding sources and



requirements. With varying campaigns and messages it is difficult to measure whether any are improving physical activity and use of parks and trails.

### **Complexity of health and economic data, or lack of it**

Park and recreation professionals are not trained in measuring physical fitness and rarely collect health data on the impact of new park construction on local users or the adjacent neighborhood. Economic benefits data is similarly lacking. While the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is conducting economic benefit studies of Pennsylvania rail trails, trail advocates often struggle with how to best use the information to promote their proposed trails. Pennsylvania first collected economic benefit data in 1982, but limited research has been funded over the past 20 years. An economic benefits study on Pennsylvania's state parks was last conducted in 1990.

### **Opportunities**

#### **Smart Transportation and Safe Routes to Schools**

In 2009, PennDOT launched a pilot program to select projects using its Smart Transportation Principles. Smart Transportation initiatives improve communities by linking transportation investments to local land use planning and decision making to foster the development of sustainable and livable communities. See <http://www.smart-transportation.com/>. The Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI)



is intended to fund planning and construction projects that focus on downtown revitalization efforts, local street connections, multi-use trails, traffic calming, and transit-oriented development studies. In May 2009, Governor Rendell announced \$59.2 million dollars to fund 50 Smart Transportation projects. Examples of these projects include bicycle and pedestrian improvements, streetscape improvements, and trail connections.

PennDOT also funded \$16.7 million in federal Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects in 2009. Thirty capital-building projects will

improve non-motorized transportation networks through the enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian facilities around K-8 schools. In addition to funding infrastructure improvements, the Safe Routes to School program also provides funding for activities that educate, encourage, and promote the safe use of the school walking and bicycling routes. See <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/Bureaus/CPDM>. Through the combination of physical improvements, encouragement strategies, and safety education, the Federal Safe Routes to School program helps to





### Close to Home Nature

Recent economic trends, including higher gas prices, have encouraged many residents to look closer to home for their recreation opportunities. Almost half (47%) of the Resident Survey respondents noted gasoline prices have recently influenced their participation in outdoor recreation. When asked about funding priorities, respondents also showed the most support for maintaining existing parks and recreation areas. When parks are renovated or new ones built, they should be developed to enhance, not degrade, the environment, designed to create safe and fun places that encourage “high tech” oriented children to play outside, and accessible to all user groups including those with disabilities. From an outdoor recreation perspective, sustainable and livable communities are attractive, fun, safe, and welcoming to residents

further the inter-agency goal of creating active, healthy and sustainable communities.

Directing state transportation funding toward more livable, walkable communities is a step in the right direction, and creates opportunities for other state agencies, local government and nonprofit partners to work together on mutual objectives. A number of recommendations in this plan build on these recent synergies. Providing Safe Routes to Schools training and “before-and-after” stories of Smart Transportation funded projects are two examples.

and visitors. Implementing county greenway plans, expanding online collections of ordinances and green park/playground examples, and meeting Pennsylvania’s goal of one million trees planted by 2013 are a few of the many action items targeted at creating more livable and greener communities.

### Pennsylvania’s New Towns

A growing number of communities along trails and greenways are becoming designated trail towns or river towns. The Allegheny Trail Alliance developed the Trail Town Program to enhance the identity of communities along trail routes as a tourism and recreation destination. For example, the boroughs of Confluence and Ohiopyle share a common link to the Great Allegheny Passage and are two of six designated trail towns seeking to connect the trail and adjacent towns. By connect-





ing trail users to the town, bike riders can visit the town, use its business services and safely and easily return to the trail to continue their journey.

Recent economic research indicates the effort is working. The Trail Town Economic Impact Study completed in 2008 by The Progress Fund and the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau found that businesses located in trail towns attribute about 25 percent of their gross revenue to users of the Great Allegheny Passage. For some types of businesses, notably outdoor recreation-related enterprises, the impact of the trail is even greater—with over 50 percent of all sales attributable to trail activity (2008 Trail Town Economic Impact

Study). This is a significant economic boost in rural communities, such as these, where local economies struggle in the wake of declining traditional industries, especially mining and manufacturing. There is a tremendous opportunity to learn from these revitalization initiatives and strengthen the connection between Pennsylvania's business community and the natural environment through the common link of outdoor recreation.

Such opportunities go well beyond trails. There is a potential to improve the business climate by linking communities to rivers, extensive public land tracts, historic canals and historic districts across the state.

### Model Public Outdoor Places

State and local parks, game lands (established for wildlife and public hunting), and fishing access areas can serve as incubators for stewardship as well as encouraging healthy outdoor recreation experiences. The plan recommends identifying public outdoor recreation areas to implement smarter maintenance practices and increase visitor opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating in parks. State Health Department data is now available that identifies counties with higher obesity rates and these areas should be targeted for more state outdoor recreation investment and assistance.

### Making the Case

We need to do a better job making the economic case for outdoor recreation. The park and recreation community has long advocated that parks, trails and open space increase the value of nearby properties, attract businesses and trained employees, and reduce health costs. The National Recreation and Park Association, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land are national leaders who have studied the value of parks, recreation, trails, and open space. The challenge for Pennsylvania is to identify and implement appropriate national findings at the state level.



## GOAL 1: RECOMMENDATIONS



### Steps to a Healthier PA...

Fayette County's walking series is designed to improve residents' health and their appreciation of the county's historical, cultural and natural features. In 2008, the program included 32 walks and attracted 1,500 participants. For more information, go to [www.stepstohealthierfayettecounty.org](http://www.stepstohealthierfayettecounty.org).

The majority of State Park visitors reported being physically active during their visit (63% moderate activity, 13% vigorous activity) and almost half (49%) said that their State Park visits were more active than their day-to-day lives.

### Recommendation 1.1:

Elevate the "Making the Health and Recreation Connection" ad hoc work group to a standing subcommittee of the TAC with a primary role of providing coordination and guidance on all health-related action steps.

**Action Step A:** Develop criteria and an interagency implementation plan for active/healthy/green community designation, recognition and funding prioritization. Criteria could include recognizing communities which have developed green and playful spaces, safe routes to schools and parks, trail-friendly towns, and gardens.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.

**Action Step B:** Identify pilot communities in which to fund projects designed to strengthen the health and outdoor recreation connection. Priority should be given to communities with underserved populations.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.

**Action Step C:** Conduct a health summit in Harrisburg to explore ways to improve health through physical activity and outdoor recreation. Participants should include family physicians' associations, health foundations, hospitals, and health advocates. Consider conducting regional summits.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.

### Recommendation 1.2:

Develop technical assistance materials that interpret and demonstrate the health and economic benefits of outdoor recreation.

**Action Step A:** Update the Pennsylvania Environment Council's (PEC) 1998 *Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails How-To Manual*, designed to help communities develop greenways and trails, to a web-based series of fact sheets.

*Implementation:* PEC, DCNR, DOH, RTC, PRPS.

**Action Step B:** Work with health care providers, health foundations, economic development organizations, local government associations, etc. to offer links and audience-appropriate text on their websites to show the benefits of outdoor recreation.

*Implementation:* DOH, DCNR, PFBC, DCED, DOE, PennDOT.

**Action Step C:** Promote model initiatives that are demonstrating the positive impact of outdoor recreation on health and economy, through agency websites. Possible examples are Steps to a Healthier Fayette and the Pennsylvania Wilds Conservation Landscape Initiative.

*Implementation:* DCNR, DOH, DCED, PDC.



### **Pennsylvania Wilds Conservation Landscape Initiative**

The Pennsylvania Wilds, a 12-county region in northern Pennsylvania, is the largest of seven conservation landscapes initiatives lead by DCNR. Targeted state investments, providing almost \$140 million to enhance the visitor experience in state parks and forests and to revitalize communities, are paying off. Many new visitors are enjoying the natural and recreational values of the region. For more information, visit: [www.PAwildsresources.org](http://www.PAwildsresources.org).

#### **Recommendation 1.3:**

**Implement a statewide education and awareness campaign to encourage people to increase physical activity through outdoor recreation and adopt healthier diets.**

**Action Step A:** Explore integration of existing health and recreation-based marketing campaigns and provide guidance for state and local community use through sample press articles, templates and logo adaptation.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.

**Action Step B:** Launch a statewide campaign to promote healthy recreation in the outdoors. Distribute through schools, recreation centers, parks and trails, healthcare practices, and related organizations.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.

#### **Recommendation 1.4:**

**Coordinate PennDOT's Smart Transportation Initiative and DCNR's Conservation Landscape Initiative to promote greener, safer, pedestrian-friendly communities.**

**Action Step A:** Develop planning guidelines to integrate outdoor and green infrastructure initiatives within multi-municipal comprehensive plans and/or greenway and open space plans. This could include walkable community components, planting shade trees, greening local parks, developing gateway gardens, rails-to-trails, community agricultural areas, and place-based asset planning.

*Implementation:* DCED, DEP, DCNR, PennDOT, PDC.

**Action Step B:** Identify and work collaboratively to implement appropriate elements of PennDOT's Smart Transportation projects which can serve as models for livable communities with an outdoor recreation focus.

*Implementation:* PennDOT, DCNR, DCED, 10,000 Friends.

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When Pennsylvanians were asked, "What benefits does your household receive from participating in outdoor recreation activities?" the most frequent responses involved health (38%). Pennsylvania State Park visitors also felt that health was one of the most important benefits they received from their park visits.





## **“Trail Towns” Rebounding**

New businesses serving Great Allegheny Passage trail users are springing up in these “Trail Towns” from the Maryland border to the Pittsburgh suburbs. The River’s Edge Café and B&B, on the banks of the Youghiogheny River in the welcoming mountain town of Confluence, is a favorite of cyclists. For more information on trail town economic impacts and opportunities visit: [www.trailtowns.org](http://www.trailtowns.org).

### **Recommendation 1.5:**

**Develop a statewide resource-based “town” program which capitalizes on opportunities to associate communities with outdoor attractions such as trails, rivers, canals, and public lands.**

**Action Step A:** Convene key state agencies and non-profits to discuss the success of initiatives like the Trail Town Program and Rivertowns PA and use this group to develop strategies to further support a statewide trail/river town program. Identify pilot communities for the statewide program.

*Implementation:* DCED, PDC, The Trail Town Program, PEC, DCNR, RTC.

**Action Step B:** Hold a summit for tourism and business stakeholders to highlight the economic benefits of outdoor recreation and demonstrate how entrepreneurs are creating and growing small businesses supported by recreation, tourism and outdoor appreciation.

*Implementation:* DCED, PDC, DCNR, PEC, RTC.

**Action Step C:** Establish Gateway sites in the Susquehanna watershed to highlight historic, cultural or natural themes and help educate and inspire visitors about the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

*Implementation:* Heritage Areas, DCED, DCNR, NPS, PHMC.

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Areas managed by local and county government account for the largest portion (43%) of away-from-home outdoor activity.



## Implementing County Greenway Plans

Philadelphia's plan will guide long-term acquisition, development, and management of open space in city neighborhoods. By 2028, GreenPlan's vision includes:

- 30% tree cover in every neighborhood (1 million trees)
- 33% more parkland (nearly 4,000 new acres)
- 37% of schoolyards will be greened (100 schoolyards)
- 50% of all streets will be green streets (over 1300 miles)
- 100% of residents within one-half mile of a trail (315 miles of new trail)

By 2010 most Pennsylvania counties will have adopted a greenway plan. For completed plans: go to: [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/greenways/CountyGreenways.aspx](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/greenways/CountyGreenways.aspx).

### Recommendation 1.6:

**Encourage local land use policy that promotes best management practices and models to preserve important green spaces, creates more walkable communities, and provides safe connections to outdoor recreation amenities.**

**Action Step A:** Expand and promote the Pennsylvania Association of Land Trusts' Conservation Tool Box, a web-based library of conservation tools, publications, best practices, and organizations. Include Chester County's Trail and Path Planning Guide for municipalities and add model ordinances and official maps from other counties.

*Implementation:* PALTA, DCNR, DCED, PPA, county planning agencies.

**Action Step B:** Promote Safe Routes to Schools Programs by holding technical assistance workshops for schools and communities, supporting demonstration communities with current funding, and providing continued funding for needed improvements. Strengthen the involvement of parks and recreation agencies and trails within Pennsylvania's Safe Routes to Schools program.

*Implementation:* PennDOT, DCNR, PRPS.

**Action Step C:** Support the implementation of county greenway plans by developing grant guidelines and ranking criteria that give priority funding to projects that encourage development of walkable communities and that strengthen local land use policies encouraging protection of open space. Continue to support capacity-building tools like DCNR's Circuit Rider program and DCED's Shared Services program to qualified applicants.

*Implementation:* DCNR, DCED, PennDOT, county planning organizations.

**Action Step D:** Promote and fund urban tree planting efforts like TreeVitalize that provide multiple environmental and health-related benefits including cleaner air and water, shaded walking routes, and aesthetic and wildlife benefits.

*Implementation:* DCNR, DEP, DCED, county planning organizations, local recreation and parks departments.







## Creating Green and Playful Parks

Park and playground managers should consider this list to green-up play areas and stimulate creativity and imagination in young visitors:

- Boulders for climbing
- Play structures made from natural or recycled materials
- Sensory gardens where children can touch, smell, and even taste various plants and wildflowers
- Large trees and other natural features for hide-and-seek and unstructured games
- Human structures integrated and balanced with the natural setting
- Recycling and composting containers provided
- Fertilizer use minimized
- Permeable surfacing on parking lots, trails, and walkways
- Interpretive signage to convey environmental messages

Equipment in these public spaces should meet safety and licensing standards and be accessible to persons with disabilities.

### Recommendation 1.7:

**Identify policy and environmental needs to improve physical activity and healthy eating in state and local parks.**

**Action Step A:** Identify park practices where design, regulation or other alterable factors constrain physical activity and healthy eating, and develop cooperative strategies to address constraints at pilot parks.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, local recreation and parks departments.

**Action Step B:** Develop a diverse collection of park, playground, and schoolyard designs that exemplify green practices and incorporate popular and innovative trends in recreation to more easily facilitate outdoor play, and disseminate through the [www.paoutdoorrecplan.com](http://www.paoutdoorrecplan.com) website.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, local recreation and parks departments, PCEE.

**Action Step C:** Create a recognition program for parks and playgrounds that rewards and celebrates green and playful park standards, strengthens partnerships, serves as model best practices and addresses community needs and issues through improved outdoor play facilities. Disseminate to municipalities and nonprofits.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, local recreation and parks departments, PPFF.





Over 80 percent of the Pennsylvanians surveyed believe that the availability of local recreation programs reduces youth crime. Nearly all respondents also feel that trails, greenways, parks and natural areas increase the value of nearby properties.

### **Recommendation 1.8:**

**Conduct new or update existing research on the economic benefits of outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania.**

**Action Step A:** Update the Pennsylvania State Parks' economic impact study (1990) using the recently completed New York (2008) and New Jersey (2006) studies as possible models.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PPFF, PRPS.

**Action Step B:** Establish a benchmark system for emerging resource and recreation-based towns that can document measurable results such as job growth, business investment, or property values attributable to outdoor recreation. Capture these as case studies as they progress.

*Implementation:* PDC, DCED, DCNR.

**Action Step C:** Complete the series of Pennsylvania rail-trail economic benefit studies and develop a statewide assessment that identifies regional implications.

*Implementation:* RTC, DCNR.

**Action Step D:** Support the Southeast Economic Impact Study of parks and open space, evaluate the study results, and promote as a model for other regions.

*Implementation:* Green Space Alliance, DCNR.

**Action Step E:** Conduct an economic impact analysis to benchmark the economic impact of water trails.

*Implementation:* PA Water Trails Partnership.

### **Recommendation 1.9:**

**Conduct new or update existing research on the health benefits of outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania.**

**Action Step A:** Conduct an assessment of attitudes and interests of hospitals, major insurance companies, family physicians, public welfare agencies, and health-care foundations with respect to outdoor recreation as a means of improving the health of Pennsylvania residents.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.

**Action Step B:** Study the impact of any implemented outdoor education and awareness campaigns on improving physical activity and use of parks and trails.

*Implementation:* Health Committee.



## GOAL 2:

### Reconnect People to the Outdoors and Develop a Stewardship Ethic Through Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Experiences

Building an ethic of advocacy for the outdoors requires an engaged and committed public. A growing body of research indicates a direct link between early and repeated positive experiences in nature and environmental values that result in personal outdoor appreciation and stewardship.

#### Challenges

##### Growing Disconnect

The Governor's Outdoor Task Force Report began to examine the disconnect of Pennsylvanians from the natural environment and outlined strategies through which state and local government, private organizations and businesses can reconnect people with nature to the benefit of

both. These strategies, coupled with the insights and perspectives gained through the plan's research process, served as a key source of information for developing the recommendations that follow. Survey data consistently cite a lack of time and knowledge of outdoor areas as the major obstacle to spending time in nature. Poor land-use planning, subdivision/

neighborhood regulations, stranger danger and general fear of nature form a second set of challenges. Concerns about crime and social disorder are also deterrents to outdoor play in urban areas, and are often present in survey results as concerns about vandalism and other maintenance issues in existing parks. Diminishing recreation opportunities are another source of the widening disconnect. The focus on standardized testing has dramatically reduced, and in many places eliminated, opportunities for environmental education, gym class and recess — often the only venues for outdoor experiences in the school setting.



Nearly all of the Pennsylvanians surveyed believe that “it is important for citizens to play a role in conserving our lands and waters.”

### Need for a Stewardship Ethic

Today's youth and families are spending less time outdoors and, consequently, will likely be less personally committed to the importance of clean air and water, open spaces, and public opportunities for outdoor recreation. As tomorrow's leaders, voters and consumers, modern youths' insulation from the natural world holds serious ramifications for the future. Given the current environmental challenges faced in local communities and on a global scale, there is concern about how the next generation's lack of affiliation with the outdoors will influence their choices and decisions.

There are signs of hope. For example, the State Parks Visitor Survey addressed the conservation attitudes and behaviors of park visitors. By a large majority (89%), survey participants, many of whom were young

people, felt that their individual actions make a difference in conserving the environment. Similarly, nearly all (92%) of park visitors surveyed believe "it is important for citizens to play a role in conserving our lands and waters." In addition, the Resident Survey found that protecting wildlife habitat, conserving natural resources and restoring damaged rivers and streams are all high priorities for Pennsylvanians.

### Getting Kids and Families Outdoors

Attitudes are more difficult to modify as people age, so it is critical youth have meaningful experiences in the outdoors. Besides the potential loss of future outdoor stewards, child advocates also express concern for the physical and mental well-being of children who haven't had adequate opportunities to play in nature. The

time is right to focus outdoor recreation planning for kids and families. Through the work of Richard Louv (*Last Child in the Woods*; *Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, 2005) and other environmental and youth advocates, a movement to reconnect children to nature is in full swing. Volumes of research and information on current programs are collected through the Children and Nature Network ([www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)), and can serve as a resource to individuals or organizations working to help get more kids outside. The youth and family-based recommendations within this plan are built upon national and state best practices, prompted by clearly articulated needs and observations of urban youth, curriculum administrators, youth organizations, and state agency officials.

### Opportunities

#### Enjoy What We Have, and Continue to Make It Better

Pennsylvanians are blessed with plentiful outdoor recreation amenities. From the millions of acres of public land acquired by visionary leaders to the playground on the neighborhood corner, residents and visitors have a broad spectrum of outdoor opportunity at their fingertips. State forest and game lands offer large swaths of land for outdoor discovery and backcountry experiences, and 117 state parks serve as special places to camp, hike, fish, or just relax and spend time with friends and family. Local and county park and recreation facilities cover the state and offer close-to-home







recreation opportunities for residents. State- and nationally-designated Heritage Areas package history and recreation, and a web of rivers and streams provide for world-class fishing and boating.

Pennsylvanians clearly deem it important to protect this extraordinary recreational estate, and manage it properly for the future. Respondents to the four research studies identified protection and maintenance of existing resources and facilities as high priorities for agency attention and funding.

### **Make it Easy to Experience and Appreciate the Outdoors**

In this plan's survey work, as well as in other existing research, people consistently cite lack of time as the major obstacle to their outdoor recreation. The Resident Survey reinforced once again that work, school and other constraints on their time keep people from participating in outdoor recreation activities as much as they would otherwise like. Venturing outdoors requires time to research where to go, obtain gear, coordinate drop off and pick up

points, or figure out the nearest day hike. Often, people do not have an entire day to devote to recreation. Instead, they must cram in an hour of paddling on a nearby stretch of river or arrange an impromptu picnic with family at a nearby park. For modern Pennsylvanians to make the most of these brief windows of opportunity, information about outdoor recreation resources needs to be widely known, easily accessed, and managed to accommodate visitors.

Various attempts have been made to share and advertise outdoor



recreation amenities, and some good examples of collaborative efforts exist, but better coordination and focus is needed to be more effective. Planned efforts described here will focus on conveying relevant and consistent messages to all populations living in and visiting Pennsylvania regarding the importance of outdoor recreation. Similarly, an intensified focus on close-to-home outdoor recreation amenities, such as parks, trails and businesses, is necessary to improve public awareness of convenient opportunities that can be enjoyed in less than a full day

outdoors. For planners and providers to meet current challenges, using new communication technologies to present relevant outdoor information in a fast efficient way needs to be a consistent priority.

### **Maximize School-Based Outdoor Experiences**

Schools offer a natural opportunity to engage young people and to motivate them as environmental stewards. Schools have the built-in structure to reconnect children to the outdoors based simply on the significant amount of time children spend at

school, and because schoolyards are often the nearest, most familiar green spaces in their lives. After-school programs and service projects should help facilitate outdoor learning, and mentoring programs can function throughout the school system to sustain frequent and consistent outdoor experience, as opposed to the familiar “once-and-done” park field trip. With subtle changes and upgrades, school grounds can serve as incubators of outdoor introduction and stewardship development.

### **Recognize the Social Value of Outdoor Recreation**

Efforts are needed to reinforce the message that outdoor recreation has a strong social appeal; people like to recreate in groups. That same message has been a tenet of organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for decades. Throughout the Commonwealth organizations are already conducting outdoor recreation programs, hungry for new audiences to introduce to the natural world. Even more organizations are seeking help and guidance for providing outdoor opportunities to members of society who, for a wide range of reasons, have not enjoyed access to the outdoors before. Diverse groups should be thoughtfully connected to create a community of outdoor enthusiasts. A key finding of this plan’s facilitated discussion groups with urban youth and Baby Boomers was each group’s interest in recreating with others. Opportunities exist to link these specific user groups to increase outdoor recreation participation and associated benefits.



Not to be discounted is the “cool” factor that powerfully influences youth response to outdoor recreation activities and clubs. It is imperative that we seek input from user and non-user groups to better understand cultural and peer-pressure barriers to recreation participation. In addition, outdoor recreation and education professionals must embrace new methods to meet potential recreationists halfway. School clubs and events, hiking meet-up groups, podcasts, Facebook, Twitter – they can all have a place, and should be explored to enhance and add relevance to current or new programs.

### **Build a Support System to Get the Work Done**

Pennsylvania currently lacks the organizational infrastructure to coordinate the important work of connecting citizens to the outdoors. Many of the issues addressed in this plan were raised in direct response to a longstanding fragmented



### **Political Spin**

Pittsburgh-based Venture Outdoors leads a bike trip with local elected officials and residents to highlight downtown’s recreation amenities. For more information visit: [www.ventureoutdoors.org](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org).

approach among organizations. Many committed organizations do their best to address the disparities but oversight and coordination from one central body is needed to maintain a strategic direction and track

progress. In fairness to Pennsylvania, this disconnect is seen all across the country, and has challenged like-minded groups to come together for the common good of creating more opportunities to actively enjoy and appreciate the outdoors.

Serious work needs to be done to broaden and strengthen the constituency for outdoor recreation. Recreation-based tours with community leaders, planning and school boards, and elected officials can provide a new perspective for important local decision-makers. Outdoor recreation amenities are an integral part of every community that need to be recognized, celebrated and improved.



## GOAL 2: RECOMMENDATIONS



### First-time Paddlers

DCNR's Adventure Camp program introduces urban youth to outdoor recreation opportunities in state and local parks.

### Recommendation 2.1:

**Continue to support and maintain existing outdoor recreation facilities and programs.**

**Action Step A:** Manage state and local parks as welcoming places where visitors feel safe and can enjoy the outdoors by prioritizing maintenance and increased staff visibility in high-use areas.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PGC, PRPS, local recreation and park departments.

**Action Step B:** Work with local recreation entities to inventory and review recreation infrastructure needs, and coordinate maintenance and planning efforts.

*Implementation:* Local park and recreation departments, planning offices, DCNR.

**Action Step C:** Expand environmental education and interpretive programming in state and local parks, and seek opportunities to provide upgraded/additional visitor and education centers, wildlife viewing areas, and active outdoor recreation facilities.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PRPS, local recreation and park departments.

**Action Step D:** Expand successful hunting and fishing programs, such as hunter safety and family fishing days, by training state and local park personnel and volunteers.

*Partners:* PFBC, DCNR, PRPS, PGC, local recreation and park departments.







## Get Active!

Youth are exploring the National Recreation Trail in Pittston as one of many steps in a free county-wide program encouraging people to get outside and active at close-to-home parks, trails and events. For more information visit: [www.stepstohealthierluzernecounty.org](http://www.stepstohealthierluzernecounty.org)

## Recommendation 2.2:

**Organize and market outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities more effectively.**

**Action Step A:** Develop a dynamic, comprehensive inventory of outdoor recreation amenities, including federal, state, and local trails and facilities, using GIS to identify areas lacking access to public parks.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PennDOT, PFBC, PGC, PRPS, DCED, RTC, outdoor recreation organizations, local recreation and parks departments.

**Action Step B:** Commission a statewide outdoor recreation clearinghouse website as a one-stop portal for outdoor recreation services and opportunities, including a database of outdoor clubs, businesses, organizations and partners in outdoor recreation.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PennDOT, PFBC, PGC, PRPS, DCED, RTC, outdoor recreation organizations.

**Action Step C:** Develop a year-long advertising and marketing program for Pennsylvania State Parks.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PPFF, PRPS, DCED.

**Action Step D:** Establish a Trail of the Year program, similar to Pennsylvania's River of the Year program, to increase promotion and use of trails.

*Implementation:* DCNR, RTC, PA Trails Committee.

Nine out of ten State Park visitors also believed that their individual actions make a collective difference in conserving the natural environment.



## Place-based Education

A Trail to Every Classroom uses the Appalachian Trail as a venue for place-based education.

More information can be found at [www.nps.gov/appa](http://www.nps.gov/appa) and/or [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org).

Youth want leadership and learning opportunities in a safe environment. They are interested in traditional activities like biking and camping, but also would like to see more nontraditional things offered at parks.

### Recommendation 2.3:

**Use outdoor learning opportunities in school and after-school settings to promote and facilitate the connection between outdoor recreation skills and environmental stewardship.**

**Action Step A:** Develop new and/or coordinate existing curricula and training to link outdoor recreation with personal outdoor stewardship to meet Health, Safety and Physical Education, Environment and Ecology, Geography, Civics and Government academic standards.

*Implementation:* PDE, DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PSAHPERD, PCEE.

**Action Step B:** Provide professional development to physical education teachers and other appropriate school personnel to provide lifelong outdoor recreation skills, in partnership with local outdoor recreation providers and facilities.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PDE, PRPS, PSAHPERD, and other outdoor recreation providers.

**Action Step C:** Build more outdoor classrooms, trails and playgrounds featuring outdoor recreation skills such as climbing walls. Provide professional development, technical assistance and support to school staff in the development/revitalization and use of outdoor learning facilities and green space on school grounds.

*Implementation:* PDE, PGC, DCNR, PFBC, PRPS.

**Action Step D:** Develop a leader's manual and student materials to establish and support school-based outing clubs, in partnership with nearby state and local parks, to increase frequent and ongoing youth participation in outdoor recreation activities.

*Implementation:* PFBC, DCNR, PSU Cooperative Extension, 4H, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, AMC.

**Action Step E:** Help Pennsylvania children meet the national recommendation for 60 minutes of physical activity each day by encouraging outdoor play as part of the school day and allowing 20 minutes of daily, unstructured, outdoor recess.

*Implementation:* PSAHPERD, DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PRPS.

**Action Step F:** Encourage the use of appropriate technology to enhance student outdoor experiences and improve outdoor and environmental knowledge.

*Implementation:* PDE, PFBC, PGC, DCNR, PRPS.





## Climbing Rocks!

Learning to rock climb at McConnells Mill State Park combines outdoor adventure with outdoor ethics and stewardship.

### Recommendation 2.4:

**Develop and fund social support networks to engage new and diverse audiences in outdoor recreation.**

**Action Step A:** Develop and support community-based and university outing clubs to facilitate easy, consistent, close-to-home outdoor recreation programming for residents and students.

*Implementation:* PRPS, SSHE, DCNR, PFBC, existing outing clubs, YMCA.

**Action Step B:** Work with existing outdoor recreation-focused clubs to package and coordinate current offerings; identify and address membership needs; and develop partnerships with state and local outdoor recreation venues.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC, KTA, PEC, IMBA, Elderhostel, hunting and fishing clubs.

**Action Step C:** Provide training to volunteer-mentor networks to empower community organizations to expand outdoor recreation programs and facilities.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, PFBC, KTA, PEC, IMBA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCAs, Boys and Girl Scouts, 4-H and PSU Cooperative Extension.

**Action Step D:** Partner with local schools and recreation and parks departments to create a Youth and Family Stewardship Corps to increase volunteer efforts on public land.

*Implementation:* PPFF, DCNR, PDE, L&I, PRPS, local recreation and parks departments.

**Action Step E:** Package and publicize outdoors-based work events, such as stream clean-ups, invasive plant removals, and trail repairs, as recreation and service-learning opportunities.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PGC, PFBC, PRPS, PPFF, PA Cleanways, Heritage Areas.

**Action Step F:** Develop events at state parks and forests, gamelands or local parks that blend youth-oriented and technology-driven activities with traditional sports like hunting and fishing.

*Implementation:* PGC, PFBC, DCNR, PRPS, nonprofit partners.



Nearly three-fourths of Pennsylvanians surveyed rated providing environmental and conservation programs and providing recreation programs at parks and recreation areas as very or extremely important.

## **Recommendation 2.5:**

**Maximize the outdoor recreation and tourism potential of Pennsylvania's 12 designated State Heritage Areas.**

**Action Step A:** Work with Heritage Areas to develop marketing packages that connect and build relationships between trail organizations, county and state parks, heritage areas, tourist promotion agencies, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and outfitters.

*Implementation:* Heritage Areas, DCNR, DCED, TPAs.

**Action Step B:** Continue to support an annual trail sojourn to promote emerging trails. As more long distance trails are completed, encourage Heritage Areas and outdoor recreation stakeholders to work with private outfitters to offer packaged bike tours.

*Implementation:* DCNR, Heritage Areas.

**Action Step C:** Work with state agencies and other partners to assess which current cultural or historic features like parks, monuments, natural features or historic districts could add recreational assets like trails and greenways.

*Implementation:* PHMC, DCED, DCNR, Heritage Areas, PRPS, trail groups, PennDOT, PA Water Trails Partnership.

**Action Step D:** Identify and implement projects linking historic or cultural features with trails or other recreational amenities. Example; water trail routes featuring Native American campsites along rivers; historic signage added to existing rail-trails.

*Implementation:* PHMC, DCED, DCNR, Heritage Areas, PRPS, trail groups, PennDOT.







## **Recommendation 2.6:**

**Build a solid support network to assist in guiding, planning and advancing outdoor recreation and stewardship efforts.**

**Action Step A:** Develop and support a standing, statewide outdoors committee of TAC to implement plan recommendations that better connect Pennsylvanians and visitors to outdoor recreation.

*Implementation:* DCNR, TAC.

**Action Step B:** Develop the Pennsylvania Kids Outside Coalition to provide a forum for youth to formally advise the direction of relevant outdoor recreation policy and practice.

*Implementation:* TAC Outdoor Committee.

**Action Step C:** Create a committee of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society dedicated to the advancement of recommendations through the PRPS membership and community recreation and park sector.

*Implementation:* PRPS, DCNR, TAC.

**Action Step D:** Focus additional research efforts on activity and/or recreation-specific interests, to obtain a clearer understanding of specialized groups and facilities.

*Implementation:* Outdoors Committee.

**Action Step E:** Engage under-represented populations in recreation research efforts by conducting additional focus group discussions and non-user surveys.

*Implementation:* Outdoors Committee.



Baby boomers also want safety and security and offered their time and willingness to volunteer to help provide outdoor recreation opportunities for other adults and youth.



### **Recommendation 2.7:**

**Better use of the media to convey outdoor recreation and natural resource stewardship messages.**

**Action Step A:** Promote recreation organizations, planners and outdoor recreation providers as speakers at conferences of media-related organizations such as the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association and Mason-Dixon Outdoor Writers Association to gain wider coverage of outdoor recreation issues.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, POWA, MDOWA, DCED.

**Action Step B:** Disseminate information about outdoor recreation sites, opportunities, events and trends to professional writers' organizations in the state.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, POWA, OWAA, MDOWA.



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Diverse groups should be thoughtfully connected to create a community of outdoor enthusiasts.



## GOAL 3:

### Develop a Statewide Land and Water Trail Network to Facilitate Recreation, Transportation and Healthy Lifestyles

Pennsylvania's abundant and well used trails come in all shapes and sizes; visitors and citizens use and care about local and state managed woodland, greenway and water trails that provide opportunities for equestrians, hikers, bikers, paddlers, motor sports enthusiasts and more.

Public respondents and the TAC trails committee have advised that recreation planners should not re-invent the wheel but build on recent feedback such as the Trail Gap study, along with findings from good existing studies, as they develop implementable recommendations. Quality information to inform better trail planning and implementation has been gathered, analyzed and reported over the years, and should inform the current process.

#### Challenges

##### A Variety of Gaps to Conquer

Though our trails are a source of great pride, attracting thousands of outdoor enthusiasts each year,

the existing network of trails can be improved. The opportunity that presents the most potential benefit is strategically closing gaps in our already vast trail network. Just scratching the surface, the Trail Gap Study identified 107 major trail gaps, and DCNR is continuing this data collection effort to develop a more comprehensive inventory of gaps in the state.

Identifying and closing gaps will make an already extensive trail system more user-friendly for state residents and visitors. Opportunities exist to finish never-completed trails; to connect trails to communities, parks or adjacent trails; to add access points to water trails; and to connect

Walking is the most popular outdoor recreation activity in Pennsylvania, with 84 percent of Pennsylvanians reporting participation in the past year.



#### Pennsylvania's Trails – A National Leader

- No. 1 in the nation with 138 open rail trail projects
- Over 1,370 miles of rail trails
- Great Allegheny Passage—Longest multi-use trail in the nation at 318 miles and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's first Hall of Fame Trail
- Over 1,900 miles of water trails with the 500-mile Susquehanna Greenway and Water Trail as one of the nation's longest
- 24 National Recreation Trails—8 new trails designated in 2009 adding over 400 miles
- Over 25,000 miles of water and land-based trails with an additional 3,500 miles proposed

water trails to land-based trails. Gaps in trail maintenance, public information, and the use of trails as educational resources create opportunities as well.

### **Continued Trail Maintenance for Long Term Sustainability**

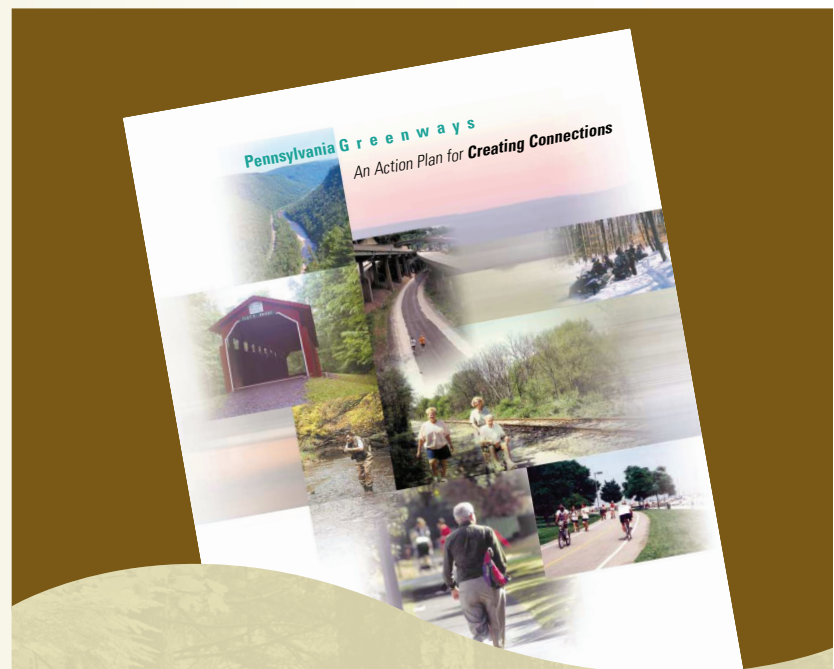
Trail maintenance emerged as a continuing concern in TAC discussions, advisory group input and other research efforts. The 2007 Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council's (CNRAC) *Review and Recommendations regarding the DCNR's Trails and Greenways Program* notes trail maintenance concerns across the state, with issues ranging from lack of maintenance on state owned trails, poor design leading to future maintenance problems and insufficient resources at state and local levels to properly maintain trails. CNRAC's subsequent trail maintenance report in 2008 provides clear recommendations to improve maintenance, many of which have been incorporated here. While state grant-making agencies encourage and reward maintenance plans in trail grant applications, it's important to explore additional ways to align state trail grant programs and promote best practices.

### **Disconnect in Statewide Trail Planning**

Planning efforts have been strong for years within individual trail advocacy organizations, and at the county level through the development of greenway plans, but there has been no solid statewide effort focused on comprehensive planning of trail systems from the routing and con-

struction phases through continued maintenance and evaluation. Past research efforts and input from stakeholder groups call for an integrated strategic effort to develop a trail network that facilitates recreation, transportation and healthier lifestyles across the state.

One of Pennsylvania's trails challenges is the lack of consistent plan-



### **An Interstate System of Greenways and Trails**

Adopted in 2001, and containing an implementation schedule through 2020, the greenways action plan was designed to provide a coordinated and strategic approach to creating connections through the establishment of greenways. The action plan envisions a statewide network of greenways connecting Pennsylvania's open space, natural resources, cultural, historic and recreational sites, and urban and rural communities.

For more information on the Action Plan visit:

[www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/greenways/actionplan.aspx](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/greenways/actionplan.aspx).



ning, signage and trail information. Despite the positive efforts of trail holding agencies and interest groups, one group's standards often conflict with those of another and many long distance trails are owned by more than one entity.

## Opportunities

### Statewide Solutions Start With Statewide Planning

Over half of Pennsylvania counties have completed a greenway and open space plan, with another 30 expected to complete a plan by 2010. These plans provide extensive mapping and analysis of local and regional trail systems. Additionally, most of the state's watersheds have been the subject of river conservation planning efforts to conserve and improve water resources and have developed proposals for better river access and recreational use. This planning effort creates a network of watershed-based alliances and provides a solid basis to move water trail projects forward.

Opportunity exists to build on these existing plans by establishing a statewide trails committee to represent Pennsylvania trail ownership groups, including the three state agencies with primary trail responsibilities, DCNR, PennDOT and PFBC, as well as local government entities, regional and county planners, motorized and non-motorized trail organizations, rail trail, greenway and heritage groups. Engaging trail stakeholders as an organized, ongoing group would allow regular discussion and development of standardized trail inventories (including GIS), trail guides and maps, and



### Corrections Makes Connections

Montgomery County partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to close a critical link and complete the very popular 20-mile Perkiomen Trail. Over 200,000 walkers, runners, cyclists and equestrians now enjoy this trail each year.

strategies to close trail gaps. There is also an opportunity for a statewide trail stakeholder committee to develop funding-decision criteria to prioritize trails projects.

### Strong Existing Partnerships and Abundant Water Resources

Pennsylvania leads the nation with 21 water trails developed, and over 1,900 miles of water trails available. The state also sponsors a large number of river sojourns each year (12 in 2009), which combine paddling with educational opportunities and conservation themes. Sojourns help generate recognition for the needs of paddlers, like improved access, and the economic impact of recreational paddling on river communities.

Pennsylvania is fortunate to have a partnership of agencies, non-profits and local water trail groups working

together to promote water trails. The Pennsylvania Water Trails Partnership was created to improve and expand trails in Pennsylvania through improved signage, access and facilities, mapping and electronic information, and to expand opportunities for maintenance, stewardship and sustainability of water trails. Input from water trail users parallels that received from land-trail advocates: there is a need for more educational programming, better marketing through programs such as river towns, and prioritization of needs such as maintenance and technical assistance in public grant criteria.

A 2009 Presidential Executive Order 13508 prioritizing protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries will give Pennsylvania additional resources to conserve and improve its water resources.



### Collaboration for Consistency

The recreating public is best served by trails that adhere to the same standards or guidelines, regardless of which agency's land holdings they cross or which trail group holds ownership responsibilities.

A national trail difficulty rating system has been adopted within DCNR's state parks and forests. The next step is posting consistent difficulty ratings at trailheads, trail intersections and on all promotional materials. "Easy" or "challenging" must mean the same statewide if the outdoor public's expectations are to be met, whether on state-managed or locally managed trails.

Trail managers should rely on good documentation, guidelines and standards that already exist as a

starting point. For instance, DCNR's bureaus of State Parks and Forestry have recently aligned to develop *Guidelines for Marking Recreational Trails*, which is used by many trail maintenance groups on state park and forest trails. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's *Maintenance and Operation Guide* covers variables from liability to trail surfaces.

### Using New Technologies

Trail groups and stakeholders have long advocated for more centralized information. The 2007 *CNRAC Review and Recommendations regarding the DCNR's Trails and Greenways Program* contains a recommendation that "DCNR should provide one stop shopping for trails in Pennsylvania" as a method to both centralize and

globalize trails information. As a consequence, DCNR has begun designing a website and compiling GIS data to support the site. In 2008, DCNR also launched a two-year statewide trails GIS project, with three primary objectives:

1. Establish a one-stop shop for best-available, easy to find trails information, using state of the art web-based visualization and mapping tools.
2. Create a web-enabled work space for trail users to share user-generated content.
3. Leverage existing data and current GIS methods, standards and technologies to collect, submit, validate and share trails data for use by the public.



Collected data and technologies used to support the statewide trails GIS effort will be critical for analyzing trail needs and tracking progress toward trail access and information sharing.

### Considerations for Closing Gaps

Web-based availability of trail information will also facilitate state agency funding decisions. With trail development costs escalating and funds shrinking, aligning and standardizing the funding criteria for trail projects will be important.

Respondents surveyed in the Penn State Trail Gap Priorities research were asked to rate the importance of variables affecting trails and trail policy. Variables included geographic, social and organizational issues. The top three most important priorities in the three categories of variables are as follows.

#### Geographic:

1. providing connections between existing trails
2. closing a gap within an existing trail
3. building trails that connect communities to one another

#### Social/Experiential:

1. providing access to outstanding natural scenery
2. providing trails that accommodate more than one user group
3. providing trails accessible for users with disabilities

#### Organizational:

1. securing trail rights-of-way that otherwise would be lost to development
2. taking advantage of landowners' willingness to allow trail development
3. ensuring a high level of local support

### Proper Maintenance for Future Sustainability

Efforts to promote best maintenance practices can also play a role in funding decisions and certainly play a role in the future sustainability of a trail. DCNR encourages grant applicants to complete and implement maintenance plans to ensure the future sustainability of trails and facilities, and can provide grant assistance for maintenance plan development. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has included maintenance plans for water trails as a top consideration in their grant criteria. And, the Pennsylvania Water Trails Partnership plans to develop technical assistance materials for long-term maintenance, stewardship and sustainability of the Commonwealth's approximately 2,000 miles of water trails.

### Making Trails Accessible

Directional signage along roads to access areas, signage signifying parking areas and facilities, the increased visibility of trailheads and entry points or the addition of access points to trails have all been raised by trail partners as areas for collaboration. Additional opportunities raised include the need for trailheads and access areas to contain trail information, maps and safety precautions.

Trail users need to know the trail's route, potential entry and exit points and parking areas. But to attract and accommodate less experienced hikers, paddlers or bikers, trails should display maps, directional signage and safety cautions. The desire for such information is well documented in





Trail organization representatives assigned the highest priority to providing connections between existing trails. Pennsylvania residents, in contrast, placed more importance on building pedestrian and cycling paths between places of work, schools, and shopping areas.

Penn State's facilitated discussions with Baby Boomer groups, as are concerns for personal safety. Older participants in these discussions expressed a desire to know more about trail length, difficulty, terrain and other conditions before venturing out.

### **Meeting Expectations Through Quality Information**

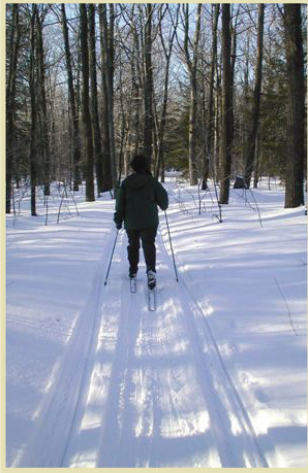
The research projects conducted in support of this plan, and public input from trail constituents, point out an "information gap" regarding trails in the state. They call for more and better information on trail availability, location, access points, regulations, and conditions users can expect to encounter along the way. Trail users also appear interested in knowing what other local attractions and amenities are available in communities along or near trails.

On some trails, it may be important to convey additional information about seasonal hazards like high spring stream flows, in-season hunting, icy footing or deer tick prevalence. The effectiveness of such warnings is greater if they are consistent, easily recognized, not unduly alarming, and well understood.

Pennsylvania's trails also present opportunities to close gaps in user understanding of the outdoor environment through more effective interpretive programs and signage. Trail user groups and the TAC both see a need for boosting programming and interpretive opportunities on trails. Well planned and presented interpretive signage is a great way to introduce a learning experience that may spark further interest and encourage a dynamic trail experience.



## GOAL 3: RECOMMENDATIONS



When asked for their perceptions about recreation area and facility needs, nearly half of Pennsylvanians reported that the number of hiking and backpacking trails should be increased, and one-third felt their quality should be improved.

### Recommendation 3.1:

**Establish an official and recognized trails committee to recommend trail policy and coordinate standardized planning, trail information and evaluation of trail efforts in Pennsylvania.**

**Action Step A:** Convene a trails committee as a subgroup of the TAC or combination of advisory group participants, to include representatives from DCNR, PFBC, PennDOT, regional and county planners, other local officials, interested and relevant motorized and non-motorized user organizations, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and regional and heritage groups.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC, PennDOT.

**Action Step B:** Develop a strategic plan for the PA Trails Committee that details future goals, implementation and evaluation tools, and participant responsibilities to guide the work of that committee and to guide future progress toward a statewide trail system.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC and PennDOT.

**Action Step C:** Initiate outreach to the Pennsylvania Game Commission to explore opportunities for closing trail gaps and to the Department of Corrections to explore opportunities for trail construction on the perimeters of DOC land holdings.

*Implementation:* PA Trails Committee.

**Action Step D:** Update the 2001 Pennsylvania Greenway Plan and evaluate state progress in meeting its goal of establishing close-to-home greenways/trails within 1,000 Pennsylvania municipalities.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PA Trails Committee, greenway stakeholders.





## Greenway Links 22 Counties

The 500-mile Susquehanna Greenway links 22 Pennsylvania counties and a multitude of recreational, historic, environmental, and cultural assets along the Susquehanna River. For more information visit:

[www.susquehannagreenway.org](http://www.susquehannagreenway.org)

A majority of State Park visitors believed that building connective trails (within the parks and from parks to local communities) were important future priorities for State Parks.

### Recommendation 3.2:

**Standardize trail planning guidelines, information and funding decision criteria to build a sustainable statewide trail system.**

**Action Step A:** Develop and adopt statewide trail funding criteria that emphasizes as priorities closing gaps, connecting users, opening opportunities for a variety of users, securing rights-of-way, and providing access to people with disabilities.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC, PennDOT.

**Action Step B:** Adopt statewide guidelines to encourage uniform trail construction, maintenance and signage; develop a non-motorized trail standards and guidelines publication; and promote best practices to ensure continued maintenance and future sustainability of trails and related facilities.

*Implementation:* PA Trails Committee.

**Action Step C:** Adopt and encourage statewide use of the federal trail difficulty rating system at trailheads and on printed and web based trail guides and maps.

*Implementation:* PA Trails Committee.

### Recommendation 3.3:

**Standardize and improve existing electronic information available for data collection and trail planning and launch the interactive trails website.**

**Action Step A:** Continue to gather detailed GIS based trail inventory data from agencies and stakeholders, to include identifying gaps and digitizing trail related recreation facilities and amenities, such as parking areas, pavilions and restroom facilities.

*Implementation:* PA Trails Committee.

**Action Step B:** Launch the planned one-stop trail information interactive website and continue website enhancements.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PFBC, RTC, KTA, local and county trail builders.





Three-fourths of Pennsylvanians indicated they would be more likely to use a trail if it was within easy walking distance from where they live, but only about half felt that their community is a safe and easy place to walk.

#### **Recommendation 3.4:**

**Improve the accessibility and use of trails by enhancing the quality, quantity and visibility of access points and printed and electronic information.**

**Action Step A:** Clearly mark trails, trailheads and trail guides/maps with standardized difficulty ratings.

*Implementation:* Trail clubs, DCNR, PFBC, RTC, KTA, local and county trail builders.

**Action Step B:** Provide consistent and complete trail information on brochures, maps and websites. Indicate local attractions and amenities on trail maps/guides. Provide information on safety and recreation facilities and launch sites along river trails.

*Implementation:* Trail clubs, DCNR, PFBC, RTC, KTA, local and county trail builders.

**Action Step C:** Develop a system of signing for river paddlers/water trail users that identifies landmarks (bridges and launches) and provides distances to upcoming access points.

*Implementation:* PennDOT and PA Water Trails Partnership.

**Action Step D:** Develop a statewide communications plan for the PA Water Trails Program that integrates strategies for public relations, marketing, education and stewardship across multiple agencies.

*Implementation:* PA Water Trails Partnership.

**Action Step E:** Explore ways to link land and water trails and trail access points, and improve portages.

*Implementation:* PA Water Trails Partnership.



Three-fourths of Pennsylvanians indicated they would be more likely to use a trail if it was within easy walking distance from where they live, but only about half felt that their community is a safe and easy place to walk.

### **Recommendation 3.5:**

**Develop self-guided and interpreter-led educational and programming opportunities at trailheads and on trails statewide.**

**Action Step A:** Provide electronic and printed interpretive materials to facilitate self-guided hikes on which trail users will have the opportunity to learn about Pennsylvania's natural and cultural history.

*Implementation:* DCNR, Heritage Areas, PPFF, local and county trail builders.

**Action Step B:** Explore initiation of a trail guide trainers program, which includes creation of a brand or certification by which agency staff or volunteers may be recognized as trained guides.

*Implementation:* DCNR, Heritage Areas, PPFF, local and county trail builders.

**Action Step C:** Explore opportunities for youth programs on different types of trails, guided by properly trained and certified adult volunteers.

*Implementation:* DCNR, Heritage Areas, PPFF, local and county trail builders.

**Action Step D:** Work with canoe outfitters and local stakeholders to develop orientation programming to ensure paddlers have the information they need before disembarking.

*Implementation:* PA Water Trails Partnership.

### **Recommendation 3.6:**

**Build the capacity of local and regional land and water trail groups in planning, stewardship and programming.**

**Action Step A:** Continue regular one-day workshops that enable local and regional land and water trail groups to share information, best practices, and conduct joint marketing efforts.

*Implementation:* PA Trails Committee, PA Water Trails Partnership.

**Action Step B:** Work with partners to produce guides for water trails and land trails on maintenance, stewardship and sustainability.

*Implementation:* PA Water Trails Partnership, PA Trails Committee.



## GOAL 4:

### Enhance Outdoor Recreation Through Better State Agency Cooperation

Improving cooperation between agencies is always a favorite suggestion in any planning effort, but participants in the planning process gave this theme serious consideration and focus.



TAC members and other agency partners identified four main areas for improving inter-agency cooperation: greening and broadening access to existing state grant programs; taking better advantage of natural synergies and interests between and among state agencies; identifying solutions to cases where state agency efforts are working at cross purposes; and creating a 5-year standing committee to move recommendations forward to implementation. In some cases, recommendations reflect work already begun by state agencies. For example, greening grant programs is already underway at DCNR, where criteria are being developed to ensure that future investments in recreation reward applicants who make more effort to protect natural resources in the development of facilities.

The majority of Pennsylvanians surveyed reported that “open space near where I live is threatened by development,” and “there is not enough protected open space near where I live.”



### Bringing Wildlife to You

In spring 2009, the Pennsylvania Game Commission set up a small camera that transmits video and audio through cable to bring live feeds of a bluebird nest to the web for public viewing. Look for the Bluebird Live-Feed link on the PGC webpage at [www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/cwp/view.asp?a=521&q=176641](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/cwp/view.asp?a=521&q=176641).

## Challenges

### Divided Responsibility for Natural Resources

Pennsylvania has four agencies tasked with responsibility for conserving our outdoor resources; The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which administers the Commonwealth's 117 state parks and approximately two million acres of state forests and has jurisdiction over terrestrial insects and plants; the Department of Environmental Protection, with regulatory responsibilities in air and water quality; the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, which manages fish, reptile and amphibian populations and provides and regulates fishing and boating, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission, which regulates hunting and trapping in the state and has management responsibility for all the state's birds and mammals. This divided responsibility for Pennsylvania's natural resources can sometimes present an obstacle to improving or expanding recreational opportunities.

Other agencies, such as Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation, also play a major role in providing access to outdoor resources, addressing development impacts through mitigation, and funding some recreation-related projects. State agencies with a role in land management, such as the Department of General Services and Department of Corrections, may not have recreational interests uppermost in their planning





efforts, or regular opportunities to coordinate recreational goals with those of other agencies. Finding ways to bring these agencies together to identify shared recreational interests, and to implement those interests, is an institutional and organizational challenge for the Commonwealth.

### **Inter-Agency Coordination Needs Greater Emphasis, Sometimes Policy Changes**

In many cases, state agencies may share recreational interests but lack the time, staff and momentum to look for those shared interests and implement new programs. Inter-

views with 12 state agencies during the course of developing the plan brought forward a number of creative ideas on ways to work together without substantial new resources or investment. In other cases, state agency missions are not always in close alignment. A trail across state lands to one agency may be an amenity, but to another, a trail may represent unwanted public access or a detraction from the main purpose of a land-protection program. Opportunities to work out these misalignments will require creativity, flexibility, and agency commitment.

## **Opportunities**

### **Better Coordination of Goals and Resources**

Interviews with agency staff revealed a recognition that individual agencies need to do more to promote outdoor recreation, and often need to partner with others to take advantage of expertise they may not have themselves. One example of this is a multi-agency approach to land conservation. The Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI) is a place-based strategy for natural resource stewardship and advocacy in key landscapes across our state where there are sig-

Between half and two-thirds of resident survey respondents expressed a desire for more natural or wild lands, environmental education areas, wildlife viewing areas, rental cabins, nature inns/ lodges and dog parks.

nificant natural and recreational assets along with a local readiness and support for land conservation, locally driven planning, and community revitalization efforts. DCNR, along with fellow state agencies, non-profit partners, and local governments, is working collaboratively in seven landscapes across the state.

Another area for potential improvement is working across multiple agencies at the staff level to combine and coordinate resources. For example, staff at the PFBC have expertise in designing and building boat access areas, but have limited land holdings and limited field staff. Their recommendation to train DCNR field staff to build boat access areas on DCNR state park and forest lands would combine expertise and opportunity for both agencies. Over the 5-year period for which these recommendations are designed, the current

declines in state, county and local funding for outdoor recreation and conservation are likely to continue, and agencies will have to learn to do more with less.

### **Grant Criteria as Leverage for Policy Changes**

Many participants in the SCORP planning process identified grant-making as a major tool for accomplishing policy change — specifically, by designing grant programs to promote greener, sustainable, and non-structural approaches to recreation, and to reach more communities — particularly underserved ones. The need to reach new and underserved audiences with grants and grant-funded projects in urban as well as rural areas, was identified through the facilitated discussions conducted with urban minority youth. Researchers concluded that







urban youth not only lacked adequate nearby outdoor recreation opportunities, but often had no institutional support to access the funding or expertise to bring those resources to their communities.

Similarly, building recreational opportunities into brownfield site restorations was identified as a way to bring more recreation to urban areas. Building a recreational trail or park into a redeveloped site as a design

element from the beginning is often easier than adding a trail or park after the fact. The recommendation to better coordinate and incorporate the State Wildlife Action plan (developed and administered by PGC and PFBC) into all state agency recreational grant-making would help ensure that state investments work in tandem with efforts to protect our most vulnerable wildlife species, and not against them.

### **Making Better Use of Shared Agency Interests**

Agency partners interviewed often suggested capitalizing on existing opportunities to expand recreation through inter-agency partnerships and prototype projects. These recommendations originated in the recognition that state agency missions are often compatible as far as recreational interests, but lack the vision, energy or staff-level cooperation to move forward on joint projects. One recommendation offered by staff at the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission was to combine physical and interpretive resources among agencies. For example, on a trail or greenway built with county and state DCNR funding, PHMC could highlight sites of historic or cultural interest through interpretive signage. This is not necessarily a new idea, but agencies felt it deserved more focus and deliberate effort.

A good example of this type of synergy occurred several years ago when DCNR sponsored a week-long river sojourn trip down the middle stretch of the Susquehanna river through Harrisburg at the same time PennDOT was widening Route 15, which parallels the river's west shore. Archaeologists sifting through the construction zone to identify and protect Native American artifacts, including a major find of indigenous projectile points, became a focal point on the sojourn for canoeists and kayakers who got to watch the dig and learn about Native American culture in the Susquehanna River Basin.

### Leading by Example

There was lively debate within the TAC on how to best accomplish policy change. Some felt it should involve more centralized planning, such as using the State Planning Board or similar body. Others felt more regional planning would improve grants and help coordinate agency efforts. State agency participants expressed great enthusiasm for less planning but more demonstration projects that would point the way to better cooperative efforts between agencies. A consensus emerged that agency change often comes faster through great demonstration projects between cooperating agencies than from top-down planning. As a result, many of the action steps in this section call for demonstration projects to test and showcase different recommendations, such as looking at planned land sales

or exchanges by Commonwealth agencies as opportunities to build in recreational trails or other amenities.

### Correcting Misalignments

TAC members and state agency interviews provided some creative thinking on how to better align state, county or local agencies where missions conflicted or were not working well together. Most involve one or two agencies resolving an issue one-on-one, but there are also opportunities for third parties, particularly nonprofit organizations, friends groups, and interest groups to participate. Two of these recommendations, improving coordination of trail funding and development between DCNR and PennDOT, and using existing rights-of-way across PGC and PFBC owned lands to help close trail gaps for low-impact, non-motorized trail users, were ranked among the highest priorities by attendees

of three stakeholder meetings held across the state.

Recommendations that look toward solutions to long-standing misalignments between state agencies may be harder to implement, but the proposals here represent a step in the right direction: acknowledging the conflict, and setting up discussions to move forward. With a 5-year time frame, not all the recommendations listed will be accomplished, but the dialogue begun between agencies through the planning process has already identified important recreation issues and fostered a willingness to address these in a cooperative fashion.

### Standing TAC Committee

Perhaps the most important plan recommendation is the creation of a 5-year Technical Advisory Committee to help ensure that the recommendations are implemented. Establishing a standing TAC committee for the duration of the 5-year plan would enable state agency, local government and nonprofit members to continue to resolve obstacles and monitor progress. The TAC should meet annually, and coordinate throughout the year by email on issues as they arise. The TAC would also develop an evaluation method for monitoring annual progress of recommendations and action steps, and provide a forum for highlighting successes and lessons learned. The TAC would also provide continuity and cultivate ideas for the next outdoor recreation planning effort in five years.





## GOAL 4: RECOMMENDATIONS



Many of the action steps in this section call for demonstration projects to test and showcase different recommendations.

### Recommendation 4.1:

**Develop a set of green principles to ensure that all state grant programs for recreation reward environmentally sustainable practices.**

**Action Step A:** Develop a set of green principles for state grant programs; communicate these principles to potential applicants and other partners, and share green principles with all state agency partners.

*Implementation:* DCNR, DEP, PDA, DOE, DOH, Center for Rural Affairs, PennDOT, DOA, DCED, State Planning Board, Interagency Land-Use Team.

**Action Step B:** Work with state agencies and partners responsible for implementing the Wildlife Action Plan to coordinate timing and prioritizing grant awards, and ensure other agencies and partners are aware of Wildlife Action Plan priorities when giving grants.

*Implementation:* PFBC, PGC, DCNR, DEP, PennDOT.

**Action Step C:** Develop standards and grant criteria to outline and incentivize the development of green and playful parks.

*Implementation:* DCNR, PRPS, Health Committee, Outdoors Committee.

**Action Step D:** Take steps to better align PennDOT and DCNR trail development and grantmaking. Review PennDOT's Smart Transportation policies to identify ways to use funds for trails as alternative transportation and recreational space.

*Implementation:* PennDOT, DCNR, PUC, RTC, PA Trails Committee.

**Action Step E:** Develop grant guidelines to ensure bridge replacements preserve existing land and water trails.

*Implementation:* PennDOT, PFBC, DCNR, PA Water Trails Partnership, PA Trails Committee.



Pennsylvanians want state and local governments to do more to protect and restore the state's environment. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated support for a permanent source of state and local funding for park and recreation resources, and for increasing public awareness of the importance of river conservation.

#### **Recommendation 4.2:**

**Provide more recreation opportunities for underserved urban and rural communities through inter-agency cooperation and outreach.**

**Action Step A:** Work through the Office of Environmental Justice to develop criteria for grant programs promoting recreational opportunities in underserved urban and rural areas, and identify and implement projects in underserved areas.

*Implementation:* DEP, Center for Rural PA; RTC, PennDOT.

**Action Step B:** Incorporate recreational opportunities into urban infill and brownfield redevelopment projects by working with urban and rural housing and economic development agencies and advocates to identify and implement demonstration projects.

*Implementation:* DEP, DCED, DCNR, PDC, PennDOT.



#### **Buy Fresh Bike Local**

In both south central and south eastern Pennsylvania, the Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign partnered with area bike clubs, farmers and businesses to sponsor "buy fresh bike local" bike tours. For more information contact Mid-State Resource Conservation & Development Council. <http://msrcd.cas.psu.edu/>





### The Seed Farm

To help slow future loss of farmland, support new farming enterprises, train new farmers, and provide a local source of good nutritious food, Lehigh County created an agricultural incubator project in 2009 called “the Seed Farm.”

For more information on bike tours through these farmlands to raise awareness, visit:

[www.lehighconservation.org](http://www.lehighconservation.org).



### Recommendation 4.3:

**Protect Pennsylvania’s working landscapes and local economies through Conservation Landscape Initiatives and restoration activities.**

**Action Step A:** Work with CLI leaders, county planners, and economic development staff to identify areas that need more recreation and marketing to benefit local economies.

*Implementation:* DCED, RC&D areas, DCNR, PDA, counties, L&I, PACD, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Organizations, PEC.

**Action Step B:** Develop trails, events, or other recreational features within CLI regions highlighting different local economies. For example, 10k bike tours to visit community-supported farms within the South Mountain CLI.

*Implementation:* DCED, RC&D areas, DCNR, PDA, counties, L&I, PACD, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Organizations.

**Action Step C:** Work with agency partners, in particular DEP and PFBC, and with non-profit partners to continue Pennsylvania’s successful small dam removal program.

*Implementation:* PFBC, American Rivers, DEP, DCNR, Riverkeeper Program, Conservation Districts.

**Action Step D:** Work with agency and nonprofit partners, particularly the agricultural community, to conserve existing riparian forested buffers and restore buffers along river corridors in conjunction with water trail establishment.

*Implementation:* NRCS, DCNR, PDA, DEP, CBF, Conservation Districts.

**Action Step E:** Work with PFBC and others to expand and enhance stream easements to preserve river access and protect river corridors as natural and scenic byways.

*Implementation:* PFBC, DCNR, PALTA, PA Water Trails Partnership.



A majority of State Park visitors (67%) felt that State Parks should increase the number of facilities that promote more active use of parks (e.g., trails, canoe launches, playgrounds).

#### **Recommendation 4.4:**

**Initiate inter-agency policy discussions to promote more recreational opportunities on state lands and state-funded private lands.**

**Action Step A :** Work with the DGS and other land-owning state agencies to identify ways to introduce recreational opportunities when the state sells or exchanges land; develop guidelines for agencies to build-in recreational development when conducting land exchanges, and implement pilot projects.

*Implementation:* DGS, DCNR, land trusts, PALTA, Chamber of Business and Industry.

**Action Step B:** Work with PGC and PFBC to identify and develop trail connections on state game lands and PFBC properties for low-impact, non-motorized trail users taking advantage of existing rights of way.

*Implementation:* PGC, DCNR, PFBC, trail groups, counties, land trusts, PALTA.

**Action Step C:** Work with Department of Agriculture to identify ways to incorporate hiking trails and rails-to-trails on lands under permanent agricultural preservation easements. Review easements and easement policy to determine potential options.

*Implementation:* PDA, counties, DCNR, trail groups, Farm Bureau, PSU Cooperative Extension, PALTA.





#### Recommendation 4.5:

**Identify collaborative opportunities among state agencies and state and local governments to share planning, training, and project implementation and maintenance.**

**Action Step A:** Survey state and local agencies for capacity needs and strengths as well as desired collaborative recreation projects.

*Implementation:* PGC, PFBC, DCNR, DEP, SRBC, State Police.

**Action Step B:** Have PFBC provide training to DCNR field staff on designing and implementing fishing and boating access areas at state parks and forests.

*Implementation:* PFBC, DCNR.

**Action Step C:** Build short loop trails or other recreational facilities at Pennsylvania Turnpike rest-stops and Welcome Centers. Explore planting gardens at select sites during growing season.

*Implementation:* DCNR, Turnpike Commission, DCED, PennDot, non-profits, trucking organizations.

#### Recommendation 4.6:

**Establish a 5-year Technical Advisory Committee that meets annually and is responsible for conducting annual evaluations.**

**Action Step A:** Invite members and establish a TAC and subcommittees on Health, the Outdoors, and Trails; develop a set of responsibilities and a schedule.

*Implementation:* Current TAC Partners.

**Action Step B:** Develop an evaluation methodology to use for annual reviews of recommendations and action steps.

*Implementation:* Current TAC Partners.

More bicycle lanes and paths were among the top rated recreation needs of the Pennsylvanians surveyed, suggesting a need for integration of recreation and transportation planning.



One of the central purposes of a state's comprehensive outdoor recreation plan is to develop priority recommendations for program implementation and to direct federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars to meet those priorities. Pennsylvania is fortunate in having had significant state funding sources for recreation and conservation. However, the downturn in the global economy and the exhaustion of environmental bond funds has changed the equation. A diversified funding mix of LWCF, other federal funds and state funding will be essential to move the 28 programmatic recommendations in Pennsylvania's plan into action over the next five years. The following discussion makes a case for investment in outdoor recreation, documents the current need, and recommends an approach to complement LWCF funding with state funds and increasing levels of philanthropic support as the keystone to accomplishing this plan.

## **funding needs and**





# recommendations

## Funding Needs and Recommendations:

### The Case for Outdoor Recreation Investment

As noted throughout the plan, investment in outdoor recreation is critical for physical and mental health, lifelong learning and enjoyment and environmental conservation.

Creating a green infrastructure of parks and open space, trails, clean water and revitalized downtowns supports improvements in quality of life and a more sustainable future for Pennsylvania. Green infrastructure investments create and support the same type of planning, consultant and construction jobs and spin-off benefits that other infrastructure investments do. Green infrastructure spending and community development grants, infuse dollars and jobs into local communities all across Pennsylvania, from the most urban to the most rural counties. In addition, the availability of open space and recreational opportunities are key factors in a region's ability to attract new jobs and retain businesses.

Some examples: DCNR grants leverage approximately \$2.50 for every \$1.00 of state funding provided for parks, community revitalization/ green space, trail and open space projects. The multiplier effect and job impacts of those investments are not as easy to quantify. However, the Trail Town Economic Impact Study



(cited earlier in the plan) also found that Somerset County gained 31 new businesses that service trail users. Another study of the impact of parks in Philadelphia, completed by the Trust for Public Land in June 2008, estimated that the parks generated

\$5.2 million in spending by out-of-towners who came to Philadelphia primarily because of its parks. In addition, the report estimates that \$23 million is generated for the City from tax receipts from increased property values and tourism.

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When asked directly about the importance and priority of various recreation and conservation programs, Pennsylvanians surveyed showed the most support for maintaining existing parks and recreation areas.



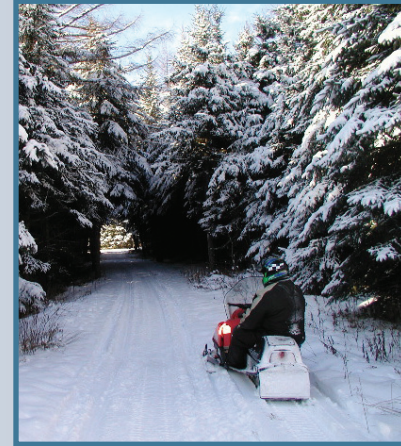
## Funding History

Traditionally, Pennsylvania's major green infrastructure investments have been funded through bond initiatives, like the recent Growing Greener Bond Fund (GGII) initiative, and dedicated funding sources like the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (Keystone) and the Environmental Stewardship Fund (GGI). Since 1996, the Keystone Fund alone has provided more than \$660 million to recreation and conservation projects, some in each of the state's 67 counties, through grants and matching funding.

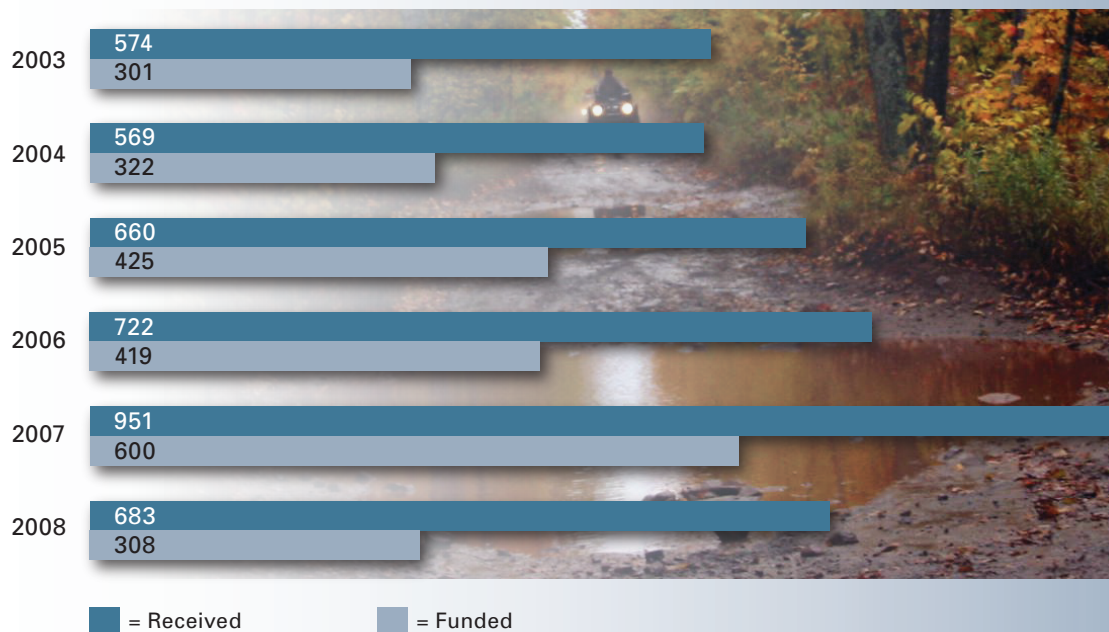
With the impending exhaustion of major bond funding in GGII and an increased amount of GGI

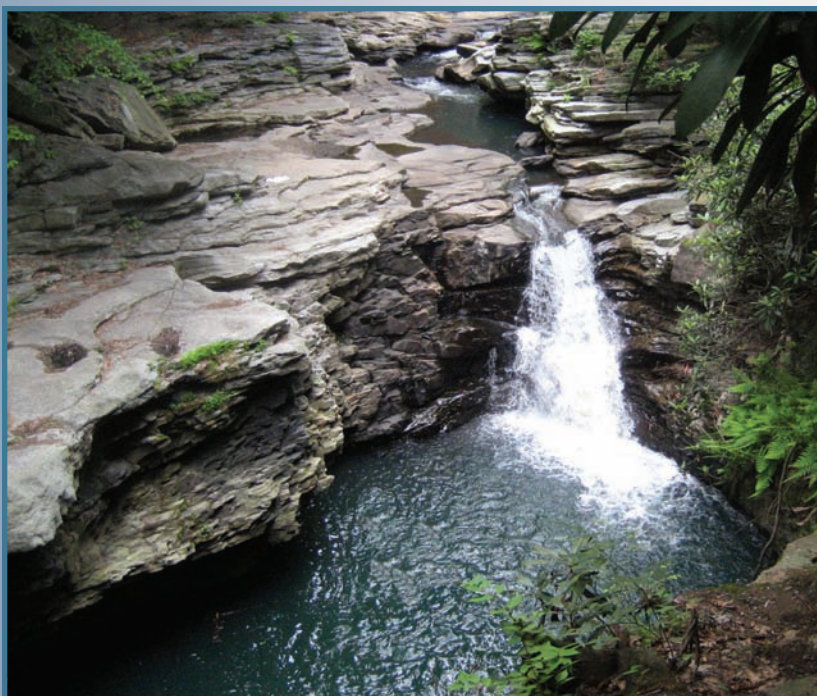
funding directed to pay debt service on GGII, significantly less money is available now than over the last five years. The current slow housing market is also trimming available Keystone funding. Keystone funds come from a portion of the state's realty transfer tax receipts, and the amount projected to be available in FY 09-10 is down nearly 20 percent from 2008-09.

DCNR continues to have an additional annual funding source through the snowmobile and ATV recreational user-fee fund, which generates about \$3.5 million each year for projects to improve these recreational resources.



**Figure 5.** DCNR Applications Received Versus Funded, 2003-2008





In years past, DCNR was able to fund, on average, 48 percent of grant dollars requested using all funding sources (Keystone, Growing Greener I and II, and LWCF). In the 2009 grant round DCNR expects to fund only 20 percent of grant dollars requested (Figure 5). Based on applications, existing demand exceeds funding by nearly \$160 million annually.

This reduction in funds impacts not only recreation and conservation grants to partners, but also infrastructure investments in state parks and other public recreational facilities such as boat launches and hunting and fishing access (Table 8).

**Table 8.** Summary of Recreation Project Funding Need by Category

Category	Amount	Notes
Local Park and Rec Funding	\$71 million	Based on 2008 Applications
Acquisition/Land Conservation	\$45-50 million	Based on 2008 Applications
Counties	\$11 million	Based on 2008 Applications & Completed Greenways and Open space Plans
River Infrastructure/Access	\$1.5 million	Based on PFBC Match Dollars Available
Greenways/Trails	\$15 million	Based on 2008 request of \$20.9 million
Main Street/Elm Street/Trail Town	\$3.0 million	Based on DCED Match Dollars Avail '06-07
Smart Growth	\$2.5 million	Based on 2008 Applications
State Parks	\$400 million	DCNR estimate for needed construction, energy-improvement and other non-maintenance projects, 2009-2013
State Forests	\$275 million	DCNR estimate for needed construction, energy-improvement and other non-maintenance projects, 2009-2013





Direct funding for recreation and conservation is not the only source of dollars that is oversubscribed. PennDOT received more than 400 applications in 2008 for the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative, an alternative transportation grant program, requesting more than \$600 million. However, the department was only able to provide \$59.2 million for 50 Smart Transportation-related projects and \$16.8 million for 30 Safe Routes to School projects. Many of these were critical trail linkages and trail development projects and all contributed to more walkable and livable communities. Reduced funding in other state-agency grant programs, including those administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development, is also anticipated.

Protecting wildlife habitat/conserving natural resources and restoring damaged rivers and streams were among Pennsylvanians' highest priorities for funding recreation and conservation programs.

### **Pennsylvania's Federal Lands**

For an eastern state, Pennsylvania has a wealth of federal recreational land within its borders. The first national wild and scenic river in the country was the Delaware, which forms the Commonwealth's eastern border. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area protects critical habitat while offering spectacular views, paddling, or rafting, and hiking on a portion of the Appalachian Trail. In 2008, Pennsylvania gained a new national wildlife refuge designation with Cherry Valley, in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Allegheny National Forest covers more than half a million acres of forested land

in northwestern Pennsylvania, providing hundreds of trail miles, recreational lakes and reservoirs, stream miles, and outstanding hunting and fishing habitat. The Army Corps of Engineers owns and operates a number of large reservoirs that provide popular recreational boating and paddling opportunities, including Raystown Lake in southcentral Pennsylvania and dam-release-powered white water runs on the Lehigh River.

From Gettysburg Battlefield to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is home to 15 National Parks, 6 National Heritage Areas, and 26 National Natural Landmarks.



Pennsylvania trail advocates strongly supported use of organized local work crews, such as volunteers, prisoners, and adjudicated youth, as a means for meeting funding needs for trail maintenance.

### Land and Water Conservation Fund

Since 1964, the National Park Service has funded 1,559 projects through \$160 million in LWCF grants to Pennsylvania. However, in recent years those federal funds have been greatly reduced.

With federal fiscal constraints continuing well into 2009 and beyond, Pennsylvania's national, state and local lands, parks, and recreational, cultural and historic

sites are accumulating a significant backlog of funding needs. Meeting these needs through restoring LWCF at the fully authorized level in 2009 and beyond will be critical to address these funding needs.

### Recommendations

Over the next five years LWCF will become more important than ever to moving Pennsylvania's recreation and conservation agenda forward. The plan's public input process and

survey research results have identified five top priorities for federal and matching recreation and conservation funding: maintaining existing park and recreation areas; protecting wildlife habitat and wild resources; acquiring and protecting open space; restoring damaged rivers and streams; and connecting residential areas with schools, workplaces, and commercial districts. These priorities reflect the interest in investing and reinvesting in the green infrastructure of the Commonwealth.

In addition, almost every stakeholder meeting, survey tool, and input from the public reflected an overwhelming interest in trails. Recommendations included developing new trails, maintaining existing trails, and closing gaps within and between trails. The majority of participants in the 2008-09 public input process represented different trail groups.

Existing federal and state funds alone will not be enough to continue to expand Pennsylvania's green infrastructure, build the trail connections, and move the comprehensive recommendations in this plan forward. Technical Advisory Committee members familiar with the philanthropic community in the Commonwealth recommend that funding for the plan's priorities be sought from this sector. In particular, the plan's focus on the health and wellness of Pennsylvania's citizens was seen as an issue that lends itself to a coalition of partners.



## FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following funding recommendations reflect the identified public needs and the knowledge of both state agency and nonprofit partners on potential funding strategies that should be pursued over the coming five years:

### ■ Funding Recommendation 1:

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at its authorized levels to provide needed funding for federally owned and operated parks, heritage areas, forests, reservoirs, to protect additional priority lands and waters in Pennsylvania, and to provide needed funding for state and local recreational priorities.

### ■ Funding Recommendation 2:

Prioritize the use of LWCF funds that come to Pennsylvania over the next five years to augment Pennsylvania's green infrastructure through improvements to existing park and recreation areas, acquisition of open space and critical habitat, and other top priorities identified by stakeholders.

### ■ Funding Recommendation 3:

Market plan recommendations — particularly those developing a stronger link between the outdoor recreation and health, and opportunities for

community “greening” — to place-based, private, community and corporate foundations, and especially to health care conversion foundations.

### ■ Funding Recommendation 4:

Continue dialogues with large private foundations to fund and coordinate statewide efforts such as statewide trail networks, statewide health and outdoor recreation campaigns, and regional model programs.

### ■ Funding Recommendation 5:

Provide success stories and the information on public priorities for outdoor recreation to health, outdoor-recreation, and community partners. With such support, partners can demonstrate the value of renewed sources of state funding such as Growing Greener statewide funding initiatives.











## Plan Implementation Matrix

### Summary of Programmatic Recommendations and Action Steps













This chart summarizes all programmatic recommendations and action steps in the 2009-2013 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan and includes a recommended timeline for each action step. Partners included are Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members who have affirmed their commitment to implementing plan recommendations, as well as suggested partners. A list of partner acronyms can be found on page 112. The plan recom-

mends continuing the TAC to help oversee plan implementation, and developing three subcommittees for Health, Outdoor and Trails. Determining these committee memberships and responsibilities is an ongoing process. The PA Water Trails Partnership is an existing alliance formed in 2008 between DCNR, PFBC, PEC, and NPS Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network.

### Goal 1: Strengthen Connections Between Outdoor Recreation, Healthy Lifestyles and Economic Benefits in Communities

Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>1.1: Establish TAC Health Committee.</b>				
a. Develop criteria and an interagency implementation plan for active/healthy/green community designation, recognition and funding prioritization.	TAC Health Committee			
b. Identify pilot communities in which to fund projects designed to strengthen the health and outdoor recreation connection.	TAC Health Committee			
c. Conduct a health summit to explore ways to improve health through physical activity and outdoor recreation.	TAC Health Committee			
<b>1.2: Develop technical assistance materials.</b>				
a. Update Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Manual to web-based fact sheets.	PEC, DCNR, DOH, RTC, PRPS			
b. Work with health, economic, and government association stakeholders to offer links and audience-appropriate text on their websites to show the benefits of outdoor recreation.	DOH, DCNR, PFBC, DCED, DOE, PennDOT			
c. Promote model initiatives that are demonstrating the positive impact of outdoor recreation on health and economy.	DCNR, DOH, DCED, PDC			
<b>1.3: Implement a statewide education and awareness campaign.</b>				
a. Explore integration of existing health and recreation-based marketing campaigns and provide guidance for use.	TAC Health Committee			
b. Launch a statewide campaign to promote healthy recreation in the outdoors.	TAC Health Committee			



Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>1.4: Coordinate PennDOT's Smart Transportation Initiative and DCNR's CLIs to promote greener, safer, pedestrian-friendly communities.</b>				
a. Develop planning guidelines to integrate outdoor and green infrastructure initiatives within multi-municipal plans.	DCED, DEP, DCNR, PennDOT, PDC			
b. Identify and implement PennDOT's Smart Transportation projects to serve as models for livable communities with an outdoor recreation focus.	PennDOT, DCNR, DCED, 10,000 Friends			
<b>1.5: Develop a statewide resource-based "town" program.</b>				
a. Convene key stakeholders to discuss successful initiatives, develop strategies to further support a statewide trail/river town program, and select pilots.	DCED, PDC, The Trail Town Program, PEC, DCNR, RTC			
b. Hold a summit for tourism and business stakeholders to highlight the economic benefits of outdoor recreation.	DCED, PDC, DCNR, PEC, RTC			
c. Establish Gateway sites in the Susquehanna watershed.	Heritage Areas, DCED, DCNR, NPS, PHMC			
<b>1.6: Encourage local land use policy that promotes best management practices to preserve green spaces, creates walkable communities, and provides connections to amenities.</b>				
a. Expand and promote PALTAs' Conservation Tool Box.	PALTA, DCNR, DCED, PPA, county planning organizations			
b. Promote Safe Routes to Schools Programs by holding workshops, supporting demonstration communities, and providing continued funding for needed improvements.	PennDOT, DCNR, PRPS			
c. Support the implementation of county greenway plans.	DCNR, DCED, PennDOT, county planning organizations			
d. Promote and fund urban tree planting efforts.	DCNR, DEP, DCED, county planning organizations, local recreation & parks departments			
<b>1.7: Identify policy and environmental needs to improve physical activity and healthy eating in parks.</b>				
a. Identify park practices where design, regulation or other factors constrain physical activity and healthy eating, and develop strategies to address constraints at pilot parks.	DCNR, PRPS, local recreation & parks departments			
b. Develop a collection of park, playground, and schoolyard designs that exemplify green practices and incorporate innovative trends in recreation to facilitate outdoor play.	DCNR, PRPS, local recreation & parks departments, PCEE			
c. Create a recognition program for parks and playgrounds.	DCNR, PRPS, local recreation & parks departments, PPFF			















## Goal 1: Strengthen Connections (continued)

Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>1.8: Conduct research on the economic benefits of outdoor recreation.</b>				
a. Update the PA State Parks' economic impact study.	DCNR, PPFF, PRPS			🍁
b. Establish a benchmark system for emerging resource and recreation-based towns that can document measurable results and capture as case studies.	PDC, DCED, DCNR		🍃	
c. Complete the series of PA rail-trail economic benefit studies and develop a statewide assessment.	RTC, DCNR			🍁
d. Support the Southeast Economic Impact Study of parks and open space, evaluate results, and promote as a model.	Green Space Alliance, DCNR, William Penn Foundation	🍁		
e. Conduct an economic impact analysis to benchmark the economic impact of water trails.	PA Water Trails Partnership		🍃	
<b>1.9: Conduct research on the health benefits of outdoor recreation.</b>				
a. Conduct an assessment on attitudes and interests of health stakeholders.	TAC Health Committee			🍁
b. Study the impact of any implemented outdoor education and awareness campaign on improving physical activity.	TAC Health Committee			🍁






















## Goal 2: Reconnect People to the Outdoors and Develop a Stewardship Ethic Through Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Experiences

Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>2.1: Continue to support and maintain existing outdoor recreation facilities and programs.</b>				
a. Manage parks as welcoming places where visitors feel safe and can enjoy the outdoors by prioritizing maintenance and increased staff visibility in high-use areas.	DCNR, PGC, PRPS, local recreation & park departments			
b. Work with local recreation entities to inventory and review recreation infrastructure needs.	Local recreation & park departments, planning offices, DCNR			
c. Expand environmental education and interpretive programming in parks, and seek opportunities to provide upgraded centers, wildlife viewing areas, and active outdoor recreation facilities.	DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PRPS, local recreation & park departments			
d. Expand successful hunting and fishing programs by training park personnel and volunteers.	PFBC, DCNR, PRPS, PGC, local recreation & park departments			
<b>2.2: Organize and market outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities more effectively.</b>				
a. Develop a dynamic, comprehensive inventory of outdoor recreation amenities and facilities using GIS to identify areas lacking access to public parks.	DCNR, PennDOT, PFBC, PGC, PRPS, RTC, DCED, outdoor recreation organizations, local recreation & park departments			
b. Commission a statewide outdoor recreation clearinghouse website as a one-stop portal for outdoor recreation opportunities.	DCNR, PennDOT, PFBC, PGC, PRPS, RTC, DCED, outdoor recreation organizations			
c. Develop a year-long advertising and marketing program for Pennsylvania State Parks.	DCNR, PPFF, PRPS, DCED			
d. Establish a Trail of the Year Program to increase promotion and use of trails.	DCNR, RTC, PA Trails Committee			
<b>2.3: Use outdoor learning opportunities in school settings and after-school settings to promote and facilitate the connection between outdoor recreation skills and environmental stewardship.</b>				
a. Develop new and/or coordinate existing curricula and training to link outdoor recreation with personal outdoor stewardship to academic standards.	PDE, DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PSAHPERD, PCEE			
b. Provide professional development to physical education teachers and others to provide lifelong outdoor recreation skills.	DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PDE, PSAHPERD, PRPS, outdoor recreation providers			
c. Provide professional development, technical assistance and support for the development and/or revitalization of outdoor learning facilities and green space on school grounds.	PDE, PGC, DCNR, PFBC, PRPS			
d. Develop a leader's manual and student materials to establish and support school-based outing clubs.	PFBC, DCNR, PSU Cooperative Extension, 4H, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, AMC			
e. Help PA children meet the national recommendation for 60 minutes of physical activity each day by encouraging more outdoor play as part of school day.	PSAHPERD, DCNR, PFBC, PGC, PRPS			
f. Encourage the use of technology to enhance student outdoor experiences and improve knowledge.	PDE, PFBC, PGC, DCNR, PRPS			

## Goal 2: Reconnect People to Outdoors (continued)










Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>2.4: Develop social support networks to engage new and diverse audiences in outdoor recreation.</b>				
a. Develop and support community-based and university outing clubs to facilitate close-to-home outdoor recreation programming.	PRPS, SSHE, DCNR, PFBC, outing clubs, YMCA			
b. Work with outdoor recreation-focused clubs to package and coordinate current offerings; address membership needs; and develop partnerships with outdoor recreation venues.	DCNR, PFBC, KTA, PEC, IMBA, Elderhostel, hunting/fishing clubs			
c. Provide training to volunteer-mentor networks to empower community organizations to expand outdoor recreation programs and facilities.	DCNR, PRPS, PFBC, KTA, PEC, IMBA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCAs, Scouts, 4-H Cooperative Ext.			
d. Partner with local schools and rec/parks depts. to create a Youth and Family Stewardship Corps. to increase volunteer efforts on public land.	PPFF, DCNR, PDE, L&I, PRPS, local recreation & park departments			
e. Package and publicize outdoors-based work events as recreation and service-learning opportunities.	DCNR, PGC, PFBC, PRPS, PPFF, PA Cleanways, heritage areas			
f. Develop events that blend youth-oriented and technology-driven activities with traditional sports like hunting/fishing.	PGC, PFBC, DCNR, PRPS, nonprofit partners			
<b>2.5: Maximize outdoor recreation and tourism potential of PA's 12 Heritage Areas.</b>				
a. Work with Heritage Areas to develop marketing packages that connect and build relationships between recreation, tourism, and business partners.	DCNR, DCED Heritage Areas, TPAs			
b. Continue to support an annual trail sojourn to promote emerging trails.	DCNR, Heritage Areas			
c. Work with state agencies and others to assess which current cultural or historic features could add recreational assets like trails and greenways.	PHMC, DCED, DCNR, Heritage Areas, PRPS, trail groups, PFBC, PennDOT			
d. Identify and implement projects linking historic or cultural features with trails or other recreational amenities.	PHMC, DCED, DCNR, Heritage Areas, PRPS, trail groups, PennDOT			














Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>2.6: Build a solid support network to assist in guiding, planning and advancing outdoor recreation and stewardship efforts.</b>				
a. Develop and support a standing, statewide outdoors committee of TAC to implement recommendations that connect people to the outdoors.	DCNR, TAC			
b. Develop the PA Kids Outside Coalition to provide a forum for youth to advise the direction of relevant outdoor recreation policy and practice.	TAC Outdoors Committee			
c. Create a committee of the PRPS to advance plan recommendations.	PRPS, DCNR, TAC Outdoors Committee			
d. Focus research on activity and recreation-specific interests to understand specialized groups and facilities.	TAC Outdoors Committee			
e. Engage under-represented populations in recreation research efforts.	TAC Outdoors Committee			
<b>2.7: Better use the media to convey outdoor recreation and stewardship messages.</b>				
a. Promote recreation orgs., planners and outdoor recreation providers as speakers at conferences of the POWA and MDOWA conferences.	DCNR, PRPS, POWA, MDOWA			
b. Distribute information about outdoor recreation sites, opportunities, events and trends to membership of professional writers' organizations in the state.	DCNR, PRPS, POWA, OWAA, MDOWA			














### Goal 3: Develop a Statewide Land and Water Trail Network to Facilitate Recreation, Transportation and Healthy Lifestyles

Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>3.1: Establish Statewide Trail Committee.</b>				
a. Convene a trails committee as a subgroup of the TAC to include reps from DCNR, PFBC, PennDOT, planners, motorized and non-motorized user orgs., and the RTC.	DCNR, PFBC, PennDOT			
b. Develop a strategic plan that details future goals, implementation and evaluation tools, and responsibilities.	DCNR, PFBC and PennDOT			
c. Initiate outreach to the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Department of Corrections for trail partnership opportunities.	PA Trails Committee			
d. Update the 2001 PA Greenway Plan.	PA Trails Committee with greenway stakeholders			
<b>3.2: Standardize trail planning guidelines and funding decision criteria.</b>				
a. Develop and adopt statewide funding criteria that emphasizes as priorities closing gaps, connecting users, opening opportunities for a variety of users, securing rights-of-way and providing access to people with disabilities.	DCNR, PFBC, PennDOT			
b. Adopt statewide guidelines to encourage uniform trail construction, maintenance and signage, to include the development of a non-motorized trail standards and guidelines publication.	PA Trails Committee			
c. Adopt and encourage statewide use of the federal trail difficulty rating system at trailheads and on printed and web-based trail guides and maps.	PA Trails Committee			
<b>3.3: Standardize and improve electronic information and launch the trails website.</b>				
a. Continue to gather GIS based trail inventory data to include identifying gaps and digitizing trail related recreation facilities and amenities.	PA Trails Committee			
b. Launch the planned one-stop trail information interactive website and continue website enhancements.	DCNR, PFBC, RTC, KTA, local and county trail builders			












Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>3.4: Improve trail access and use by enhancing access points and printed and electronic information.</b>				
a. Clearly mark trails, trailheads and trail guides/maps with standardized difficulty ratings.	Trail clubs, DCNR, PFBC, RTC, KTA, local/county trail builders			
b. Provide consistent and complete trail information on all brochures, maps and websites including information on safety and recreation facilities and launch sites along river trails.	Trail clubs, DCNR, PFBC, RTC, KTA, local/county trail builders			
c. Develop a system of signing for river paddlers/water trail users that identifies landmarks (bridges and launches) and provides distances to upcoming access points.	PennDOT and PA Water Trails Partnership			
d. Develop a statewide communications plan for the PA Water Trails Program.	PA Water Trails Partnership			
e. Explore ways to link land and water trails and trail access points, and improve portages.	PA Water Trails Partnership			
<b>3.5: Develop self-guided and interpreter-led educational and programming opportunities.</b>				
a. Provide electronic and printed interpretive materials to facilitate self-guided hikes to learn about PA's natural and cultural history.	DCNR, Heritage Areas, PPFF, local/county trail builders			
b. Explore initiation of a trail guide trainers program.	DCNR, Heritage Areas, PPFF, local/county trail builders			
c. Explore opportunity for youth programs guided by properly trained and certified adult volunteers.	DCNR, Heritage Areas, PPFF, local/county trail builders			
d. Work with canoe outfitters and others to develop orientation programming to ensure paddlers have the information they need before disembarking.	PA Water Trails Partnership			
<b>3.6: Build the capacity of local trail groups in planning, stewardship and programming.</b>				
a. Continue workshops for land and water trail groups to share information, best practices, and conduct joint marketing efforts.	PA Trails Committee., PA Water Trails Partnership			
b. Work with partners to produce a guide for water trails and land trails on maintenance, stewardship and sustainability.	PA Water Trails Partnership, PA Trails Committee			

## Goal 4: Enhance Outdoor Recreation Through Better State Agency Cooperation

Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
<b>4.1: Develop a set of green principles to ensure that all state grant programs for recreation reward environmentally sustainable practices.</b>				
a. Develop a set of green principles for state grant programs; develop a website and share green principles with all state agency partners.	DCNR, DEP, PDA, DOE, DOH, Center for Rural Affairs, PennDOT, DOA, DCED, State Planning Board, Interagency Land-Use Team.			
b. Work with state agencies and partners responsible for implementing the Wildlife Action Plan to coordinate timing and prioritizing grant awards.	PFBC, PGC, DCNR, DEP, PennDOT			
c. Develop standards and grant criteria to outline and incentivize the development of green and playful parks.	DCNR, PRPS, TAC Health and Outdoors Committees			
d. Take steps to better align PennDOT and DCNR trail development and grantmaking.	PennDOT, DCNR, PUC, RTC, PA Trails Committee			
e. Develop grant guidelines to ensure bridge replacements preserve existing land and water trails.	PennDOT, PFBC, DCNR, PA Water Trails Partnership, PA Trails Committee			
<b>4.2: Provide more recreation opportunities for underserved urban and rural communities.</b>				
a. Develop criteria for grant programs promoting recreational opportunities in underserved urban and rural areas and implement pilot projects.	DEP, Office of Environmental Justice Center for Rural PA; RTC, PennDOT			
b. Incorporate recreational opportunities into urban infill and brownfield redevelopment projects.	DEP, DCED, DCNR, PDC, PennDOT			
<b>4.3: Protect PA's working landscapes and local economies by promoting recreation and conserving lands and waters through CLIs and restoration activities.</b>				
a. Work with CLI leaders, county planners, and economic development staff to identify areas that need more recreation and marketing to benefit local economies.	DCED, RC&D areas, DCNR, PDA, counties, L&I, PACD, metropolitan and regional planning organizations, PEC			
b. Develop trails, events, or other recreational features within CLI regions highlighting different local economies.	DCED, RC&D areas, DCNR, PDA, PACD, counties, L&I, metropolitan planning and regional planning organizations			
c. Work with agency partners, in particular DEP and PFBC, and with non-profit partners to continue PA's successful small dam removal program.	PFBC, American Rivers, DEP, DCNR, Riverkeeper Program, Conservation Districts			
d. Work with agency and nonprofit partners, particularly the agricultural community, to conserve riparian forested buffers and restore buffers along river corridors in conjunction with water trail establishment.	NRCS, DCNR, PDA, DEP, CBF, Conservation Districts			



Recommendations and Action Steps	Implementing Partners	On-going	1-2 yrs	3-5 yrs
e. Work with PFBC and others to expand and enhance stream easements to preserve river access and protect river corridors as natural and scenic byways.	PFBC, DCNR, PALTA, Pennsylvania Water Trails Partnership			
<b>4.4: Initiate inter-agency policy discussions to promote more recreational opportunities on state lands and state-funded private lands.</b>				
a. Work with DGS to identify ways to introduce recreational opportunities when the state sells or exchanges land; develop guidelines, and implement pilot projects.	DGS, DCNR, land trusts, PALTA, Chamber of Business and Industry			
b. Work with PGC and PFBC to identify and develop trail connections on state game lands and PFBC properties for low-impact, non-motorized trail users.	PGC, DCNR, PFBC, trail groups, counties, land trusts, PALTA			
c. Work with Dept of Agriculture to identify ways to incorporate trails on lands under permanent agricultural preservation easements.	PDA, counties, DCNR, trail groups, Farm Bureau, PSU Cooperative Extension, PALTA			
<b>4.5: Identify collaborative opportunities among state and local agencies to share project planning, training, and project implementation and maintenance.</b>				
a. Survey state and local agencies for capacity needs and strengths as well as desired collaborative recreation projects.	PGC, PFBC, DCNR, DEP, SRBC, State Police			
b. Have PFBC provide staff training to DCNR field staff on designing and implementing fishing and boating access areas at state parks and forests.	PFBC, DCNR			
c. Build trails or other recreational facilities at PA Turnpike rest-stops and Welcome Centers and explore planting gardens at select sites.	DCNR, Turnpike Commission, DCED, PennDot, non-profits, trucking organizations			
<b>4.6: Establish a 5-year Technical Advisory Committee that meets annually and is responsible for conducting annual evaluations.</b>				
a. Establish a TAC and subcommittees on Health, the Outdoors, and Trails; develop a set of responsibilities and a schedule.	TAC Partners			
b. Develop an evaluation methodology to use for annual reviews of recommendations and action steps.	TAC Partners			



## Acronyms for Agencies, Organizations, and Terms referred to in text

ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle	PCEE	Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education
CDC	Center for Disease Control	PEC	Pennsylvania Environmental Council
CLI	Conservation Landscape Initiative	PennDOT*	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
CNRAC	Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Committee	PDA*	Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
DCED*	Department of Community Economic Development	PDC	Pennsylvania Downtown Center
DCNR*	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	PDE*	Pennsylvania Department of Education
DEP*	Department of Environmental Protection	PFBC*	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
DGS*	Department of General Services	PGC*	Pennsylvania Game Commission
DOA*	Department of Aging	PHMC*	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
DOC*	Department of Corrections	POWA	Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association
DOH*	Department of Health	PPA	Pennsylvania Planning Association
DPW*	Department of Public Welfare	PPFF	Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation
GG	Growing Greener	PRPS	Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society
KTA	Keystone Trails Association	PSAHPERD	Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
L&I*	Department of Labor and Industry	PSU	Pennsylvania State University
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund	RC&D	Resource Conservation & Development
MDOWA	Mason-Dixon Outdoor Writers Association	RTC	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
NPS	National Park Service	SCORP	State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
NPS-CBGN	National Park Service-Chesapeake Bay Gateways & Water Trails Network	TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle		
PALTA	Pennsylvania Association of Land Trusts Association		
PARTAB	Pennsylvania Recreation and Trails Advisory Board		

*\*Indicates Pennsylvania state agency*



For your convenience and to share with others, the report, studies and surveys are included on this CD.



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Edward G. Rendell, Governor  
John H. Quigley, Acting Secretary



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