

# Greenways, Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan



**April 2006**



Mercer County Regional Planning Commission

**MCRPC**

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# MERCER COUNTY GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

A Vision, Inventory, and Strategy  
for Natural and Cultural Resource Conservation and Rural Recreation  
in Mercer County, Pennsylvania

Adopted by the Mercer County Board of Commissioners  
April 27, 2006

Prepared by the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission

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Not yet appointed, Mercer County Cooperative Extension  
Not yet appointed, Private Recreation Facility  
Not yet appointed, Mercer County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Not yet appointed, At-Large Business

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# Preface

## to the Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan

### Purpose

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Mercer County's Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan address the need to plan and manage open spaces and to provide recreational opportunities for the health, safety and well-being of county residents. A plan of similar scope was developed in the 1970s. Since then, the county comprehensive plan has been the guiding policy document for natural resource protection and recreation in coordination with community development policies.

Today, resource planners recognize that new tools are available to protect sensitive natural resources, to sustain their productivity for economic benefits and to integrate many rural recreation activities into rural environments. Focused planning for resources and rural recreation can help to coordinate protection, strengthen production industries, and publicize recreation initiatives.

The plan was developed to ensure that:

- open space under public and private ownership preserves the functions of sensitive natural resource systems,
- local communities remain connected with the natural and cultural features that define them and the region,
- open space for active and passive recreation remains accessible to all residents, and
- the recreational needs of rural residents are met.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resource encourages counties to develop open space, greenways and recreation plans in response to land development trends and planning code requirements for recreational services. *The Pennsylvania's Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections* initiative aims to connect Pennsylvania's open space, natural landscape features; scenic, cultural, historic, and recreation sites; and urban and rural communities through direct state investment and through public and public-private partnerships. The Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan is consistent with this initiative.

#### **PA Greenways Vision**

Pennsylvania and its many partners will develop an outstanding network of greenways across the Commonwealth, creating an asset highly valued by Pennsylvanians and enhancing the quality of life for all. This network of greenways will connect Pennsylvania's open space, natural landscape features, scenic, cultural, historic, and recreation sites, and urban and rural communities. Greenways will become one of the Commonwealth's most powerful tools to achieve sustainable growth and livable communities.

- From *Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections*, June 2001

## Plan Goals

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The goals for the Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan is to establish policy and planning priorities to support future County investments, to establish a framework for municipal level open space, greenways and rural recreation planning, and to coordinate public and private investments. As a component of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan, this plan and its goals are to be accomplished in a manner consistent with other county policies, namely those outlined in other components of the comprehensive plan.

The four goals for natural resources established in the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan focus on retaining Mercer County's natural systems while allowing for low impact recreation and other activities in a sustainable manner.

- Retain natural landscape systems
- Sustain or improve the quality of natural and manmade environmental features
- Encourage the sustainable management of natural resources for resource-based industries
- Demonstrate the value of the natural environment to landowners, residents, and visitors

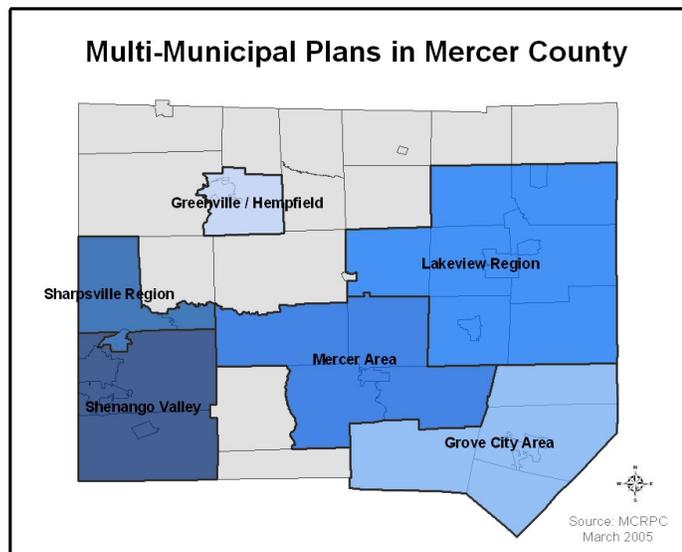
In fact, this plan provides further definition and direction of how natural resources protection these goals can be accomplished in Mercer County.

## Study Area

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The Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan addresses Mercer County as a whole and in part. Greenways and Open Space were analyzed across the county, while recreational opportunities were examined with a focus on the rural areas of the county (the gray areas of the Multi-Municipal Plans graphic). These communities include the following and collectively represent 18% of the population.

1. Delaware
2. Fredonia
3. Greene
4. Jamestown
5. Pymatuning
6. Sugar Grove
7. West Salem
8. Deer Creek
9. French Creek
10. Perry
11. Otter Creek
12. Salem
13. Sandy Creek
14. Sheakleyville
15. Lackawannock
16. Wilmington



General guidance for recreation in urban communities and multi-municipal planning regions can be found in the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan.

## **The Planning Process**

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The planning process was conducted through a series of steps to identify the following:

1. Unique and special resources, recreational areas and organizations
2. Issues and concerns for meeting residents' needs
3. Goals for the protection of resource areas and corridors, the provision of recreational facilities and services and the education of residents on these important community topics
4. Strategies for enhancing the management of open space, the establishment and extension of greenways and the development of a recreational network
5. Indicators by which to measure the plan's progress
6. Partners and programs for implementation

The project was developed in conjunction with the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan and supplemented with additional input from the Greenways Committee. The Greenways Committee was comprised of resource managers and recreation service providers and contributed its collective knowledge and perspective to the analysis and findings of the comprehensive plan, and focused further input on the specific goals and recommendations of the Greenways Plan. Once complete, the Greenways Plan was incorporated into the draft comprehensive plan as a supplemental document. The comprehensive plan was then presented at public review sessions before the Plan was finalized and adopted by the Mercer County Board of Commissioners.

The Mercer County Regional Planning Commission was the lead agency in preparing the plan. The planning staff administered a grant from DCNR, coordinated meetings, and assisted in the preparation of the document.

## **The Plan's Relation to County Policy and Planning**

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The Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan was developed in tandem with the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan. The Mercer County Regional Planning Commission will be able to reference this document in their reviews of subdivision and land development plans. Where opportunities to accomplish the Plan's goals exist and are not recognized by the proposed subdivision or land development plan, the Commission and the planning staff should feel confident in requesting further consideration of the identified opportunities by the landowner or developer. The planning staff may also reference this plan during municipal plan reviews, amendments and updates for comprehensive plans or parks, recreation and open space plans.

Local municipalities can look to the plan for its data on resources and existing facilities, ideas for municipal and multi-municipal projects, a listing of project partners and assistance programs and its case studies of approaches to resource management and recreation services, particularly in rural areas. Municipalities can also directly reference the existence and recommendations of the plan in their grant applications to funding agencies; this emphasis on consistency with county policy often improves a municipality's competitiveness for limited funding.

The plan has value for many other county partners. School districts may be interested in sidewalk and trail projects that provide safe routes to school, interpretive sites for outdoor education and ideas appropriate for student service projects. Public and private recreation organizations may be willing to partner on unique recreation facilities or programs. Non-profit community and environmental associations may find new locations for special events that bring residents together. Finally, business development groups may take interest in projects that will enrich the quality of life for their employees and project sponsorship opportunities that help to market businesses in the region. In addition to their own interests, many project partners may be eligible to apply for technical and financial assistance to accomplish projects more efficiently.

## **Plan Overview**

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The Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan begins with an introduction to the county and the region in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 inventories the county's current open space resources and recreation facilities and Chapter 3 identifies the organizations working in the fields of resource management and recreation and evaluates their policies and programs. Chapter 4 compares residents' need for recreation and open space to the available facilities. Chapter 5 presents Mercer County's vision and goals for open space, greenways and recreation. Chapter 6 presents an action plan to improve management of current open space and recreation resources and finally, Chapter 7 outlines tools, resources and funding sources to facilitate implementation of the plan, including descriptions, eligibility and contact information on technical and financial assistance programs.

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## Chapter 1

# An Introduction to Mercer County

Mercer County is located in northwestern Pennsylvania, along the Ohio Border. Interstates 80 and 79 cross almost midway between Mercer Borough and Grove City, providing excellent access to the area. The county is also strategically placed between the ports of Erie and Pittsburgh, which has played a large role in the development of Mercer County throughout its history. The wealth of natural resources found in the county has been instrumental in shaping the diversity of communities within its borders. Agriculture, mining, and the network of rivers and streams continue to play a role in the economic and cultural fabric of Mercer County.

## **Location and Regional Context**

Mercer County is located on Pennsylvania's western border adjacent to the state of Ohio. Neighboring Pennsylvania counties include Lawrence and Butler Counties to the south, Venango to the east, and Crawford to the north. Trumbull and Mahoning Counties in Ohio border Mercer to the west.

Mercer County is a 5th class county with 48 municipalities: 14 boroughs, 31 second class townships and the incorporated cities of Sharon, Farrell and Hermitage.

Mercer County ranks 33rd among Pennsylvania counties in land area, with 672 square miles.

Mercer County is wedged between two of the Commonwealth's Heritage Regions/Parks. The State Heritage Parks

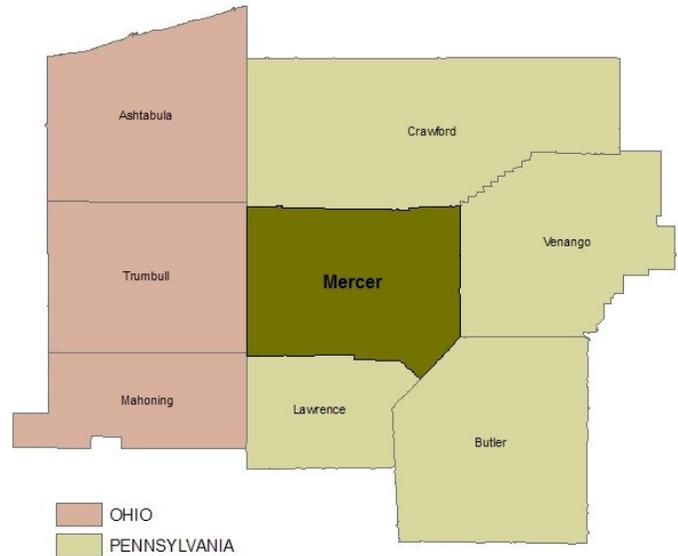
are "large geographic regions or corridors that span two or more counties and contain a multitude of cultural, historic, recreational, natural and scenic resources of state and national significance that collectively exemplify the industrial heritage of Pennsylvania."<sup>1</sup> The Oil Heritage Region includes Venango and Crawford Counties and is the location of a number of resources that tell the story of the birth of the oil industry. The Rivers of Steel Heritage Region is focused on the history of iron and steel, coal and coke, and other related industries in the counties of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland. Mercer County's history is tied to both, but the county is not included in either region.

Mercer County, along with the neighboring counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Venango, and Warren, are served by the Northwest Pennsylvania Planning and Development Commission, a Local Development District (LDD) providing economic and community development services to businesses and communities in its seven county service region.

## **Settlement and Development History**

Mercer County was established in 1800 from Allegheny County. The county was slow to settle due to conflicts with the native Seneca Indians, but by 1795 small settlements were established in the forks of the Mahoning, Shenango and Neshannock Creeks. Between 1801 and 1811, fifteen townships were formed and in 1814 Mercer Borough was incorporated. By 1818, semi-weekly postal routes between Pittsburgh and Erie through Mercer had been established and the Pittsburgh and Erie Turnpike opened for travel.

Mercer County was built on both agriculture and steel. Coal was discovered in early 1835 in a hillside west of Sharon and by 1845-46, the first of the blast furnaces and rolling mills opened in the Shenango Valley. Over the next 150 years, the steel industry and related manufacturing industries dominated the county, employing thousands of residents and playing an



**Figure 1-1 Mercer County Regional Location**

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program Manual, 2005.

instrumental role in the development of numerous communities, as well as the railroads that served them.

Then, during the 1980s, the steel mills and manufacturing plants began to close and the 1990s ushered in a period of major transition in Mercer County that continues to this day. Once prominent economic centers – the Shenango Valley, Greenville, and Grove City – continue to re-establish an identity and fill the voids left by Westinghouse, Sharon Steel, and others. The trickle down effect has influenced all aspects of life in Mercer County, including housing and infrastructure, not to mention the number of residents, particularly young residents, who have left the County in search of employment.

## Facts about Mercer County

**Location:** Northwest Pennsylvania, USA

**Date of Establishment:** March 12, 1800

**Namesake:** Revolutionary War General Hugh Mercer (1726-1777)

**Number of Municipalities:** 48

**County Seat:** Mercer Borough

**Form of Government:** 5<sup>th</sup> Class County; elected 3-member Board of Commissioners

**World Wide Web:** [www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us](http://www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us)

**Size:** 671.5 square miles

**Population (2000):** 120,293 (Estimated 2004: 119,797)

**Population Change (1990-2000):** - 0.6%

**Population per Square Mile (2000):** 179.1 persons

**Median Age:** 39.6

**Community / Economic Profile:**

**Leading Industries (by employment)**

- Health Care
- Education
- Social and government services

**Employment Centers**

- Greenville Area
- Grove City Area
- Mercer Area
- Sandy Lake/Stoneboro
- Shenango Valley

**Hospitals**

- Horizon Hospital System
- Sharon Regional Health System
- United Community Hospital

**Schools**

- 12 public districts
- 7 private/parochial institutions

**Public Libraries:** 7

Yet the future is promising. Initiatives that took shape during the 1990s are beginning to have an impact. Traditional natural resource based industries – agriculture, forestry, and mining – will continue to play important roles, with new opportunities in the form of both passive and active outdoor recreation. The county’s rich history presents yet another opportunity, given the increased popularity of heritage-based tourism. This plan will help Mercer County continue to utilize its many valuable natural resources as effectively and sensitively as possible.

## More Facts about Mercer County

**Largest Municipality by population (2000)**

City of Sharon: 16,328 persons

**Smallest Municipality by population (2000)**

Sheakleyville Borough: 164 persons

**Natural Setting:**

**Major waterways/watersheds:**

Shenango River  
French Creek  
Wolf Creek  
Sandy Creek  
Neshannock Creek

**Forest cover:** 162,000 acres (37% of County)

**Mineral resources:** coal, gravel, sand,

**Public Lands:**

**Federal Recreation Site:** Shenango Lake Reservoir

**Parks:** Pymatuning State Park,  
Maurice K. Goddard State Park  
Numerous municipal parks

**State Game Lands:**

#130 – East of Stoneboro in Sandy Lake and Worth  
#270 – North and east of Sheakleyville  
#284 – South of Springfield Falls in Springfield Township

**Historical Sites:**

Wendell August Forge  
Bridge in French Creek Township  
Frank H. Buhl Mansion  
Mercer County Courthouse  
Gibson House  
Johnston’s Tavern  
Christiana Lindsay House  
Jonas J. Piece House  
The Quaker Bridge  
First Universalist Church of Sharpsville

## **Recent Socioeconomic Conditions and Trends**

The Updated Mercer County Comprehensive Plan (2005) provides a snapshot look at current socioeconomic conditions and a brief analysis of select historic trends. The following bulleted points were taken from the comprehensive plan with additional analysis and interpretation to relate them to the open space, greenways and outdoor recreation plan.

- Total population in Mercer County has declined by almost 6 percent over the past 40 years. The impact of the industrial closures during the 1980s on the county’s population is clearly evident as the total population declined by over 7,000 residents during that decade. During the 1990s, the decline was less than 1 percent. (See Table 1-1)

A closer look at the data, however, reveals that many of the county’s townships are experiencing growth, while the boroughs and cities have lost population. This suggests that residents are relocating from the older “urban” centers (boroughs and cities) to the outlying rural townships. This shift to township living impacts both borough and township communities. The boroughs are left to maintain their infrastructure of roads, water and sewer, and services with support from a shrinking population. Rural townships that had little development between the early and mid 1900s now host “modern” development densities, patterns and design that seem non-traditional and impact increasingly larger portions of the rural landscape. (See Table 1-2)

**Table 1-1 Population Change 1960 - 2000**

	Population					2003 estimate	Population Change	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000		1990-2000	1960-2000
Pennsylvania	11,319,366	11,793,909	11,863,895	11,881,643	12,281,054	12,365,455	3.4%	8.5%
<b>Mercer County</b>	<b>127,519</b>	<b>127,225</b>	<b>128,299</b>	<b>121,003</b>	<b>120,293</b>	<b>119,895</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>	<b>-5.7%</b>
Butler County	114,639	127,941	147,912	152,013	174,083	180,040	14.5%	51.9%
Crawford County	77,956	81,342	88,869	86,169	90,366	89,846	4.9%	15.9%
Lawrence County	112,965	107,374	107,150	96,246	94,643	93,408	-1.7%	-16.2%
Venango County	65,295	62,353	64,444	59,381	57,565	56,600	-3.1%	-11.8%
Mahoning County, OH	300,480	303,424	289,487	264,806	257,555	251,660	-2.7%	-14.3%
Trumbull County, OH	208,526	232,579	241,863	227,813	225,116	221,785	-1.2%	8.0%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 1-2 Municipal Population Trends 1970 - 2000

Jurisdiction	Total Population				Population Change			
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000		1970-2000	
					#	%	#	%
<b>Mercer County</b>	<b>127,225</b>	<b>128,299</b>	<b>121,003</b>	<b>120,293</b>	<b>-710</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>-6,932</b>	<b>-5.4</b>
<b>Greenville-Reynolds</b>	24,615	25,766	23,585	23,240	-345	-1.5	-1,375	-5.6
Delaware	1,863	2,205	2,064	2,159	95	4.6	296	15.9
Fredonia	731	712	683	652	-31	-4.5	-79	-10.8
Greene	1,099	1,292	1,247	1,153	-94	-7.5	54	4.9
Greenville	8,704	7,730	6,734	6,380	-354	-5.3	-2,324	-26.7
Hempfield	3,628	4,078	3,826	4,004	178	4.7	376	10.4
Jamestown	937	854	761	636	-125	-16.4	-301	-32.1
Pymatuning	3,073	3,880	3,736	3,782	46	1.2	709	23.1
Sugar Grove	1,029	1,153	987	909	-78	-7.9	-120	-11.7
West Salem	3,551	3,862	3,547	3,565	18	0.5	14	0.4
<b>Northern Tier</b>	<b>4,505</b>	<b>5,160</b>	<b>4,982</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>13.0</b>
Deer Creek	398	496	513	465	-48	-9.4	67	16.8
French Creek	601	765	789	764	-25	-3.2	163	27.1
Perry	1,368	1,597	1,468	1,471	3	0.2	103	7.5
Otter Creek	565	605	583	611	28	4.8	46	8.1
Salem	679	695	678	769	91	13.4	90	13.3
Sandy Creek	753	847	806	848	42	5.2	95	12.6
Sheakleyville	141	155	145	164	19	13.1	23	16.3
<b>Lakeview</b>	<b>7,029</b>	<b>8,145</b>	<b>8,080</b>	<b>8,462</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>1,433</b>	<b>20.4</b>
Fairview	889	965	910	1,036	126	13.8	147	16.5
Jackson	691	1,045	1,089	1,206	117	10.7	515	74.5
Jackson Center	274	265	244	221	-23	-9.4	-53	-19.3
Lake	544	598	651	706	55	8.4	162	29.8
Mill Creek	466	587	604	639	35	5.8	173	37.1
New Lebanon	211	197	209	205	-4	-1.9	-6	-2.8
New Vernon	402	476	493	524	31	6.3	122	30.3
Sandy Lake Borough	772	779	722	743	21	2.9	-29	-3.8
Sandy Lake Township	884	1,163	1,161	1,248	87	7.5	364	41.2
Stoneboro	1,129	1,177	1,091	1,104	13	1.2	-25	-2.2
Worth	767	893	906	830	-76	-8.4	63	8.2
<b>Shenango Valley</b>	<b>66,469</b>	<b>62,534</b>	<b>56,506</b>	<b>54,800</b>	<b>-1,706</b>	<b>-3.0</b>	<b>-11,669</b>	<b>-17.6</b>
Clark	467	667	610	633	23	3.8	166	35.5
Farrell	11,000	8,645	6,841	6,050	-791	-11.6	-4,950	-45.0
Hermitage	15,421	16,365	15,300	16,157	857	5.6	736	4.8
Lackawannock	1,974	2,814	2,677	2,561	-116	-4.3	587	29.7
Sharon	22,653	19,057	17,493	16,328	-1,165	-6.7	-6,325	-27.9
Sharpsville	6,126	5,375	4,729	4,500	-229	-4.8	-1,626	-26.5
Shenango	3,141	4,399	4,339	4,037	-302	-7.0	896	28.5
South Pymatuning	2,973	3,016	2,775	2,857	82	3.0	-116	-3.9
West Middlesex	1,293	1,064	982	929	-53	-5.4	-364	-28.2
Wheatland	1,421	1,132	760	748	-12	-1.6	-673	-47.4
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>9,377</b>	<b>10,956</b>	<b>11,649</b>	<b>12,205</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2,828</b>	<b>30.2</b>
Coolspring	1,518	1,984	2,140	2,287	147	6.9	769	50.7
East Lackawannock	1,314	1,709	1,606	1,701	95	5.9	387	29.5
Findley	1,337	1,651	2,284	2,305	21	0.9	968	72.4

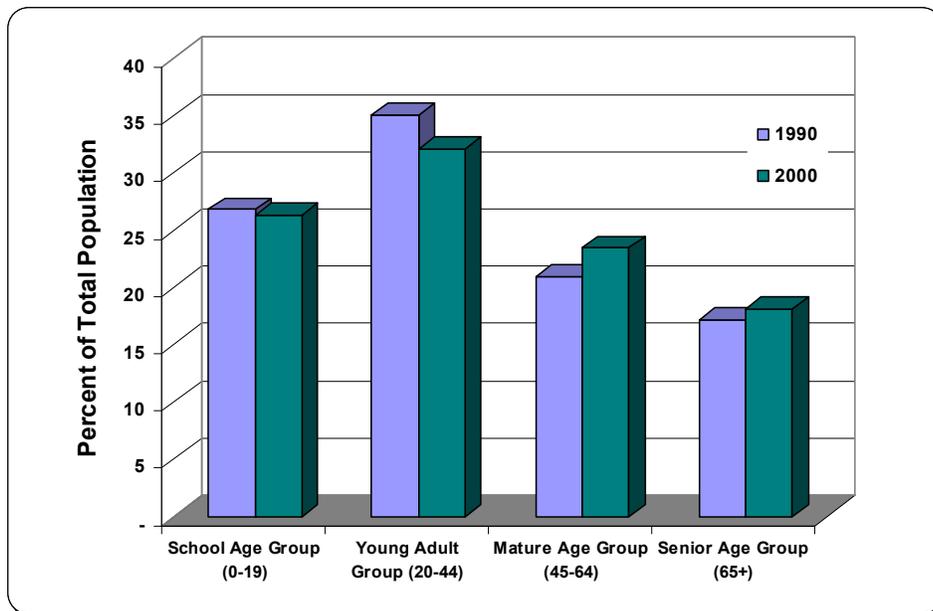
Jurisdiction	Total Population				Population Change			
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000		1970-2000	
					#	%	#	%
Jefferson	1,623	2,007	1,998	2,416	418	20.9	793	48.9
Mercer	2,773	2,532	2,444	2,391	-53	-2.2	-382	-13.8
Wilmington	812	1,073	1,177	1,105	-72	-6.1	293	36.1
<b>Grove City</b>	<b>15,230</b>	<b>15,738</b>	<b>16,201</b>	<b>16,494</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>8.3</b>
Grove City	8,312	8,162	8,240	8,024	-216	-2.6	-288	-3.5
Liberty	916	1,199	1,223	1,276	53	4.3	360	39.3
Pine	3,514	3,762	4,193	4,493	300	7.2	979	27.9
Springfield	1,878	1,904	1,892	1,972	80	4.2	94	5.0
Wolf Creek	610	711	653	729	76	11.6	119	19.5

Source: Mercer County Comprehensive Plan (1996); U.S. Census Bureau

- Mercer County’s population as a whole is aging.** Older age cohorts are growing in their percentage of the overall population, while the percentage of younger residents is declining. This trend is common throughout rural Pennsylvania.

Figure 1-2 illustrates the changes in the county’s age groups between 1990 and 2000. As shown, the School Age and Young Adult Groups continue to represent the largest percentage of the population. However, between 1990 and 2000, their share of the total declined by almost 5 percent from 61.9 to 58.5 percent. At the same time, the Mature and Senior age groups increased.

**Figure 1-2 Age Groups in Mercer County 1990 – 2000**



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

However, as with the historical population figures, there will continue to be areas of growth within the county. As suggested in the Comprehensive Plan, the Mercer region will have the greatest population increase and will be the fastest growing region. Lakeview ranks second in projections of additional residents and growth rate. The Shenango Valley and Greenville-Reynolds regions are projected to continue to lose population.

- **The county’s average household size is declining** slightly more rapidly than the state but slower than several of the surrounding counties. The average household size has decreased from 2.54 in 1990 to 2.44 in 2000.

These changes in the demographic composition of the county will have substantial impacts on the demand for recreation and leisure services and transportation services; they may also affect income-based government revenue and the overall availability of disposable income for household and leisure pursuits and capital and community investments

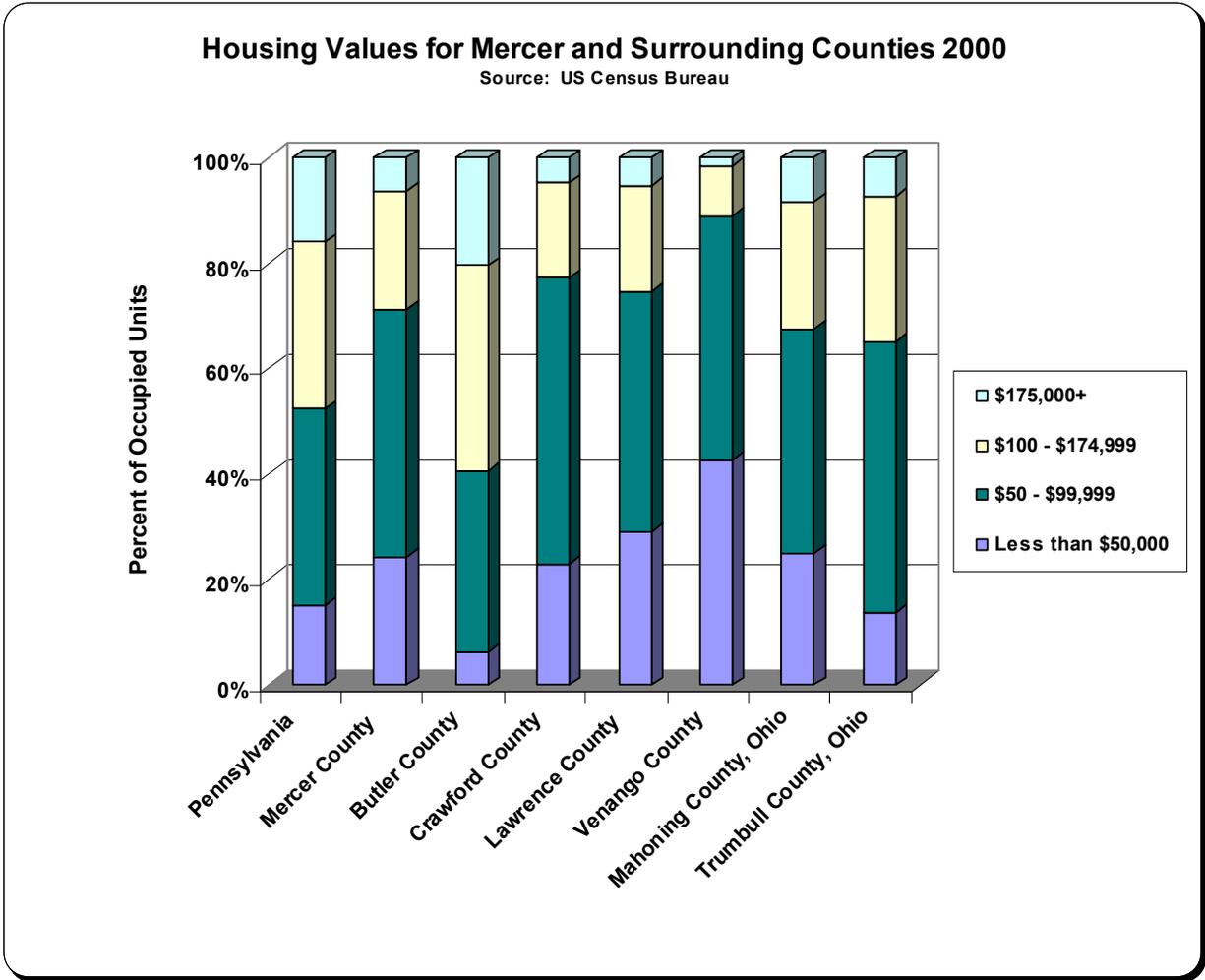
**Table 1-3 Average Household Size 1990 -2000**

Jurisdiction	Average Household Size		Change in Household Size, 1990-2000	
	1990	2000	#	%
Pennsylvania	2.57	2.48	-0.09	-103.6
Mercer County	2.54	2.44	-0.10	-104.1
Butler County	2.65	2.54	-0.11	-104.3
Crawford County	2.60	2.50	-0.10	-104.0
Lawrence County	2.57	2.47	-0.10	-104.0
Venango County	2.58	2.45	-0.13	-105.3
Mahoning County, OH	2.57	2.44	-0.13	-105.3
Trumbull County, OH	2.62	2.48	-0.14	-105.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990 and 2000 STF3A

- **Mercer County household incomes experienced real growth from 1990 to 2000.** Mercer County’s median household income was \$34,666 in 1999. There was a \$10,067 increase in dollars from median household income in 1989 (\$24,599), which indicates approximately 5 percent real growth. Trends in per capita income also reflect growth within the County. Per capita income increased from \$15,190 in 1989 to \$17,636 in 1999, resulting in real growth of 16.1 percent. Regarding both median household income and per capita income, Mercer County fared better than Pennsylvania (-4.1 percent real growth in median household income; 3.2 percent real growth in per capita income).
- **Housing values in Mercer County typically fall below state and national levels,** but are consistent with each of the surrounding counties except Butler County. Just over 47 percent of the county’s specified owner-occupied housing units fall within the \$50,000 to \$99,999 value range; an additional 24.2 percent had values less than \$50,000. Housing affordability is critical to community development, particularly the affordability of starter homes whose sale supports transactions throughout the housing market. (See Figure 1-3)

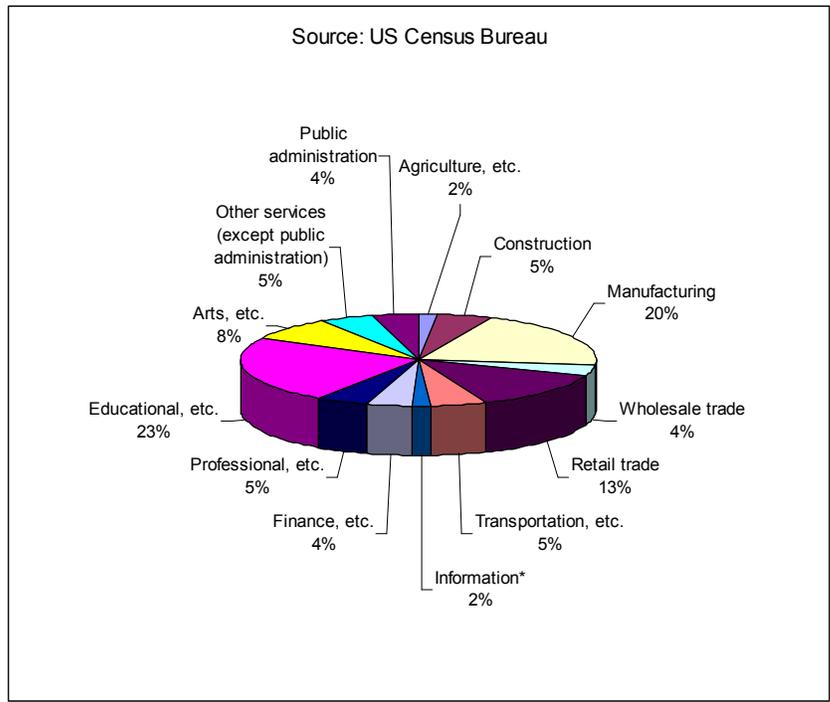
Figure 1-3 Housing Values, 2000



- More Mercer County residents were working in 2000 than in 1990.** Mercer County's total labor force participation was 58.1 percent in 2000; an increase of just over 2.0 percent from 1990. The county had the lowest male labor force participation (65.1 percent) of the surrounding counties, while the female labor force participation (51.7 percent) *increased* by nearly 5.0 percent between 1990 and 2000. This placed Mercer County fifth among the surrounding counties. These statistics reflect an older community comprised of many senior and retired residents who do not participate in the labor force, as well as a greater percentage of women over the age of 16 years who work outside the home.

- Serving people and making products have become the focus of Mercer County’s economy.** Mercer County’s leading major industries and their respective percentages of the labor force are education, health, and social services (23.7 percent); manufacturing (20.1 percent) and retail trade (13.4 percent). Together these three major industries employ 57.2 percent of the County’s work force. These industries are also the leading industries across Pennsylvania and the surrounding counties. Mercer County’s resident employment is higher in each of these industries than Pennsylvania as a whole, and on par or slightly higher than the surrounding counties. The County’s resident employment in finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing, and in professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services is lower than that of Pennsylvania, and in the lower range of the values for the surrounding counties.

Figure 1-4 Resident Employment by Industry, 2000



- The list of top employers (Table 1-4) further illustrates the importance of the education, health, and social services industries to Mercer County’s economy.** Employees in these industries tend to be strong advocates for health and wellness and are supportive of walkable communities with clean air, water, and recreation sites, even though they generally manage a far smaller portion of land and water resources.

Table 1-4 Top Employers in Mercer County, 2004

Rank	Employer	Rank	Employer
1	Sharon Reg. Health System	11	Sharon School District
2	Horizon Hospital System Inc.	12	Sharon Tube Company
3	Werner Co.	13	General Electric Company
4	John Maneely Co.	14	Hermitage School District
5	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	15	Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
6	Duferco Farrell Corp.	16	Grove City Area School District
7	George Junior Republic Inc.	17	Mercer County
8	United Community Hospital	18	St Paul Homes
9	U.S. Investigations Services Inc.	19	Farrell Area School District
10	Grove City College	20	Thomas & Betts Corporation

Source: Penn Northwest

- Manufacturing pays the highest wages in the County.** The average annual wage across all industrial sectors in Mercer County was \$24,804. Manufacturing offered the highest average annual wage (\$34,788) of all industrial sectors. Public administration ranked second with an average annual wage of \$33,436. Construction ranked third with an average annual wage of \$31,824.

Mercer County's average annual wages are lower than those of Pennsylvania by as little as \$4,316 for the construction industry and as much as \$15,600 for the wholesale trade industry. Alternatively, looking at the difference in value as a percentage, Mercer County's wages range from 12 percent (construction) to 40 percent (arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services) lower than those of Pennsylvania. As a result, businesses have a lower payroll costs (one cost of doing business) in Mercer County and resident employees have lower incomes (one measure of quality of life) than most other areas of Pennsylvania.

- Tourism and related service industries are growing in the county.** The history and natural resources of the area attract more and more visitors to the county each year.

**Table 1-5 Average Annual Wages by Industry**

Industry Sector	Mercer County		Pennsylvania		Difference in annual wage value	
	% Labor Force	Annual Wage	% Labor Force	Annual Wage	\$	%
Educational, health and social services	23.7%	\$25,688	21.9%	\$30,524	\$4,836	16%
Manufacturing	20.1%	\$34,788	16.0%	\$41,080	\$6,292	15%
Retail trade	13.4%	\$13,104	12.1%	\$16,484	\$3,380	21%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.7%	\$10,816	7.0%	\$18,148	\$7,332	40%
Construction	5.1%	\$31,824	6.0%	\$36,140	\$4,316	12%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.0%	\$31,304	5.4%	\$40,560	\$9,256	23%
Other services (except public administration)	5.0%	n/a	4.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4.7%	n/a	8.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	4.2%	\$32,084	6.6%	\$45,084	\$13,000	29%
Public administration	4.2%	\$33,436	4.2%	\$45,448	\$12,012	26%
Wholesale trade	3.8%	\$26,468	3.6%	\$42,068	\$15,600	37%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.5%	\$16,068	1.0%	\$21,476	\$5,408	25%
Mining	0.1%	\$31,096	0.3%	\$45,136	\$14,040	31%
Information	1.6%	n/a	2.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a
All Industries	100.0%	\$24,804	100.0%	\$32,292	\$7,488	23%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 STF3A  
 Pennsylvania Covered Employment, Annual 1999

## **Major Communities**

### **Population and Employment Centers**

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- **The Shenango Valley** - Located on the western border of the county, the “Shenango Valley” is the collective name for the cities of Sharon, Farrell, and most recently, Hermitage. These communities grew up with the iron and steel manufacturers that line the Shenango River. Traditional neighborhoods are seeing the impacts of the loss of these businesses; however, the Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program has been used to clean up 14 properties totaling over 500 acres of brownfields.
- **Mercer Borough** is located near the center of the county and is the county seat. Located on the original route of the Pittsburgh and Erie Turnpike, the borough was a key point along the way. The original square is surrounded by traditional neighborhoods and continues to be a key crossroads. Its history is tied closely to the county’s political history and the surrounding agricultural communities.
- **Greenville Borough** is located on the Shenango River north of the Shenango Valley along PA 18. It was founded in 1838 and is currently home to Thiel College. The borough is surrounded by Hempfield Township and the two communities completed a joint comprehensive plan in 2004.
- **Grove City** is located in the southeast corner of the county at the crossroads of PA 58, PA 173, and PA 208. The city is surrounded by Pine Township and is a member of the Wolf Creek/Slippery Rock Council of Governments (COG), which also includes Liberty, Springfield, and Wolf Creek Townships. These communities have also completed a multi-municipal comprehensive plan. The Prime Outlets at Grove City are located west of the city at the I-79/PA 208 interchange and attract visitors from around the region.

### **Rural Centers**

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- **Fredonia Borough** is located north of Mercer Borough just west of US 19. The Bessemer and Lake Erie Shortline runs through the borough, connecting Greenville and Grove City. It is surrounded by Delaware Township to the west and Fairview Township to the east. Ball Run is just north of the Borough.
- **The Lakeview Region** includes four boroughs and seven townships located in northeastern Mercer County. The boroughs of Jackson Center, Stoneboro, Sandy Lake and New Lebanon are typical rural boroughs with a small mix of commercial businesses and fairly dense housing development. The townships (Mill Creek, Sandy Lake, Worth, Jackson, Lake, Fairview, and New Vernon) enjoy primarily single-family residential development, agricultural uses, small businesses/home occupations dotted here and there and light industry and service businesses concentrated near interchange areas. The rural region is further enriched by Goddard State Park, State Gamelands, Lake Wilhelm, Sandy Creek and Stoneboro Lake which serve the recreational needs of the area in conjunction with local community parks, playing fields and the Lakeview School District complex.<sup>2</sup>
- **Jamestown Borough** is located on the northern border of the county with Crawford County. In fact, it is in both counties. The Shenango River runs through the western part of the borough, and highway access is primarily via PA 58 and US 322.

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<sup>2</sup> Lakeview Region Comprehensive Plan, 2002

- **Sheakleyville** is located on US 19 in north central Mercer County. It is surrounded by Sandy Creek Township and is just north and west of Lake Wilhelm. Part of State Game Land #270, and Maurice K. Goddard State Parks are easily accessed from the borough via SR 1018 (Sheakleyville Road) and SR 1014 (Georgetown Road).

## **Major Transportation Corridors**

In 2003, the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) followed PennDOT's lead and began an update of its existing long-range plan using the PennPlan model. This direction was also consistent with federal policy, which strongly promotes the need for and value of long range transportation planning. MCRPC, as the staff agency for the Shenango Valley MPO, identified 11 corridors of regional significance, which are centered on the county's major highways and are listed in Table 1-6.

Interstates 79 and 80 intersect south and east of Mercer Borough, providing residents and businesses with access to Pittsburgh, Erie, New York, and Chicago. Three of the county's major highways have been divided into segments in order to better understand travel patterns along those routes: PA 18, PA 60, and US 62. A brief discussion of Mercer County's major state and US routes follows, including three that were not selected for independent corridor analysis – US 322, US 19, and PA 173. The reader is referred to the corridor profiles of the Long Range Transportation Plan for additional information.

**Table 1-6 Transportation Planning Corridors in Mercer County**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Corridor Name</b>	<b>Centered On</b>
1	Pittsburgh to Erie Regional Thruway	I-79
2	New York to Chicago Regional Thruway	I-80
3	Shenango Valley to Pittsburgh Regional Thruway	PA 60
4	Shenango Valley N-S Commercial Core	PA 18
5	Shenango Valley E-W Commercial Core	US 62
6	Broadway Avenue	PA 60
7	Shenango Valley to Mercer	US 62
8	Shenango Valley to Greenville/Reynolds	PA 18
9	Grove City - Southern Mercer County Tourism Pathway	PA 208
10	Greenville to Mercer	PA 58
11	Greenville to I-79	PA 358

## **Major Land and Water Features**

- Mercer County falls within the Appalachian Plateaus Physiographic Province, specifically the Northwestern Glaciated Plateau section. The dominant topographic form within this section is characterized by "broad, rounded upland and deep, steep-sided, linear valleys that are partly filled with glacial deposits."<sup>3</sup> The underlying rock is shale, siltstone, and sandstone.

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<sup>3</sup> PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey, 2000.

- **Mercer County has an abundance of surface waters.** The Shenango River runs north/south in the western part of the County and is the major river in the County. In 1965, the Army Corps of Engineers completed The Shenango River Lake project, which provides flood protection for the Shenango River Valley, as well as for the Beaver and upper Ohio Rivers. The project also provides seasonal discharge regulation for water quality improvement and recreation opportunities. Table 1-7 below lists the major water ways in the County. Other significant lakes include Lake Wilhelm, which is north of Sandy Lake Borough; Sandy Lake, which is in Stoneboro; and Lake Latonka, which is located along the border of Coolspring Township and Jackson Township.

**Table 1-7 Major Waterways in Mercer County**

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

As shown in Table 1-8, the vast majority of the County’s land use falls into the undeveloped categories. Almost 50 percent of the total land area is classified as Agricultural, with an additional 37 percent in the Forest/Woodland category. These uses are generally dispersed throughout the county. However, there is a significant concentration of woodland in the eastern part of the County.

Less than 10 percent of the County is classified as either high- or low-density urban areas. These areas are primarily located at the junctions of the County’s original major transportation routes and include the Shenango Valley (Sharon/Farrell/Hermitage), Greenville, Mercer, and Grove City, as well as several of the smaller boroughs and villages. Land uses within these areas include residential, commercial, industrial, and public and semi-public uses.

**The Natural Heritage Inventory for Mercer County<sup>4</sup> provides a preliminary report of the County’s natural heritage.** Completed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in June 2003, the inventory identifies and maps the most significant natural places in Mercer County. Plant and animal species, natural communities that are unique or uncommon in the County and areas

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<sup>4</sup> *Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory*. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, June 2003

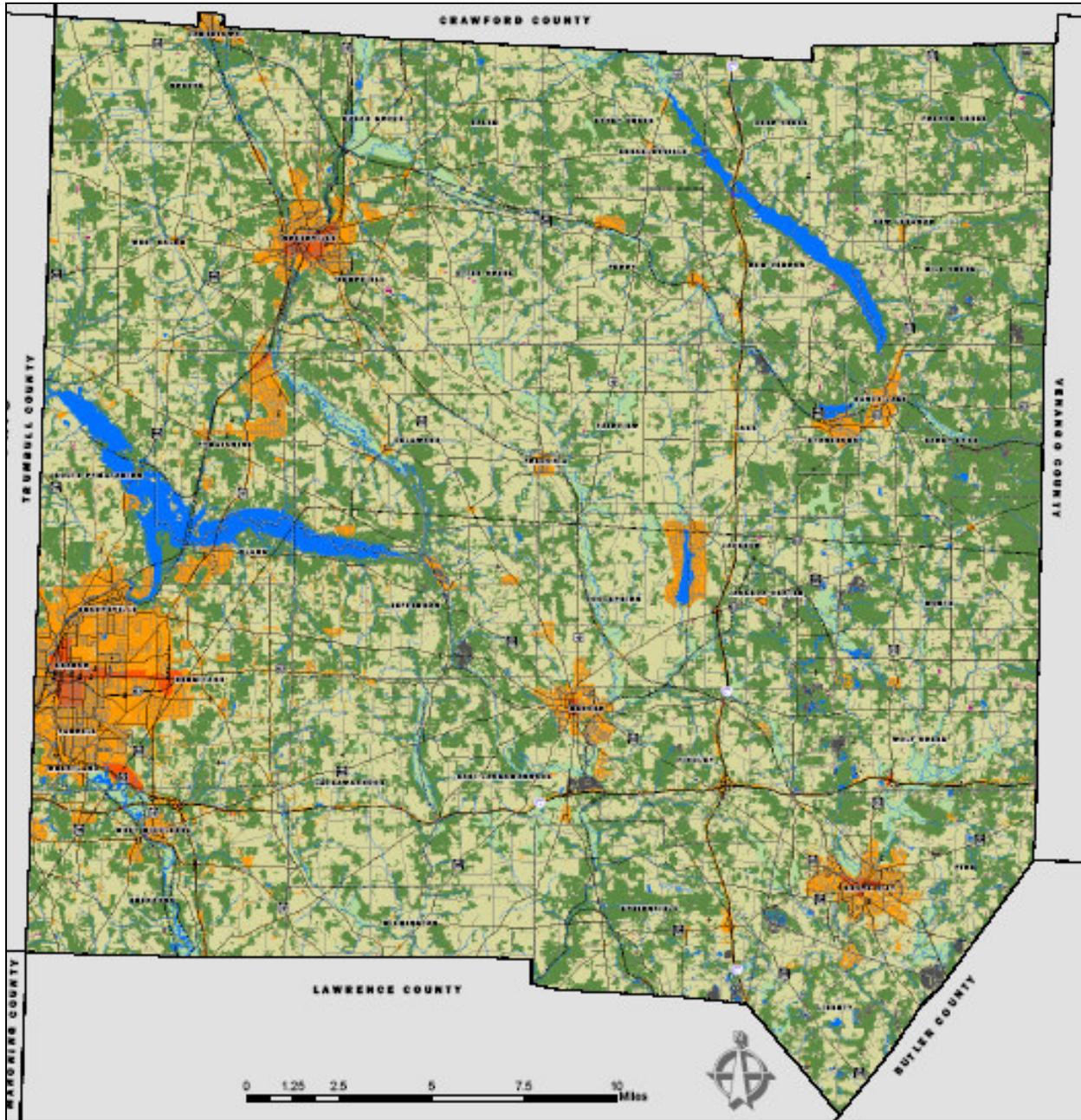
important for wildlife habitat and scientific study were investigated and included in the inventory process. While the inventory does not protect these areas, it provides the necessary information to guide land acquisition and conservation decisions. It can also be used in the development of municipal comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, as well as in the review of development plans.

**Table 1-8 Existing Land Use, 2003**

Land Use Category	# of acres	% of Total
Low Density Urban	29,658.3	6.80
High Density Urban	2,459.7	0.56
Transitional	3,625.0	0.83
<b>Total Developed Land</b>	<b>35,743.0</b>	<b>8.19</b>
Hay/Pasture	67,081.7	15.37
Row Crops	149,788.4	34.32
Probably Row Crops	2.2	0.00
<b>Total Agricultural Land</b>	<b>216,872.3</b>	<b>49.69</b>
Coniferous Forest	4,664.0	1.07
Mixed Forest	2,853.7	0.65
Deciduous Forest	154,650.7	35.44
<b>Total Forest/Woodland</b>	<b>162,168.4</b>	<b>37.16</b>
Water	7,463.8	1.71
Woody Wetland	10,740.8	2.46
Emergent Wetland	1,581.8	0.36
Quarries	1,757.7	0.40
Coal Mines	103.7	0.02
Beach	0.0	0.00
<b>Total Other Land Area</b>	<b>21,647.8</b>	<b>4.95</b>
<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>436,431.5</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: PSU

Figure 1-5 Existing Land Use in Mercer County, 2003



## **Major Recreation Facilities**

Public recreation and resource lands are inventoried in detail in Chapter 2 and through the various maps.

### **US Army Corps of Engineers – Shenango River Lake**

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

### **State Parks**

**Maurice K. Goddard State Park** – The 2,856-acre Maurice K. Goddard State Park features the 1,860-acre Lake Wilhelm, which is very popular with anglers. Many recreational activities attract visitors in all seasons. The large lake, abundant wetlands, old fields and mature forests provide a diversity of habitats for wildlife, especially waterfowl and eagles and ospreys.

**Pymatuning State Park** - Pymatuning is one of the largest state parks in the Commonwealth. The large lake provides excellent fishing throughout the year. Pymatuning State Park is located in southwestern Crawford County. The park office is located near the Crawford-Mercer County line about 1.5 miles north of Jamestown, Pennsylvania. Approximately three-fourths of the reservoir area is located in Crawford County and the remaining one-fourth is located in Ashtabula County, Ohio.

### **County Parks**

There are no county parks in Mercer County.

### **Municipal Parks**

There are approximately 75 municipal parks in the county; less than 10 are located in the county's most rural municipalities.

## **County and Local Government**

Mercer County is a 5th class county with 48 municipalities: 14 boroughs, 31 second class townships and the incorporated cities of Sharon, Farrell and Hermitage.

### **Growth Management Policy**

The authority to establish growth management policy and implement management tools in Pennsylvania lies with local government, as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (as enacted and amended). Any national or state policy simply provides guidance to local decision makers and does not supersede established local policy and standards.

### **National Policy**

As a whole, the nation has not witnessed the dramatic impacts of intensive and rapid development. While no national policy exists, several states have developed policies on growth management, which can serve as references for county and municipal policy development in Pennsylvania. Maryland and Oregon have perhaps the strongest statewide policies on record. Maryland has, in fact, established the Governor's Office of Smart Growth "to better coordinate the State's renowned anti-sprawl program and to strengthen its core mission of encouraging development in older communities."<sup>5</sup> The department has also enabled the county designation of priority funding areas to attract development and published a number of guidance documents for local government. Oregon has also taken a cooperative approach between its Department of Transportation and Department of Land Conservation and Development to support sound land use and transportation development at the state and local levels. "The Oregon program has served as a model for similar programs in Vermont, Maine, Florida, and Georgia."<sup>6</sup>

### **State Policy**

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code was enacted in 1968 and amended as recently as 2000. The recent amendments expanded county and municipal authority and responsibility to plan for their futures. Amendments included provisions for farmland preservation, forestry activities, mixed uses and new tools for designating the most basic of land use planning decisions: growth and conservation areas.

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) has historically required counties to provide regional guidance; it and now requires local municipal planning efforts to be consistent with this guidance.

While Pennsylvania has no statewide growth management policy, the State Planning Board was reinstated in 2004. "This advisory board, comprised of cabinet secretaries, state legislators and citizens, has a mission to monitor trends and issues of concern to the Commonwealth, gather input from state and local officials and citizens and develop reports and recommendations for the Governor and the Legislature on improved state policies and programs."<sup>7</sup>

### **County Policy**

Mercer County and its communities should plan for continued development and should work to enhance the sense of place in each of the urban, suburban and rural areas. This will be established by policies that:

- define existing developed areas and areas for future growth
- encourage redevelopment in existing developed areas and encourage new development near existing developed areas
- balance a variety of land uses and densities, as well as combinations of uses, appropriate to urban, suburban, and rural character
- encourage land uses that support a strong tax base, including agriculture and forest industries in rural areas

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<sup>5</sup> Maryland Department of Planning, Smart Growth Program website.

<sup>6</sup> Cited among Quotations About Oregon's Statewide Planning Program, prepared by the Department of Land Conservation and Development, October 1991.

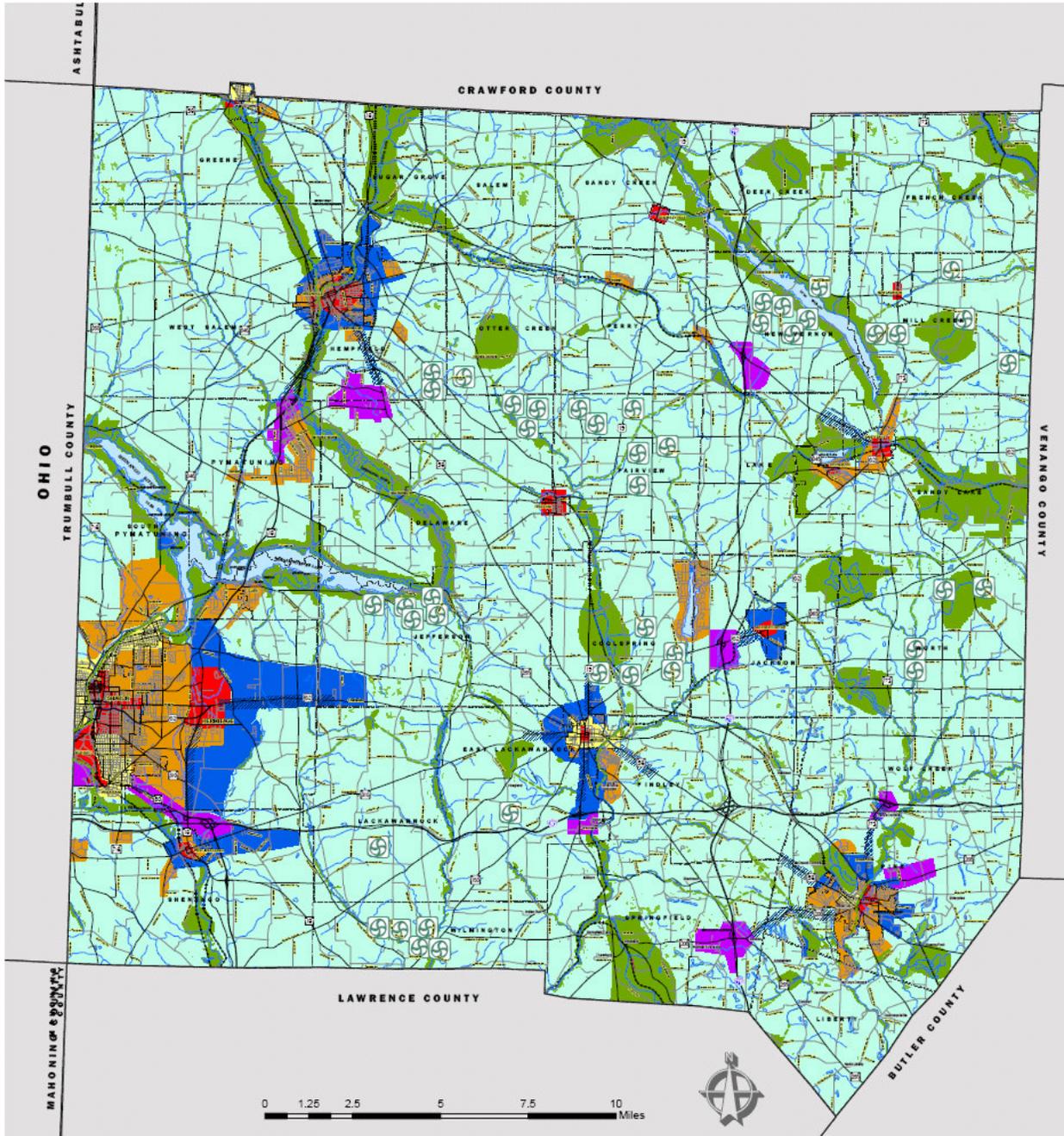
<sup>7</sup> Press Release from the Office of the Governor, July 21, 2004.

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- encourage development patterns that complement and preserve existing natural, environmental, and historic features
- coordinate infrastructure (water, sewer, and transportation) upgrades and extensions in areas of existing development and those areas targeted for growth
- incorporate public participation in the decision-making and land development process

This growth policy statement encompasses sustainable smart growth principles where urban, suburban, and rural areas complement one another.

Figure 1-6 Future Land Use

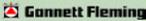


## Future Land Use Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan  
Mercer County, Pennsylvania

### Legend

- Urban / Suburban Preservation
- Economic Revitalization Areas
- Neighborhood Revitalization Areas
- Mixed Use Growth Areas
- Economic Growth Areas
- Natural Resource Protection Areas (Greenways)
- Natural Resource Production Areas (Open Spaces)
- Community Gateway Overlay

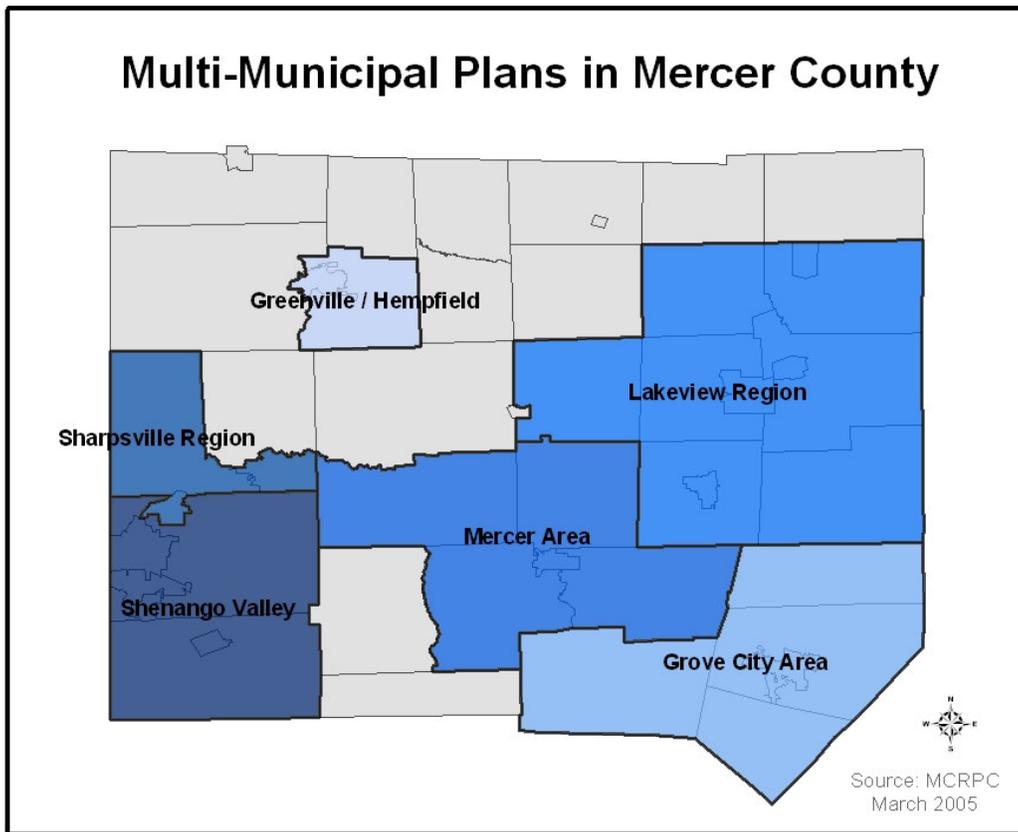

  
  

  
  
Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, FEMA, PSU, USFWS, USGS, NHI, NRCS  
Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone, Datum NAD83

**Local Policy**

Mercer County has a strong history of planning. Figure 1-7 shows those municipalities that have either completed or are starting a multi-municipal planning effort. As shown, 32 of 48 (66.6%) municipalities are involved in these planning efforts. These 32 communities also represent 98,679 residents or 82% of the population.

**Figure 1-7 Multi-Municipal Planning in Mercer County**



There are also many municipalities within the county that have the necessary ordinances in place to assist with the implementation of their plans. Mercer County Regional Planning Commission also administers a subdivision and land development ordinance for municipalities that have not adopted their own. The following tables list the municipalities that have these ordinances in place.

The majority of the county's municipalities and the largest portion of county residents are covered by a community plan and zoning. However, most are more than 10 years old. Almost 50 percent of the communities' plans are over 20 years old. Given the economic and demographic changes that have occurred in the interim it is most likely that they are seriously outdated and have little relevance to existing conditions.

Table 1-9 Community Comprehensive Plans in Mercer County, 2003

County Residents in Municipality with:	Population	% of total	No. of Municipalities	% of total
Some form of community comprehensive plan	111,033	92.3%	38	79.2%
Plan no more than 10 years old	20,787	17.3%	17	35.4%
Plan 10-20 years old	30,979	25.8%	3	6.3%
Plan more than 20 years old	59,267	49.3%	18	37.5%
New plan or update pending	52,014	43.2%	25	52.1%

Source: MCRPC

Figure 1-8 Zoned and Unzoned Municipalities, 2003

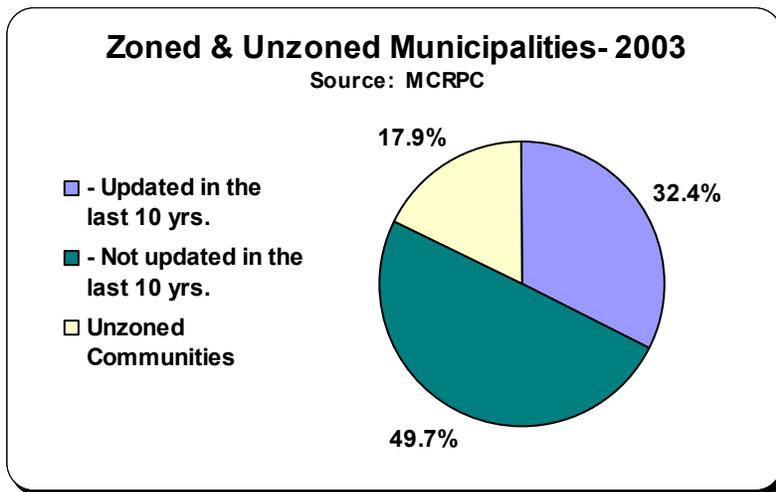
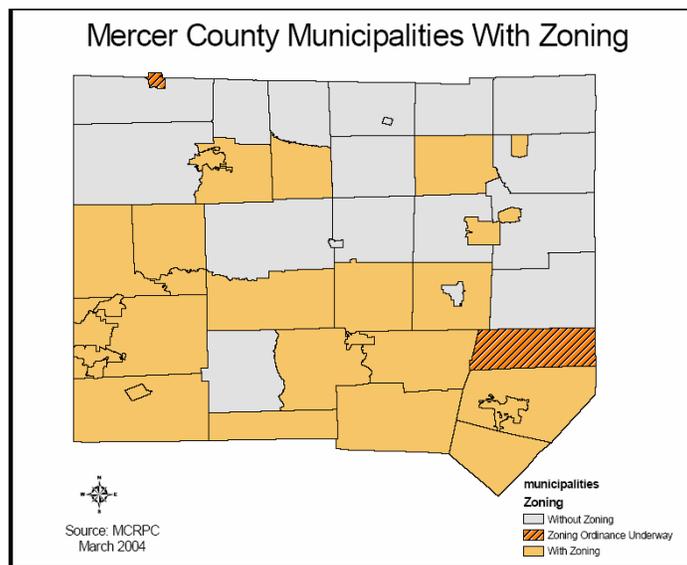


Figure 1-9 Municipal Zoning in Mercer County



**Table 1-10 Land Use Regulations by Municipality**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Zoning Ordinance</b>	<b>SLDO</b>
Clark Borough	X	X	X
Coolspring Township		X	County
Deer Creek Township			County
Delaware Township			County
East Lackawannock Township		X	County
Fairview Township			County
Farrell City	X	X	X
Findley Township		X	County
Fredonia Borough	X		County
French Creek Township			County
Greene Township			County
Greenville Borough		X	County
Grove City Borough	X	X	X
Hempfield Township		X	County
Hermitage City	X	X	X
Jackson Center Borough			County
Jackson Township		X	County
Jamestown Borough	X	X	County
Jefferson Township	X	X	X
Lackawannock Township			County
Lake Township			County
Liberty Township		X	County
Mercer Borough		X	X
Mill Creek Township			County
New Lebanon Borough		X	County
New Vernon Township		X	County
Otter Creek Township		X	County
Perry Township			County
Pine Township		X	County
Pymatuning Township		X	County
Salem Township			County
Sandy Creek Township			County
Sandy Lake Borough		X	County
Sandy Lake Township			County
Sharon City		X	X
Sharpsville Borough		X	X
Sheakleyville Borough			County
Shenango Township		X	County
South Pymatuning Township		X	X
Springfield Township		X	X
Stoneboro Borough		X	County
Sugar Grove Township			County
West Middlesex Borough		X	X

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Zoning Ordinance</b>	<b>SLDO</b>
West Salem Township			County
Wheatland Borough		X	X
Wilmington Township		X	County
Wolf Creek Township		X	County
Worth Township			County

Source: MCRPC

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## **Resource and Recreation Planning**

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While the Open Space, Greenways and Outdoor Recreation Plan is the first contemporary countywide plan of its kind in the region, many previous studies and plans have provided data, analysis, policy recommendations and priority projects with similar or related objectives for resource protection and management and recreation services.

The Mercer County Regional Planning Commission prepared a Recreation and Open Space plan in the early 1970s. The goals of this plan were to:

- Enforce policy to preserve slope land, undeveloped portions of the existing flood plains and sub marginal areas for brush and forest growth
- Insure the best utility of land and to encourage concentrated development through applications of higher subdivision design standards
- Include farmland in proposed greenbelts
- Discourage isolated, leap-frog development
- Control urban growth
- Develop component greenbelt facilities and amenities to promote tourism economy
- Integrate open space and recreation plans with Northwest Pennsylvania planning and Economic Development Commission
- Maximize funding available from state and federal sources to acquire and enhance lands for recreation and open space
- Reserve scenic areas and river shoran for recreation and leisure

The 1970 Recreation and Open Space Plan was not officially adopted and was not implemented in any structured fashion. The same is true of its comprehensive plan counterpart. Several communities also developed local recreation plans at approximately the same time. These plans have been implemented in some degree, and recreation facilities and programs have been evolving, particularly in the Shenango Valley, Grove City and Greenville areas.

In the mid 1990s, the Mercer County renewed its interest in community planning and developed a new county comprehensive plan, entitled Planning for Livable Communities. The 2006 update took advantage of 2000 data from the US Census Bureau and new tools authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code in 2000. Recent studies, such as the Natural Heritage Inventory for Mercer County (2003), which identifies and maps the most significant natural places in Mercer County, were also referenced in the plan update. The county is ready and focused on implementing its county plans and assisting municipalities in implementing local comprehensive and recreation/open space plans.

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## Chapter 2

# An Inventory of Natural and Man-made Resources

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

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

### **Natural Resources**

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

### **Land Resources – Soils and Topography**

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

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

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

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

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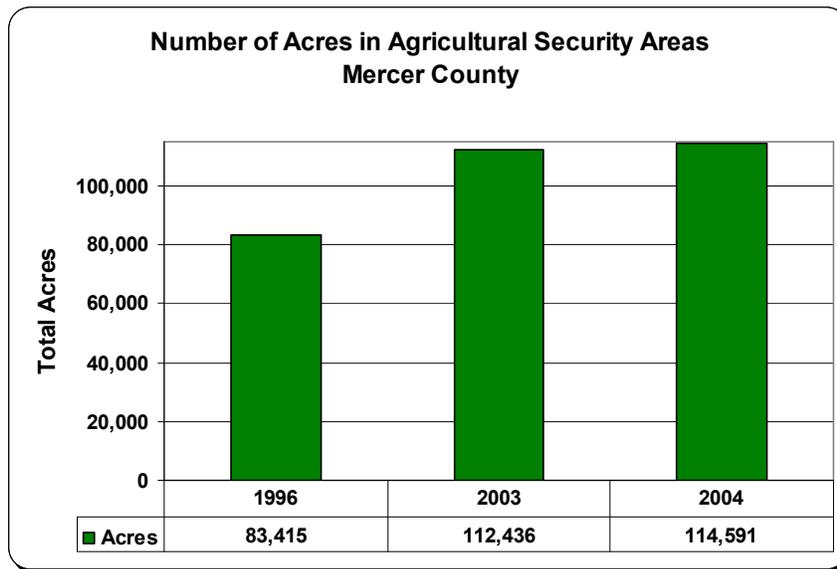
<sup>1</sup> PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey, 2000.

**Extensive lands within Mercer County are engaged in agricultural production.** Recent statistics indicate there are 1,030 farms in the County; 533 of which are full-time. There are over 166,000 acres in farms, with an average farm size of 162 acres. Dairy products, nursery and greenhouse crops, cattle and calves, corn for grain, and hay, silage field seeds and grass seeds are the top commodities. The market value of the agricultural products sold is over \$58,000,000, with an estimated annual impact on the economy of more than \$96,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

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

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

**Figure 2-1 Agricultural Security Acres**



<sup>2</sup>Mercer County Web Site; [www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us](http://www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us)

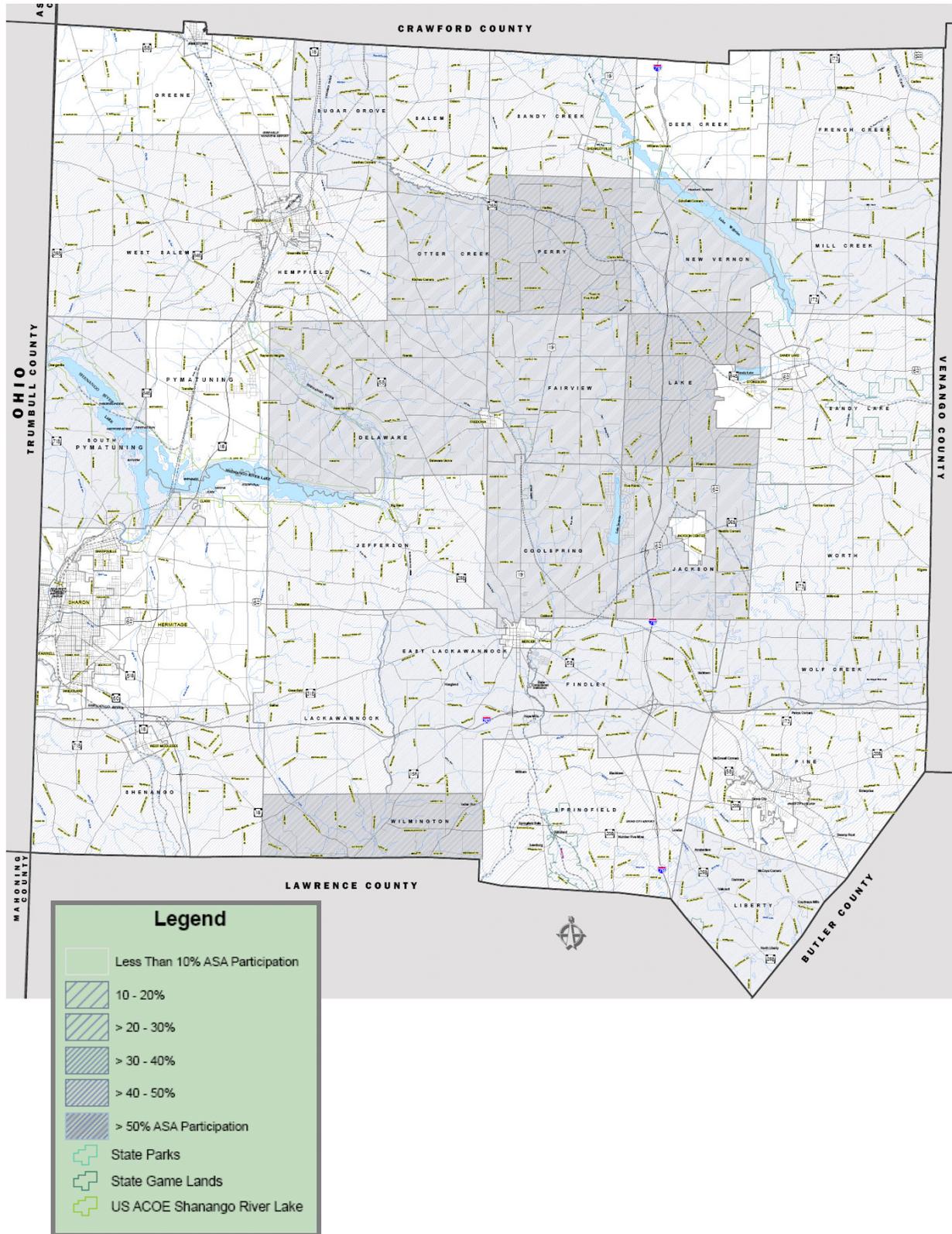
Table 2-1 summarizes the information regarding ASAs in the County and, in addition to the number of properties and acreage, includes the date they were established and their next renewal deadline. Additional information, including the specifics for creating an ASA can be found on the web at <http://mercer.extension.psu.edu/Agriculture>.

**Table 2-1 Agricultural Security Areas by Municipality**

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

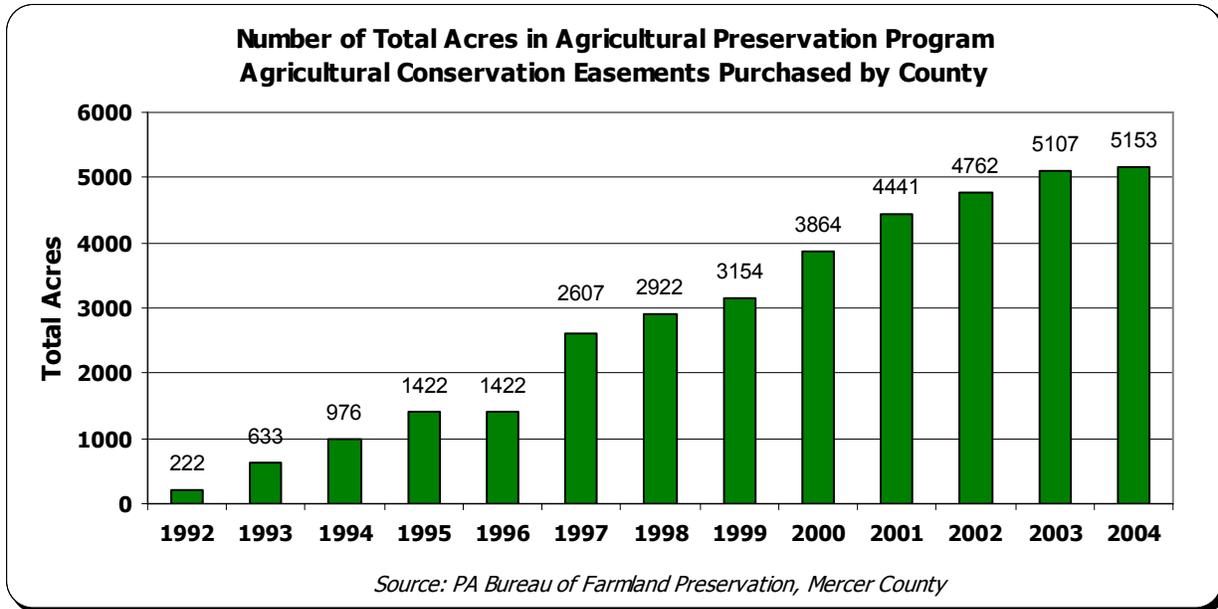
Source: Penn State Cooperative Extension Service

Figure 2-2 Municipal Participation Rates by Acreage



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

**Figure 2-3 Conservation Easements in Mercer County**



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## **Water Resources – Surface Waters and Groundwater**

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

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

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

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

**Table 2-2 Waterways in Mercer County**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Impaired Stream Reaches in Mercer County include:**

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

Additional information regarding water quality and impaired streams can be found online at [www.emappa.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.emappa.dep.state.pa.us).

### **What is a water quality standard?**

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

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

### **What is a TMDL?**

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

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

---DEP TMDL Factsheet

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

Category 1: Waters attaining all designated uses.

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

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

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

*Category 4A:* TMDL has been completed.

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

*Category 4C:* Not impaired by a pollutant.

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

*--PA Department of Environmental Resources*

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

Table 2-3

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

Mercer County (January 2005)

Source: DEP Northwest Regional Office

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

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

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

*Inventory of Resources*

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

Source: PA DEP

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

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

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

## **Integrated Land and Water or Riparian Resources**

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

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

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

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

## **Vegetation and Wildlife Resources**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Important Bird Areas Sites Notes, Audubon Pennsylvania, 2005.

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

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

**The Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) for Mercer County<sup>4</sup> provides a preliminary report of the County's biodiversity.** Completed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in June 2003, the inventory identifies and maps the most significant natural places in Mercer County. Plant and animal species, natural communities that are unique or uncommon in the County and areas important for wildlife habitat and scientific study were investigated. While the inventory does not protect these areas, it provides the necessary information to guide land acquisition and conservation decisions. It can also be referenced in the development of municipal comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, as well as in the review of development plans. Table 2-3 summarizes the results of the inventory, listing the Natural Heritage Areas "in order of their significance to the protection of the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the region."<sup>5</sup> The entire report can be accessed online via the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission's website - [www.mcrpc.com](http://www.mcrpc.com).

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

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<sup>4</sup> *Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory*. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, June 2003

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

**Table 2-5 Natural Heritage Inventory Sites**

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

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

Source: Mercer County Natural Heritage Inventory

## **Recreation Areas**

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

## **Federal Lands**

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

Recreational facilities are located throughout the property and include:

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

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

## **State Lands**

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

Many recreational activities attract state park visitors in all seasons.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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

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

### **Other Hunting Sites**

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

### **County Parkland**

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

### **Municipal Parkland**

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

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

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

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

Table 2-7 Municipal Parks

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

continued

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

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

continued

Inventory of Resources

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

continued

Mercer County Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan

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

continued

*Inventory of Resources*

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

Source: Gannett Fleming

Notes

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

N = not in use  
 P = planned

PP = Port-a-Pot

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

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

**Table 2-8 Golf Courses, Mercer County**

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

Source: Mercer County

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

**Table 2-9 Quasi-Public Recreation Sites**

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

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

**Table 2-10 Private Recreation Facilities**

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

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

## **Water Access Sites for Fishing and Boating**

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

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

**Table 2-11 Waterway Access Locations**

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

Source: PA Fish and Boat Commission

## **Camping**

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

## **Trails**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Cultural Resources**

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

### **Historic Sites**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Table 2-14 Pennsylvania Historical Markers in Mercer County**

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

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

Source: PHMC

## Additional Historical and Cultural Interest Sites

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

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

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

### **Further Historic Designation**

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

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

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

## **Community Resources**

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

### **Schools**

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

**Table 2-15 Public School Districts**

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

Source: PA Department of Education

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

**Table 2-16 Public School Facilities Utilized by Recreation Programs**

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

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

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

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

Source: Mercer County

## **Libraries**

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

**Table 2-18 Libraries**

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

Source: PA Department of Education

## **Travel Linkages**

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

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

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

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

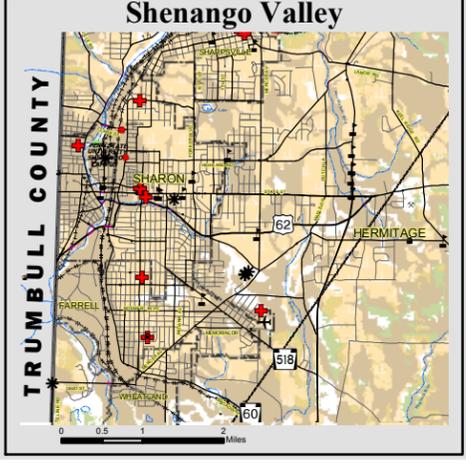
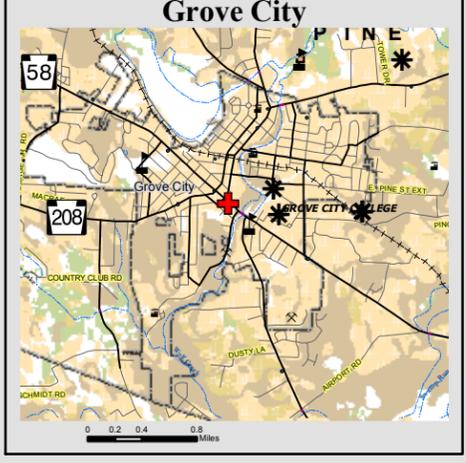
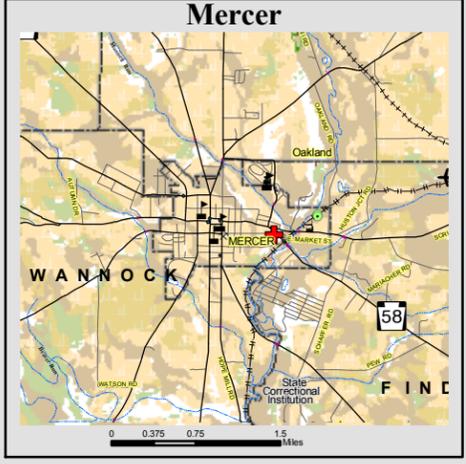
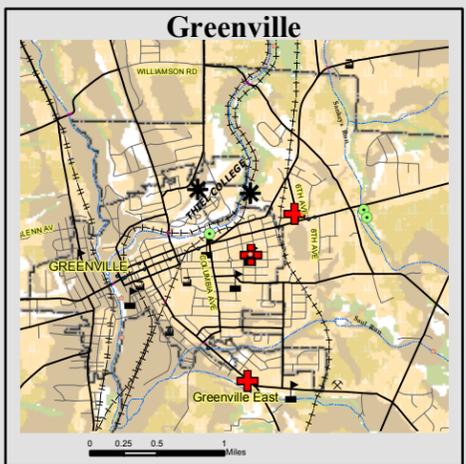
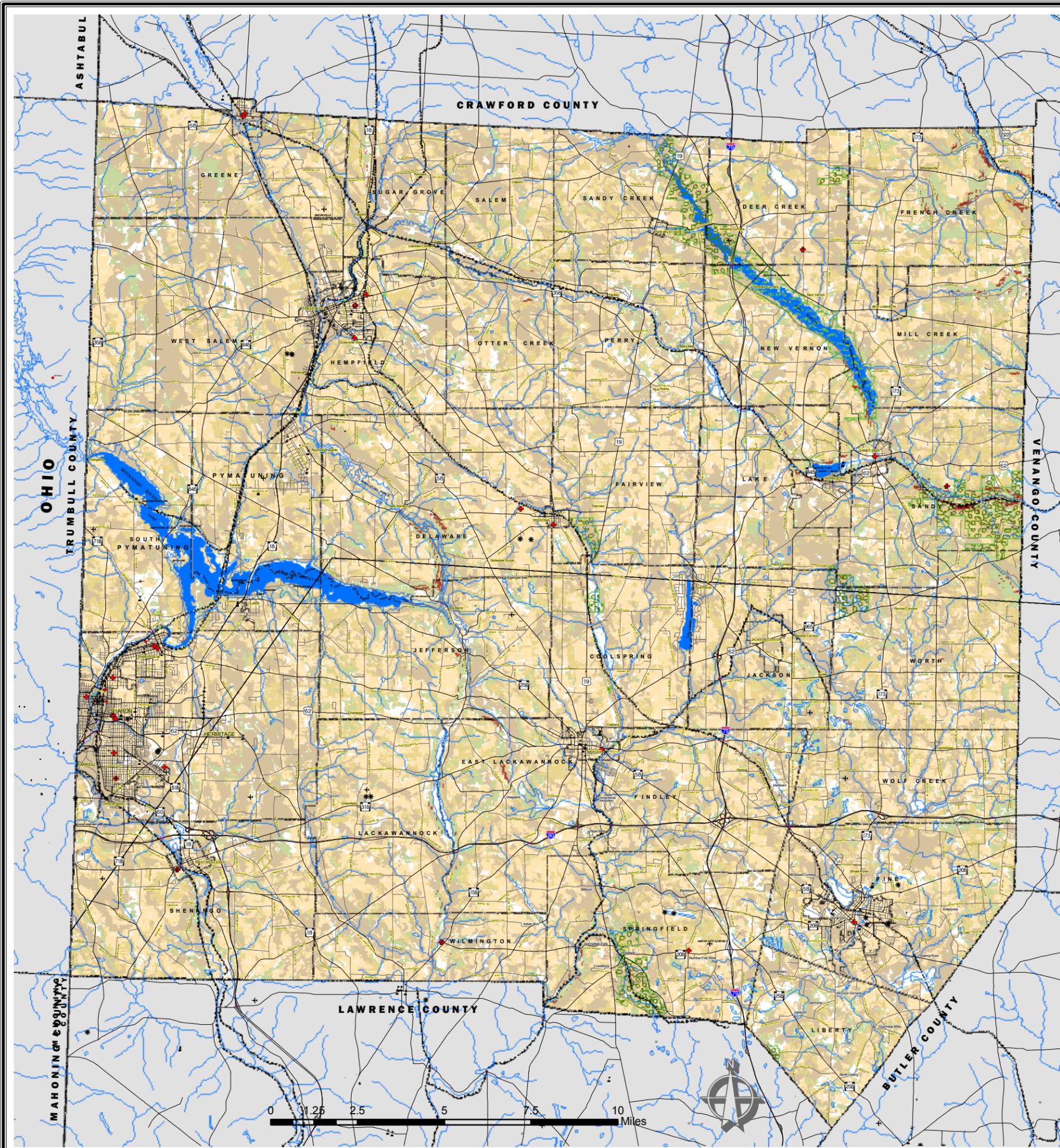
The rail network in Mercer County consists of only two freight routes that serve some portions of the county. These include the Class 1 carrier of Norfolk Southern, and the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad shows the location of these rail lines within the county. Other tail lines and spurs exist but are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

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

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

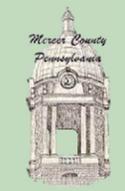
- Highland Road/East-West Corridor - This roadway based bicycle-pedestrian corridor connects the Shenango River to Hickory High School. The main segment of the route follows Highland Road through residential and institutional areas.
- Sharpsville/Wheatland North-South Corridor - This roadway based corridor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

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# Land Resources Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan  
Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

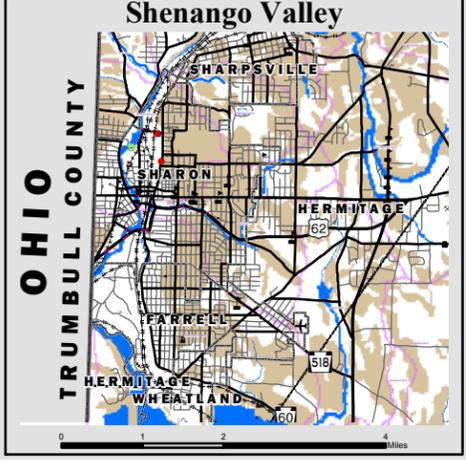
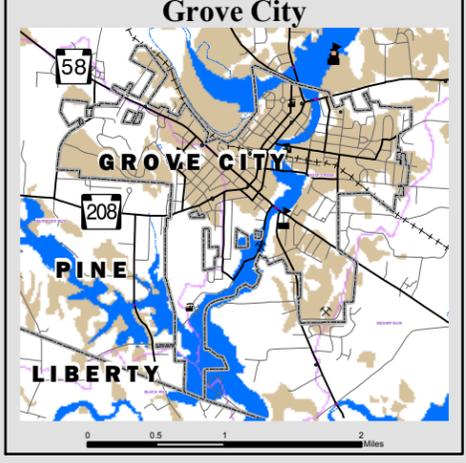
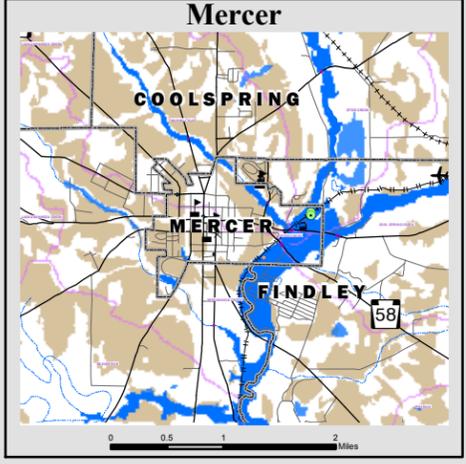
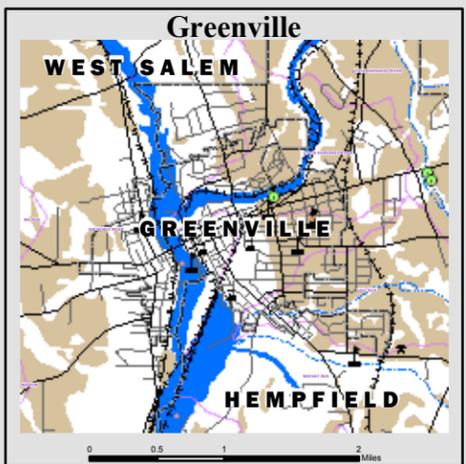
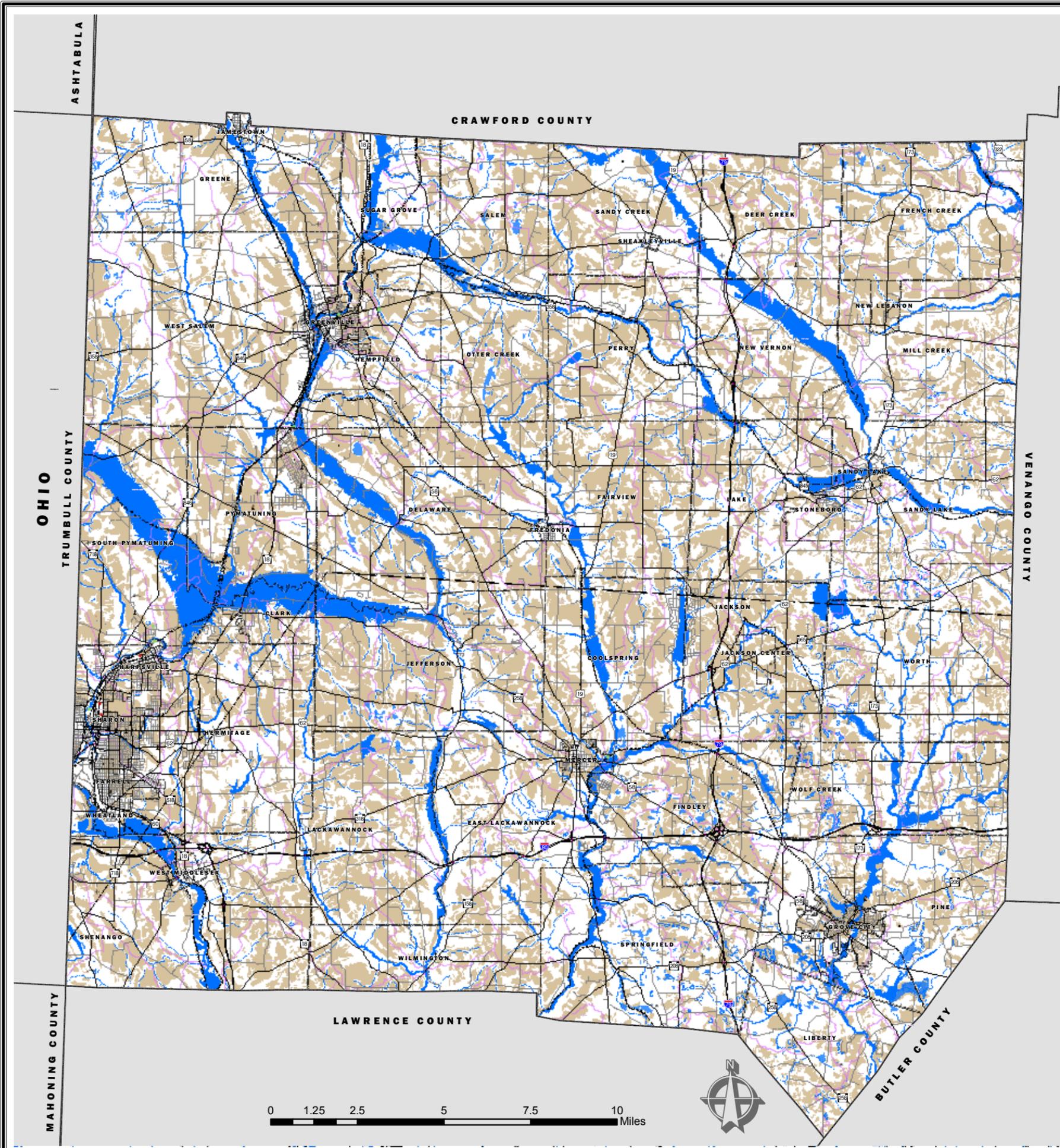
- Superfund Site
- Drinking Water Supply
- Industrial Facility Discharge
- ◆ Pollution Control Site
- Resource Conservation & Recovery Info. System
- Mines
- Toxic Release Inventory
- Slope Greater than 25%
- Prime Farmland
- State Game Lands
- State-wide Important
- State Parks
- Woodland

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, NRCS

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



Map drawn by: alo Date: 07/21/04  
 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 06/06/05  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 06/03/05  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Water Resources Map

## Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



### Legend

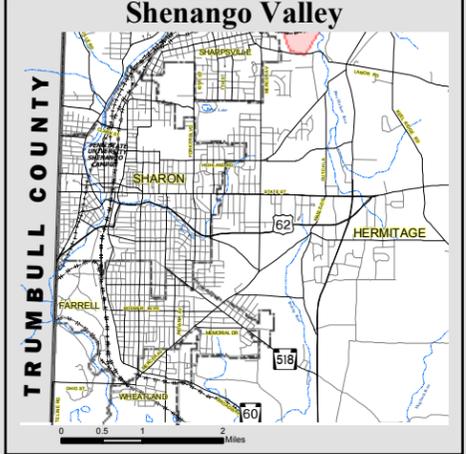
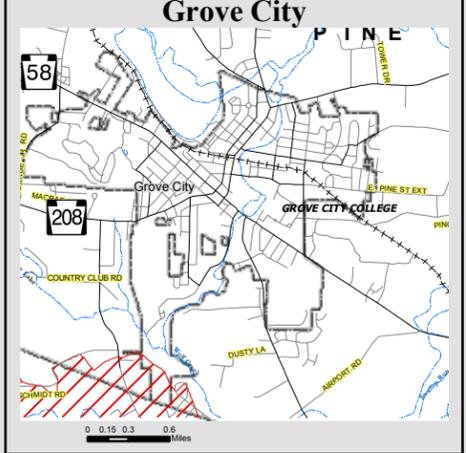
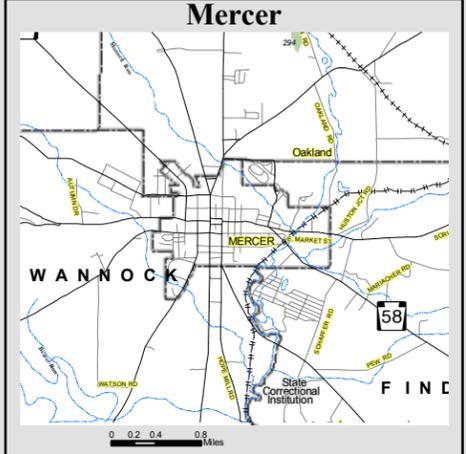
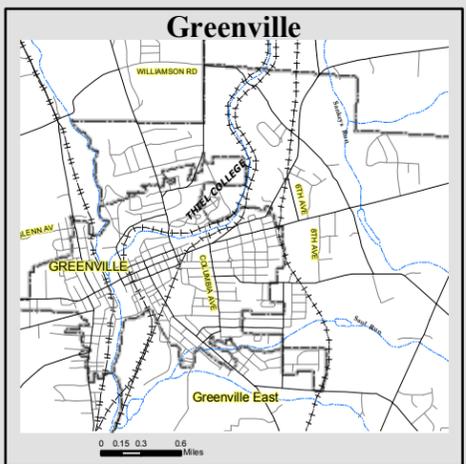
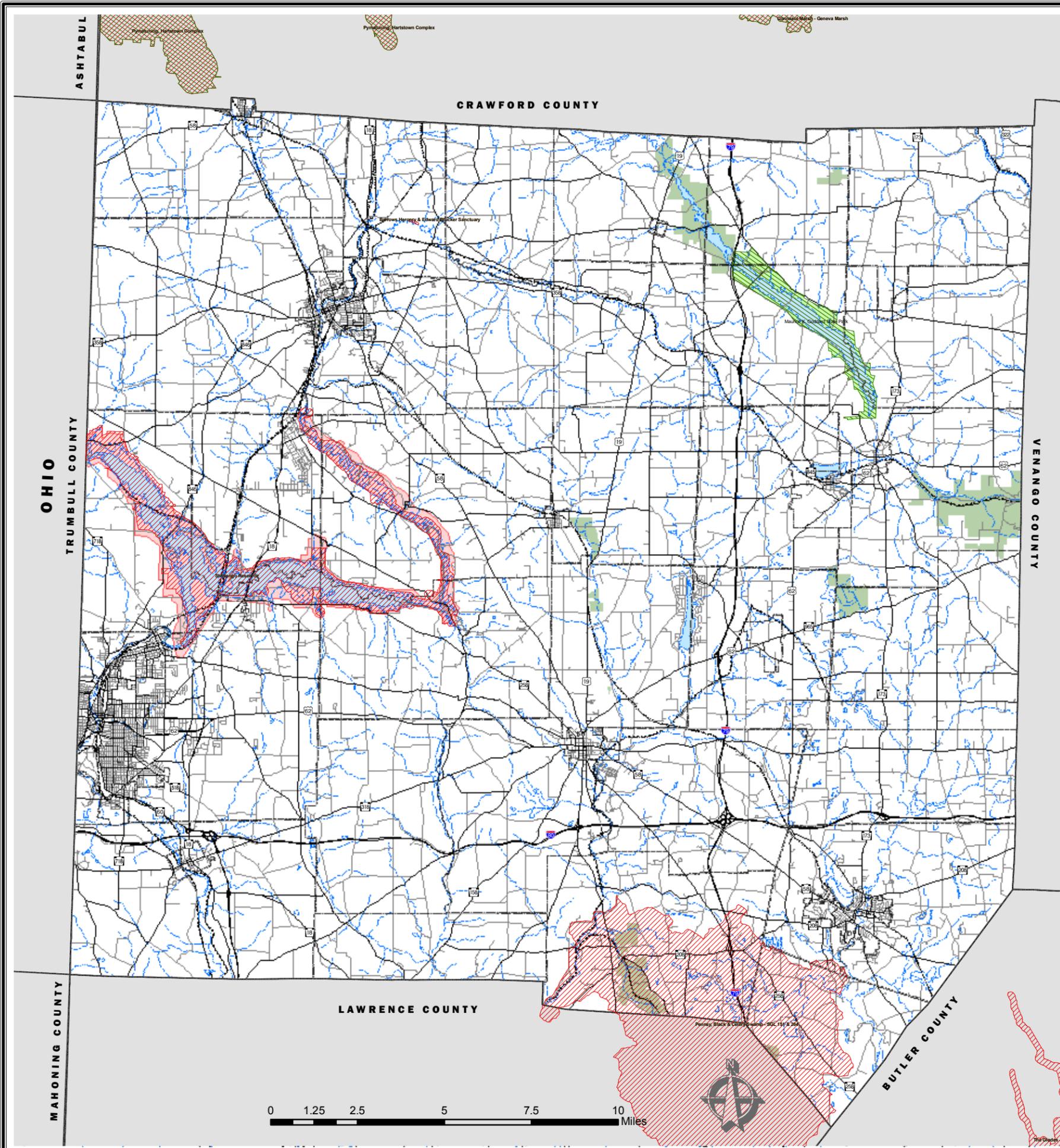
- Superfund Site
- Drinking Water Supply
- Industrial Facility Discharge
- Pollution Control Site (Permit Compliance System)
- Mines
- Resource Conservation & Recovery Info. System
- Toxic Release Inventory
- Impaired Streams (PADEP)
- Watersheds (HUC11)
- USFWS National Wetland Inventory and FEMA 100 Year Floodplains
- Hydic Soils

Data Sources: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, FEMA, USFWS, EPA, PADEP, PADOT, USGS

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



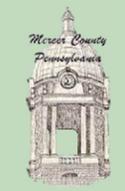
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 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 06/06/05  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 06/03/05  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Important Bird and Mammal Area Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

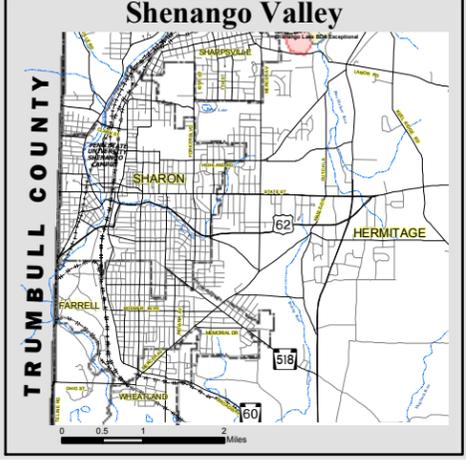
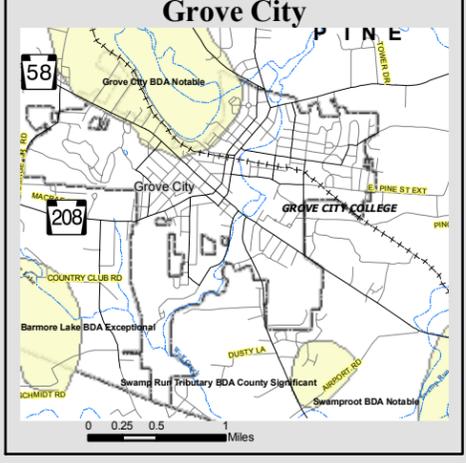
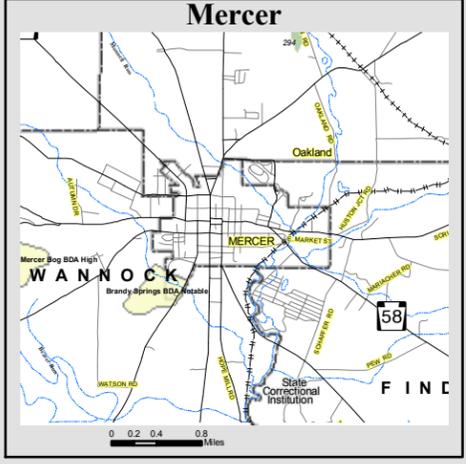
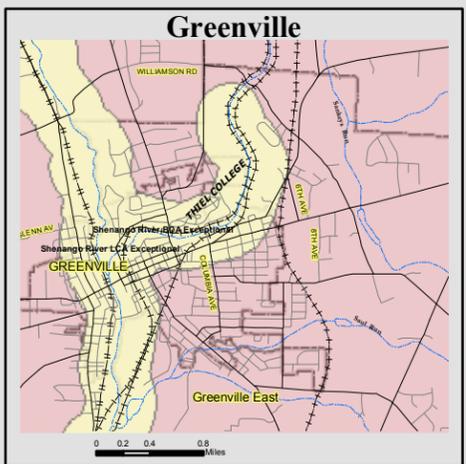
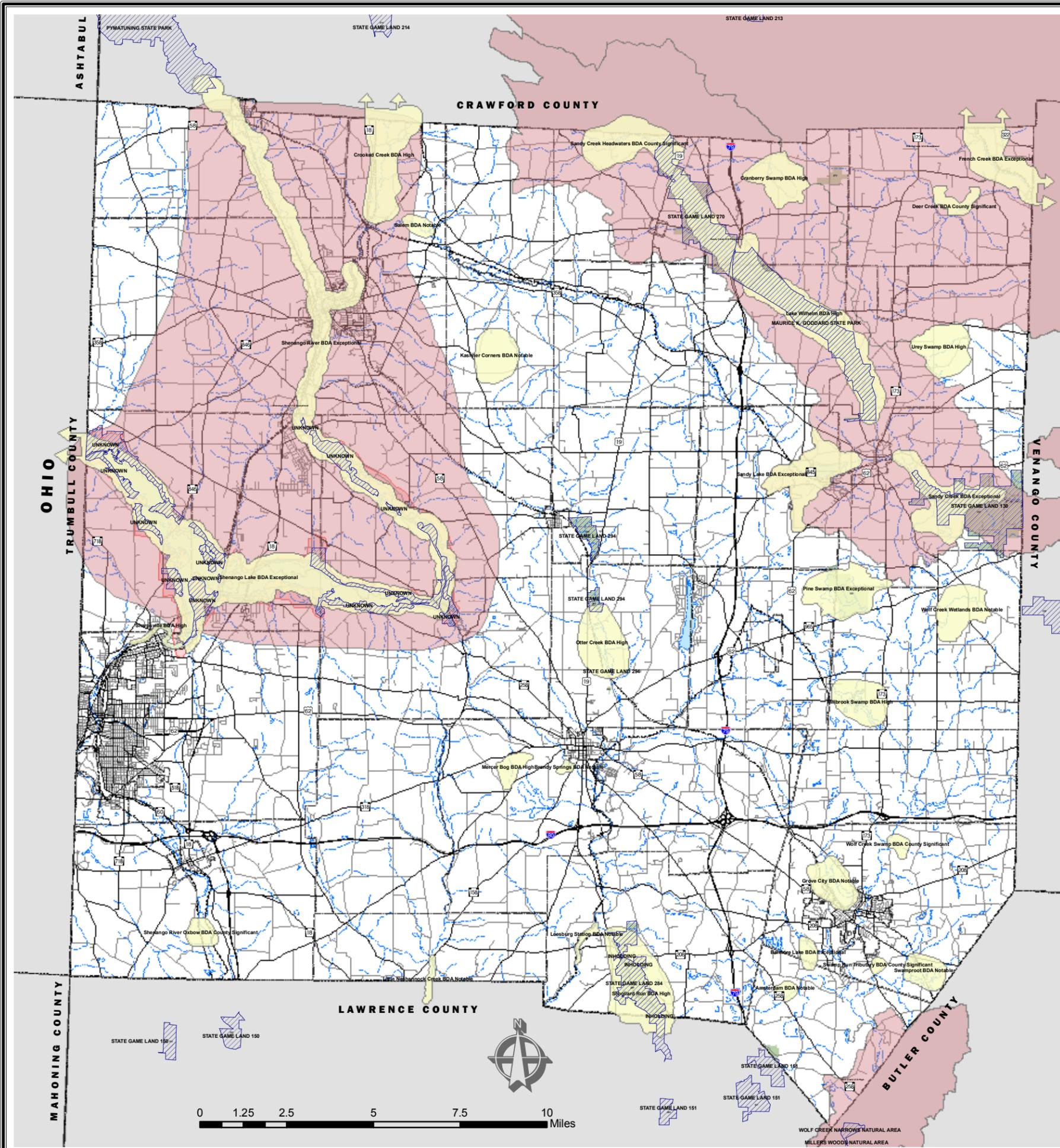
- Important Bird Areas
- Important Mammal Areas

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, PSU, USGS, US Army Corps

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



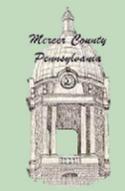
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 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Natural Heritage Inventory Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



### Legend

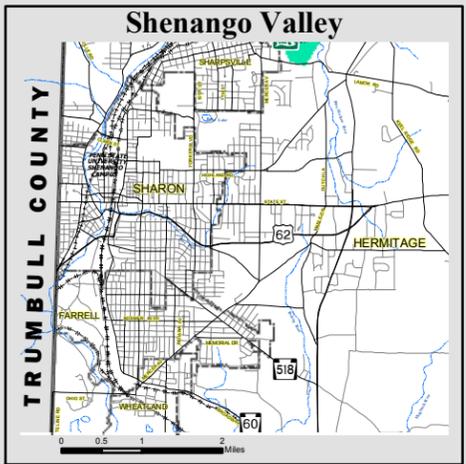
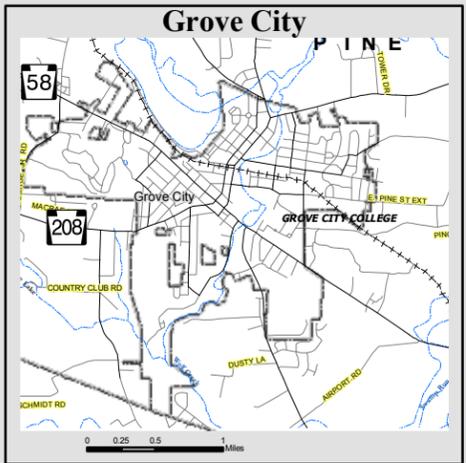
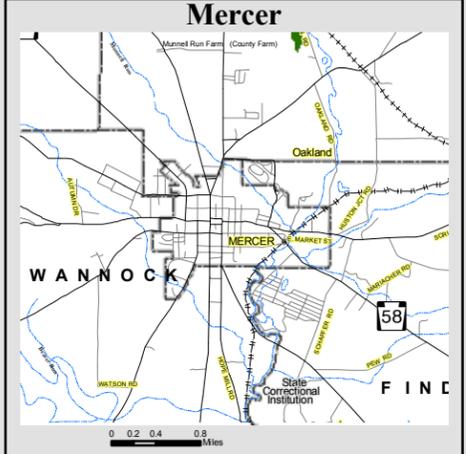
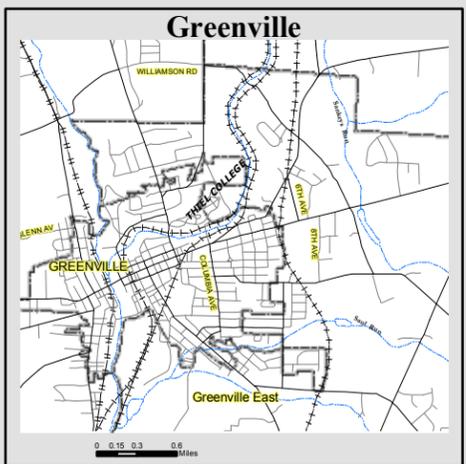
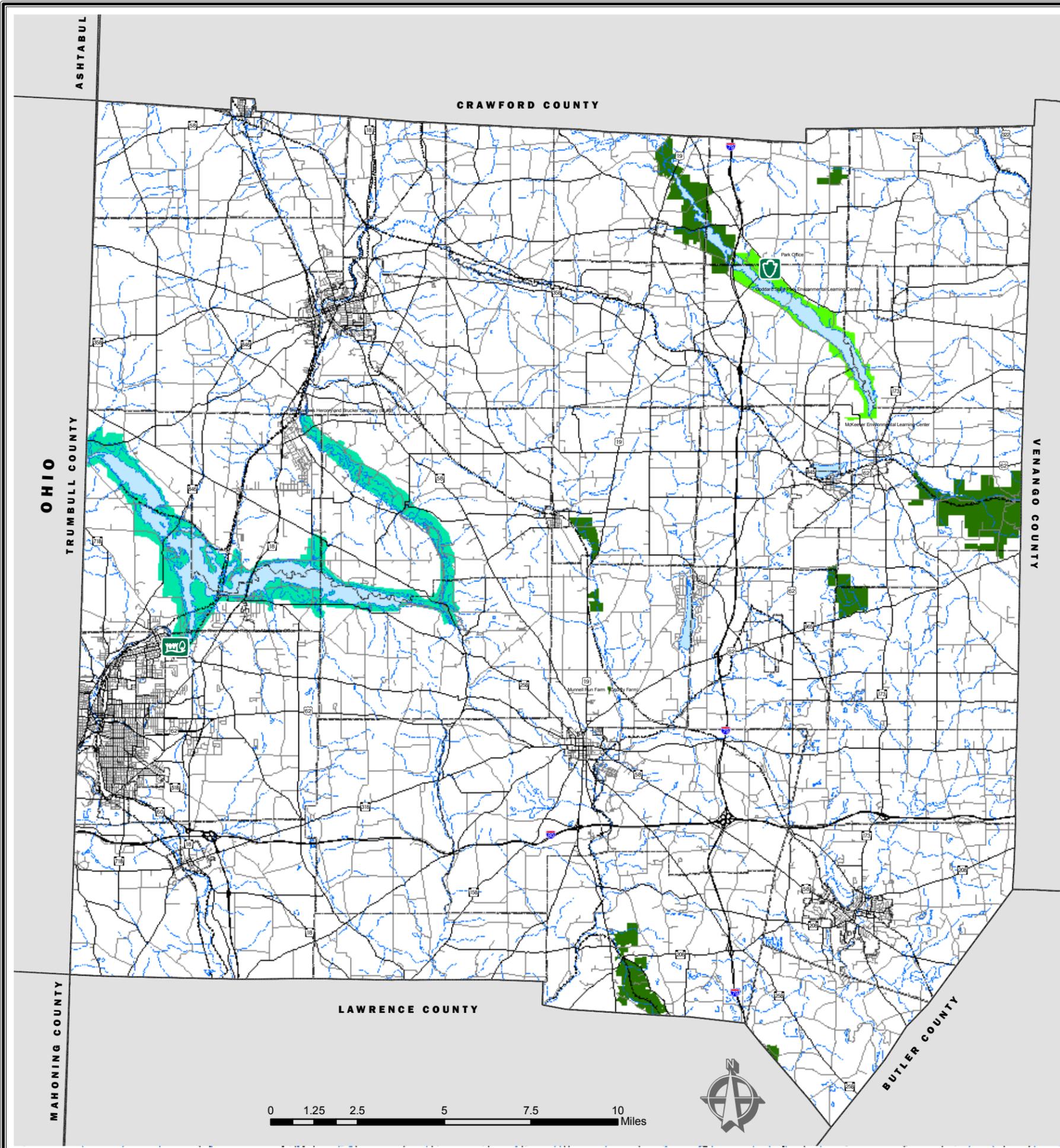
- Landscape Conservation Areas
- Biological Diversity Areas
- Managed Lands

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, Western PA Conservancy, USGS, US Army Corps

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



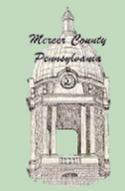
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 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Federal and State Lands and Facilities Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

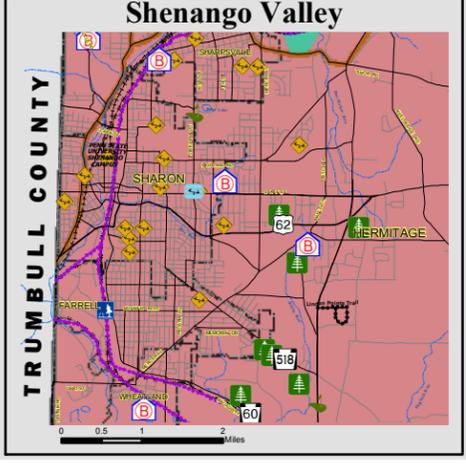
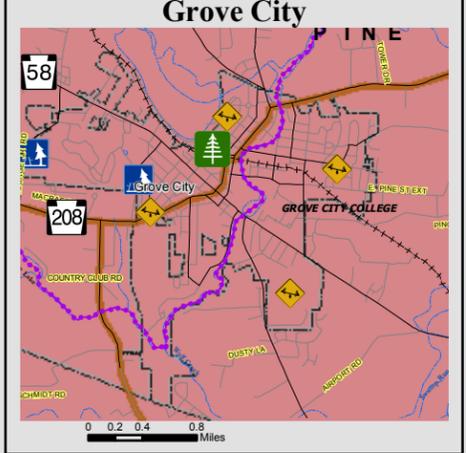
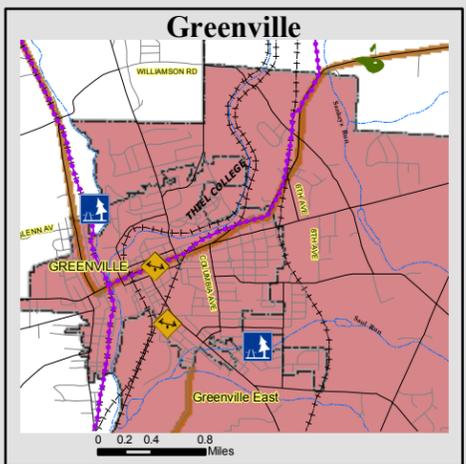
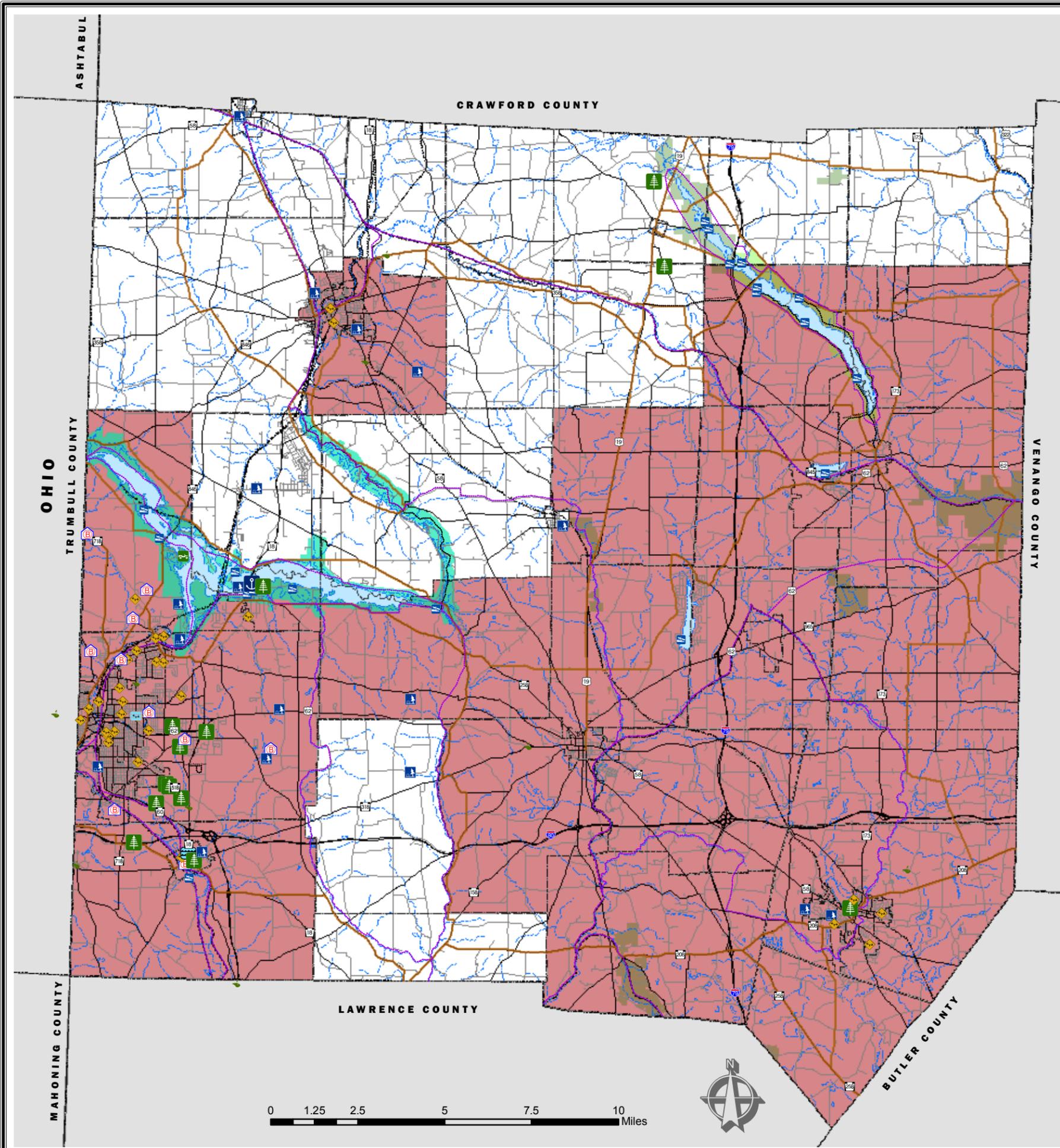
-  State Park Office
-  Shenango - Resource Manager's Office
-  State Parks
-  State Game Lands
-  US ACOE Shanango River Lake

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, NRCS

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



Map drawn by: alo Date: 07/21/04  
 alo 08/27/04  
 dbg 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Recreation Areas Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

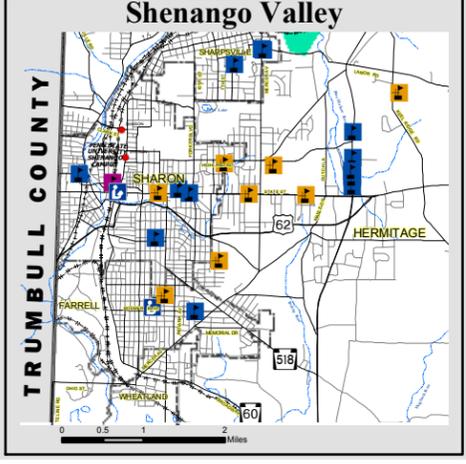
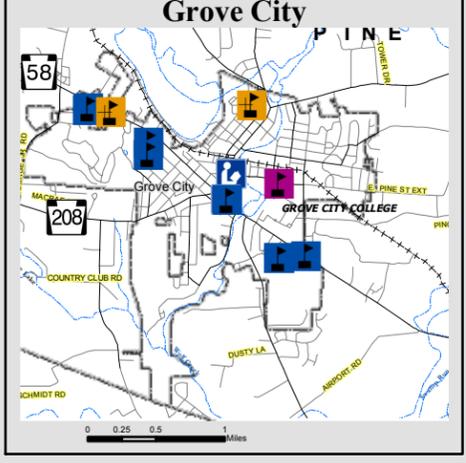
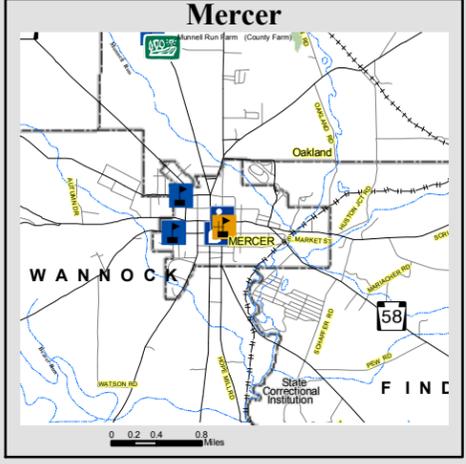
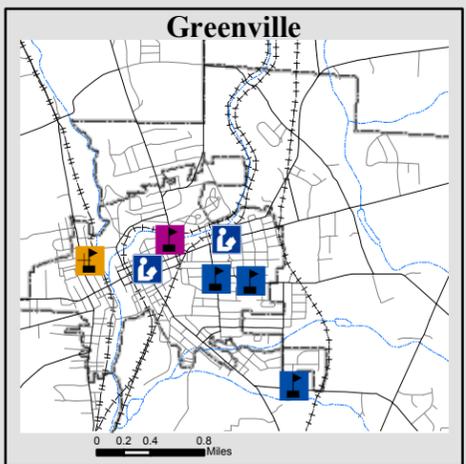
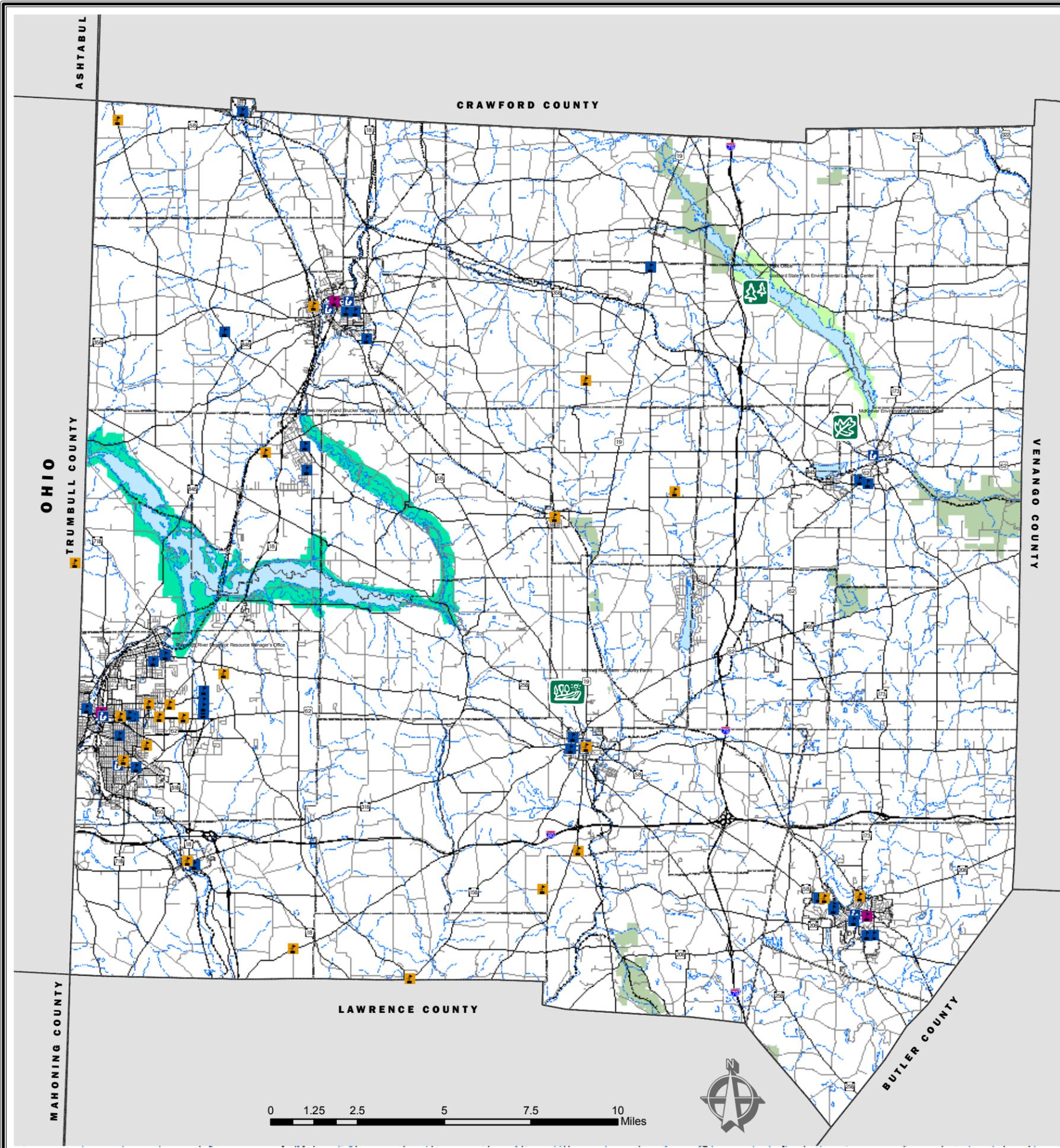
- Ballfield
- Marina
- Playground
- Pool
- Pool/Playground
- Recreation Area
- Tennis Courts
- Park
- Boat Launch
- Golf Course
- Off-road Vehicle Area
- Trail Opportunities
- Existing Trails
- Scenic Corridors
- Urban Communities / Regional Planning Areas
- Rural Communities

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, PSU, USGS

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



Map drawn by: alo Date: 07/21/04  
 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Community Facilities Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan  
Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

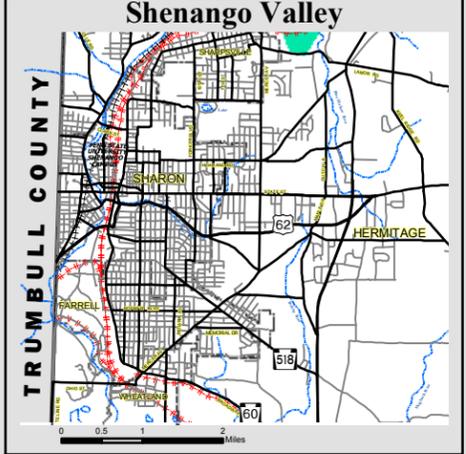
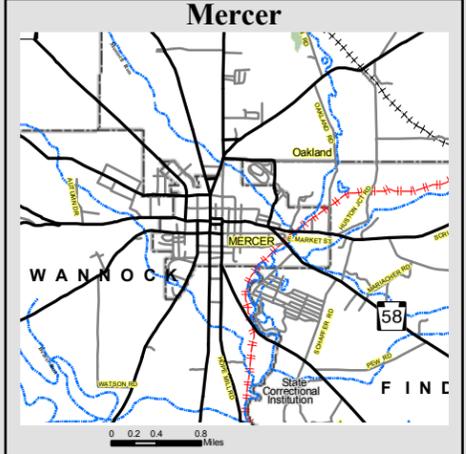
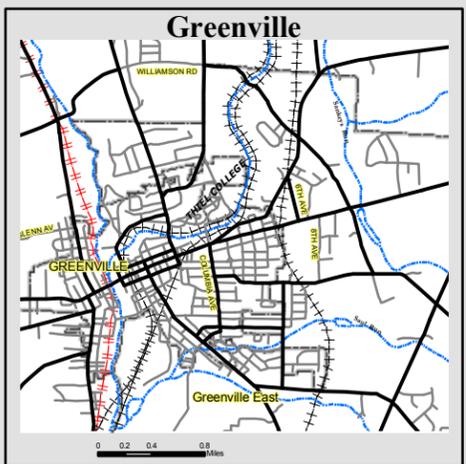
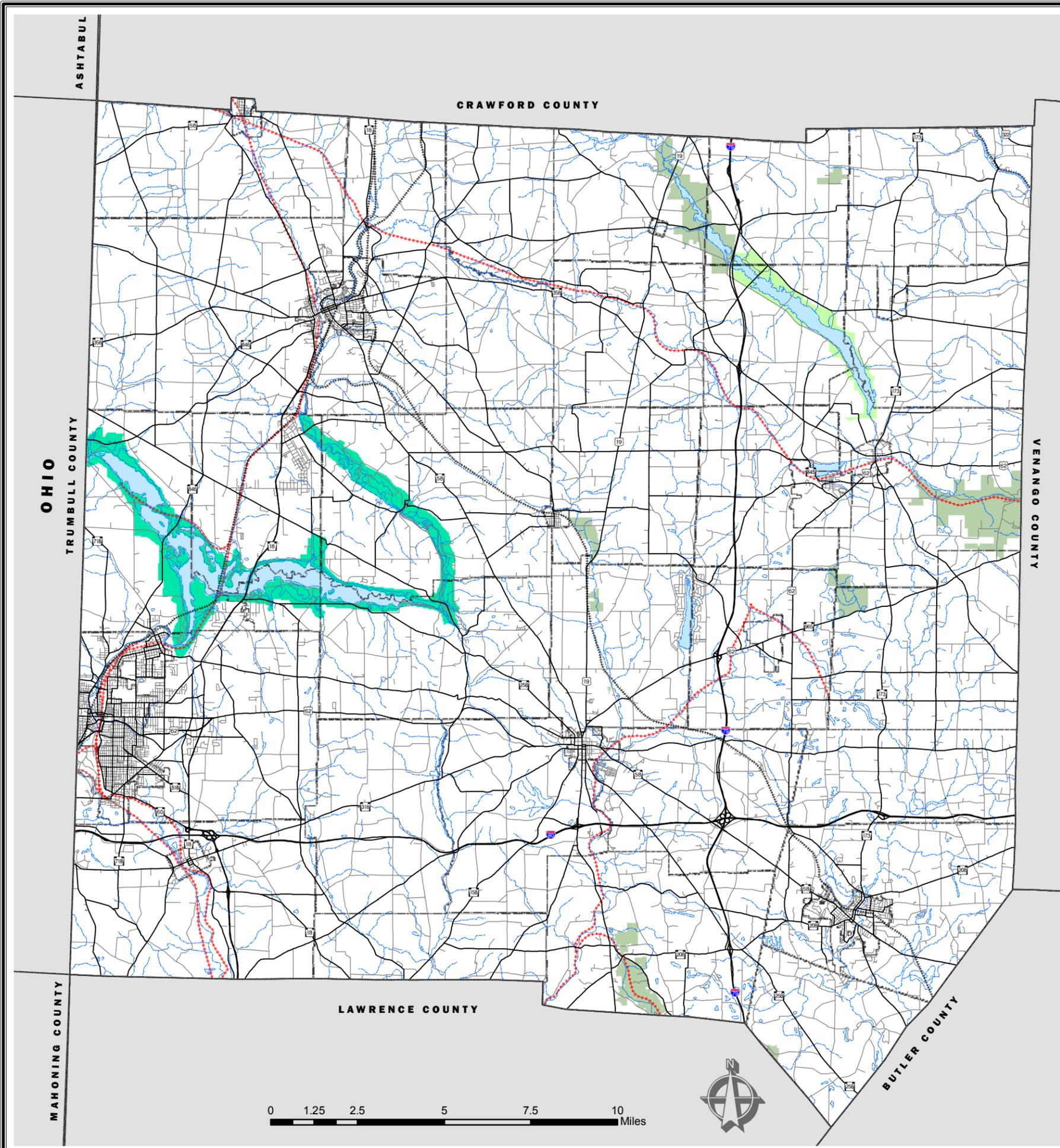
- Goddard State Park Environmental Learning Center
- McKeever Environmental Learning Center
- Munnell Run Farm (County Farm)
- Libraries
- School - Religious
- Public Schools
- Higher Education Schools

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, PSU, USGS, PGC

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



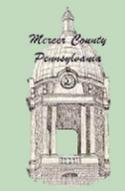
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 dbg Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Transportation Infrastructure Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

-  State, US and Interstate Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Inactive Railroad
-  Active Railroad
-  Surface Water

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, PGC USGS, PSU

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



Map drawn by: alo	Date: 07/21/04
alo	08/27/04
dbg	06/06/05
Map Reviewed by: rnk	Date: 06/03/05
Map Approved by:	Date:

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## Chapter 3

# An Index of Organizations and Initiatives

Organizations and initiatives are really about people with purpose – people working together to provide services, to sustain their livelihoods, to protect and restore resources, and to educate and entertain others with their knowledge and skills. They work together as public agencies, private for-profit and non-profit organizations, and public-private partnerships.

The organizations in this index are ones that already are working in Mercer County or perhaps have an interest in working in the county in the future. They are identified here as active partners in protecting and managing open space and providing recreational opportunities for residents. Their projects or initiatives provide the foundation for this plan.

These people sustain, and in some cases are sustained by, the open space and recreation opportunities in Mercer County.

## **Local Government and Organizations**

Local organizations often best reflect the interests of residents. From local government in the public sector to watershed organizations in the private sector, the following organizations local to Mercer County demonstrate an appreciation for the quality and productivity of the natural resources that yield economic and recreational benefits and promote continuity with their heritage.

### **Public Sector**

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**Municipal governments** in Mercer County have a tremendous impact on open space and recreation. As the primary authorities for land development, they have established the land use policies that outline where and how development can occur and where open space should remain for the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Thirty municipalities have established land use policies through municipal comprehensive plans or zoning ordinances.

The stronger of these two is the zoning ordinance, which specifies the uses that may take place on any given property. Yet zoning ordinances are only as strong as their enforcement. In communities where development is slow to moderate, community leaders may “accommodate” prospective developers with exceptions to their own land use regulations. For planning efforts to be effective – in other words, to guide the development of the communities toward the community it wants to become-- community leaders need to follow their plans and regulations carefully. Such careful enforcement may require professional services from a trained code enforcement officer and solicitor. The cost of these professional services may be a limiting factor to good planning and community development in small communities.

Municipal officials have also established recreation committees, boards, and commissions to oversee recreation programs and facilities. These have been established in five municipalities: Hermitage, Sharon, Farrell/Wheatland, Grove City and Greenville.

Furthermore, local officials can require land donation, or accept fees-in-lieu of land donation, as a component of the land development process. The authority to establish and enforce this requirement is given in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and recognizes that people need outdoor space for recreation and leisure activities within their communities. Currently no communities have these provisions. The MPC requires an adopted recreation plan as a prerequisite for adopting a mandatory dedication of land ordinance at the county and municipal levels, respectively. This county plan is not expected to be substituted for an adopted municipal recreation plan, but may be used as a tool in seeking funding for such a plan and for consistency with the county’s intent for partnerships.

Finally, municipal officials are eligible for funding programs from state and federal agencies. These programs make money available to communities where the need for community or environmental improvements is demonstrated. Communities in Mercer County have received funding from Pennsylvania’s Growing Greener program, as well as the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), TEA-21 programs, and the DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program and Rivers Conservation Program.

Municipal officials are also working regionally to better serve residents with cost effective government services. Officials in six multi-municipal regions have adopted or are working together to develop a multi-municipal or regional comprehensive plan. These regional planning efforts not only consolidate the cost of planning efforts and services, but also enable partner municipalities to share the requirements for land use.

The **Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)** is organized as a joint municipal planning commission in accord with Article XI of the Planning Code as existed prior to the amendments of Act 67 of 2000 and grand-fathered by said act. MCRPC originated in 1952 as the Shenango Valley Regional Planning Commission and served only the seven municipalities of Sharon, Farrell, Sharpsville, Wheatland, West Middlesex, Hickory (now Hermitage), and South Pymatuning. In 1972, the commission was restructured combining the Shenango Valley Regional Planning Commission with the Mercer County Planning and Zoning Commission to form the present-day Mercer County Regional Planning Commission.

Today voluntary membership includes 35 of the county's 48 municipalities plus the county itself. Membership is formalized through an inter-governmental agreement. Each local government member contributes funds to support the organization according to a population-based formula stated in the agreement. Each local government member appoints at least 2 representatives to the commission. The larger municipalities and the county have additional representatives. One rep must be a governing body member and one rep must be a local planning commissioner (preferred) or at-large member.

MCRPC's mission is "to prepare at the request of the governing body, a comprehensive plan and to conduct related studies and implementation activities." These activities include:

- Prepare long-range community plans, with emphasis on the county comprehensive plan and multi-municipal comprehensive plans, for member governments.
- Prepare plans and studies and provide staff assistance for special projects or problems (housing rehab, downtown revitalization, community and economic development projects, etc.).
- Prepare new or revised land use control ordinances (zoning, subdivision & land development, floodplain management, etc.) for member governments. Review and comment on all amendments to such ordinances.
- Administer Mercer County subdivision & land development ordinance - review and approve all subdivision plans in 36 municipalities covered by county ordinance. Review and comment on all subdivision plans in municipalities with own ordinance.
- Prepare plans for countywide solid waste disposal. Serve as staff for the Mercer County Solid Waste Authority for implementation and enforcement of the plan.
- Serve as county-designated recycling coordinator. Assist with mandatory and voluntary local recycling programs and generally promote an active countywide recycling effort.
- Prepare public highway and transit plans as federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Assist separate MPO coordinating committee in approval of long-range plan and periodic transportation improvement programs (TIP's) necessary for federal funding of highway & transit projects.
- Work with the county's lead economic development agency and local IDCs to plan for and facilitate development of reuse and new economic development projects.

- Administer Community Development Block Grant Program for Mercer County, Greenville Borough, Pine Township and other grantees when requested.
- Administer the Mercer County Affordable Housing Fund and Brownfields for Housing grants. Solicit, review, and recommend selection of eligible housing improvement projects.
- Prepare grant applications for a variety of community improvement projects.
- Prepare research and studies of local demographic/economic conditions to 1) support needs assessments and grant applications by municipalities and agencies; 2) provide needed information for marketing and prospective developers; and 3) fill public requests.
- Aid municipalities, agencies, local groups, etc. in implementing community plans.
- Assign addresses and update street/address database files for 911.

MCRPC was the lead agency for the development of the 1995/1996 Mercer County Comprehensive Plan: Planning for Livable Communities, the 2005 comprehensive plan update, and the lead or coordinating agency for the six multi-municipal comprehensive plans prepared in the county. These recent multi-municipal comprehensive plans have generated increased interest in cooperative efforts, including new recreation entities. Continued and expanded discussion is needed to determine the most effective and efficient recreation planning and management approach to serve all residents of the county.

In addition, several working committees provide reviews/recommendations to the full commission and carry out certain authorized tasks. MCRPC employs seven full-time professional staff as well as administrative staff and part-time professional for special projects. MCRPC's office is located in Hermitage, adjacent to the offices of the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments.

Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)  
2491 Highland Road,  
Hermitage, PA, 16148  
Phone 724-981-2412  
Fax 724-981-7677  
Website [www.mcrpc.com](http://www.mcrpc.com).

The **Mercer County Regional Council of Government (MCRCOG)** coordinates transit, police booking, animal control, pesticide control, vehicle repair and maintenance, information technology, and Uniform Construction Code (UCC) enforcement services and equipment sharing for 24 of the 48 municipalities in Mercer County, including 8 rural municipalities. The decision-making body of MCRCOG comprises elected officials from the member municipalities and the Board of Commissioners.

- |               |                     |                      |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Clark      | 10. Hempfield       | 19. Shenango         |
| 2. Coolspring | 11. Hermitage       | 20. South Pymatuning |
| 3. Delaware*  | 12. Jackson Center* | 21. West Middlesex   |
| 4. Fairview   | 13. Jefferson       | 22. West Salem*      |
| 5. Farrell    | 14. Lackawannock*   | 23. Wheatland        |
| 6. Findley    | 15. Mercer          | 24. Wilmington*      |
| 7. Fredonia*  | 16. Pymatuning*     | 25. County of Mercer |
| 8. Greene*    | 17. Sharon          |                      |
| 9. Greenville | 18. Sharpsville     |                      |

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MCRCOG employs a 12-person professional staff to administer its programs and services. It also coordinates recreation services and provides grant writing and administration, which has fostered substantial support for local recreation planning and implementation through investment in urban recreation facilities in the county. Like MCRPC, MCRCOG is a membership-driven organization, although some services are available to non-member municipalities on a contract basis as staff time permits.

In addition to local government, the **Mercer County school districts** are active local partners, as owners of recreation facilities in rural areas, educators of young residents, as well as land managers of their facilities.

The **Greenville Area Leisure Service Association (GALSA)** is the only traditional regional recreation organization in Mercer County. GALSA<sup>1</sup> is an agency of Greenville Borough that provides recreation programming for Greenville Borough, surrounding municipalities, and to manage the parks in the area. GALSA services five school districts: Greenville Area, Commodore Perry, Reynolds, Lakeview, and Jamestown, as well as St. Michaels.

GALSA is funded through contributions made by the three primary sources, Greenville Borough, Greenville Area School District, and the United Way, as well as revenues generated from user fees, fundraisers, and contributions from outside sources.

GALSA staff consists of three office people, an executive director, a program director, and an office manager, along with a full-time maintenance worker. During the summer months, between 70 and 80 part-time maintenance workers are employed to assist with park maintenance.

GALSA is overseen by a Board, which is comprised of two Borough Council members, six community residents, and the borough manager.

Affiliated organizations include the Greenville Area Youth Soccer Association, the Greenville Memorial Swimming Pool, the Greenville Area Ladies Softball, the Greenville Area Community Theatre, the Canal Museum, the Greenville Area Church Co-ed Softball, and Kid's Korner Day Care. Kid's Korner Day Care is a program sponsored by GALSA and is open to children up to 12 years. Children of the ages 0-5 are cared for at the First Baptist Church while children between 6-12 years are cared for at the Rec Center.

Greenville Area Leisure Service Association  
PO Box 244  
45 Alan Avenue  
Greenville PA 16125  
724-588-4810  
[galsa@svol.net](mailto:galsa@svol.net)

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<sup>1</sup> Greenville Borough / Hempfield Township Joint Comprehensive Plan, 2004.

## **County Agencies**

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Officials, employees, and advocates in county level agencies and organizations also have a strong sense of local values and priorities. They are often residents of the county or region, who share directly in the benefits of their conservation and recreation work.

The 10-member **Mercer County Agricultural Development Council**<sup>2</sup> is appointed by the Mercer County Commissioners and works as an advocate for Mercer County Agriculture. The Council works to insure that agriculture is visible and viable in the county. Activities that enhance and acknowledge the agriculture industry and its contributions to social, economic, and environmental well-being of the area are a priority.

PO Box 530, Mercer, PA 16137  
(724) 662-3141 phone  
(724) 662-1933 fax  
[MercerExt@psu.edu](mailto:MercerExt@psu.edu)  
<http://mercer.extension.psu.edu>

The **Mercer County Agricultural Land Preservation Board**<sup>3</sup> administers the Mercer County Agriculture Preservation Program to protect viable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements, which prevent the development or improvement of the land for any purpose other than agricultural production.

Further, it is the purpose of this program to:

1. Encourage landowners to make a long-term commitment to agriculture by offering them financial incentive and security of land use.
2. Protect normal farming operations in agricultural security areas from incompatible non-farmland uses that may render farming impracticable.
3. Protect farming operations from complaints of public nuisance against normal farming operations.
4. Assure conservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy of this Commonwealth.
5. Provide compensation to landowners in exchange for their relinquishment of the right to develop their private property.
6. Maximize agricultural easement purchase funds and protect the investment of taxpayers in agricultural conservation easement.
7. Preserve Mercer County agricultural productivity by buying easements on land most logically to remain as farmland.

The Mercer County Agricultural Land Preservation Board has developed fair, equitable, objective, non-discriminatory procedures for determining easement purchase priorities and has adopted written guidelines for purchasing easement. This organization is governed by a seven member Board of Directors.

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<sup>2</sup> Mercer County Agricultural Resource Directory, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

PO Box 530, Mercer, PA 16137  
(724) 662-3141 phone  
(724) 662-1933 fax  
[MercerExt@psu.edu](mailto:MercerExt@psu.edu) or [dmulju@msn.com](mailto:dmulju@msn.com)

The **Mercer County Conservation District**<sup>4</sup> strives to promote the wise use of natural resources. The conservation district offers the following services to the public:

- Process National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for projects involving earthmoving activities of 5 acres or more.
- Review of erosion and sediment pollution control plans.
- Process general permits on behalf of the PA DEP for activities encroaching on streams and wetlands.
- Environmental education activities including speakers, field days, and demonstrations.
- Nutrient Management planning and plan reviews.
- Dirt and Gravel Roads Program administration.
- Agriculture BMP funding in the Shenango River watershed.
- Munnell Run Farm programs and tours
- West Nile Virus Program administration

747 Greenville Road, Mercer PA 16137  
(724) 662-2242 phone  
(724) 662-3905 fax  
[mercercdd@Pathway.net](mailto:mercercdd@Pathway.net)

The **Mercer-Lawrence County Farm Service Agency**<sup>5</sup> works to stabilize farm income, help farmers conserve land and water resources, provide credit to new or disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and helps farm operations recover from the effects of disaster.

559 Greenville Road, Suite C, Mercer PA 16137  
(724) 662-2890 or (724) 652-3321 phone  
(724) 662-0278 or (724) 652-3586 fax  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

The **Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau**<sup>6</sup> is located in Sharon. The Bureau provides information on places to stay, things to do, community characteristics, and travel information for County visitors via paper and online publishing. The Bureaus' website also contains links to Pennsylvania search engines targeted toward travelers, allowing potential County explorers to locate other destinations across the state. The Bureau has published a media kit, entitled "Everyone needs an escape plan..." which highlights the seasonal activities, unique features, and uncommon characteristics of Mercer County.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau website, [www.mercercountypa.org](http://www.mercercountypa.org).

### **Local Private Sector Organizations**

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Private partners can assist in open space and recreation initiatives through several means. They may be willing to help promote the initiatives by distributing information to their members through newsletters, meetings, and other membership services. They may also take interest in sponsoring a special event, activity, or project. Private partners can be sources of technical assistance, including speakers who can share their knowledge and experience. And finally, these partners may be sources of local match monies for public grants or independent grant applicants for segmented portions of large projects.

The **Mercer County Trails Association, Inc.**<sup>7</sup> is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed by the Shenango Valley Foundation. The Trails Association was formed with the primary purpose of developing and maintaining multipurpose trails in Mercer County, Pennsylvania, for public use, exclusively for charitable purposes. Its primary activities focus on

- Promoting health and fitness by providing a safe and pleasant setting for many recreational activities including biking, jogging, walking, cross-country skiing, in-line skating, and wheelchair mobility.
- Encouraging tourism and contributing to the economic vitality of our communities.
- Helping protect our environment and natural resources by making transportation links in our area that are not dependent on the automobile.

The Trails Association's current projects include the Trout Island Trail Project and the Shenango River Trail Project.

The Trout Island Trail will run from Sharpsville to Orangeville along the abandoned Pennsylvania Railroad and Erie Railroad lines. It will be an 8' wide blacktop surface and will cross two railroad trestles over the Shenango Reservoir. The project will be completed in phases as funding becomes available. Long-term extension of the trail could link to Transfer and Greenville along the same former railroad right-of-way.

The Shenango River Trail will run from Greenville on the west side of the Shenango River and follow the abandoned Erie and Pittsburgh Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad north to Jamestown and the Pymatuning State Park area. Like the Trout Island Trail, the Shenango River Trail will have an 8' wide paved surface. Eventually the trail may extend southward on the former railroad grade to connect with the Trout Island Trail, thus linking two of Mercer County's major recreation areas - Pymatuning and Shenango Lakes.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.mctrails.freesevers.com/>

**AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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The **Mercer County Agricultural Society**<sup>8</sup> and the **Mercer County Grange Fair**<sup>9</sup> promote agriculture and family fun among the public of all ages. Both are member-based and member-supported organizations.

The **Mercer County Agricultural Society** organizes the Great Stoneboro Fair. The Society is led by 9 directors, and aided by a secretary and a treasurer.

P.O. Box 215, Stoneboro, PA 16153

(724) 376-2852

[www.pafairs.org/stoneborofair](http://www.pafairs.org/stoneborofair)

The Mercer County Grange Fair

1540 South Center Street Extension, Grove City, PA 16127

(724) 748-4007 phone

The **Pennsylvania Farm Bureau** is a grassroots farm organization financed by members to raise awareness, analyze and solve problems. Members meet at the county level (the **Mercer County Farm Bureau**<sup>10</sup>) to discuss and address issues of concern.

Pennsylvania Farmers Union, and its local **Mercer County Farmers Union**,<sup>11</sup> is part of the National Farmers Union, Denver, Colorado. This farm organization is in partnership with rural America and is dedicated to securing higher commodity prices and better living for rural citizens throughout the American heartland and continues to advance educational, cooperative, and legislative programs. The Pennsylvania Farmers Union is dedicated to the preservation of the strength of the family farm and the productivity which has made the United States the greatest nation in the world.

752 Forrester Road

Mercer PA 16137

(724) 475-2357

In addition, there are several growers associations in Mercer County and western Pennsylvania (also listed in the Mercer County Agricultural Resource Directory, 2003) that may provide a social network of farmers and growers interested in farmland and open space conservation efforts:

- The Mercer County Cooperative Sheep and Wool Growers
- Mercer County Holstein Club
- Mercer-Northwest Guernsey Breeders' Association
- Northwest Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association
- Western Pennsylvania Jersey Breeders Association.

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<sup>8</sup> Mercer County Agricultural Resource Directory, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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The **Conneaut Lake / French Creek Valley Conservancy**<sup>12</sup> is a non-profit environmental organization with a mission “to promote the environmental integrity of the French Creek watershed and its environs, and to advocate the protection of natural resources in the watershed to the aesthetic, ecological, recreational and economic benefit of the citizens of the area.” Based in Meadville, the conservancy operates as an advocacy group, a watershed association and a land trust throughout the French Creek watershed, primarily in Crawford, Erie, and Venango Counties, although future projects and events are anticipated for Mercer County. Founded to question the use of chemical herbicides for controlling the weed growth in Conneaut Lake, the organization has expanded its charter to encompass the entire French Creek Watershed, addressing issues such as water quality, preservation of land, habitat, scenic beauty, and quality of life. The conservancy owns three properties and one conservation easement. The conservancy is funded by memberships

PO Box 434  
Meadville, PA 16335  
Phone: (814) 337-4321  
Website: <http://frenchcreekconservancy.allegheny.edu/>

Established in 1995, the **French Creek Project**<sup>13</sup> is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, the Western PA Conservancy, Allegheny College, and The Nature Conservancy. The purpose of the Project is to raise public awareness about French Creek, the Commonwealth’s most biologically diverse stream. The French Creek Project employs 6 professional staff and supports additional interns and work study students.

[www.FrenchCreek.allegheny.edu](http://www.FrenchCreek.allegheny.edu)  
[FrenchCrik@aol.com](mailto:FrenchCrik@aol.com)  
1-888-920-8699 phone

**Munnell Run Farm Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that depends on contributions to support the educational programs, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements at Munnell Run Farm. Munnell Run Farm is a 163-acre working farm owned by the County of Mercer and managed by the Munnell Run Farm Foundation, Inc. with the support of the Mercer County Conservation District. Featuring outdoor, hands-on activities designed to meet PA Chapter 4 Academic Standards, Munnell Run Farm Foundation, Inc. received the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence in Education and Outreach in 2003. MRF depends on grants and donations for its educational programs, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements.

747 Greenville Road  
Mercer, PA 16137  
(724) 662- 2242 phone

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<sup>12</sup> **Conneaut Lake/French Creek Valley Conservancy** website, <http://frenchcreekconservancy.allegheny.edu/index.html>.

<sup>13</sup> The French Creek Project website, <http://frenchcreek.allegheny.edu/>.

(724) 662-3905 fax

[mercercdd@verizon.net](mailto:mercercdd@verizon.net) email

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

The **Sandy Creek Conservancy**<sup>14</sup> is a non-profit organization directed by local people and dedicated to environmental concerns, including educational efforts, productive land uses, careful recreation planning and sound land management practices. The Sandy Creek Conservancy was established in 1959 to help solve the problems of two small towns, namely, Sandy Lake and Stoneboro, in northeastern Mercer County. Periodic flooding of Sandy Creek was ended in 1971 when the flood gates closed creating Lake Wilhelm. The Conservancy

- Awards scholarships for McKeever's Outstanding Student Teachers of the Year
- Provides scholarships for elementary students who participate in summer programs at the McKeever Center
- Monitors activities within the Sandy Creek Watershed

P.O. Box 147

Sandy Lake, PA 16145

(724)458-7003 phone

[sean@mckeeper.org](mailto:sean@mckeeper.org) email

The **Shenango Conservancy** is non-profit land trust organization incorporated in 1986. Its goals include historic preservation, conservation, and tourism development in the watershed of the Shenango River. In 1990, the Conservancy completed the restoration of the historic Kidd's Mill Covered Bridge, a major two-year undertaking by volunteers and contractors. Future plans for the covered bridge include development of a park with picnic areas, a canoe launch, landscaping, and improved parking. Other projects include maintenance of the Shenango Trail, public education of history and nature, preservation of the Beaver to Erie Canal and other historic sites.

747 Greenville Rd

Mercer, PA 16137

(724) 662-2242

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#### **HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS**

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The **Mercer County Historical Society** (MCHS) is a private, nonprofit group (501c3) established in 1947. MCHS headquarters are located at the Anderson/Magoffin Complex, 119 South Pitt Street, Mercer, PA. The organization is led by a 21-member board of directors, 5 officers, and 7 staff persons; the executive director is a full time employee. About three thousand guests visit MCHS sites annually, with just over one third being children on school field trips. MCHS sites and services are free and open to the public; donations are accepted and encouraged. MCHS has knowledgeable, trained tour guides at each of its sites.

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<sup>14</sup> McKeever Environmental Learning Center website, <http://www.mckeeper.org/scc.html>.

In 1998, MCHS fostered the development of **the Mercer County Historical Societies Coalition (MCHSC)**. This group includes thirteen historic and preservation organizations in the County.

The **Mercer County Genealogical Society** is a non-profit organization staffed by volunteers with a mission to promote the research of family history and to preserve historical data. The Society is located in the Shenango Valley Community Library, 11 North Sharpville Avenue, Sharon. The research holdings of the society include records from county census, churches, funeral homes, and the county home. The society also maintains a collection of cemetery books, family histories, city directories, and courthouse certificates (birth, marriage, and death).

**The Greenville Area Historical Society** - Greenville, PA is the oldest city in Mercer County. Founded in 1798 as West Greenville, it became a borough in 1865 and changed its name to Greenville. The Greenville Area Historical Society was once housed on the campus of Thiel College, but as of spring 2003, it is located at the Waugh House at 25 West Main Street. The Society's museum boasts rooms dedicated to different eras, such as the Civil War, WWI, and WWII, as well as to various themes, such as industry, health and medicine, and theater. The Society presents a yearly lecture series and sponsors other activities such as ethnic heritage festivals, walking tours and an oral history program focusing on longtime area residents. The Society is led by a 15-member board of directors and professional staff.

23 West Main Street  
Greenville, PA 16125  
724-588-9432  
[www.greenvillehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greenvillehistoricalsociety.org)

The **Greenville Museum Alliance** was formed in December 2002 and legalized in 2003 with a mission for promoting, preserving and presenting Greenville's storied history. The GMA serves as an umbrella organization for the Canal Museum, the Greenville Railroad Park, and the Greenville historic society, to coordinate fundraiser, special events, and grant proposals.

The Stewart House is the home of the **Hermitage Historical Society**, located at 5465 E. State Street. The Society currently focuses its efforts on topical research, such as the city's oldest homes and the families who built them, Veterans from the Revolutionary War to the present, the City's 25 Cemeteries, canal history, early settlers, and photo-history.

5465 East State Street  
Hermitage, PA 16148  
724-346-0419

In 1998, the Grove City area celebrated the 200th anniversary of its founding. During that year, the rich history of the Grove City area was rediscovered through celebrations, publications, and an original play. Many citizens expressed an interest in preserving this local history. Some of those citizens suggested forming a **Grove City Historical Society**<sup>15</sup> in order to preserve the local history. The historical society is financially supported by memberships. The society has been

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<sup>15</sup> Grove City Historical Society website, <http://www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org/>.

involved in the dedication of historical markers on Broad Street and in the preservation of the Hand Wrought Aluminum Shop of Arthur Armour, a local craftsman. In addition, the society's website hosts an on-line walking tour of historic homes in the Grove City area.

111 College Ave.  
P.O. Box 764  
Grove City, PA 16127  
724-458-1798  
[gcahs@wononline.net](mailto:gcahs@wononline.net)  
<http://www.grovecityhistoricalsociety.org/>

The **Stoneboro Community & Historical Society** office is located in the Caboose on Railroad Street at Stoneboro Station Park.

Lake St.  
Stoneboro, PA 16153  
412-376-4190

The **Jamestown Historical Society** was founded in 1974 with a mission to preserve the history of Jamestown and surrounding townships. Its home, the Gibson House, contains displays and local artifacts that have been authenticated by research and local tradition.

The **Jamestown Future Foundation** is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing and expanding the cultural and educational life of a rural community and surrounding areas.

The **Sharpsville Area Historical Society** serves the Sharpsville, Clark, and South Pymatuning areas – the northern part of the Greater Shenango Valley.

Chloe Pierce Community Chapel  
131 North Mercer Avenue  
Sharpsville, PA 16150  
Hours of Operation: Call for appointment

The **Wheatland Historical Society** documents and celebrates local history through displays located in the Borough Hall.

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#### **RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS**

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The **Shenango Outing Club** is non-profit recreation club based in Greenville. The outing club organizes and leads various recreational activities throughout Mercer County and the northwest Pennsylvania region. The club maintains the Shenango Trail.

c/o Riverside Park Nature Center  
PO Box 244  
Greenville, PA 16125

## **Western Pennsylvania Region**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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The **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy** protects, conserves and restores land and water for the diversity of the region's plants, animals and their ecosystems. Through science-based strategies, collaboration, leadership and recognition of the relationship between humankind and nature, WPC achieves tangible conservation outcomes for present and future generations. The conservancy is guided by a 25-member Board of Directors, 11 officers and senior professional staff. WPC provides for the long-term stewardship of natural and historic resources by conserving and preserving forests and woodlands, watersheds and waterways, wildlife habitat, and agricultural lands. Through its land protection programs, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy conserves land of ecological, scenic, and recreational significance. Most of the 216,000 acres of WPC-protected land is now publicly owned and makes up some of the state's premier parks, forests, gamelands, and natural areas.

In addition to direct acquisition of land for publicly beneficial projects, WPC works with private landowners to purchase and administer conservation easements and to develop plans and construct projects that minimize impacts to the land from farm and forestry activities while at the same time providing viable economic return.

WPC's Natural Heritage Program science initiatives include a variety of studies, including County Natural Heritage Inventories, assessments of flora and fauna in state and national parks, at Allegheny National Forest, studies of plants and animals in natural lakes and streams, and more. Projects also include the description of landscapes and habitats, and investigations into the ecology of rare species. These initiatives include:

- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) - formerly named PNDI (Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory), this program records scientific data about occurrences of the Commonwealth's biological resources. This information is used as part of planning and permitting processes.
- Glacial Lakes Flora Project - an ongoing study of the plant life inhabiting the eight natural, glacial lakes in Northwestern Pennsylvania. This intensive project is just one way the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy makes use of volunteers.
- Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Study - this native Pennsylvanian snake is a candidate species for federal classification. WPC is doing some of the most thorough research to date on this relatively timid reptile.
- Aquatic Classification Project - WPC is working with The Nature Conservancy to develop a classification of all of the fish, insect, and mussel communities in Pennsylvania's streams and rivers. This classification will provide us with a more holistic understanding of aquatic life in the state.
- County Natural Heritage Inventories - WPC is involved in a statewide effort to conduct inventories of all of the species of special concern in each county of the Commonwealth.

The **Watershed Assistance Center of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy** serves watershed organizations statewide. The twelve-member staff of WAC provides technical

assistance in the areas of science, legal issues, education and outreach, and project identification and prioritization, as well as administrative support. WAC is located in Blairsville, PA.

## **RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS**

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**Venture Outdoors**<sup>16</sup> is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to making the outdoor recreation community a vibrant centerpiece of Western Pennsylvania and nearby sections of West Virginia and Ohio. The organization works to increase awareness of, participation in and appreciation for many regional outdoor amenities. Venture Outdoors can be reached at 412-255-0564 or [info@ventureoutdoors.org](mailto:info@ventureoutdoors.org).

The **Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen (WPW)**,<sup>17</sup> founded in 1969, is one of the largest bicycle clubs in Pennsylvania. WPW promotes the general interests of bicyclists, to educate bicyclists in safe riding methods in adherence to the State Vehicle Code, to defend the rights of bicyclists, and to advocate the use of bicycles for pleasure, health, and transportation. The WPW is affiliated with the League of American Bicyclists (LAB, previously known as League of American Wheelmen (LAW), the Bicycle Federation of Pennsylvania (Bike FED-PA), the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) and the Pittsburgh Area Cycling Coalition (PACC). WPW members financed half of the abandoned railroad assessment study by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy that gave birth to the local Rail-Trail movement. WPW support has helped form the organizations to promote and develop the following trails: the Montour Trail, Yough River Trail, Three Rivers Heritage Trail, Butler-Freeport Trail, Harmony Trail, Allegheny Highlands Trail, Armstrong County Trail, Roaring Run Trail, and the National Pike Trail. WPW is based in Pittsburgh and can be reached at 412-422-2234.

## **State Agencies and Organizations**

The following agencies are listed to acknowledge their purpose and priorities for managing public lands and supporting sound community development throughout Pennsylvania's local communities. To the extent that these agencies offer technical and financial assistance to communities, the state agencies' priorities are portals to technical and financial assistance programs. When local project sponsors can demonstrate that their projects would implement or advance these priorities, funding is more likely to be awarded.

### **Public Sector**

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The **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** is charged with maintaining and preserving the 116 state parks; managing the 2.1 million acres of state forest land; providing information on the state's ecological and geologic resources; and establishing community conservation partnerships with grants and technical assistance to

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<sup>16</sup> Venture Outdoors website, <http://www.wpfi.org/index.asp>.

<sup>17</sup> WPW website, <http://www.wpwbikeclub.org>.

benefit rivers, trails, greenways, local parks and recreation, regional heritage parks, open space and natural areas.<sup>18</sup>

DCNR recognizes that its conservation mission extends well beyond the boundaries of public lands and seeks the assistance of advocates in the public and private sectors to foster stewardship among local communities, sister state agencies, non-profit conservation organizations, and private landowners. As the steward agency of Pennsylvania forests, **DCNR's Bureau of Forestry** manages over 2 million acres of state forest land and provides technical assistance to private and other forest land owners. The Bureau seeks to create a cultural and economic environment that fosters and supports a stewardship ethic within the Commonwealth. The Bureau provides advice, guidance and technical assistance concerning forest resources management for forest products, wildlife habitat, insect and diseases of forest trees, control of invasive and competing species, wetland enhancement and timber sales. The Bureau also offers specialized programs on forest management.

DCNR also acknowledges that recreation planning is an increasingly complex responsibility for local communities, as demands for recreation services increase, as communities age, and as developers and environmentalists debate land values and purposes. In the midst of these challenges, "recreation offers real hope in the face of society's real problems — that it can have a substantial role in improving health and fitness, reducing substance abuse, stimulating tourism and economic growth and, in general, making life better for Pennsylvania citizens."<sup>19</sup> **DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation** has researched and published white papers on several major issues to help communities understand and deal with these issues. These papers have become DCNR's action plan and can be accessed at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us>.

To address these challenges, DCNR has focused its support for local parks and recreation on creating healthy and livable communities that include open space, linkage of public space, and recreation facilities.

The **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** is the state agency largely responsible for administering Pennsylvania's environmental laws and regulations. Its responsibilities include reducing air pollution; making sure our drinking water is safe; protecting water quality in our rivers and streams; making sure waste is handled properly; managing the Commonwealth's recycling programs; and helping citizens prevent pollution and comply with the Commonwealth's environmental regulations. DEP's priority open space initiative is Growing Greener, described below under "Joint Initiatives."

Since 1999, the **Governor's Center for Local Government Services**, within the Department of Community and Economic Development's<sup>20</sup> has served as the principal state entity responsible for land use assistance and monitoring. The center encourages communities to plan wisely for future growth and development while preserving and protecting the environment and natural resources. The Governor's Center promotes the preservation of open space and the provision of recreational opportunities as important components of sound community planning, as

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<sup>18</sup> Pennsylvania's Recreation Plan 2004-2008, April 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

established by the provisions of the Municipalities Planning Code and the cooperative technical and financial assistance of DCNR.

The Center offers educational programs through the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors to local government officials and staff, as well as technical assistance with land use management techniques. The Shared Municipal Services program and Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program are the center's financial assistance services that promote cooperative service agreements and planning, respectively.

The Center's priorities include its partnerships with sister state agencies to fund cooperative initiatives to support sound land use planning and promote recreation, greenway, and open space planning to local governments. These cooperative initiatives include:

- Funding to the Natural Lands Trust to promote the integration of conservation by design concepts into local plans and regulations.
- Funding to the Conservation Fund to develop a Pennsylvania-based "Better Models for Development" book.
- Funding to assist counties in completing Natural Resources Inventories.

**Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation (PennDOT)** is responsible for meeting the transportation needs of the Commonwealth. In addition to highways, PennDOT also provides transportation programs and funding for bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as transit riders. With this multi-modal responsibility, PennDOT was one of the sponsor agencies for Pennsylvania's greenway initiative.

PennDOT's current priorities include its Home Town Streets/Safe Routes to School program, which reimburses communities for sidewalk and trail improvements, and context sensitive solutions, which promote the design of transportation facilities that meet travel needs and support other community development goals, such as visual character and pedestrian mobility.

The **Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)** is the sole agency responsible for the protection, propagation, and distribution of game fish, fish bait, bait fish, amphibians, reptiles, and aquatic organisms. The Commission is also responsible for managing recreational boating in the Commonwealth.<sup>21</sup> While other agencies focus on land-based linkages and recreational experiences, PFBC focuses on the water-based environment.

More specifically, PFBC enforces the Title 30 Fish and Boat Law, which addresses disturbances and pollution of waterways, and cooperation between farmers, fishermen, and boater for land access to waters.

PFBC launched the water trail program in response to increased demand for information on fishing and boating opportunities and the need for associated boating safety information to boaters. The water trail program is a co-sponsored program, described below under "Joint Initiatives."

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<sup>21</sup> Pennsylvania's Recreation Plan 2004-2008, 2004.

In July 2005, the PFBC initiated the Boating Facilities Grant Program to fund local projects to develop, improve, or rehabilitate public recreational boat launches and encouraged eligible public entities to apply for a second round of funding through the Boating Facilities Grant Program.

1353 Brent Road, Volant, PA 16156  
(724) 748-0012  
[jomo018@hotmail.com](mailto:jomo018@hotmail.com)

A sister agency to the PFBC, the **PA Game Commission (PGC)** is responsible for the protection, propagation, and distribution of game birds and mammals. The PGC has recently adopted a new management approach. Wildlife management units (WMUs) are now the geographic basis for management techniques and decisions by the Game Commission. Mercer County lies within WMU 1A. The Game Commission monitors the habitat and harvest of bear, antlered and antlerless deer, and various small game in Mercer County and across the state. Statistics for recent bear and deer harvest can be found in Chapter 2.

The northwest regional office of the Game Commission serves Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties, and is located in Franklin, PA.

The **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's** mission is to encourage and promote agriculture and related industries throughout the Commonwealth. Its mission is accomplished through three major program areas: consumer protection, market development and promotion and farmland preservation. The Region 1 Office serves Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren Counties and is located in Meadville. The office is home to six professional staff members, representing four of the department's bureaus:

- Bureau of Food Safety
- Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services
- Bureau of Plant Industry
- Bureau of Ride & Measurement Standards (Weights & Measures Division)

13410 Dunham Road,  
Meadville, PA 16335  
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(814) 333-1431 fax  
[www.pda.state.pa.us](http://www.pda.state.pa.us)

### ***Joint Initiatives***

The state agencies have partnered together on several statewide initiatives, including some led by the private sector.

The **Coldwater Heritage Partnership (CHP)**, based in Bellefonte, Centre County, is a collaborative effort between the PFBC, DCNR, Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program and Pennsylvania Trout. The Coldwater Heritage Partnership provides coordination, technical assistance, and funding support specifically for the evaluation, conservation and

protection of Pennsylvania's coldwater streams and watersheds. Organization start-up, planning studies, restoration/mitigation, and educational projects are eligible for Partnership funding.

**Growing Greener** ties economic and community development together with environmental initiatives. Established by Governor Ridge and continued by Governor Rendell, the Growing Greener program funds projects that return contaminated industrial sites and other polluted sites to productive use; protects farmland and open space from development; cleans up polluted streams and reclaims abandoned mines; and improves state and community parks and green infrastructure for fish and wildlife. Growing Greener is also the source of state farmland preservation funds allocated to counties for agricultural conservation easements.

*Growing Greener: Conservation By Design™* is a state-wide program that builds conservation principles into the development process. Based on the approach developed by Randell Arendt at the Natural Lands Trust, this program targets the community development designers (developers) and decision-makers (municipal officials). Municipal officials can amend the process into their development regulations and developers can apply the approach to their design process.

The program's four components...

1. Enable participants to envision the built-out condition of their communities under current regulations and assess the potential for private conservation efforts to conserve open space and valued resources.
2. Encourage communities to identify preferred open space lands geographically in their comprehensive plans.
3. Promote reasonable zoning regulations that provide options rather than prescriptions for development.
4. Provide municipal officials and developers with a subdivision process that conserves open space and allows economic growth.

The program is recognized for its non-confrontational approach that protects a portion of each traditionally defined parcel, "builds" open space into new development, and requires little to no land acquisition or easement costs.

*Growing Greener* is a collaborative program of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR); the Governor's Center for Local Government Services and Natural Lands Trust, with additional direction provided by state and local agencies including the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, the Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension, and the private sector.

The **Important Bird Area (IBA)** program aims to help combat threats to bird populations and the habitats we often share with them, by conserving the most essential and vulnerable areas with voluntary management efforts. Audubon Pennsylvania, a private, non-profit organization, is the lead organizations for this program. Agency grants and private donations are used to develop an IBA database, write conservation plans, implement conservation actions, develop volunteer training for monitoring programs, and engage local communities in conservation activities. Seventy-eight IBA sites have been designated in Pennsylvania; two of these are in

Mercer County. The program is open to additional site nominations. Details about the nomination process can be found at [www.audubon.org/chapter/pa/pa/iba/facts\\_info\\_site\\_book.html](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/pa/pa/iba/facts_info_site_book.html).

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

DCNR supports and advances this project by awarding additional rating points to IMAP-designated sites when scoring grant applications, thus increasing the likelihood of a grant award.

**LandSavers** is a partnership of the Heritage Conservancy, DEP, GreenWorks, and DCNR. This public-private partnership advocates the benefits of open space, the costs of development and land preservation, and funding options for open space programs, among other related topics. LandSavers can be access online at <http://www.greentreks.org/landsavers/index.htm>.

**Pennsylvania Water Trails Program** is a joint initiative of DCNR, the Fish and Boat Commission, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) to encourage tourism and economic revenues to local communities, to provide water-based recreation, and to foster environmental stewardship among paddlers.<sup>22</sup> The program provides guidelines to communities and organizations that want to develop a designated water trail, technical assistance in the development process, and marketing of designated water trails through Paddle Pennsylvania, a print and online publication.

**Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA)** is composed of more than 500 public, private, academic, professional, and volunteer groups that are working to promote policies and environments that support healthy eating and activity. This organization began operating in 2003 as a facilitator for the implementation of Pennsylvania's Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan to Prevent Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases. Its mission is to build state-wide capacity for developing an environment to support and promote active lifestyles and healthy food choices through collaboration and coordinated communication. The organization has three goals: to serve as a communication clearinghouse and statewide nutrition and activity resource; to facilitate the implementation of Pennsylvania's Nutrition & Physical Activity Plan; and to assess the effects of statewide PANA-related activities.

The **Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership**<sup>23</sup> works to conserve biodiversity statewide by promoting communication and cooperation among a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Partnership members represent conservation and environmental organizations, government agencies, business and industry, scientists and academic institutions, sportsmen, and private landowners. The partnership is in the midst of a multi-year process to formulate the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Conservation Plan (BCP) that identifies gaps in scientific knowledge,

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.pecwest.org/watertrails.dwt>.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.pabiodiversity.org>

establishes criteria for measuring Pennsylvania's biodiversity, and consolidates and completes recommendations for the protection of Pennsylvania's biodiversity. One of the plan's goals is to establish informed priorities for inventory, monitoring, and conservation at a statewide level. The partnership is led by a 22-member Board of Directors, including representatives from several state agencies; its two-person staff is based in Pittsburgh.

**Other cooperative agency initiatives** include the development of a Pennsylvania-based "**Better Models for Development**" book, led by the Conservation Fund, and **Natural Resource Inventories** for every county in the state.

**Penn State Cooperative Extension in Mercer County**<sup>24</sup> gives local residents easy access to the resources and expertise of the Pennsylvania State University.<sup>25</sup> The cooperative extension offers research-based information to individuals, families, businesses and communities throughout the county on a broad range of educational programs in agriculture and the food systems; building strong families, children, and communities; environment and natural resources; and public issues. Educational programs are developed by extension staff in cooperation with volunteers, advisory committees, clients, and a board of directors. The extension program includes educational meetings, individual assistance, newsletter, resource materials, 4-H/youth development program, Master Gardeners and more. Extension staff include 11 professional and five secretarial positions.

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463 North Perry Highway  
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<http://mercer.extension.psu.edu>

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### **Private Sector**

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In addition to the IBA program, **Audubon Pennsylvania** has also developed **The Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail Guide** to lead wildlife observers to locations that afford ample opportunity to view birds and other wildlife. The guide is available in print or online formats.

**PA Cleanways, Inc.** is a non-profit organization dedicated to the fight against illegal dumping and littering in Pennsylvania's communities. The organization programs site and community cleanups, site adoptions and education events and activities. Site adoptions enable grassroots organizations to adopt responsibility for keeping a designated area trash-free. Local roads, parks, greenways, waterways and trails are common adoptees.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

The **Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)**<sup>26</sup> is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to sound environmental policy and decision-making by state government. The council provides critiques of proposed legislation by testifying and publishing its findings for members. PEC was a strong advocate for the passage of the 2000 amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code. PEC's work in the northeastern region of Pennsylvania has focused primarily on statewide initiatives such as the Susquehanna Greenway and the Pennsylvania Water Trail program. It has also promoted the reuse of brownfields and grayfields in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties.

**The Pennsylvania Organization for Watershed & Rivers (POWR)** advocates for the protection, restoration and enjoyment of water resources and conducts programs that foster stewardship, communication, leadership, and action. The organization promotes watershed awareness and education and operates the Keystone Watershed Monitoring Network, which contains water quality data, network contact information, training information, volunteer information, funding information, and service providers. POWR is based in Harrisburg.

The **Pennsylvania B.A.S.S. Federation**<sup>27</sup> is a nonprofit organization made up of seven districts with 102 bass fishing clubs and 1,518 members. This organization represents all the interests of local bass clubs and districts within the state. Pennsylvania B.A.S.S. Federation promotes district conservation efforts and youth fishing, "Casting Kids." PA B.A.S.S. is based in Mercer, PA.

The **Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society** was founded in 1935 and is the principal organization for promoting quality recreation and park opportunities to Pennsylvania residents through education, training, technical assistance, and other support to local, county, state, and federal recreation and park providers. Its mission statement is to unite recreation and park professionals and interested citizens to enhance their leadership in meeting the recreational needs of Pennsylvanians. The Society offers information about branches & programs, education & training, library & resources, public policy & legislation, awards & scholarships, and grants & funding. PRPS is based in State College, PA.

The **Pennsylvania State Snowmobile Association (PSSA)**<sup>28</sup> is a partnership of individuals, businesses, and sporting clubs promoting the safe recreational use of snowmobiles. The Association works to establish local clubs, such as the Northeast PA SnoTrails Association, and sponsors annual safety classes.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.pecpa.org/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.pabass.com>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.pasnow.org/>

## **Interstate and National Agencies and Organizations**

**American Rivers** is a national non-profit conservation organization founded in 1973 and dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy natural rivers that sustain people, fish, and wildlife. The organization focuses on America's most endangered rivers, clean water, dam removal, hydropower dam reform, wild rivers, sprawl, water scarcity and instream flow, endangered species, the rivers of Lewis and Clark, community watersheds, Army Corps reform, river science, and the rivers of Puget Sound. *A Citizens' Agenda for Rivers*, which creates a unified vision for improving national river health, was developed by collaborating partners of American Rivers. The plan has three priorities: water quality, water quantity, and well planned development.

The **American Canoe Association (ACA)**, founded in 1880, has a stated mission to promote the health, social and personal benefits of canoeing, kayaking, and rafting and to serve the needs of paddlers for safe, enjoyable and quality paddling opportunities. The Association attempts to communicate the benefits of canoeing, kayaking, and rafting as lifetime recreation and keeps participants informed about paddlesport opportunities and activities. In the fields of paddlesport instruction and education, ACA is the nation's recognized leader. The Association also has a conservation and public policy department that helps to ensure clean, accessible recreational waterways for mutual enjoyment of paddlers and other recreational users. The ACA is one of the leading organizations that aid in the enforcement of the Clean Water Act. The ACA is based in Springfield, VA.

The **National Park Service**, an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, is focused on four areas: parks & recreation, history & culture, nature & science, and interpretation & education. The National Park Service works with communities to preserve and care for neighborhood treasures through grants, tax credits, and other assistance; works with teachers to create unique learning opportunities in science and history; and helps plan personal adventures with National Register of Historic Places travel itineraries.

The **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC)** works to enrich America's communities and countryside by networking public trails from former rail lines and developing new trail corridors. RTC promotes state and national policies that enable trail development and it works to protect trail-supporting funding programs. RTC also provides consulting services for trail development. RTC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with more than 100,000 members and supporters. Founded in 1986, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is located in Washington, D.C. and six regional offices nationwide, including one in Harrisburg.

The **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS)** provides technical and financial assistance programs to the public to

- Improve water quality
- Reduce soil erosion
- Control flooding
- Reclaim mined areas
- Inventory and assess local natural resources
- Survey, layout and design of soil and water conservation practices

## *Agencies and Organizations*

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USDA NRCS provides specific service to farmers, including farm conservation planning and manure storage design/planning. The Mercer office of the USDA NRCS employs two professional staff.

559 Greenville Road, Suite B, Mercer, PA 16137

(724) 662-3740 phone

(724) 662-0278 fax

[epetrus@pa.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:epetrus@pa.nrcs.usda.gov) email

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## Chapter 4

# An Assessment of Needs, Threats and Opportunities

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

## **Standards and Approaches**

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

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

### **Standards**

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

### **Approaches**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 4-2 Parks, Open Space and Pathways Classifications

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Greenways Committee**

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

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

Through the various meeting, the Committee members:

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

### **Stakeholder Workshops**

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

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

- Natural/Historic Resources and Recreation

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

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

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

Source: Gannett Fleming

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Mercer County Surveys Results**

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Written Survey

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

  - Sledding Areas
  - Ice Skating areas
  - Skateboarding and Rollerblading areas
  - Wilderness Areas
  - Indoor pools
  - Environmental Education areas
  - Natural Areas
  - Cabin Rentals

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

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

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

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

## Assessment of Needs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Assessment of Needs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Recreation Planning

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

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

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

Source: Mercer County Regional Council of Governments

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Mercer County Regional Council of Governments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Recreation Programming**

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

Overviews of programs offered in other communities are described below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Facility-based Recreation Analysis in Mercer County

### Countywide Analysis

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Gannett Fleming

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

## Analysis for Rural Communities

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

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

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

Source: Gannett Fleming

## Future Population and Projected Recreation Demand

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

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

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

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

Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Bondata, 2003

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

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

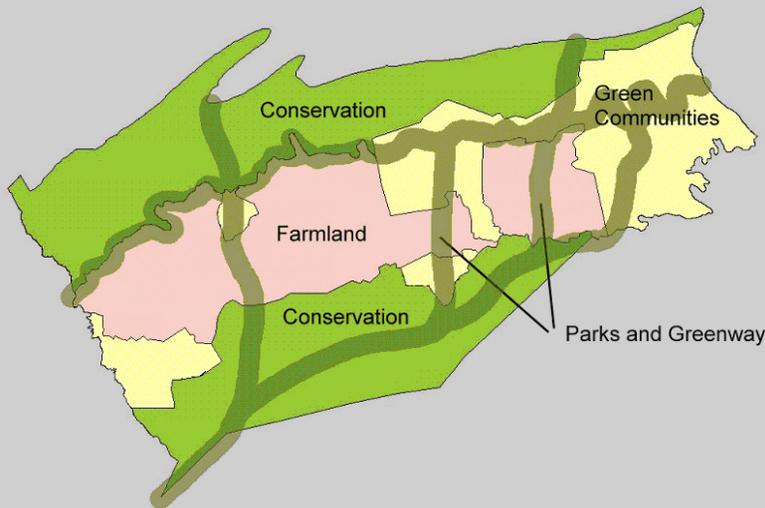
As stated above, every community looks at recreation and open space differently. Pennsylvania's open space and recreation initiative is gaining ground across the state. A handful of counties have completed and adopted some form of open space and recreation plan, and many others are in progress. Below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

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

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

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

#### Cumberland County Open Space Preservation Concept



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

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## Chapter 5

# Vision and Goals for Open Space and Recreation in Mercer County

Without a clear, defined vision of what a community wants to achieve, there is no significant probability that it will achieve the desired results.

The Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan was developed concurrently with the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan. The plan development and public participation processes were intentionally conducted in tandem to foster consistency between the two plans. The comprehensive plan is the broader document that assures the coordination and consistency of community development projects across the county. The greenways plan aims to coordinate conservation efforts at the county level and provide guidance for recreation facilities and services in the rural communities of the county.

The first part of this chapter highlights elements of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan that provide a foundation for the more specific directives of the greenways plan; the greenways vision and goals are presented in the second portion of the chapter. The chapter concludes with three maps that illustrate the location of designated greenways, open space conservation areas, and the countywide recreation network.

## **From the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan**

### **The Vision**

The Mercer County Comprehensive Plan defines a broad vision for community development and conservation. The vision provides direction for the greenways plan by addressing natural resources, community character and recreational and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors. The vision statement is the slogan, albeit a long one, that expresses the kind of community that residents want – the kind of community they want to continue to become.

### **Mercer County Vision Statement**

#### *In the year 2025,...*

*...Mercer County maintains a diverse array of urban, suburban and rural community types, yet has grown in a manner that respects the rural character and provides a high quality of life for all residents.*

*...the County has embraced the concept of "smart growth," as evidenced through guiding policies, strong leadership, and citizen feedback.*

*...existing towns continue to invest in their core districts and continue to grow in areas that are suitable for development. Municipalities plan and implement jointly to save costs and provide high-quality services as a region.*

*...economic opportunities are flourishing within the County, creating new jobs and attracting new residents. Sustainable forestry and agriculture are strong economic components of the rural landscape and economy.*

*...the County provides many recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities for residents and visitors through sound planning and program development.*

*...young persons are staying or moving to the region to take advantage of abundant entertainment and recreation opportunities, as well as safe, affordable neighborhoods well-served by water/sewer and telecommunications utilities.*

*...existing residents and newcomers enjoy many opportunities to live, work, learn, retire, and play among the County's strong community fabric and friendly people.*

## **The Growth and Development Policy Statement**

The comprehensive plan paired the vision with a growth and development policy statement to outline the patterns, methods, and tools that the county and its partners would use to work toward the vision.

### ***Mercer County Growth and Policy Statement***

*Mercer County and its communities should plan for continued development and should work to enhance the sense of place in each of the urban, suburban, and rural areas. This will be established by striving to achieve the Community Vision and by establishing policies that:*

- *define existing developed areas and areas for future growth*
- *encourage redevelopment in existing developed areas and encourage new development near existing developed areas*
- *balance a variety of land uses and densities, as well as combinations of uses, appropriate to urban, suburban, and rural character*
- *encourage land uses that support a strong tax base, including agriculture and forest industries in rural areas*
- *encourage development patterns that complement and preserve existing natural, environmental, and historic features*
- *coordinate infrastructure (water, sewer, and transportation) upgrades and extensions in areas of existing development and those areas targeted for growth*
- *incorporate public participation in the decision-making and land development process*

## **The Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan laid the groundwork for further discussion and goal setting for the greenways plan. The following excerpts from the comprehensive plan highlight the fact that resources and recreation were integrated into the comprehensive plan and not treated separately.

Education objectives from the Land Use Plan express the need for a better understanding of land use value and impacts.

### ***Land Use - Education Objectives***

- *Educate the general public about land use issues within the County and their implications for the future.*
- *Educate landowners, residents and prospective residents about the value of the agricultural and forest industries.*
- *Encourage stewardship of agricultural and forest land for recreation, timber production, wildlife habitat, and water quality protection*

The Economic Development Plan gives specific attention to rural industries, which if conducted in economically and environmentally sustainable ways, will be viable long term industries that can withstand most development pressure. The Economic Development Plan also recognizes the county's green infrastructure (both natural and man-made) as an amenity to be promoted within the county and as a tourism feature.

***Economic Development – Rural Industries Development Objectives***

- *Provide support for new agri-businesses, marketing, and other agriculturally related activities to encourage the sustainability and livelihood of the industry*
- *Promote and educate on the opportunities for sustainable forestry in urban, suburban, and rural areas and support the development of forestry related economic development initiatives*
- *Support the development of agriculture and forestry niche markets*

***Economic Development - Tourism and Community Promotion Objectives***

- *Promote the County's vision and incorporate the County's natural areas, green infrastructure, and wealth of recreational opportunities into tourism initiatives*

The community Facilities Plan draws attention to the need to consider stormwater generation as development is proposed, approved and constructed, in light of the management requirements for detention/retention, recharge and flood mitigation (water quantity) and source water and aquatic habitat protection (water quality).

***Community Facilities - Stormwater Management Objectives***

- *Work with municipalities to update stormwater regulations to adequately address water quality as required by government agencies*
- *Encourage best practices and innovative stormwater management techniques to minimize runoff from new land development, thereby reducing potential for increased flooding and flood damage*

The Natural Resources Plan emphasizes the connectedness of natural features as coherent functional systems and directs the collection and maintenance of data and analysis to assist officials in decision-making. This component also advocates sustainable use and management of resources for long-term productivity and environmental quality. In addition, the natural resources plan directs the county to demonstrate and encourage stewardship among its residents.

***Natural Resources - Systems Objectives***

- *Coordinate land use planning with resource knowledge and management.*
- *Strengthen municipal regulations to minimize the impact of development on sensitive environmental features and their functions.*
- *Assist municipalities in assembling essential data to support local regulations.*
- *Develop and maintain a detailed resource inventory for each planning region or watershed in the County.*
- *Promote connectedness of landscape features.*

***Natural Resources - Quality Objectives***

- *Promote forest stewardship by landowners and residents for recreation, timber production, wildlife habitat, and water quality protection*
- *Utilize existing organizations to promote the use of sustainable forestry practices to woodland owners.*

***Natural Resources - Resource-based Industries Objectives***

- *Promote the accessibility and marketability of local forest and agricultural products through farmers' markets, trade shows, etc.*
- *Promote managed development of tourism destinations, activities, and programs that showcase the County's natural resources*

**Natural Resources - Education Goal:** *Demonstrate (or support demonstration of) the value of the natural environment to landowners, residents, and visitors*

**Objectives**

- *Integrate environmental education efforts with nature-based recreation sites.*

The Cultural Resources Plan addresses not only the historic assets of the county, but also its contemporary culture that ties its communities together.

**Cultural Resources - Historic Preservation Objectives**

- *Support preservation and conservation easements of historic sites.*
- *Encourage innovative development approaches that integrate historic resources into new site and building design*
- *Encourage innovative approaches to adaptive reuse and building rehabilitation/restoration*

**Supporting Tourism and Community Promotion Objective**

- *Promote cultural sites and events to residents and visitors*

**Supporting Recreation Objective**

- *Integrate historical interpretation efforts with the recreation network*

**Cultural Resources - Contemporary Identity Objectives**

- *Promote strong community leadership and volunteerism.*
- *Promote heritage events and other cultural activities*
- *Promote community coordination and cooperation where common values and objectives exist*

County policy for recreation in the urban communities and multi-municipal planning regions is provided in the comprehensive plan. Many of the same concepts are applied to the greenways plan as well.

**Urban Recreation**

**Goal:** *Support development and sustainable management of a recreational network across Mercer County*

**Recreation Network Objectives**

- *Promote a guideline of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents in urbanized areas.*
- *Encourage urbanized municipalities to provide neighborhood parks within walking or short-driving distance (10 minute walk or 5 minute drive) of residential areas.*
- *Develop and support development of on-road and off-road trails that link residential neighborhoods with park facilities.*
- *Encourage the development of accessible resource-based recreation opportunities, e.g. fishing piers, playgrounds, etc.*
- *Encourage the development of adequate recreational infrastructure, e.g. parking, trash receptacles, picnic and seating benches, restrooms, etc.*

## ***Vision and Goals for Open Space and Rural Recreation***

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- *Assist municipalities in budgeting and exploring funding options for facility maintenance and policing.*
- *Encourage new development to incorporate trail connections with adjacent properties.*
- *Encourage re-development of underused or substandard recreation facilities.*
- *Encourage shared use of specialized recreational facilities (e.g. indoor swimming pools) that require significant investment and operations/maintenance support.*

***Services Goal:*** *Support provision of year round recreational programs for residents of all ages*

### ***Objectives***

- *Support recreational and leisure programs for specific age groups (pre-school, elementary, teens, adults, seniors) and for intergenerational groups.*
- *Integrate environmental education and historical interpretation efforts with the recreation network.*

Finally, the transportation element of the comprehensive plan directs the county and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (the regional transportation planning agency) to provide a transportation system that is safe and efficient for all travelers, including bicycle and pedestrian route travelers.

### ***Transportation - Accessibility and Mobility Objectives***

- *Develop and maintain an integrated transportation system utilizing bicycle/pedestrian, rail, air, and highway networks in meeting the goals of TEA-21.*

## **Ingredients for Livable Communities**

The 1996 Mercer County Comprehensive Plan outlined several critical “ingredients” that make communities great places to live. These ingredients were reviewed and updated in the new comprehensive plan. The ingredients are the anticipated and hoped-for outcomes of the county’s planning efforts.

The ingredients most relevant to the greenways plan are presented in the following matrix. The complete matrix can be found in Chapter 3 of the comprehensive plan.

Greenways, Open Space and Recreation Ingredients from the

**Ingredients for Livable Communities Matrix**

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

VISION THEMES								
	Recreational Opportunities	Cultural, Historic, and Entertainment Resources	Economic Development	Smart Growth & Community Character	Inter-governmental Cooperation	Environmental and Natural Resources	Infrastructure (transportation, water, sewer)	Community Social Fabric
Ingredients for livable communities	Well-maintained, well-connected parks, trails and recreational facilities	Preserved cultural and historic sites, structures, and landscapes	Productive rural industries (agri-businesses, forest industries, etc.)	Innovative land use regulations (zoning and SALDO)	Regionally consistent (possibly joint) land use policies and tools	Sustainable agricultural and forestry activities	Safe ease of movement for all modes of transportation (automotive, rail, air, bicycle, pedestrian)	Attractive public spaces
	Variety of recreational programs for all ages	Cultural and artistic events; Variety of event venues		Strong sense of community character (unique features)	Regional cooperation to deliver services (police, fire, recreation)	Available resource preservation tools (conservation easements, ASAs)		
	Recreational opportunities available to visitors/tourists	Cultural, Historic, and Entertainment Resources available to visitors and tourists		Conserved natural and historic resources within developed areas		Programs that encourage private resource stewardship		
						Detailed, up –to-date environmental resource inventory		
						Regulations that protect sensitive environmental resources		
						Designated greenway networks		

## **A Vision for Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation in Mercer County**

Residents of Mercer County clearly value the abundant natural resources and the current recreational opportunities available in the county. They also believe that more could be done to protect and manage resources more effectively, to enhance the quality and diversity of recreation, and to coordinate public and private sector efforts in these areas.

These beliefs begin to describe how residents would like the future to be different, and in fact better, than the present. They form the basis of a vision for an even better quality of life for residents in the future. It is of the utmost importance for residents to agree on what they ultimately want to accomplish for themselves and for future generations. A vision statement serves this purpose. It defines the desired outcome of this planning effort.

### **Vision Statement for Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation**

**By 2025, Mercer County will be a community where open space is recognized as a vital part of the county's character and economy.**

Open space land will be found in the county's urban, suburban and rural settings, as parks and playgrounds, as fields, pastures and woodlands, and as trails, wildlife and water ways corridors. Residents will value open space land for its qualities, functions and benefits:

- the crops, livestock and forest products it yields
- the employment and income it provides to rural landowners
- the minimal safety and infrastructure services it requires from local government
- its capacity to filter and purify the water in streams, rivers and underground aquifers
- the habitat it provides for wildlife and game species
- its pastoral and seasonal scenic beauty

And landowners will engage open space land for sustainable resource-based industries, such as agriculture, forestry, recreation, and tourism.

To achieve this vision, Mercer County residents and landowners will need a thorough understanding of what open space is, how it functions, and what benefits it offers. The county will need to designate greenways and establish policies for open space uses and management. Furthermore, the county will need to manage growth and development to minimize negative impacts on open space lands. The five goals for the open space, greenways, and outdoor recreation plan reflect the broadest level of action that Mercer County and its partners should take to fulfill the resource and recreation related needs of residents.

## **Five Goals**

With a clear understanding of the desired outcome, the process or strategy for achieving the vision can be outlined. The strategy begins with goals that identify broad topics for enhancement or improvement, and supports these goals with objectives that further direct action to specific areas of need.

### **The Greenways Goal**

**Designate and promote greenways as corridors for resource stewardship, recreation, and cultural interpretation.**

This goal advocates that the most sensitive resources receive protection from development and its impacts.

The functions of natural systems, the splendor of large natural features, and the stories of county heritage can be understood from single sites or locations, but a full appreciation of these threads of the community requires a larger view – a view that demonstrates the relationship of one site to another.

Greenways are a means to physically link these individual sites and highlight the relationships between our natural and man-made communities. Active greenways can provide public access to those sites that residents and visitors would like to observe, explore and experience in person, while passive greenways are intended to conserve the benefits of environmental systems under the management of private landowners.

Both types of greenways have a place in Mercer County. The Shenango River corridor is a candidate for an active greenway, where people can travel the corridor on land and water trails to experience its natural and cultural significance. Smaller corridors in the county are candidate for passive greenways for biological health and diversity of wildlife.

### **Objectives**

- Support the connection of protected and sensitive resources through greenways designation.
  - Designate greenways in county planning documents (text and maps).
  - Encourage municipalities to designate and protect greenways.
  - Work with greenway partners to identify and protect resources from development and its impacts.
  - Support the development of public access appropriate to the resources and its corridor context (active greenway or passive greenway).
-

### **The Open Space Goal**

**Encourage the sustainable management of natural resources for resource-based industries, particularly in designated conservation areas.**

This goal advocates that open space lands be managed with the recognition that they influence the quality of the overall environment, that the farms and forests of the county should employ best management practices, and balance short term economic benefits with long term productivity and resource health.

Residents of Mercer County rely on the presence and quality of environmental systems and open space lands for their livelihood and their quality of life. Some rely on these resources for water – the water the lands absorb, filter, and make available as groundwater in underground aquifers. Some rely on these resources for the agricultural crops and livestock and forest products they cultivate and harvest. Some rely on these resources for the public and private environments they provide for outdoor recreation. And nearly all residents appreciate the scenic seasonal beauty.

While the functions and benefits of these systems and open space lands are enjoyed by all members of the public, to at least some degree, the ownership and management of such lands lies in the hands of various public agencies and numerous private landowners.

For the most part, the working lands of the county, those that are actively engaged in agricultural and forestry, are adequately managed in the hands of private land owners. Many of these land owners have been caring and cultivating the landscape throughout their family history, and have learned and passed the management techniques through generations. Their ability to cultivate or nurture valuable, marketable products for local and regional markets provides a sustainable component to the economy and should be recognized.

Other site-specific resources are important to the overall health of the community that their management should exclude significant physical development. Floodplains are one example. These resources can remain under the ownership of private land owners as passive greenways and with management assistance and limitations provided by public or public-interest agencies.

While the various land owners may have different perspectives on the beneficiaries of the lands and their products, they need not conflict in terms of protecting the health and well-being of the community at-large. The county should promote these principles among public, private, and even public-private partnerships involved in resource ownership and management

### **Objectives**

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- Focus and refine Mercer County’s rural industries.
- Encourage municipalities to recognize the value of open space through their regulatory provisions.
- Encourage farmers and forest landowners to develop and implement management/stewardship plans for their properties.
- Encourage public land owners to manage properties with best practices.
- Support the restoration of lands that contribute to impaired water quality.

## **Rural Recreation**

### **Provide recreation facilities and programs for rural residents through partnerships.**

This goal focuses on developing and sustaining recreation facilities in rural areas as part of a countywide network, recreational programs for rural residents, and partnerships to develop and maintain these facilities and services. Policy and future projects for rural recreation will not only meet sport, fitness, and well-being needs of residents, but also enhance recreation-based tourism in Mercer County. Parkland supports recreational activities for athletic and fitness programs, and sidewalks and trails enable people to travel by bike or on foot within and between the local communities of the county. Most importantly, the goal recognizes that partners in rural areas often have very limited financial and human resources – available land, improvement funds, staff time and skill – will best be able to make progress toward this goal.

The following goals and objectives are similar to the urban recreation policies in the county comprehensive plan yet specific to the resources and capabilities of rural communities.

**Recreation Network Goal:** Support development and sustainable management of a recreational network across Mercer County

#### **Objectives**

- Promote a guideline of 3 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents in rural municipalities.
- Encourage rural municipalities to plan for and develop recreational facilities jointly and in partnership with school districts.
- Encourage the development of accessible resource-based recreation opportunities, e.g. fishing piers, trails.
- Encourage the development of adequate recreational infrastructure, e.g. parking, trash receptacles, picnic and seating benches, restrooms, etc.
- Assist municipalities in budgeting and exploring funding options for facility maintenance and policing.
- Encourage re-development of underused or substandard recreation facilities.

**Recreation Services Goal:** Support provision of yearround recreational programs for residents of all ages

#### **Objectives**

- Encourage rural municipalities to plan for and develop recreational services jointly.
- Support recreational and leisure programs for specific age groups (pre-school, elementary, teens, adults, seniors) and for intergenerational groups.
- Integrate environmental education and historical interpretation efforts with the recreation network.

### **Community Growth and Development**

**Foster sound growth and development that respects open space and integrates recreational amenities.**

Residents' appreciation for traditional settlement patterns may be somewhat sentimental. But those patterns also fostered a strong sense of place and community identity among previous generations. This is evident in the "cookie-cutter" residential development that has taken place in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century but also in other types of development. Large parcels are subdivided and developed en masse, fragmenting and replacing woodlands, fields and pastures with development that fits neither town nor countryside settings.

In some communities, farmland and woodlands are viewed as lands awaiting development. That is not the case in Mercer County, where farmland and woodlands are actively engaged in the economy. These open space uses receive moderate support for their function as viable land uses, but more should be done to support their continued presence and value to the community.

When new development does occur, it should locate residential subdivision as new neighborhoods of existing communities or as first neighborhoods of new communities; provide connections into the community center; and provide public space for community gathering in ways that are feasible and functional for the local community.

#### **Objectives**

- Encourage municipalities to guide development to appropriate locations and into appropriate patterns for distinct town, village and rural settings.
- Encourage municipalities to integrate open space requirements into their development provisions.

### **Education**

**Promote a thorough understanding of the functions and benefits of open space, greenways, outdoor recreation, and community development among residents.**

Interwoven throughout the above listed goals is the need for a more thorough understanding of both built and natural environments among current and future residents and officials. While it could have been addressed as an objective for each goal, education was thought to be of such great significance that it warranted an independent goal and required specific and coordinated action. This goal encompasses both education and demonstration to help landowners, residents, and visitors understand the function and value of the natural environment. And while the goal focuses on the understanding of the natural and built environments, it is also intended to foster increased stewardship by those residents who have this understanding.

#### **Objectives**

- Educate local officials, landowners and residents about the positive and negative effects of development on the physical and financial resources of the community.
- Demonstrate the function and value of natural resources.

- Support public and private partner in developing and distributing such information. It is important to share these visions with those who can provide assistance and those who will benefit from the results. Promoting the vision communicates the importance of working together to achieve the common goal and the beneficial results. These goals, like the vision statement, can be a reference to which individuals, agencies and local government compare their current activities and decisions. Will this action promote the protection of sensitive environmental sites? Will this approval foster sound growth and development in our community? Will this new park help to reflect to available natural resources to park visitors? If the answer is yes, these people should feel confident in advancing their actions and approvals. If the answer is no, they should consider what alternatives could better support these goals. In addition, the vision should be shared with those who might not readily accept the plan's ideas, in order to identify the points of disagreement, resolve them, and begin working together.

## **Greenway, Open Space Conservation and Recreation Network Maps**

### **The Greenways Map**

The Greenways Map illustrates lands that should be protected through public ownership and management or private stewardship. These same lands are shown on the Future Land Use Map of the county comprehensive plan as Natural Resource Protection Areas, as shown in Figure 5-1.

The lands designated as greenways include some lands already in public ownership:

- State parks
- State Game Lands
- US ACOE Shenango River Lake

as well as land currently in private ownership:

- lands with slopes greater than 25%
- land in the 100-year floodplain
- Biological Diversity Areas, defined in the Mercer County Natural Areas Inventory; "exceptional" and "county significant" BDAs should receive priority attention; "high" and "notable" sites should be conserved as opportunities arise and as the county and its partners make progress on priority sites.
- National Wetland Inventory sites adjacent to Biological Diversity Areas
- Greenway connectors – corridors that connect other greenways features primarily along waterways and ridgelines.

The Greenways Map and Figure 5-1 illustrate the location of the proposed greenways. Table 5-1 outlines the major proposed greenways by name, location, length, significance/significant features and inter-county connections. These proposed greenways represent substantial natural and man-made resources and the potential to interconnect these resources with local communities. These lands should be considered priority candidates for public acquisition or easement, with the agreement of the landowner.

Figure 5-1  
Greenway Map  
as compiled for the Future Land Use Map of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

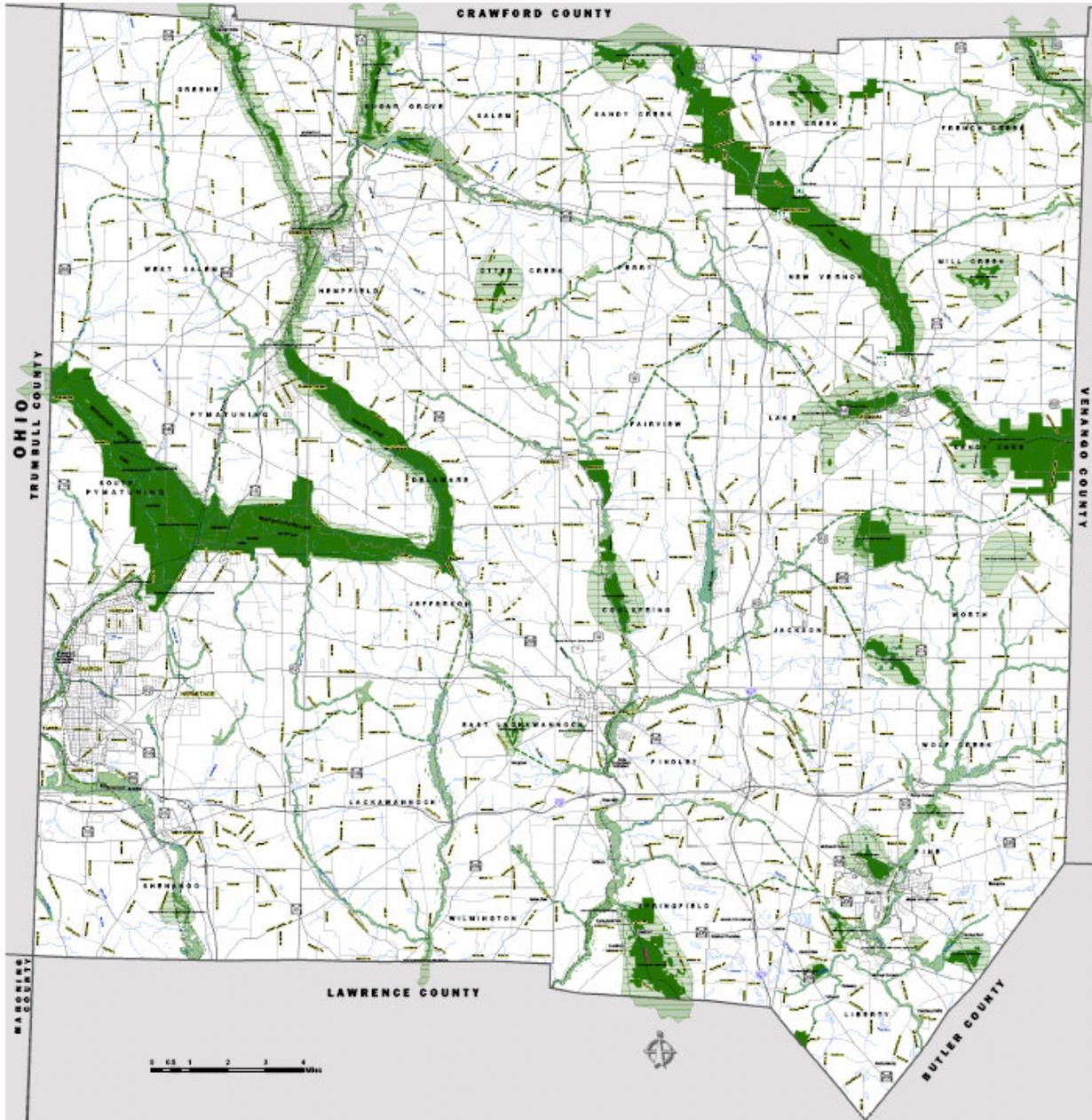


Table 5-1 Proposed Greenways for Mercer County

Name	Location	Size	Type	Significance	Inter-County Connections
<b>Shenango River Greenway</b> (segments shown below)	<b>Sugar Grove Twp, Greenville, Hempfield Twp, West Salem Twp, Pymatuning Twp, Delaware Twp, Jefferson Twp, South Pymatuning Twp, Clark, Sharpsville, Sharon, Farrell, Wheatland, Shenango Twp, West Middlesex</b>	<b>35-40 miles</b>	<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Shenango River BDA, Shenango Lake BDA, Sharpsville BDA and Shenango River Oxbow BDA</li> <li>■ Conservation of Shenango River Reservoir IBA and IMA site</li> <li>■ Recreation opportunities in and along the river corridor</li> <li>■ Trail connection between communities</li> <li>■ Potential connection to Pymatuning State Park</li> <li>■ Potential re-use of rail corridor</li> <li>■ Potential integration or spurs to historic districts and areas</li> </ul>	<b>Crawford – Mercer – Trumbull (OH) – Mercer – Lawrence</b>
■ Jamestown to Greenville Segment	Jamestown, Greene Twp, West Salem Twp, Greenville	6 miles			Crawford – Mercer
■ Greenville to Reynolds Segment	Greenville, Hempfield Twp, West Salem Twp, Pymatuning Twp	3.5 miles			
■ Reynolds to Kidds Mill Segment	Pymatuning Twp, Delaware Twp	3.5 miles			
■ Kidds Mill to Big Bend Segment	Delaware Twp, Jefferson Twp	4 miles		■ Trail complete	
■ Big Bend to Clark Segment	Jefferson Twp, South Pymatuning Twp, Clark	6 miles			
■ Clark to Sharpsville Segment	Clark, South Pymatuning Twp, Sharpsville	4.5 miles			
■ Sharpsville to Farrell Segment	Sharpsville, Sharon, Farrell	4.5 miles			Mercer – Trumbull (OH)
■ Farrell to West Middlesex Segment	Farrell, Wheatland, Shenango Twp, West Middlesex	5 miles			Trumbull (OH) – Mercer
■ West Middlesex to Lawrence County Segment	West Middlesex, Shenango Twp	3.5 miles			Mercer – Lawrence

*Vision and Goals for Open Space and Rural Recreation*

Name	Location	Size	Type	Significance	Inter-County Connections
Crooked Creek Greenway	Sugar Grove Twp, Greenville	6 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Crooked Creek BDA</li> <li>■ Potential re-use of rail corridor</li> </ul>	Crawford – Mercer
Northwest Connector	Jamestown, Greene Twp, West Salem Twp, South Pymatuning Twp	11.25 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creation of active trail loop in northwest portion of county</li> <li>■ Follows stream corridors approximately 50% of distance</li> </ul>	
West Salem – Pymatuning Greenway	West Salem Twp, Pymatuning Twp	8.75	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of stream corridor</li> </ul>	
<b>Little Shenango Greenway</b> (segments shown below)	<b>Sandy Lake Twp, Sandy Lake, Stoneboro, Kae Twp, New Vernon Twp, Perry Twp, Salem Twp, Sugar Grove Twp</b>	<b>20-25 miles</b>	<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Conservation and recreation in and along the river corridor</b></li> <li>■ <b>Conservation of Sandy Lake BDA, Sandy Creek BDA, and Salem BDA</b></li> <li>■ <b>Conservation of the Barrows Heronry and Edward Brucker Sanctuary IBA site</b></li> <li>■ <b>Potential re-use of rail corridor in select locations</b></li> <li>■ <b>Trail connection between Sandy Lake, Stoneboro, Clarks Mills, Hadley, Salem/Leeches Corners, Osgood and Greenville</b></li> </ul>	<b>Venango – Mercer</b>
■ Headwaters Segment	Sandy Lake Twp, Sandy Lake	4.5 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Sandy Creek BDA</li> <li>■ Access to SGL 130</li> </ul>	<b>Venango – Mercer</b>
■ Upper Segment	Sandy Lake, Stoneboro, Kae Twp, New Vernon Twp, Perry Twp	6.5 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Sandy Lake BDA</li> <li>■ Trail connection between Sandy Lake, Stoneboro, Clarks Mills</li> </ul>	
■ Middle Segment	Perry Twp	3.5 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation and recreation in and along the river corridor</li> <li>■ Trail connection between Clarks Mills, Hadley</li> </ul>	
■ Lower Segment	Perry Twp, Salem Twp, Sugar Grove Twp	8 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of the Barrows Heronry and Edward Brucker Sanctuary IBA site</li> <li>■ Trail connection between Hadley, Salem/Leeches Corners, Osgood and Greenville</li> </ul>	
<b>Goddard Greenway</b>	<b>Sandy Creek Twp, Deer Creek Twp, New Vernon Twp, Mill Creek Twp, Sandy Lake Twp, Sandy Lake</b>	<b>12 miles</b>	<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Connection of Goddard State Park to Sandy Lake</b></li> <li>■ <b>Conservation of Sandy Creek Headwaters BDA</b></li> </ul>	

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

Name	Location	Size	Type	Significance	Inter-County Connections
Northcentral Connector	Sandy Creek Twp, Perry Twp, Salem Twp, Sugar Grove Twp		A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creates connections between Shenango River Greenway and Goddard Greenway and loop trails</li> </ul>	
<b>French Creek Greenway</b>	<b>French Creek Twp</b>	<b>2.5 miles</b>	<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Conservation and recreation in and along the river corridor</b></li> <li>■ <b>Conservation of French Creek BDA</b></li> </ul>	<b>Crawford – Mercer – Venango</b>
French Creek Greenway Connector	French Creek Twp, Deer Creek Twp, Sandy Creek Twp, New Vernon Twp	10.5 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Deer Creek BDA and Cranberry Swamp BDA</li> <li>■ Connection of French Creek Greenway with Goddard Greenway</li> </ul>	
Northeast Connector	Mill Creek Twp	5-7 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Connection between southern portion of Goddard Greenway and French Creek</li> </ul>	Mercer – Venango
<b>Wolf Creek Greenway</b> (segments shown below)	<b>Worth Twp, Wolf Creek Twp, Pine Twp, Grove City,</b>	<b>18 miles</b>	<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Conservation of Pine Swamp BDA, Wolf Creek Swamp,</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Millbrook Spur</li> </ul>	Worth Twp, Wolf Creek Twp	5 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Millbrook Swamp BDA</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ (Northeast) Spur</li> </ul>	Worth Twp, Wolf Creek Twp	6 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of stream corridor</li> </ul>	Venango – Mercer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ East Branch Spur</li> </ul>	Wolf Creek Twp	3 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of stream corridor</li> </ul>	Venango – Mercer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Barmore Spur</li> </ul>	Liberty Twp		P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Barmore Lake BDA</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amsterdam Spur</li> </ul>	Liberty Twp	3-5 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation Of Amsterdam BDA</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Swamproot (?) Spur</li> </ul>	Pine Twp	3-5 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of Swamproot BDA and Swamp Run tributary BDA</li> </ul>	
<b>Otter Creek Greenway</b>	Otter Creek Twp, Delaware Twp, Fairview Twp, Coolspring Twp, Mercer, Findley Twp, Springfield Twp	<b>20-25 miles</b>	<b>A/P</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation and recreation in and along stream corridor</li> <li>■ Interconnection of communities</li> </ul>	<b>Mercer – Lawrence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Upper Otter Creek Greenway</li> </ul>	Otter Creek Twp, Delaware Twp, Fairview Twp	7 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of stream corridor</li> <li>■ Conservation of Kashner Corners Swamp BDA</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Middle Otter Creek Greenway</li> </ul>	Fairview Twp, Coolspring Twp, Mercer	7 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation and recreation in and along stream corridor</li> <li>■ Conservation of Otter Creek BDA</li> <li>■ Trail connection between Fredonia and Mercer</li> <li>■ Access to SGL 294</li> </ul>	

*Vision and Goals for Open Space and Rural Recreation*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Inter-County Connections</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lower Otter Creek Greenway</li> </ul>	Mercer, Findley Twp, Springfield Twp	7-9 miles	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation and recreation in and along stream corridor</li> <li>■ Conservation of Schollard Run BDA</li> <li>■ Conservation of Pennsy, Black and Celery Swamp IBA</li> <li>■ Trail connection between Mercer, Hope Mills, Milburn, Springfield Falls, Schollard and Leesburg</li> <li>■ Access to SGL 284</li> </ul>	
<b>Little Neshannock Greenway</b>	<b>Jefferson Twp, Lackawannock Twp, Wilmington Twp</b>	<b>10-12 miles</b>	<b>P</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Conservation of stream corridor</b></li> <li>■ <b>Conservation of Little Neshannock Creek BDA</b></li> </ul>	<b>Mercer – Lawrence</b>
Little Neshannock Spur	Lackawannock Twp, Shenango Twp, Wilmington Twp	7 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of stream corridor</li> </ul>	
Jefferson – Lackawannock Connectors	Jefferson Twp, Lackawannock Twp	6.5 miles	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conservation of stream corridors and wetlands</li> <li>■ Potential trail connections between Shenango River Greenway and Little Neshannock Greenway (if an active greenway)</li> </ul>	

While each proposed greenway may include many resources and may benefit many people, Mercer County cannot “build” these greenways at once. Instead, the county should prioritize its leadership and cooperative efforts with local and regional partners to pursue greenways projects that will gradually “build” greenway over time.

The county should consider a sound approach to prioritizing its efforts and investment. Table 5-2 outlines several criteria that may be used to prioritize projects for county support. Table 5-3 qualitatively measures the opportunities for the proposed major greenways by these criteria.

**Table 5-2 Potential Greenway Prioritization Criteria for Greenway Corridors**

Proposed Greenway includes...	Active Greenway (with public land trail)	Passive Greenway (no public land trail)
Exceptional Value/high Quality Water Quality		X
Existing municipal protection through regulations		X
Existing conservation easement (agricultural or other type)		X
Existing conservation management		X
Existing ASA designation		
Public land	X	X
Expressed landowner interest or available land/right-of-way	X	X
Existing recreational use	X	
Documented historical site	X	X
Advocacy Organization	X	X
Proposed Greenway would...	Active Greenway	Passive Greenway
Extend trail/provide other recreational use/opportunities, e.g. expand park or provide new park	X	
Increase bicycle-pedestrian mobility, e.g. for inter-community travel	X	
Provide connection to existing recreational lands/facilities	X	
Address stream impairment		X
Implement rivers conservation plan or watershed protection/conservation plan		X
Protect NHI sites (weighted per exceptional/high/notable/county significant values)		X

Table 5-3 Opportunities for Major Greenways based on Greenway Prioritization Criteria

Proposed Greenway includes...	Shenango River Greenway	Little Shenango Greenway	Goddard Greenway	French Creek Greenway	Wolf Creek Greenway	Otter Creek Greenway	Little Neshannock Greenway
Exceptional Value/High Quality Water Quality					X		
Existing municipal protection through regulations							
Existing conservation easement (agricultural or other type)			w/in 1 mile of corridor		w/in 1 mile of corridor	w/in 1 mile of corridor	
Existing conservation management							
Existing ASA designation	X	X	X				
Public land	X	X	X			X	
Expressed landowner interest or available land/right-of-way							
Existing recreational use	X	X	X				
Documented historical site	X						
Advocacy Organization	X	X		X			
<b>Proposed Greenway would...</b>							
Extend trail/provide other recreational use/opportunities, e.g. expand park or provide new park	X	X	X			X	
Increase bicycle-pedestrian mobility, e.g. for inter-community travel	X	X	X		X	X	
Provide connection to existing recreational lands/facilities	X	X	X		X	X	X
Address stream impairment		X				X	
Implement rivers conservation plan or watershed protection/conservation plan	X			X			
Protect NHI sites (weighted per exceptional/high/notable/county significant values)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

## **Opportunities for Greenways**

Based on the qualitative prioritization of greenways shown in Table 5-3 and the current efforts of local entities, the following activities for each of the major greenways would take help to advance their development. These activities represent opportunities for Mercer County to focus future county assistance and investment based on local interest, support and cooperation.

### Opportunities to advance the Shenango River Greenway

1. Complete the construction of the Trout Island Trail.
2. Extend the Shenango Valley Trail north to Reynolds.
3. Extend the Trout Island Trail south into Sharon and Farrell.
4. Support implementation of the Shenango River Conservation Plan.
5. Develop the Shenango River Water Trail.

### Opportunities to advance the Little Shenango Greenway

1. Connection Sandy Lake to the SGL.
2. Explore right-of-way acquisition.
3. Explore interest in a Little Shenango Water Trail, i.e. additional access points at Hadley or Leeches Corners.

### Opportunities to advance the Goddard Greenway

1. Pursue protection of Sandy Creek Headwaters BDA via landowner management.

### Opportunities to advance the Wolf Creek Greenway

1. Review/amend municipal regulations to minimize development impacts on stream corridors and BDAs, particularly in growth area municipalities/regions.
2. Pursue protection of BDAs via landowner management.

### Opportunities to advance the French Creek Greenway

1. Review/amend municipal regulations to minimize development impacts on stream corridors and BDAs.
2. Pursue protection of BDAs via landowner management.
3. Coordinate implementation of land and water conservation plans with the French Creek Valley Conservancy.

### Opportunities to advance the Otter Creek Greenway

1. Review/amend municipal regulations to minimize development impacts on stream corridors and BDAs, particularly in growth area municipalities/regions.
2. Explore right-of-way acquisition
3. Connect Fredonia to SGL, SGL to SGL, and SGL to Mercer.
4. Pursue protection of BDAs via landowner management.

## **The Open Space Map**

The Open Space Map illustrates lands that should be conserved for resource production (farm and forest) primarily through private stewardship. These same lands are shown on the Future Land Use Map of the county comprehensive plan as Natural Resource Production Areas. Developed and Growth Areas are lands designated for intensive community development and detailed on the Future Land Use Map of the county comprehensive plan. Other stream classifications and drinking water supply locations are provided for reference.

Landscape Conservation Areas, defined in the Mercer County Natural Areas Inventory, and the exceptional value and cold water watersheds are designated as priority conservation areas and listed in Table 5-4. Education and outreach to landowners in these areas should be coordinated and strengthened. Development policy and proposals in these areas should be carefully reviewed and enhanced, as needed; the policy review task should be prioritized in the priority conservation areas over other areas of the county, while the proposal review can begin immediately.

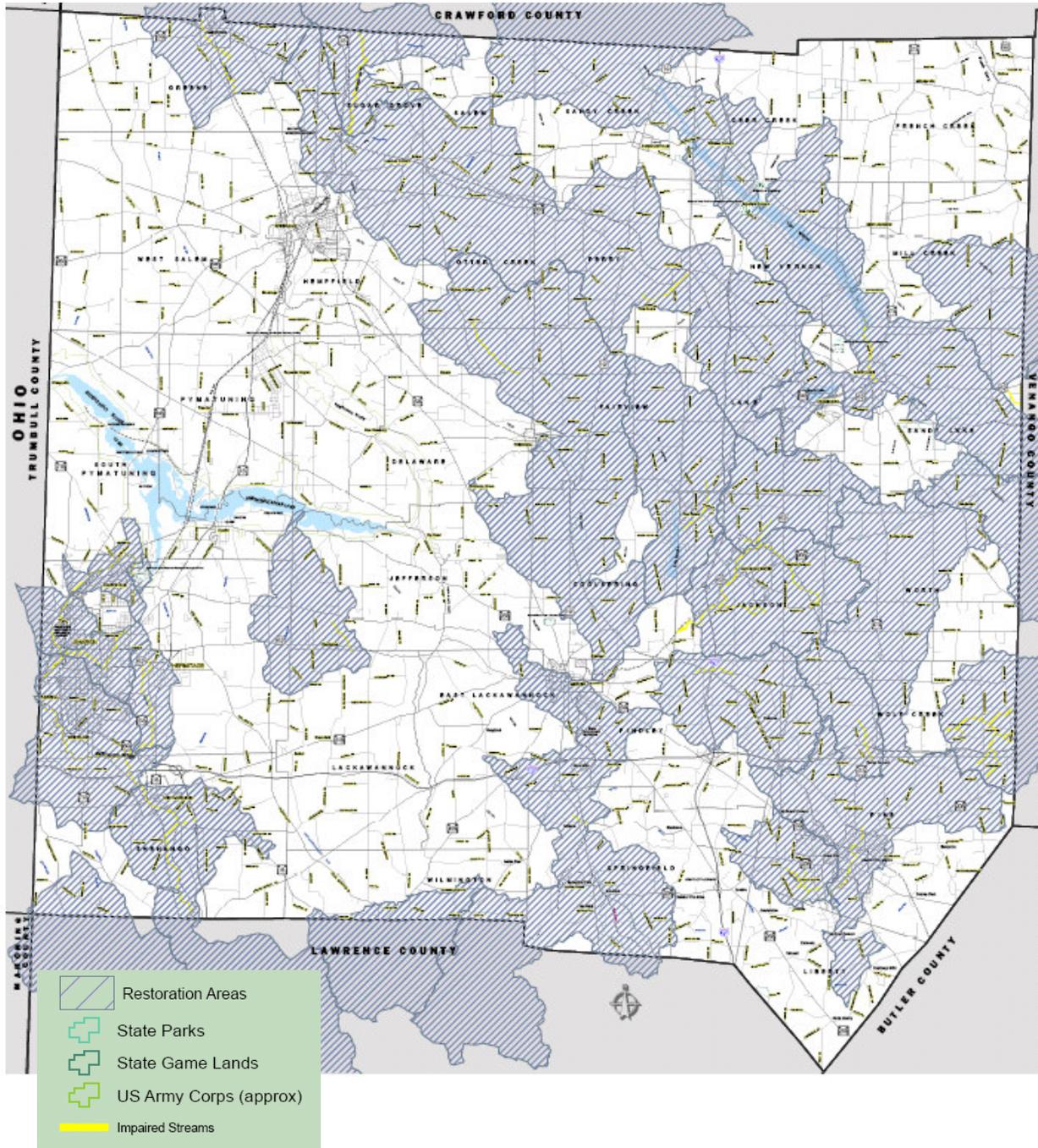
The watersheds of impaired streams should also receive special attention as restoration areas. Impaired streams and their watersheds are shown in Figure 5-2. In some cases, the impairment may be difficult or particularly costly to mitigate or eliminate. Such instances include impairment from the broad non-point sources. But some impairments are temporary, occurring as a result of specific management techniques, such as unbuffered run-off from adjacent properties. The county should strive to restore these watersheds where there is a reasonable expectation of restoring water quality. Assisting and educating landowners in modifying management techniques may be all that is needed to improve or restore water quality.

All other lands identified as open space are the third level of priority for open space protection. These lands include agricultural lands, woodlands, and quarries, as defined by the Existing Land Use Map of the county comprehensive plan. Current education and outreach to landowners in these areas should be sustained. Development policy should be reviewed and enhanced, as needed, in these areas after the priority conservation areas are addressed.

**Table 5-4 Priority Conservation Areas**

Site Name	All or portions of (Municipality)	Significance	Priority Sites
French Creek LCA	Deer Creek Township, French Creek Township, New Lebanon Borough, Mill Creek Township	Watershed that contains numerous animal species of special concern, one plant species of concern and several natural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ French Creek BDA</li> <li>■ Deer Creek BDA</li> <li>■ BDA adjacent lands</li> </ul>
Sandy Creek LCA	Deer Creek Township, French Creek Township, Lake Township, Mill Creek Township, New Lebanon Borough, New Vernon Township, Perry Township, Salem Township, Sandy Creek Township, Sandy Lake Borough, Sandy Lake Township, Stoneboro Borough, Worth Township	Watershed that contains numerous important natural communities, and plants and animals of special concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sandy Creek BDA</li> <li>■ Sandy Lake BDA</li> <li>■ Sandy Creek Headwaters</li> <li>■ Lake Wilhelm BDA</li> <li>■ Cranberry Swamp BDA</li> <li>■ BDA adjacent lands</li> <li>■ Restoration areas</li> </ul>
Shenango River LCA	Clark Borough, Delaware Township, Greene Township, Greenville Borough, Hempfield Township, City of Hermitage, Jamestown Borough, Pymatuning Township, South Pymatuning Township, Sugar Grove Township	Watershed that supports numerous animal and plant species of special concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Crooked Creek BDA</li> <li>■ Shenango River BDA</li> <li>■ Shenango Lake BDA</li> <li>■ Sharpsville BDA</li> <li>■ BDA adjacent lands</li> <li>■ Restoration areas</li> </ul>
Wolf Creek LCA	Liberty Township	LCA that is the location of high quality aquatic community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ None</li> </ul>
Wolf Creek Watershed	Grove City Borough, Findley Township, Liberty, Township, Pine Township, Springfield Township, Wolf Creek Township, Worth Township	Cold water fishery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amsterdam BDA</li> <li>■ Barmore Lake BDA</li> <li>■ Gorve City BDA</li> <li>■ Swamp Run Tributary BDA</li> <li>■ Swampprot BDA</li> <li>■ Wolf Creek Swamp BDA</li> <li>■ BDA adjacent lands</li> <li>■ Restoration areas</li> </ul>

Figure 5-2  
Restoration Areas



## **The Recreation Network Map**

The Recreation Network Map is based on the Recreation Sites Map compiled during the inventory process, distinguishing facility types and sites in urban and rural communities. The Recreation Network Map focuses on linking the existing sites with future land trails, scenic corridors, and water trails.

Existing trails are shown for reference. Expansion of existing trail segments should be evaluated, planned, and designed as opportunities arise.

Future land trails propose circulation within major recreation sites and communities and interconnections among these major hubs. The specific location or alignment of these future trails should be developed through individual trail master plans.

Scenic corridors are road-based routes that lead the traveler through some of the most scenic open spaces of the county and major communities. These corridors should be further explored to identify scenic viewsheds and vistas. They should also be considered candidates for scenic byways designation.

Water trails are defined primarily by the waterbody they occupy but they also include specific points of access. Water trails often have published maps or guides that illustrate points of access and interest; directions to nearby rest areas and locations for supplies; and rules and regulations about boating on public waterways.

Opportunities for new recreation resources are outlined in table 5-5 and illustrated on the Recreation Network Map.

**Table 5-5 Future Recreation Resources**

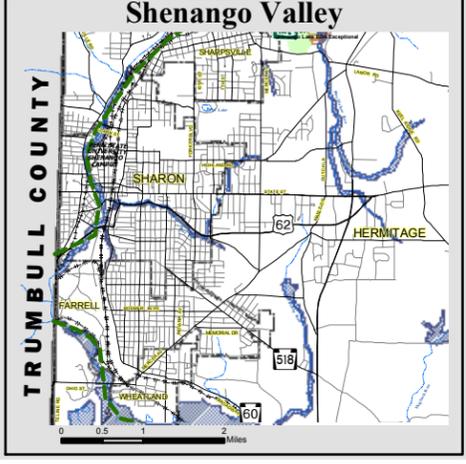
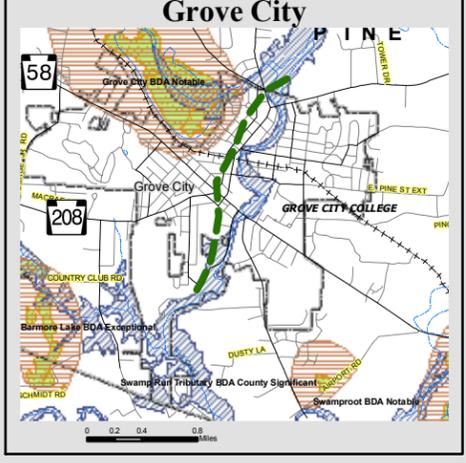
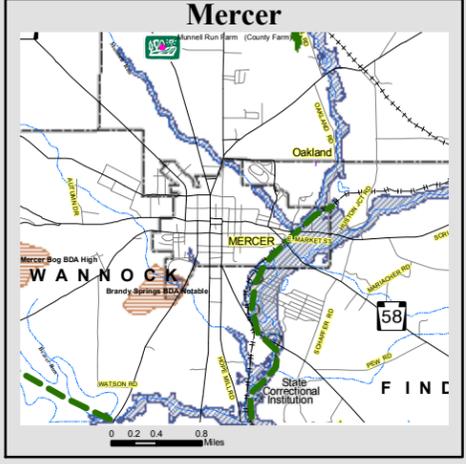
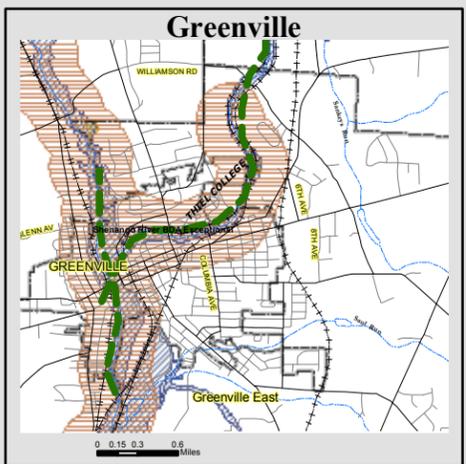
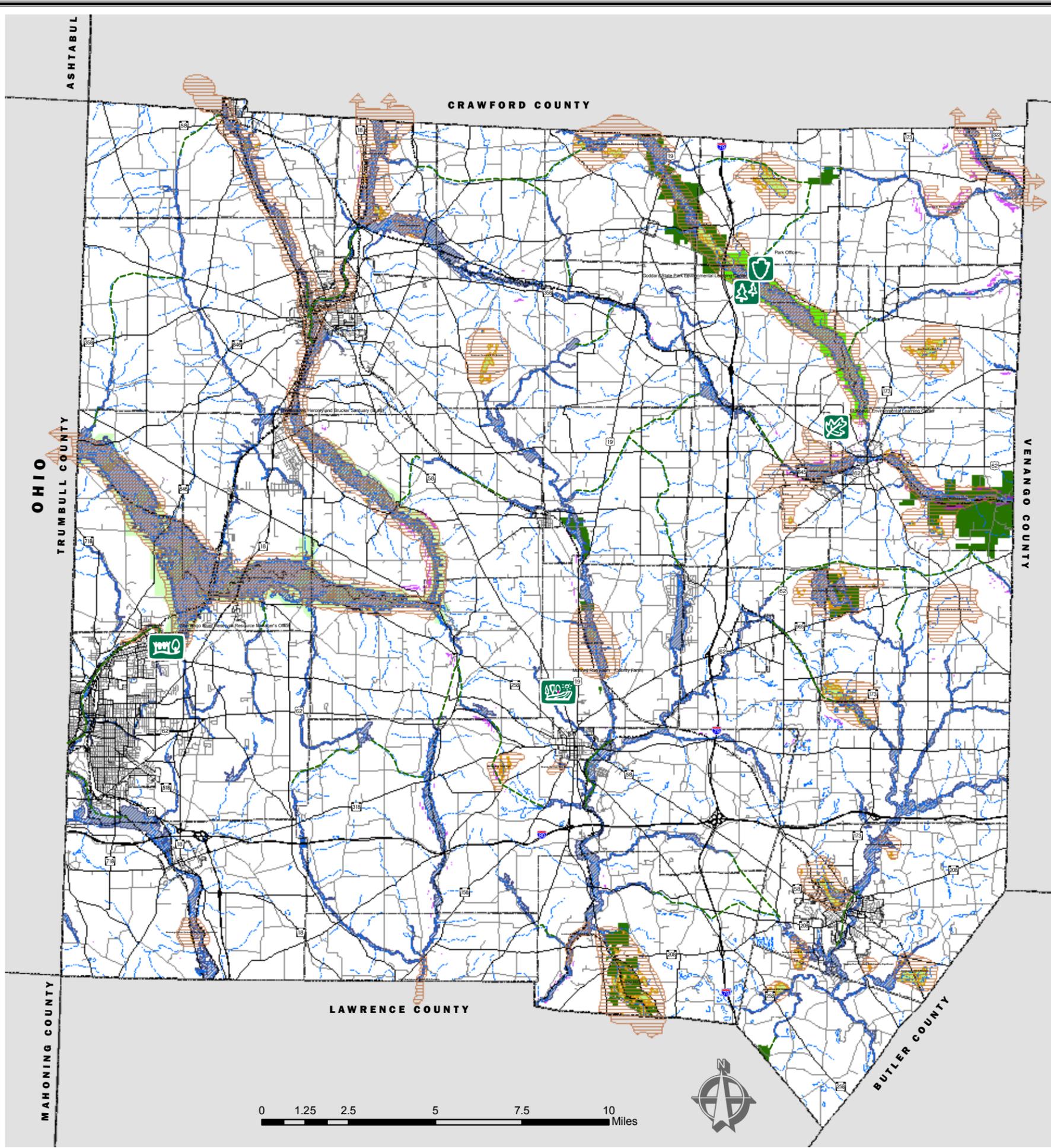
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Inter-County Connections</b>
<b>Future Water Trails</b>			
Upper Shenango River Water Trail	Shenango River	Connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jamestown</li> <li>▪ Greenville</li> <li>▪ Reynolds</li> <li>▪ Clark</li> <li>▪ Hermitage</li> </ul>	Crawford – Mercer – Lawrence
Lower Shenango River Water Trail	Shenango River	Connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hermitage</li> <li>▪ Sharpsville</li> <li>▪ Sharon</li> <li>▪ Farrell</li> <li>▪ Wheatland</li> <li>▪ West Middlesex</li> </ul>	Crawford – Mercer – Lawrence
Lake Wilhelm Water Trail		Connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State Park</li> <li>▪ SGL 270</li> </ul>	None
Sandy Lake Water Trail	Sandy Lake	Sandy Lake BDA	None
Lake Latonka Water Trail	Lake Latonka	Recreational	None
<b>Scenic Corridors</b>			
US 19	Sandy Creek Twp, Perry Twp, Fairview Twp, Coolspring Twp, Mercer	SGL 270 and 294 Goddard State Park Future Lake Wilhelm Water Trail Sheakleyville Wilhelm Trail Extension Otter Creek BDA Munnell Run Farm Mercer	Mercer – Crawford
Goddard Scenic Loop	Sandy Cree Twp, Deer Creek Twp, New Vernon Twp, Mill Creek Twp, Sandy Lake Twp, Sandy Lake,	SGL 270 and 294 Goddard State Park Future Lake Wilhelm Water Trail Sheakleyville Trails at McKeever Environmental Learning Center	None
Cross-County Scenic Corridor (Sandy Lake to Sharpsville )	Sandy Lake, Sandy Lake Twp, Stoneboro, Lake Twp, Jackson Twp, Fairview Twp, Coolspring Twp, Jefferson Twp, Clark, Pymatuning Twp, South Pymatuning Twp, City of Hermitage, Sharpsville	Active farm and forest land Shenango Trail Big Bend Historical Area Shenango River Lake Clark Trout Island Trail Sharpsville	Venango – Mercer – Trumbull (OH)

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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Inter-County Connections</b>
<b>Scenic Corridors (continued)</b>			
East Mercer Scenic Corridor	French Creek Twp, Mill Creek Twp, Sandy Lake Twp, Worth Twp, Wolf Creek Twp, Pine Twp	Active forest and farm land SGL 130 French Creek BDA Wolf Creek Wetlands BDA	Mercer – Crawford
PA 258	Springfield Twp, Liberty Twp	Pennsy, Black and Celery Swamp BDA Grove City Country Club	Mercer – Butler
PA 208	Pine Twp, Grove City, Springfield Twp	Downtown Grove City SGL 284 Leesburg Station BDA Schollard Run BDA	Mercer – Venango
Little Neshannock Scenic Corridor	Jefferson Twp, East Lackawannock Twp, Wilmington Twp	Shenango Trail Big Bend Historical Area Shenango River Reservoir Active forest and farmland Little Neshannock Creek BDA	Mercer – Lawrence
Southern Shenango Scenic Corridor	Shenango Twp, West Middlesex, Lackawannock Twp, Wilmington Twp	Shenango River Lake Reservoir (multiple boat accesses) West Middlesex (boat access #172) Little Neshannock Greenway Spur	Trumbull (OH) – Mercer – Lawrence
Shenango River Lake Loop	South Pymatuning Twp, Pymatuning Twp, Delaware Twp, Jefferson Twp	Shenango River Lake Reservoir Shenango Lake BDA Multiple boat accesses (#164-#171) Shenango Trail Big Bend Historical Area Future Trout Island Trail Chestnut Beach	Mercer – Trumbull (OH)
Western Shenango Scenic Corridor	South Pymatuning Twp, Sharon, Farrell, City of Hermitage	Community and recreational facilities in Sharon and Farrell	Mercer – Trumbull (OH)
Greenville – New Hamburg Scenic Loop	Greenville, Hempfield Twp, West Salem Twp, Delaware Twp	Greenville Historic District New Hamburg Historical Area Shenango Trail Shenango River BDA	None
Northwest Scenic Corridor	Jamestown, Greene Twp, West Salem Twp	Active farm and forest land	None
North Central Scenic Loop (Greenville to Clarks Mills)	Greenville, Hempfield Twp, Sugar Grove Twp, Otter Creek Twp, Perry Twp, Salem Twp	Active farm and forest land Greenville Historic District Barrows Heronry and Edward Brucker Sanctuary IBA site	None

*Vision and Goals for Open Space and Rural Recreation*

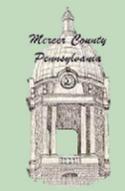
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Inter-County Connections</b>
<b>Future Land Trails (Active Greenways and Connecting Trail Segments)</b>			
<b>Shenango River Greenway</b>	Jamestown to Shenango Twp	Connections/Segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shenango Trail</li> <li>▪ Seth Myers Nature Trail (US ACOE)</li> <li>▪ Future Trout Island Trail</li> <li>▪ Future Shenango River Trail</li> </ul> Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inactive railroad right-of-way</li> </ul>	Crawford – Mercer – Lawrence
<b>Little Shenango Greenway</b>	Sandy Lake to Greenville	Connections/Segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sandy Lake to Stoneboro Trail</li> </ul> Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inactive railroad right-of-way</li> </ul>	Venango – Mercer
<b>Goddard Greenway</b>	Goddard State park and SGL 270	Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing trails on state park land</li> </ul>	None
<b>Little Neshannock Greenway</b>	Jefferson Twp to Wilmington Twp	Connections/Segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little Neshannock to Shenango River Lake and Shenango Trail</li> </ul>	Mercer – Lawrence
<b>Little Neshannock Spur</b>	City of Hermitage to Wilmington Twp	Connections/Segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little Neshannock and tributary (near and through mixed use growth area) to Shenango River Lake</li> </ul>	Mercer – Lawrence
<b>Otter Creek Greenway</b>	Delaware/Fredonia to Springfield Twp	Connections/Segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fredonia to New Hamburg</li> </ul> Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inactive railroad right-of-way</li> </ul>	Mercer – Lawrence
<b>Otter-Wolf Trail Loop</b>		Connections/Segments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Future Otter Creek Greenway/Trail</li> <li>▪ Mercer to Jackson Center to Wolf Creek (link)</li> <li>▪ Grove City to Otter Creek (link)</li> <li>▪ Wolf Creek Greenway/Trail</li> <li>▪ Jackson Center to Sandy Lake/SGL130</li> </ul> Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inactive railroad right-of-way</li> </ul>	None



# Greenways Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

- Greenway Connectors
  - State Game Lands
  - State Parks
  - US ACOE Shanango River Lake
  - Slope Greater than 25%
  - Biological Diversity Areas
  - 100 Year Floodplains
  - USFWS National Wetlands Inventory
- \*Wetlands shown within Biodiversity Areas only

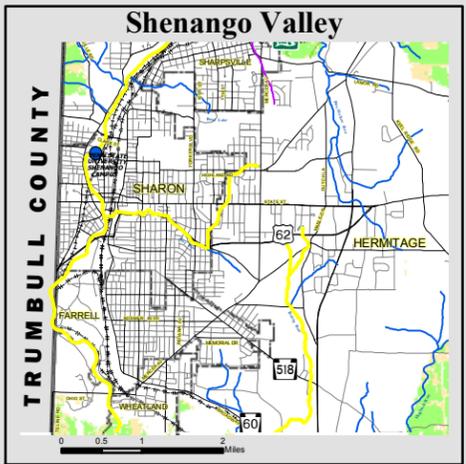
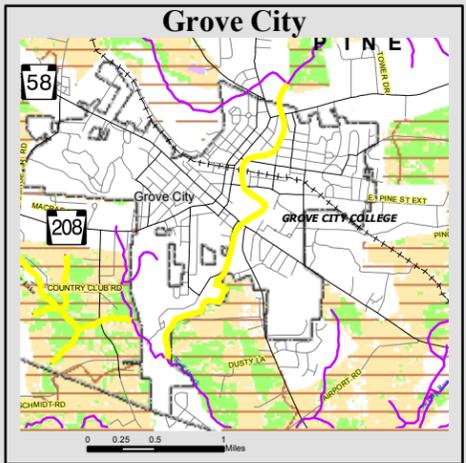
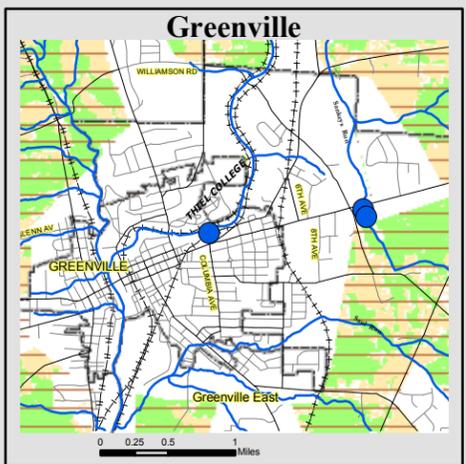
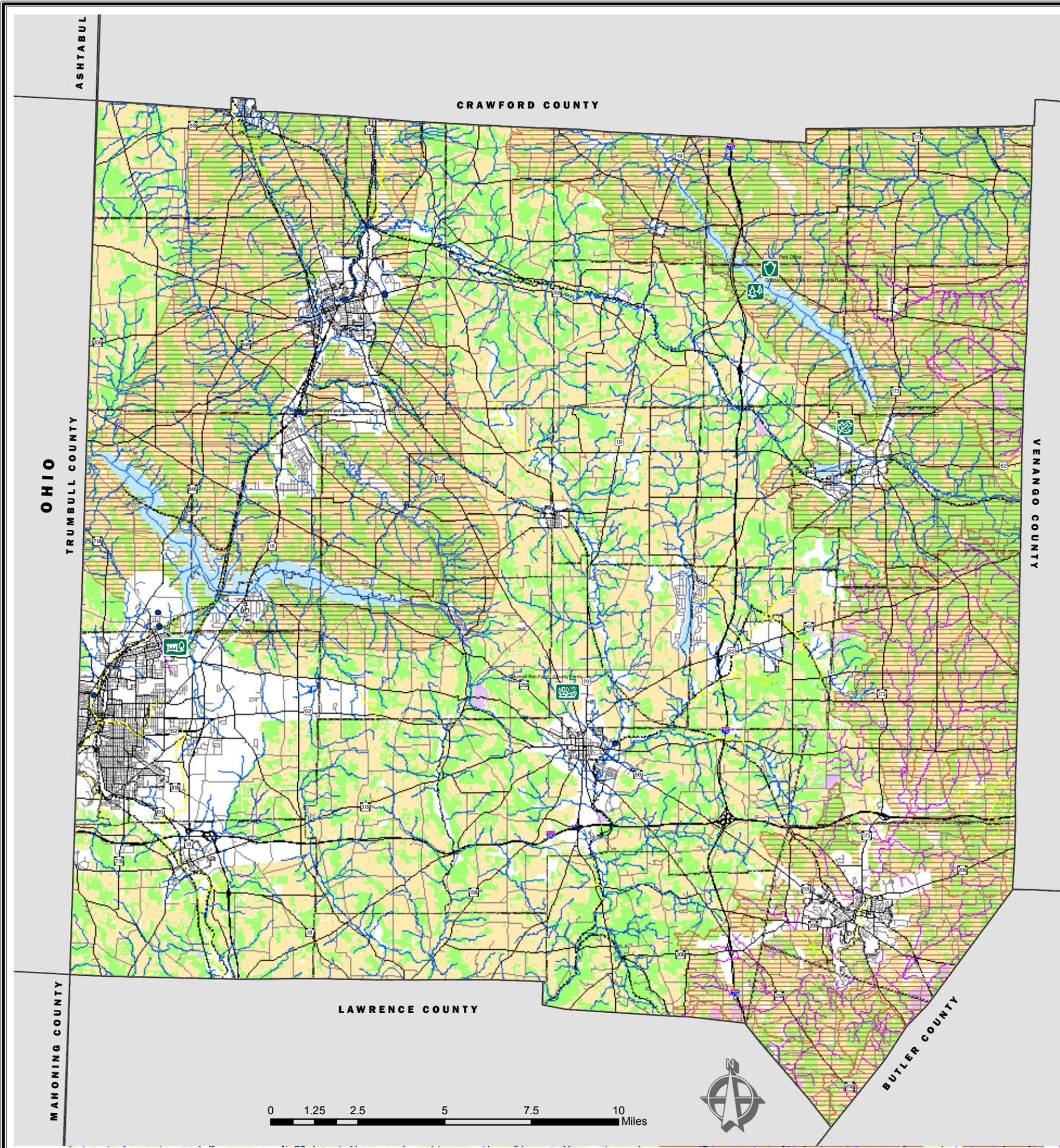
- Goddard State Park Environmental Learning Center
- McKeever Environmental Learning Center
- Munnell Run Farm (County Farm)
- State Park Office
- Shenango- Resource Manager's Office

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, NRCS, FEMA, PSU, USFWS, NHI, PGC

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



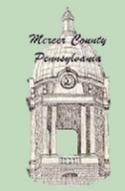
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 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Open Space Lands Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

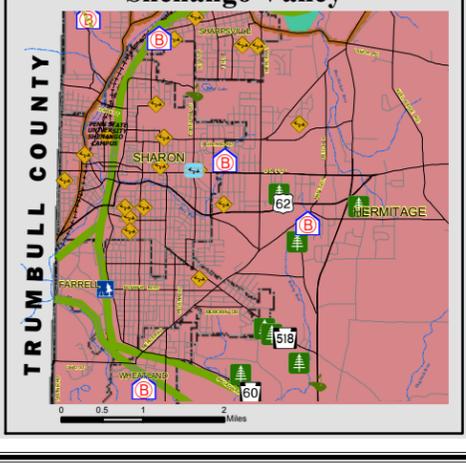
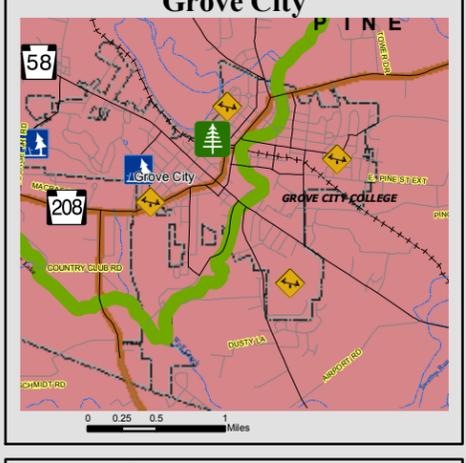
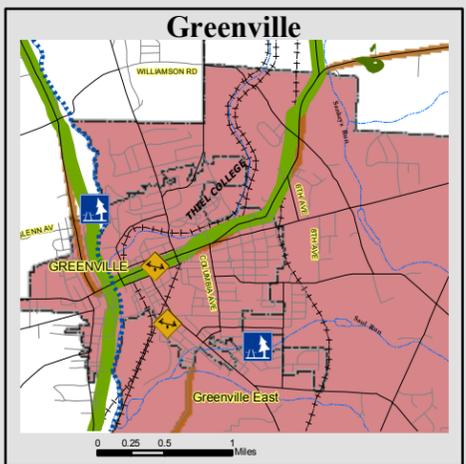
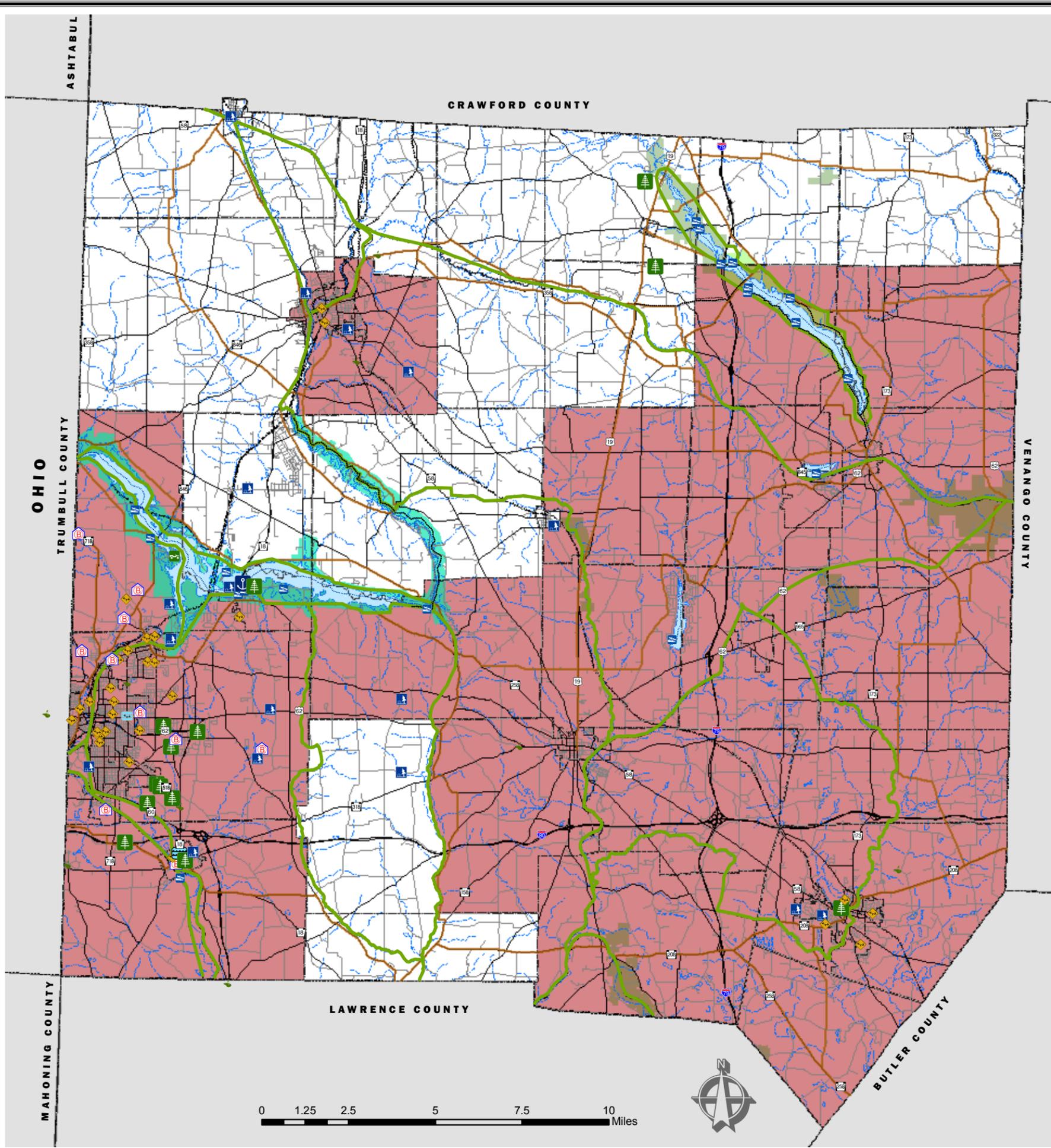
-  Priority Conservation Lands
-  Developed and Growth Areas
-  State Parks
-  State Game Lands
-  US Army Corps (approx)
-  Woodland
-  Quarries
-  Agriculture
-  Impaired Streams
-  Cold Water Fisheries; Exceptional Value Streams
-  Trout Stocked Fisheries; Warm Water Fisheries
-  Drinking Water Supply

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, NRCS

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



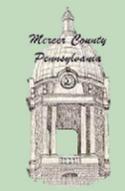
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 alo Date: 08/27/04  
 dbg Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:



# Recreation Network Map

Mercer County Comprehensive Plan

Mercer County, Pennsylvania



## Legend

- Ballfield
- Marina
- Playground
- Pool
- Pool/Playground
- Recreation Area
- Tennis Courts
- Park
- Off-road Vehicle Area
- Boat Launch
- Golf Course
- Existing Trails
- Future Water Trails
- Future Land Trail Opportunities
- Scenic Corridors
- Urban Communities / Regional Planning Areas
- Rural Communities

Data Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PennDOT, PSU USGS

Data Projection: Pennsylvania State Plane, South Zone; Datum NAD83



Map drawn by: alo Date: 07/21/04  
 alo 08/27/04  
 dbg 04/25/06  
 Map Reviewed by: rnk Date: 04/25/06  
 Map Approved by: Date:

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## Chapter 6

# The Action Plan

For Mercer County to achieve its vision for greenways, open space, and rural recreation, new, continued and expanded efforts by the county and its many partners are needed. Together, they must answer this question: “How can we change what we do today in order to become the community we want to be?”

The Action Plan outlines recommendations that answer this question. They build on the goals outlined in Chapter 5 by designating measurable objectives and recommending coordinated policies, programs, and tasks.

The recommendations or strategies were developed throughout the public involvement and technical process of the project. Recommendation ideas were suggested by stakeholders and interviewees, greenways committee members, MCRPC staff and the project consultant. The entire list of recommendations was reviewed with the greenways committee to determine which suggestions would be effective in helping the county and its partners achieve the established goals and therefore should be put into the action plan. The greenways committee, MCRPC, and the consultant also discussed the priority of each recommendation to determine which should be implemented in the short term, and which should be longer term initiatives. Finally, the committee gave input to the list of partners, confirming those that should lead each strategy's implementation, and those that should be involved in a supporting or otherwise participatory role.

The Action Plan is presented in three sections. The high priority strategies, those that should be implemented in the next 2-3 years, are shown in a concise matrix format. This format allows MCRPC and its partners to focus on the heart of the plan – what needs to happen first. The matrix includes the high priority strategies, their respective implementing partners and potential funding sources, as well as the goals. As these strategies are completed or achieve sustaining momentum, the partners can then begin to program implementation of the mid and low priority strategies that are listed in the subsequent text with the anticipated implementing partners and funding sources. Finally, the strategies are classified by type to clearly illustrate the nature of the strategy. The Mercer County Comprehensive used three classifications:

- Strategies for Organization and Coordination
- Strategies for Planning and Implementation
- Strategies for Regulatory Guidance and Enforcement

Since DCNR and other funding agencies may be interested in a finer classification, one more specific to open space and recreation missions and programs, a closing matrix classifies the strategies by the DCNR's objectives for county greenways, open space, and recreation plans:

- Open Space Protection, Conservation, and Productivity
- Greenway and Recreation Sites, Networks and Linkages
- Land Acquisition Strategies
- Administration, Management, and Maintenance
- Marketing and Communication
- Land Use Policies and Regulations
- Future Studies/Plans

**GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN  
HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES**

<b>GOALS</b>	<p><b>Greenways:</b> Promote the management and interpretation of natural systems and cultural, historic, and scenic resources through designated corridors.</p> <p><b>Open Space:</b> Promote the protection of sensitive environmental systems and the managed use of open space lands.</p> <p><b>Rural Recreation:</b> Support the development and sustainable management of a recreational network and associated programs across Mercer County to interconnect the communities and their resources.</p> <p><b>Community Growth and Development:</b> Foster sound growth and development that respects open space and integrates recreational amenities.</p> <p><b>Education:</b> Promote a thorough understanding of the functions and benefits of open space, greenways, outdoor recreation, and community development to residents.</p>
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Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p><b>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</b></p> <p>1. Develop a rural industries strategy to sustain and enhance the agricultural and forest industries in Mercer County. This strategy should evaluate current and future forces that threaten the sustainability of agriculture and forestry in this area from within the county and from a global perspective. Specifically, the study should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the strengths, weaknesses and apparent threats to rural industries.</li> <li>• Assess global import/export trends in crop, livestock, and forestry industries; identify the local implications of changing markets, consumer demands and associated impacts.</li> <li>• Identify needed changes in technology, commodities and/or markets.</li> <li>• Determine the effects on agricultural and forest land use and land value.</li> <li>• Establish community planning initiatives and economic incentives to preserve the industries.</li> <li>• Develop innovative marketing approaches.</li> </ul>	<p>LEAD: Conservation District and Cooperative Extension</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: Agricultural landowners, Mercer County agricultural and agribusiness organizations, land trusts and conservancies, local watershed organizations, MCRPC</p>	<p>DEP funding to conservation district; Sustainable Development Challenge Grants; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service</p>

**GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN  
HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p><b>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</b></p> <p>2. In advance and consistent with the rural industries strategy, actively support rural industries and publicize the organizations that provide support and protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to identify where volunteer stewardship by private landowners is desired and where public land management or land transfer is preferred. Implement best management practices (BMPs) consistent with the landowner’s management objectives. Encourage landowners to enroll agricultural land in conservation programs, e.g. the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program, in priority conservation areas and pursue preservation programs, e.g. the Mercer County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, in greenways. Encourage landowners to enroll forest land in conservation programs, e.g. the Clean and Green – Forest Reserve Program, in priority conservation areas and pursue preservation, e.g. the Forest Legacy Program, in greenways.</li> <li>• Strive to match available farms with new farmers and available forest land with new forest owners to sustain the respective uses and management objectives where possible. (See Economic Development Action Plan)</li> </ul>	<p>LEAD: Mercer County (via county department/agency websites)</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: Mercer County agricultural and agribusiness organizations, land trusts and conservancies, local watershed organizations, DCNR/Bureau of Forestry, MCRPC, WPC</p>	<p>Implementation Partners, DEP funding to conservation district; Sustainable Development Challenge Grants; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service</p>

**GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN  
HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p><b>A Strategy for Organization and Coordination</b></p> <p>3. Establish local and/or a regional recreation commission to serve the residents of rural communities with recreation facilities, programs and services. Options include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding the Greenville Area Leisure Services Association,</li> <li>• Expanding the service of the MC Regional Council of Governments, or</li> <li>• Creating a new regional organization</li> </ul> <p>These options are not mutually exclusive. In fact, all three options may be needed to best meet the needs of residents in rural municipalities. Investigating current recreation participation and interest in additional or expanded recreation activities should be a first point of discussion among the implementing parties and rural residents.</p>	<p>LEAD: MCRPC (for initial coordination of) municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships, school districts, public and private recreation organizations</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: MCRPC, business community (e.g. chambers of commerce), YMCA, youth organizations (scouts, boys/girls clubs, etc), Area Agency on Aging, health and wellness advocates</p>	<p>Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP); DCNR peer-to-peer/circuit rider programs; DCED Shared Municipal Services Program</p>
<p><b>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</b></p> <p>4. Interconnect public facilities, locally with bike-pedestrian networks and regionally with active greenways (trails).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide safe crossings of roadways, railways, waterways and other features.</li> <li>• Provide trail heads in convenient locations that include parking (automobile/bicycle), trash and recycling receptacles, signage, and lighting.</li> <li>• Clearly identify land and water trail heads in the community.</li> <li>• Incorporate interpretive signage to provide environmental education, conservation, and resource protection information to users.</li> <li>• Strive to provide a major trail within 5-7 miles of each resident. See also Transportation Action Plan; Economic Development Action Plan; Community Facilities, Services and Utilities Action Plan. (Continued)</li> </ul>	<p>LEAD: Mercer County Trails Association, public and private recreation organizations</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships (officials/authorities/public works), MCRPC, developers, landowners, natural resource agencies (for interpretive signage), watershed organizations, WPC, Natural Lands Trust, health and wellness advocates</p>	<p>Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), developers (land dedication), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED), Community Revitalization Program, PennDOT Transportation Enhancements Program, DEP funding to conservation districts, U.S. Department of Agriculture Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, private foundations and sponsors</p>

GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES		
Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p>The Greenways Map and supporting tables illustrate and outline several major and minor active greenways. Local efforts are leading the way in developing and enhancing these corridors for bicycle-pedestrian travel. The opportunities for greenways (listed in Chapter 5) show that there are logical places to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ begin the land acquisition or easement process in order to implement existing plans, e.g. the Mercer County MPO Bike-Ped Action Plan and recreation elements of regional comprehensive or recreation/open space plans,</li> <li>▪ designate new trail alignments,</li> <li>▪ extend existing trail facilities, or</li> <li>▪ focus outreach to landowners regarding future trails or open space conservation.</li> </ul> <p>Once alignments are designated, they should be evaluated for safety, convenience, and natural and cultural resource interpretation, and new projects for appropriate improvements/enhancements should be developed.</p> <p>As projects are identified by local municipalities and organizations, Mercer County should provide technical and/or financial assistance to help implement existing plans or study new project ideas. Fortunately, transportation planning is strength at MCRPC; the staff has technical assistance and is familiar with a variety of funding sources for trail-type projects.</p>		

GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES		
Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p><b>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</b></p> <p>5. Through adoption of this plan, establish a Mercer County standard for recreation in rural areas. This policy includes:</p> <p>1) municipalities should meet the recreational needs of residents independently or through multi-municipal partnerships.</p> <p>2) municipalities should provide 3 acres of municipal recreation land per 1,000 residents;</p> <p>3) municipalities should include provisions for recreational land dedication and/or fees-in lieu thereof in their subdivision and land development ordinance or by way of reference to the Mercer County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance*; and</p> <p>4) development within ½ mile of major trails should contribute to local trail networking through subdivision techniques, land or easement donation or fees-in-lieu, as well as the construction of the trail extension.</p> <p>MCRPC should assist in municipal plan preparation and updates and ordinance revisions, where needed.</p>	<p>LEAD: municipalities, developers</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: MCRPC, Mercer County Trails Association, PPA, PSATS</p>	<p>Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR); DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP); LUPTAP (DCED)</p>
<p>* The Pennsylvania MPC requires an adopted recreation plan as a prerequisite for adopting a mandatory dedication of land ordinance at the county and municipal levels, respectively. This county plan is not expected to be substituted for an adopted municipal recreation plan, but may be used as a tool in seeking funding for such a plan and for consistency with the county’s intent for partnerships.</p>		

Additional Funding Sources can be found in Financing Municipal Recreation and Parks: A Resource Guide for Recreation, Parks and Conservation, 2005 DCNR publication available at [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us) or by calling 717-787-7672.

## Keys to Success

1. Regional Perspective and Intergovernmental Cooperation
2. Community Needs Assessment: Citizen Input and Building Awareness
3. Effective Civic Leaders and “Everyday Volunteers”
4. Soliciting Dollar Support and Leveraging Resources
5. Combining Free (Tax Supported) and Fee-based Recreation Programs to Support Recreation Programs and Facilities
6. Managing the Budget

*From Keys to Success in Community Recreation Initiatives:  
Four Stories in North Central Pennsylvania, DCNR, 2003*

## Medium and Low Priority Strategies

The following are the medium and low priority strategies for greenways, open space and rural recreation. These strategies were evaluated as important issues and efforts that would improve quality of life over the long term.

As previously stated, the partners can begin to program implementation of the mid and low priority strategies once the high priority strategies are completed or achieve sustaining momentum. Timeframes of 3-7 years (2008-2012) for medium priority strategies and 7-15 years (2012-2020) for low priority strategies are suggested to review these initiatives. The goals are listed for easy reference.

### GOALS

**Greenways:** Promote the management and interpretation of natural systems and cultural, historic, and scenic resources through designated corridors.

**Open Space:** Promote the protection of sensitive environmental systems and the managed use open space lands.

**Rural Recreation:** Support the development and sustainable management of a recreational network and associated programs across Mercer County to interconnect the communities and their resources.

**Community Growth and Development:** Foster sound growth and development that respects open space and integrates recreational amenities.

**Education:** Promote a thorough understanding of the functions and benefits of open space, greenways, outdoor recreation, and community development to residents.

## **Strategies for Organization and Coordination**

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### **Medium Priority**

1. **Encourage agricultural landowners to make open space available to hunters through the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Cooperative Farm Game/Safety Zone Program.** This program provides hunters with access to hundreds of acres of open space for wildlife and game hunting. The program promotes respect between sportsmen and land owners and assists in the development of good land use practices that improve small game habitat. The program is administered through executed agreements between landowners (cooperators) and the Game Commission to make the property's hunting rights available to the Game Commission for 5 years or more. Cooperators are eligible to receive the following benefits and services from the Game Commission:
  - food and cover seedlings that attract beneficial game and preference in the pheasant stocking program,
  - increased patrol and law enforcement during hunting seasons,
  - signs warning hunters not to commit unlawful acts,
  - advice on soil conservation and other farm practices, and
  - cutting of woodland borders to remove shade and tree roots from cropland areas and provide immediate cover for wildlife.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Game Commission – Wildlife Conservation Officers conduct outreach to farmers interested in the program.

SUPPORT: Conservation District for identification of potential cooperators and assistance in soil conservation guidance

FUNDING: Implementation Partners

2. **Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian enhancements (e.g. increased shoulder widths, designated bike lanes, and trail connections) with larger scale transportation projects.** Transportation projects can often address more than one mode. A road or bridge widening can incorporate a bike lane or an intersection improvement can upgrade adjacent sidewalks and crosswalks. As transportation projects are considered by the Mercer MPO, PennDOT, and local municipalities, project partners should consider how such improvements (or even maintenance tasks) could concurrently improve travel for other modes. The Recreation Network Map identifies several sites and corridors for land-based trails and scenic driving/biking corridors. These locations should be reviewed when planning and programming transportation projects for opportunities to coordinate the timing and perhaps leverage the investment of such improvements. (See also the Transportation Action Plan)

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: Municipalities, PennDOT, Mercer County Trails Association

FUNDING: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED)

3. **Assist municipalities and recreation organizations in marketing their facilities and services.** Throughout the project, there was discussion that recreation sites were underutilized and that residents didn't know what kinds of recreation opportunities were available. A marketing campaign could address these issues, by publicizing sites and services more aggressively. This strategy should be combined with a program to measure the change in use of the sites before and after the marketing campaign. ("Before" data may already exist in various reports of program participation, site reservations, etc. If not, before it should be captured in advance of the marketing campaign.) The marketing campaign could include the following elements, as well as others:
- recreation maps by community/municipality,
  - special events related to recreation and other community and cultural interests held at recreation sites to familiarize new users to the sites,
  - a recreation webpage on the County or MCRCOG website, and links to the page from municipal websites,
  - a press series (newspaper, radio, etc.) featuring recreation sites and services.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships, public and private recreation organizations

SUPPORT: MCRPC, health and wellness advocates, Area agency on Aging, Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, recreation organizations

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP)

4. **Promote clean recreation facilities.** Clean recreation sites can be the jewel of a community, since residents often translate clean places as safe places and are more likely to be utilized. But if cleanliness is solely the responsibility of the owner, it can be a time and resource intensive task. Promoting sites cleanliness as "everyone's responsibility" can greatly relieve the cost of maintenance for the site owner. Most commonly, owners provide trash receptacles and trash collection. Alternatively, owners can promote litter-free outdoor recreation environments by encouraging recreationists to "pack in and pack out" supplies and trash, thus reducing or even eliminating the need for trash receptacles and trash collection. Where this shared-responsibility approach is not feasible, owners should provide regular clean-up and maintenance service to each site.

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: Mercer County Regional Council of Governments, municipalities, recreation organizations

SUPPORT: DNCR

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP)

## **Strategies for Planning and Implementation**

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- 5. Review municipal comprehensive plans and regulations for consistency with county guidance for recreational land and service provisions. Recommend appropriate recreation provisions, as needed.** Consistency is an increasingly important part of policy, decision-making and investment. Funding program sponsors want to see that applicant projects have support of local and regional officials. Demonstrating consistency can help grant applicants be more competitive for limited funding programs. This may require modifications to existing policy or a clear statement on why there is inconsistency, such as a special local issue.

The county planning staff has the unique perspective of how different municipalities operate, including local planning initiatives and regulatory requirements and their impacts on the community. From this perspective, the staff can assess which policies are effective and consistent with county objectives and communicate with local officials the success of existing policy or the benefits of a revised policy.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: Municipalities, Natural Lands Trust

FUNDING: Natural Lands Trust (mini-grants)

- 6. Publicize the designated greenways and develop greenway master plans to focus and define efforts to protect resources in these corridors.** The Greenways Map illustrates the areas and corridors where the most sensitive resources should be protected from the impacts of intensive human activity and development. These same areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map in the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan as Natural Resources Protection Areas.

The county should publicize these greenways by including them on county land use and open space maps, and offering these GIS data layers to municipalities for use in their own planning and mapping activities. The county should also work with partners to develop greenway master plans. Each master plan should address a single greenway corridor or region, and should more specifically define the type (active/passive) and location/alignment of that greenway.

*Active greenways are natural resource areas that are open to public recreation, and may include new and existing parks, walking paths, and trails; active greenways may also include bicycle-pedestrian and streetscape networks.*

*Passive greenways are natural resource areas that are managed for their ecological function and value to the community; they are not open to the public.*

Since the greenways represent the most sensitive environmental features of the county, protection and stewardship should be strongest in these areas. Such protection could range from acquisition to easement purchase to landowner agreements and landowner stewardship. Acquisition and easements will likely be required for the active, recreational greenways; private efforts to steward resources and permit limited public access, e.g. for hunting and fishing, are recommended for passive greenways. This approach will limit the public funding required to “protect” these areas and the administrative and management demands of public property, and honor the rights of private landowners.

Partners should consider active greenway corridors as priority locations for future low-impact recreational facilities, since these corridors can accommodate trails for bicyclists and pedestrians. As active greenways with recreational trails and parks evolve, these greenways should also be shown on tourism maps.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships, public and private recreation organizations

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP), Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED)

7. **Develop a plan for historic resource protection.** This strategy goes hand-in-hand with Cultural Resources Action Plan of the comprehensive plan. The primary purpose of this recommended plan is to:
- Inventory historic features (sites, districts, or other features) – which sites, where are they located, what is the historic significance, who owns the sites today, and how are they used today.
  - Determine what threatens these sites and how severe the threat is – lack of occupancy/ownership, lack of maintenance, development pressure, etc.
  - Determine what kind of protection is desired - public/quasi-public preservation, private conservation, or other protection.
  - Designate lead party(ies) to pursue funding for sites recommended for public/quasi-public preservation
  - Designate lead party(ies) to pursue technical assistance for sites recommended for private conservation, or other protection. Provide technical guidance to historic property owners for future maintenance, enhancement and/or improvement of conserved historic features, e.g. a list of publications and qualified local contractors for maintenance, rehabilitation/renovation, and demolition.

In the meantime and as part the implementation to protect historic resources, partners should:

- Identify and market historic sites as redevelopment opportunities. Offer and raise awareness for incentives for historic site rehabilitation.
- Assist the Mercer County Historical Society and other local historical organizations with applications for various grants, tax credits and other assistance programs.
- Develop guidelines for historic site/district redevelopment. Include in these guidelines flexibility for conversion and adaptive re-use of historically significant structures. For historic districts, this should entail a Historic District Overlay. For individual sites not located in a historic district, an overlay or specific historic site provisions should be developed.
- Develop a handbook of site and architectural design features of Mercer County communities. Encourage developers to integrate these features into projects in their respective communities.
- Assist local municipalities with amending their zoning ordinances for incorporating Historic District Overlay provisions and other cultural resource protection measures.

The value of these properties increases as residents understand and appreciate the heritage these sites represent. Therefore, helping residents to understand and appreciate these sites (interpretation), and to some extent, marketing these sites as unique real estate and/or tourism sites can draw attention to their value. Interpretation through signage, maps, brochures, tours and events, etc., can occur for properties in public and private ownership. Partners, together with property owners, should determine what kind of interpretation is appropriate at each site.

**PRIORITY:** Medium

**LEAD:** Mercer County Historical Society

**SUPPORT:** Local historians and historical societies, MCRPC, property owners

**FUNDING:** PHMC, Historic Preservation Grants (PHMC), private foundations and sponsors

- 8. Integrate historic preservation sites into parks, trails, and greenways.** Planned greenway locations may change and expand as the county “develops” active greenways and works with the private sector to protect passive greenways. As greenway master plans for individual active greenways are developed, partners should look for opportunities to align the greenway with historic resources, so that greenway travelers can appreciate and explore these resources. Where the geography makes it difficult to take the greenway or a trail spur to the historic site, signage could be used to bring the value and general location of nearby historic properties to the greenway.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Local and county historical societies, public and private recreation organizations, watershed organizations

SUPPORT: Mercer County Trails Association, public and quasi-public landowners

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), Heritage Parks Program (DCNR), Historic Preservation Grants (PHMC), private foundations and sponsors

- 9. Demonstrate and interpret appropriate land and water management techniques (such as riparian buffers) in place of traditional cultivated landscapes on public lands.**

Showing people how to care for resources is more effective and persuasive than telling them to do so. By demonstrating and explaining the methods of resources management, partners can educate landowners about the value of resources stewardship.

Conservation techniques should be applied to

- recreation lands (parks, rights-of-way for walking paths and trails)
- other public lands (schools, public facilities),
- at waterway access points, and
- other places where people regularly observe the treatment of vegetation and wildlife.

Conservation practices may not be practical at every site, but should be considered as an alternative to conventional “landscaping,” where appropriate. Partners could also encourage the same approach on private lands that residents have access to for recreation and leisure activities, e.g. trails, campgrounds, etc.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Conservation District

SUPPORT: Schools, the Agricultural Board, Cooperative Extension, watershed organizations, state parks, landowners, WPC, public and quasi-public landowners, sportsmen's clubs

FUNDING: DEP funding to conservation districts, U.S. Department of Agriculture Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program

**10. Identify scenic view sheds and corridors and prioritize efforts for scenic conservation (land use, land management, etc.).** Procedurally, this strategy is a planning study: inventory, assess, define intent, and develop recommendations. To tailor this process to a scenic conservation plan, partners should:

- Conduct a visual assessment of potential viewsheds and corridors to document and evaluate visual resources and amenities.
- Identify threats to visual quality – development, clear-cutting, etc.
- Develop goals for scenic conservation.
- Develop management recommendations (scenic byways designation – a PennDOT program, land use/management guidelines, signage provisions, etc.)

Once designated and characterized, the scenic corridors and viewsheds can be promoted as destinations for recreation/leisure and tourism. (See also the Economic Development Action Plan)

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: Municipalities

SUPPORT: MCRPC, PennDOT, local and county historical societies,

FUNDING: PennDOT Scenic Byways Program, private foundations and sponsors, in-kind and volunteer services from community organizations

**11. Prepare municipal and multi-municipal Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Plans to ensure that local needs are met.** DCNR provides funding to assist municipalities in developing these plans.

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships

SUPPORT: MCRPC, public and private recreation organizations

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED), private foundations and sponsors

**12. Develop water trails, trail guides, and water access facilities.** Water trails are somewhat easier to designate and develop, since the travel corridor (the waterway) is often already a public right-of-way. The challenge to water trails lies in defining and developing the access points and way points where people can get on and off the waterway. Two primary means to improve and publicize access to the county's waterways are to:

- Develop an official PA Fish and Boat Commission-designated water trail for the Shenango Reservoir and the Shenango River. Consider water trails for the Little Shenango River and other major water bodies.
- Develop additional facilities such as fishing piers and accessible surfaces from parking to water shores at existing waterway access points.

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: Mercer County Trails Association, public and private recreation organizations

SUPPORT:

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), PennDOT Transportation Enhancements Program, PA Fish and Boat Commission

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## **Strategies for Regulatory Guidance and Enforcement**

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**13. Encourage municipalities to incorporate Greener Visions, as appropriate, into their regulations to conserve open space through subdivision and land development techniques.** MCRPC is in the process of extracting and applying the Growing Greener approach, advocated by Randall Arendt and the Natural Lands Trust, to the specific circumstances of Mercer County through a publication called *Greener Visions: Making Smart Growth Options Work in Mercer County: A Technical Guide for Municipal Officials with Model Ordinance Text*. The document presents 1) an introduction to the conservation subdivision approach, 2) model zoning and subdivision language for municipal ordinances, as well as model ordinances for planned residential development (PRD) and traditional neighborhood development (TND), and 3) the benefits of implementing these recommended provisions, including:

- Better-looking, better designed development
- A chance to create a network of open space while still prospering from a new tax base
- Development that is better than that of the 1980s and 1990s
- Clearer, faster approval process
- The same number of development units with lower development costs
- Opportunities to mix uses
- Opportunities to attract emerging demographic sectors of the real estate market

As stated in the document, the model provisions “can help accomplish sound, profitable new development if it is inserted, as applicable, into both municipal zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: Municipalities, PPA, PSATS

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR); DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP)

**14. Provide a model greenway overlay district to be incorporated into existing municipal zoning ordinances.** MCRPC has taken a strong lead in preparing Greener Visions, and in the same vein could research and develop a refined greenway overlay district from those that already exist around the state.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: PPA, PSATS, municipalities

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR); Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (DCED)

## **The Nature of the Strategies**

Beyond Mercer County, other agencies may be interested in knowing how Mercer County understands the broader purpose or nature of each strategy, especially when strategies are submitted to funding programs. The following matrix presents the 19 strategies relative to DCNR objectives. Characterizing how each strategy works toward or fulfills these objectives in grant applications should help Mercer County strategically compete for grant awards.

	Open Space Protection, Conservation, and Productivity	Greenway and Recreation Sites, Networks and Linkages	Land Acquisition Strategies	Administration, Management, and Maintenance	Marketing and Communication	Land Use Policies and Regulations	Future Studies/Plans
<b>High Priority Strategies</b>							
Develop a rural industries strategy to sustain and enhance the agricultural and forest industries in Mercer County.	X						X
In advance and consistent with the rural industries strategy, actively support rural industries and publicize the organizations that provide support and protection.	X				X		
Establish local and/or a regional recreation commission to serve the residents of rural communities with recreation facilities, programs and services.				X	X		
Interconnect public facilities, locally with bike-pedestrian networks and regionally with active greenways (trails).		X					X
Through adoption of this plan, establish a Mercer County standard for recreation in rural areas.	X	X	X			X	
<b>Mid Priority Strategies</b>							
Encourage agricultural landowners to make open space available to hunters through the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Farm Game/Safety Zone Program.	X	X			X		
Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian enhancements (e.g. increased shoulder widths, designated bike lanes, and trail connections) with larger scale transportation projects.		X					
Assist municipalities and recreation organizations in marketing facilities and their services.		X			X		
Review municipal comprehensive plans and regulations for consistency with county guidance for recreational land and service provisions. Recommend appropriate recreation provisions, as needed.	X	X				X	
Publicize the designated greenways and develop greenway master plans to focus and define efforts to protect resources in these corridors.		X	X		X		
Develop a plan for historic resource protection.		X	X				X
Integrate historic preservation sites into parks, trails, and greenways.		X					

Continued

	Open Space Protection, Conservation, and Productivity	Greenway and Recreation Sites, Networks and Linkages	Land Acquisition Strategies	Administration, Management, and Maintenance	Marketing and Communication	Land Use Policies and Regulations	Future Studies/Plans
<b>Mid Priority Strategies (continued)</b>							
Demonstrate and interpret appropriate land and water management techniques (such as riparian buffers) on in place of traditional cultivated landscapes on public lands:	X				X		
Encourage municipalities to incorporate Greener Visions, as appropriate, into their regulations to conserve open space through subdivision and land development techniques. (See Land Use Action Plan)	X	X				X	
Provide a model greenway overlay district to be incorporated into existing municipal zoning ordinances.		X				X	
<b>Low Priority Strategies</b>							
Promote clean recreation facilities.		X		X	X		
Identify scenic view sheds and corridors and prioritize efforts for scenic conservation (land use, land management, etc.).	X	X					X
Prepare municipal and multi-municipal Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Plans to ensure that local needs are met.	X	X					X
Develop water trails and trail guides.		X			X		

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Chapter 7  
Implementation Tools and Funding  
Programs

## **Implementation Tools**

The Action Plans includes the implementation priority, partners and funding programs adjacent to the strategies. This enables the partners and the reader to view all of the necessary information on approximately the same page. The following tools and publications may provide additional technical assistance in implementing the Greenways, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan.

### **Tools for Mercer County**

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- **Mercer County Agricultural Land Preservation Program** – This program enables Mercer County to purchase agricultural easements from farmland owners to protect these lands from future development.
- **Mercer County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)** – This ordinance manages the creation and development of new lots and their impacts for those municipalities in Mercer County that have not adopted their own provisions. The current SALDO was adopted in 1995. A revised SALDO is currently under review. The provisions for open space/recreational land dedication in the revised SALDO have been simplified from the 1995 provisions, but still remain optional for the developer. Stronger language to require developers to dedicate land (or pay fees-in-lieu) would assist the county in acquiring the land necessary to protect its green infrastructure.
- **Greener Visions: Making Smart Growth Options Work in Mercer County: A Technical Guide for Municipal Officials with Model Ordinance Text** (*forthcoming*)
- **Mercer County Hotel Excise Tax** – This revenue is directed to the Mercer County Conventions and Visitors Bureau to promote the tourism industry in Mercer County. To the extent that greenways, open space and recreation amenities are shown to bolster tourism, this revenue may be used to make improvements and enhancements to the county's green infrastructure.

### **Tools for Municipalities**

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- **Zoning Ordinance** – enables municipalities to manage land use in areas of sensitive environmental features. The zoning ordinance defines what uses are permitted in a given area.
- **Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance** – enables municipalities to manage the creation and development of new lots and their impacts. The subdivision and land development ordinance may require that new development contribute to the recreational and open space network of a community through land dedication or fees-in-lieu of land dedication that are used to acquire land or provide or improve recreational facilities.
- **Official Map** – This tool, authorized by Article IV of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, enables municipalities to identify sites and corridors for future public facilities based upon an officially adopted comprehensive plan, and to hold these land in reserve from private development until such time as is necessary to provide the facilities to meet public needs. These facilities may include
  - public streets, watercourses and public grounds, including widenings, narrowings, extensions, diminutions, openings or closing of same.
  - public parks, playgrounds and open space reservations.
  - pedestrian ways and easements.

- railroad and transit rights-of-way and easements.
- flood control basins, floodways and flood plains, storm water management areas and drainage
- easements.
- various support facilities, easements and other properties held by public bodies undertaking the elements described in section 301 of the MPC.

As stated in Section 404 of Article IV, “The adoption of any street, street lines or other public lands pursuant to this article as part of the official map shall not, in and of itself, constitute or be deemed to constitute the opening or establishment of any street nor the taking or acceptance of any land, nor shall it obligate the municipality to improve or maintain any such street or land. The adoption of proposed watercourses or public grounds as part of the official map shall not, in and of itself, constitute or be deemed to constitute, a taking or acceptance of any land by the municipality.” In other words, the transfer of land from the private landowner to the municipality is to take place through land dedication, easement, or outright purchase at fair market value.

- **Membership and Contractual Relationships with the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments** – Membership in the MCRCOG entitles municipalities to certain services. In addition, MCRCOG provides some services, e.g. recreational service guidance and grant assistance, to non-member municipalities on a contractual basis.
- **Intermunicipal Agreements** for provision of services, such as recreation – to outline the roles and responsibilities of the participating municipalities.

## **Publications**

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From PA DCNR

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/publications/>

- **Pennsylvania’s Greenways - An Action Plan for Creating Connections**
- **Community Recreation and Parks Handbook**
- **Financing Municipal Recreation and Parks**
- **Recreation and Parks Board Handbook**
- **Keys to Success in Community Recreation Initiatives Four Stories in North Central Pennsylvania**

From the PA Greenways Clearinghouse – [www.pagreenways.org](http://www.pagreenways.org)

- **The Trail Town Handbook and Self Assessment Booklet** are under development by the Allegheny Trail Alliance with support from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. This pilot program and documentation (coming soon) will be a valuable resource for Pennsylvania's many Trail Towns.

From the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership and The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)

- **Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails How To Manual**

From the Heritage Conservancy

<http://www.heritageconservancy.org/news/publications/>

- **Land Conservation Strategies: A Guide for Landowners** (online publications)
  - Landowner's Options for Protecting Family Lands
  - Conservation Easements -- Questions and Answers
  - Resource Protection Glossary of Terms
- **Opportunity Knocks: Open Space as a Community Investment** by Michael Frank the Heritage Conservancy, 2003. This publication compares the cost of investing in open space to the cost of servicing new development with public education, safety and other government services.
- **Public Finance for Open Space: A Guide for Pennsylvania's Municipalities**, Gary Gordon, the Heritage Conservancy. "This publication is intended to be a guide for local leaders and municipal officials who wish to raise public funds for open space."
- **Using Conservation Easements to Preserve Open Space A Guide for Pennsylvania's Municipalities**, the Heritage Conservancy, 2002. "This guide is designed to provide Pennsylvania's municipalities and their advisory groups, such as environmental advisory councils and open space committees, with an overview of conservation easements."
- **Growing With Green Infrastructure**, Karen Williamson, 2003.

From the National Park Service

- **Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors: A Resource Book**, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, National Park Service, 1995.

From the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

- **Rail-Trail Maintenance and Operations**, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Northeast Regional Office, July 2005

From Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse [www.sprawlwatch.org](http://www.sprawlwatch.org)

- **Building Green Infrastructure: Land Conservation as a Watershed Protection Strategy**, James R. Marshall, The Trust for Public Land, 1999.
- **The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space: How Land Conservation Helps Communities Grow Smart and Protect the Bottom Line**. Steve Lerner and William Poole, The Trust for Public Land, 1999.

## **Local Funding Mechanisms<sup>1</sup>**

### **Taxes**

Greenways can be funded through sales tax revenues. One example of a community that is using sales tax dollars to fund bicycle and pedestrian facilities is Cobb County, Georgia, where citizens voted to implement a one percent local sales tax to provide funding for transportation projects. Over four years, Cobb County Department of Transportation will receive \$3.8 million of this sales tax revenue for bicycle improvements alone, to be used as a match for federal dollars. Another example is Oklahoma City, where voters approved a temporary \$0.01 sales tax, which generated millions of dollars for greenway acquisition and development.

### **Impact Fees**

Impact fees are monetary one-time charges levied by a local government on new development. Unlike required dedications, impact fees can be applied to finance greenway facilities located outside the boundary of development. These fees can be levied through the subdivision or building permit process to finance greenways.

### **Bond Referendums**

Communities across the state have successfully placed referendums on local ballots to support greenway development. Salisbury Township, Bucks County passed four referendums that generated more than \$40 million for open space. Since bonds rely on the support of the voting population, an aggressive education and awareness program will need to be implemented prior to any referendum vote.

### **Capital Improvements Program**

Some local governments have initiated a yearly appropriation for greenway and trail development in the capital improvements program. In Raleigh, North Carolina, greenways continue to be built and maintained, year after year, due to a dedicated source of annual funding that has ranged from \$100,000 to \$500,000, administered through the Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Private Sector Sources**

Many communities have solicited greenway funding from a variety of private foundations, corporations, and other conservation-minded benefactors. As a general rule, local foundations and businesses will have a greater interest in and be more likely to fund local projects. These local sources should be approached first, before seeking funds outside the community.

### **Local Businesses**

Local industries and private businesses may agree to provide support for development of greenways through:

#### **Donations of cash to a specific greenway segment**

Donations of services by corporations to reduce the cost of the greenway implementation, including equipment and labor to construct and install elements of a trail  
Donations in the cost of materials purchased from local businesses which support greenway implementation and can supply essential products for facility development.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Funding Sources as listed at <http://www.pagreenways.org/funding-local.htm>.

This method of raising funds requires a great deal of staff coordination. One example of a successful endeavor of this type is the Swift Creek Recycled Greenway in Cary, North Carolina. A total of \$40,000 in donated construction materials and labor made this trail an award-winning demonstration project. (Some materials used in the "recycled trail" were considered waste materials by local industries!)

### **Trail Sponsors**

A sponsorship program for trail amenities allows for smaller donations to be received both from individuals and businesses. The program must be well planned and organized, with design standards and associated costs established for each amenity. Project elements which may be funded can include wayside exhibits, benches, trash receptacles, entry signage, and picnic areas. Usually, plaques recognizing the individual contributors are placed on the constructed amenities or at a prominent entry point to the trail.

### **Volunteer Work**

Community volunteers may help with trail construction, maintenance, fund raising and a whole host of other activities. Potential sources of volunteer labor could include local bicyclists, local historical groups, neighborhood associations, local churches, conservation groups, school groups, and local civic clubs such as Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs.

A good example of a volunteer greenway program is Cheyenne, Wyoming, which generated an impressive amount of community support and volunteer work. The program has the unusual problem of having to insist that volunteers wait to begin landscaping trails until construction is completed. A manual for greenway volunteers was developed in 1994 to guide and regulate volunteer work. The manual includes a description of appropriate volunteer efforts, request forms, waiver and release forms, and a completion form (volunteers are asked to summarize their accomplishments). Written guidelines are also provided for volunteer work in 100-year floodplains.

To better organize volunteer activity, Cheyenne developed an "Adopt-a-Spot" program. Participants who adopt a segment of trail are responsible for periodic trash pick-up, but can also install landscaping, prune trail-side vegetation, develop wildlife enhancement projects, and install site amenities. All improvements must be consistent with the Greenway Development Plan and must be approved by the local Greenway Coordinator. Adopt-a-Spot volunteers are allowed to display their names on a small sign along the adopted section of greenway.

### **"Buy-a-Foot" Programs**

"Buy-a-Foot" programs have been successful in raising funds and awareness for trail and greenway projects across the country. Under local initiatives, citizens are encouraged to purchase one linear foot of the greenway by donating the cost of construction. An excellent example of a successful endeavor is the High Point (North Carolina) Greenway "Buy-a-Foot" campaign, in which linear greenway "feet" were sold at a cost of \$25 per foot. Those who donated were given a greenway T-shirt and a certificate. This project provided an estimated \$5,000 in funds.

**Developer Dedications**

Cary, North Carolina, has used a dedication program to acquire land for its greenway program. Other communities have used such programs to build facilities, such as sidewalks, trails and other amenities, as part of new development. The developer typically fronts the cost of these improvements and passes the costs along to home buyers.

**American Greenways DuPont Awards**

The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program has teamed with the DuPont Corporation and the National Geographic Society to award small grants (\$250 to \$2,000) to stimulate the planning, design and development of greenways. These grants can be used for activities such as mapping, conducting ecological assessments, surveying land, holding conferences, developing brochures, producing interpretive displays, incorporating land trusts, building trails, and other creative projects. Grants cannot be used for academic research, institutional support, lobbying or political activities.

## State and Federal Funding Programs

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
<b>Pennsylvania State Agencies</b>			
<b>Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - DCNR</b>			
<p>DCNR currently directs most of its recreation and open space investment funding through the Community Conservation Partnership Program. However, DCNR periodically reviews and modifies its funding programs. Interested applicants should contact the Northwest Regional Office or visit DCNR's website (<a href="http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us">www.dcnr.state.pa.us</a>) for current program information.</p> <p>DCNR Northwest Regional Office, 100 State Street, Suite 205, Erie PA 16507, or 814-871-4190.</p>			
Community Conservation Partnership Program	Funding program for the acquisition, development, planning, implementation, and technical assistance projects from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation (Keystone) Fund, the Growing Greener Fund, and the PA Recreational Trails Fund.	Local governments, community groups, nonprofit conservation, watershed, greenway and trail organizations.	Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (717) 787-7672
Pennsylvania Recreation Trails Program	Provides funds to develop and maintain recreation trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreation trail use.		<a href="http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us">www.dcnr.state.pa.us</a>
<b>Department of Environmental Protection - DEP</b>			
Conservation District	County conservation districts provide a local resource for implementation of environmental programs by promoting conservation and sound land use practices.	Conservation districts and local governments.	Chief Division of Conservation Districts and Nutrient Management Bureau of Water Quality Protection (717) 783-7577
Growing Greener	County conservation districts provide a local resource for implementation of environmental programs by promoting conservation and sound land use practices.	Conservation districts and local governments.	<a href="http://www.dep.state.pa.us">www.dep.state.pa.us</a>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Transportation - PennDOT</b>			
Transportation Enhancement Greenways Partnership Program	An initiative to promote the use of greenways among local, state and federal agencies and develop a statewide network of greenways.	Local, county and regional governments, and the Citizens of Pennsylvania	Transportation Enhancement Program Manager (717)-783-2258
<b>Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - PHMC</b>			
Historic Preservation Grants	Grant program to fund historic preservation projects, including planning and policy development, public outreach and archaeological activities.	Non-profit organizations and local governments.	Division of Preservation Services Bureau for Historic Preservation (717) 783-9918

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

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
<b>Department of Community and Economic Development - DCED</b>			
Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)	Funding program for housing rehabilitation, public services, community facilities, infrastructure improvement, development and planning.	Low and moderate income persons	Community Development and Housing Office (717) 787-5327
Community Revitalization Program	Funding program for the acquisition, development, planning, implementation, and technical assistance projects from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation (Keystone) Fund, the Growing Greener Fund, and the PA Recreational Trails Fund.	Local governments, community groups, nonprofit conservation, watershed, greenway and trail organizations.	Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (717) 787-7672 <a href="http://www.inventpa.com">www.inventpa.com</a>
Shared Municipal Services Program	This program provides matching grants for multi-municipal projects ranging from combined police records administration to joint ownership of equipment to shared operations or services.	Local governments	Center for Local Government Services 1-888-223-6839 <a href="http://www.inventpa.com">www.inventpa.com</a>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture</b>			
Land Trust Reimbursement Program	This program reimburses qualified land trusts up to \$5,000.00 for expenses incurred in the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements	Eligible land trusts	PA Department of Agriculture Sandra Robinson 2301 North Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408 (717) 783-3167

*Implementation Tools and Funding Programs*

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
<b>Federal Agencies</b>			
<b>U.S. Department of Agriculture - USDA</b>			
<p>Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program</p>	<p>Also known as the "Small Watershed Program", this program provides technical and financial assistance to address resource and related economic problems on a watershed basis. Projects related to watershed protection, flood prevention, water supply, water quality, erosion and sediment control, wetland creation and restoration, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, and public recreation are eligible for assistance. Technical and financial assistance is also available for planning and installation of works of improvement to protect, develop, and use land and water resources in small watersheds. Local or state agency, county, municipality, town or township, soil and water conservation district, flood prevention/flood control district, Indian tribe or tribal organization, or other subunit of state government with the authority and capacity to carry out, operate, and maintain installed works of improvement are eligible for this program. Projects are limited to watersheds containing &lt; 250,000 acres. Technical assistance and cost sharing (amount varies) for implementation of NRCS-authorized watershed plans, and technical assistance on watershed surveys and planning is provided under this program. Although projects vary significantly in scope and complexity, typical projects entail \$3.5 million to \$5 million in federal financial assistance.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.html">http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.html</a>  <a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10</a></p>	<p>States, Counties and Local Governments</p>	<p>Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service  P.O. Box 2890  Washington, DC 20013-9770  (202) 720-3534</p>
<p>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)</p>	<p>The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was established to provide a single, voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers to address significant natural resource needs and objectives. Nationally, it provides technical, financial, and educational assistance, half of it targeted to livestock-related natural resource concerns and the other half to more general conservation priorities. EQIP is available</p>	<p>Farmers and Ranchers</p>	<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service  P.O. Box 2890  Washington, DC 20013-9770  (202) 720-1873</p>

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

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
	<p>primarily in priority areas where there are significant natural resource concerns and objectives. Non-federal landowners (including American Indian tribes) engaged in livestock operations or agricultural production are eligible for this program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, forestland, and other farm and ranch lands. Assistance provided includes:                      Cost sharing: Up to 75 percent of costs of certain conservation practices                      Incentive payments: Up to 100 percent for 3 years, paid at a flat rate                      Maximum \$10,000 per person per year and \$50,000 over length of contract</p> <p><a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10912.htm">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10912.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/NRCSProg.html">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/NRCSProg.html</a></p>		
<p>Forestry Incentives Program</p>	<p>The Forestry Incentives Program (FIP) is intended to ensure the nation's ability to meet future demand for sawtimber, pulpwood, and quality hardwoods. FIP provides cost-share monies to help with the costs of tree planting, timber stand improvements, and related practices on nonindustrial private forestlands. In addition to ensuring a future supply of timber, FIP's forest maintenance and reforestation projects provide numerous natural resource benefits, including reduced soil erosion and wind and enhanced water quality and wildlife habitat. FIP provides no more than 65 percent of the total costs, with a maximum of \$10,000 per person per year. Private landowner of at least 10 acres and no more than 1,000 acres of nonindustrial forest or other suitable land. Individuals, groups, Indian tribes or other native groups, associations, and corporations whose stocks are not publicly traded might be eligible provided they are not engaged primarily in the business of manufacturing forest products or providing public utility services.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/OPA/FB96OPA/FIPfact.html">http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/OPA/FB96OPA/FIPfact.html</a>  <a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10064.htm">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10064.htm</a></p>	<p>Land must be suitable for conversion from nonforest to forestland, for reforestation, or for improved forest management. Land must be capable of producing marketable timber crops and must meet productivity standards.</p>	<p>U.S. Department of Agriculture                      Natural Resources Conservation Service                      P.O. Box 2890                      Washington, DC 20013                      (202) 720-6521</p>

*Implementation Tools and Funding Programs*

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)	Grants may be used for planning activities and working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.		USDA Rural Development One Hollowcrest Complex Tunkhannock, PA 18657 (570) 836-5111, ext. 119
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	<p>CRP is a voluntary program that offers long term rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving cover on environmentally sensitive cropland or, in some cases, marginal pastureland. The protective cover reduces soil erosion, improves water quality, and enhances or establishes wildlife habitat. Increased rental payments are available on certain land areas (e.g., land within a wellhead protection area may receive an additional 10 percent payment. Assistance provided under this program includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· (1) Annual rental payments to each participant of up to \$50,000 per fiscal year</li> <li>(2) Payment to participant of up to 50 percent of the cost for establishing cover</li> <li>(3) Incentive payments for wetland hydrology restoration equal to 25 percent of the cost of restoration</li> <li>(4) Land must be owned or operated for at least 12 months. Land must have a minimum acceptable erodibility index, be located in an approved conservation priority area, have evidence of scour erosion damage, be a cropped wetland or cropland associated with noncropped wetlands, be land enrolled in the Water Bank Program (WBP) in the last year of the WBP agreement, or contain other environmentally sensitive land.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/pubfacts.htm">http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/pubfacts.htm</a>  <a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10069.htm">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10069.htm</a></p>	Individuals, partnerships, associations, Indian tribal venture corporations, estates, trusts, other business enterprises or legal entities, a state, state political subdivisions, state or local agencies owning or operating land might be eligible to participate	Headquarters: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program Stop 0513, Washington, DC 20250-0513 (202) 720-6221 <a href="mailto:info@fsa.usda.gov">info@fsa.usda.gov</a>

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

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
<b>U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service - USDA NRCS</b>			
Wetlands Reserve Program	<p>This voluntary program provides landowners with financial incentives to restore and protect wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal agricultural land. Landowners may sell a conservation easement or enter into a costshare restoration agreement. Landowners voluntarily limit future use of the land, but retain private ownership. Landowners and the Natural Resources Conservation Service develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. Easement participants must have owned the land for at least 1 year. Owners may be an individual, partnership, association, corporation, estate, trust, business, or other legal entity; a state (when applicable); a political subdivision of a state; or any agency thereof owning private land, and the land must be restorable and be suitable for wildlife benefits. WRP provides three options to the landowner: (1) Permanent Easement: USDA purchases easement (price is lesser of the appraised agricultural or raw land value, payment cap, or amount offered by the landowner). USDA pays 100 percent of restoration costs. (2) 30-year Easement: Easement payment will be 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. USDA pays 75 percent of restoration costs. (3) Restoration Cost-Share Agreement: Agreement (min. 10 yr) to restore degraded wetland habitat. USDA pays 75 percent of restoration costs.</p> <p><a href="http://www.wl.fbnet.org">http://www.wl.fbnet.org</a>  <a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10072.htm">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p10072.htm</a></p>	Land owners	Natural Resources Conservation Service Watersheds and Wetlands Division P.O. Box 2890 Washington, DC 20013 (202) 690-0848
Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program	<p>Technical assistance is provided in designing, and installing watershed works of improvement. Financial assistance is provided for sharing costs of measures for watershed protection, flood prevention, agricultural water management, and sedimentation control, public water based fish, wildlife, and recreation; and in extending long term credit to help local interests with their share of the costs. Watershed area must not exceed 250,000 acres. Capacity of a single structure is limited</p>	Any State agency, county or groups of counties, municipality, town or township, soil and water conservation district, flood prevention or flood control	Watersheds and Wetlands Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013 (202) 720-3534

*Implementation Tools and Funding Programs*

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
	to 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity and 12,500 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity..	district, Indian tribe or tribal organization, or any other nonprofit agency with authority under State law to carry out, maintain, and operate watershed works of improvement may apply for assistance.	
<b>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - US EPA</b>			
Sustainable Development Challenge Grants	<p>Grants are intended to initiate community based projects that promote environmentally and economically sustainable development. The program encourages partnering among community, business, and government entities to work cooperatively to develop flexible, locally oriented approaches that link environmental management and quality of life activities with sustainable development and revitalization. This program challenges communities to invest in a sustainable future that will link environmental protection, economic prosperity, and community wellbeing. These grants are intended to (1) catalyze community-based projects; (2) build partnerships that increase a community's capacity to take steps to ensure long-term ecosystem and human health, economic vitality, and community well-being; and (3) leverage public and private investments to enhance environmental quality by enabling community efforts to continue beyond the period of funding. Grant amounts are for up to \$200,000, and a 20% match is required.</p> <p><a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p66651.htm">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p66651.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity/sdcg/">http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity/sdcg/</a></p>	Nonprofit organizations and community groups, and federally recognized Indian tribes, state and local governments.	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, SDCG, Office of the Administrator (MC 1306) Ariel Rios Bldg. 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Washington, DC 20460 (202) 260-6812

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

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
Capitalization Grants for Clean Water State Revolving Funds	<p>EPA awards grants to states to capitalize their Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRFs). The states, through the CWSRF, make loans for high-priority water quality activities. As loan recipients make payments back into the fund, money is available for new loans to be issued to other recipients. Although traditionally used to build wastewater treatment facilities, loans are also used for other water quality management and source water protection activities, including (1) agricultural, silviculture, rural, and urban runoff control; (2) estuary improvement projects; (3) wet weather flow control, including stormwater and sewer overflows; (4) alternative wastewater treatment technologies; and (5) landfills and riparian buffers. Loans are made at low interest rates (0 percent to market rate) for up to 20 years. States can use loan funds to refinance previously executed debt obligations, guarantee local debt obligations, buy bond insurance for local debt obligations, or guarantee bonds issued by municipal and inter-municipal revolving funds. States may use up to 4 percent of the federal funds for administrative costs. States may set the criteria for determining which municipalities can access the loans and other fund uses each year. Capitalization grant funds are available to states and Puerto Rico. Territories and District of Columbia receive construction grants for wastewater treatment. States and Puerto Rico lend money to municipalities for wastewater treatment systems and to municipalities, communities, citizens' groups, nonprofit organizations, and citizens implementing NPS and estuary management activities. Loans provided by states to eligible recipients (approx. \$3 billion annually). A 20 percent state match is required.</p> <p><a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p66458.htm">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p66458.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.epa.gov/owm/finan.htm">http://www.epa.gov/owm/finan.htm</a></p>	Local and Count Governments	<p>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Wastewater Management, SRF Branch, Municipal Support Division (4204) Ariel Rios Bldg. 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Washington, DC 20460 (202) 260-7360 <a href="mailto:srinfo@epa.gov">srinfo@epa.gov</a></p>
Environmental Education Grants Program	<p>The purpose of the Environmental Education Grants (EEG) is to provide financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Projects</p>	Local, tribal, or state education agencies, colleges and universities, nonprofit	<p>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Education (1704)</p>

*Implementation Tools and Funding Programs*

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
	<p>must focus on one of the following: (1) improving environmental education teaching skills; (2) educating teachers, students, or the public about human health problems; (3) building state, local, or tribal government capacity to develop environmental education programs; (4) educating communities through community-based organization; or (5) educating the public through print, broadcast, or other media. The funding for this project are project grants (up to \$25,000 regionally; \$25,000 to \$150,000 nationally), a nonfederal government match of 25 percent is required.</p> <p><a href="http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html">http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html</a>  <a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p66951.html">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/p66951.html</a></p>	<p>organizations, state environmental agencies, and noncommercial education broadcasting agencies are eligible for this program.</p>	<p>Environmental Education Grants  Ariel Rios Bldg.  1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  Washington, DC 20460  (202) 260-8619</p>
<b>United States Department of the Interior</b>			
<p>North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants</p>	<p>The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 provides matching grants to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United states, Canada, and Mexico. The act was passed, in part, to support activities under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This plan is an international agreement between the three countries for the long-term protection of wetland/upland habitats on which waterfowl and other migratory birds in North America depend. Both the Standard and Small Grants programs help deliver funding to on-the ground projects through the protection, restoration, or enhancement of an array of wetland habitats. The act requires that U.S. and Canadian partners focus on these three activities; Mexican partners may also develop training, educational, and management programs and conduct sustainable use studies. Project grants range from \$50,000 to \$1 million. Cost-share partners must match grant funds 1:1 with U.S. nonfederal dollars.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fws.gov/r9nawwo/granpro.html">http://www.fws.gov/r9nawwo/granpro.html</a></p>	<p>Public or private, profit or nonprofit entities or individuals establishing public-private sector partnerships are eligible for this program.</p>	<p>U.S. Department of the Interior  U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office (NAWWO)  4401 North Fairfax Drive  Room 110  Arlington, VA 22203  (703) 358-1784</p>

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

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Program	<p>The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Program, through partnerships with conservation groups and federal/state/tribal/local government agencies, provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners interested in voluntarily restoring or otherwise improving native habitats for fish and wildlife on their lands. This program focuses on restoring former and degraded wetlands, native grasslands, stream and riparian areas, and other habitats to conditions as natural as feasible. Under cooperative agreements, private landowners agree to maintain restoration projects, but otherwise retain full control of the land. Since 1987, the program has partnered with more than 19,000 landowners to restore over 409,000 acres of wetlands, 333,000 acres of prairie grassland, and 2,030 miles of in-stream aquatic and riparian habitat. In addition, the program has reopened more than 200 miles of stream habitat for fish and other aquatic species by removing barriers to passage. The assistance is project cost-share or service cost-share assistance. (generally limited to less than \$25,000). Technical assistance is also available for habitat assessment and restoration expertise.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fws.gov/r9dhcpfw/index.htm">http://www.fws.gov/r9dhcpfw/index.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.fws.gov/cep/coastweb.html">http://www.fws.gov/cep/coastweb.html</a></p>	Private landowners are eligible for this program, however they must enter into a cooperative agreement for a fixed term of at least 10 years.	U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Branch of Habitat Restoration, Division of Habitat Conservation 4401 North Fairfax Drive Room 400 Arlington, VA 22203 (703) 358-2201

*Implementation Tools and Funding Programs*

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
<b>United States Department of Transportation - Federal Highways Administration / Federal Transit Administration</b>			
SAFETEA - LU	<p>Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users - the nation's plan for surface transportation investment for 2005-2009. Various funding programs are represented within SAFETEA-LU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds</li> <li>▪ Transportation Enhancements Program</li> <li>▪ Transit Enhancements Program</li> <li>▪ National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA)</li> <li>▪ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)</li> </ul> <p>Projects related to bicycle and pedestrian network development and improvement are applicable to these funding streams that typically flow through state and MPO transportation agencies.</p>		Contact the Mercer MPO for details on funding programs and application procedures.
<b>United States - Other</b>			
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program	<p>The National Parks service operates this program aimed at conserving land and water resources for communities. Eligible projects include conservation plans for protecting these resources, trail development, and greenway development.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/ContactUs/cu_apply.html">http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/ContactUs/cu_apply.html</a></p>		(202) 354-6933
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants	<p>This federal funding source was established in 1965 to provide park and recreation opportunities to residents throughout the United States. Money for the fund comes from the sale or lease of nonrenewable resources, primarily federal offshore oil and gas leases and surplus federal land sales. LWCF funds are used by federal agencies to acquire additions to National Parks, Forests, and Wildlife Refuges. In the past, Congress has also appropriated LWCF monies for so-called "state-side" projects. These "state-side" LWCF grants can be used by communities to acquire and build a variety of park and recreation facilities, including trails and greenways. These funds are distributed by</p>		<p>Pennsylvania Deputy Secretary Conservation and Engineering Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources P.O. Box 8767 Harrisburg, PA 17105 Tel: 717-787-9306</p>

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

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONTACT
	<p>the National Park Service to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. They require a 50 percent match from the local project sponsor. In PA contact DCNR, Recreation and Conservation, 717-783-2659.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/lwcf/">http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/lwcf/</a></p>		
<p>Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP)</p>	<p>The Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program is a comprehensive initiative of research and grants to investigate the relationships between transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices and identify provide sector-based initiatives to improve such relationships. States, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, and tribal governments are eligible for discretionary grants to carry out eligible projects to integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the efficiency of the transportation system of the United States.</li> <li>• Reduce environmental impacts of transportation.</li> <li>• Reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments.</li> <li>• Ensure efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade.</li> <li>• Examine community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns and investments that support these goals.</li> </ul> <p>The TCSP Program is a FHWA Program being jointly developed with the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Rail Administration, the Office of the Secretary, and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration within the US Department of Transportation, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/">http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/</a></p>		<p>TCSP Program Manager, Office of Planning Phone: (202) 366-6654 Fax: (202) 493-2198</p>

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Appendix  
Select Mercer County Results  
from the  
Recreation Needs in Pennsylvania: Resident Survey

**Select Mercer County Results from the  
Recreation Needs in Pennsylvania: Resident Survey  
Conducted in Conjunction with the Pennsylvania State Recreation Plan  
Developed by PA DCNR**

2. During an average week, how many hours do you usually spend on recreational activities away from your home?

Indoor 2.17 hours

Outdoor 7.13 hours

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

Local 35%

State 24%

Federal 8%

Private/Commercial 38%

Don't Know 1%

3b. With whom do you typically recreate away from home?

Alone 13%

Groups of 1 or 2 people 36%

Groups of 3 or more people 37%

4a. How many times have you or anyone in your household visited public recreation areas?

In PA in last three months 4.97 visits

Out of PA in last three months 1.87 visits

In PA in last twelve months 13.84 visits

Out of PA in last twelve months 3.01 visits

4b. How long does it take you to travel to the recreation area in Pennsylvania you visited most often?

Average/Mean Response 34.6 minutes

5. Over the next five years, do you think your recreational activity will increase, decrease, or remain about the same?

Indoor recreation

Increase 18%

Decrease 13%

About the same 57%

No Response 12%

Outdoor recreation

Increase 39%

Decrease 11%

About the same 41%

No Response 9%

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

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

...

8a. How important is outdoor recreation to you?

4.03/5.00 Somewhat Important-Very Important/ No Response 2%

8b. How important is indoor recreation to you?

3.25/5.00 Neutral- Somewhat Important /No Response 2%

8c. How important are public recreation areas and opportunities to you?

3.75/5.00 Neutral- Somewhat Important /No Response 2%

8d. How important were public recreation areas and opportunities in choosing where you live or work?

2.74/5.00 Somewhat Unimportant-Neutral / No Response 4%

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

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

	Adequate / Increased / Improved / No Response
<b><u>Trail/Street/Road Activities</u></b>	
Walking Paths (indoor and outdoor)	45% / 27% / 9% / 19%
Jogging and Fitness Trails	36% / 23% / 10% / 31%
Hiking and Backpacking Trails	28% / 25% / 4% / 44%
Equestrian Trails	16% / 8% / 7% / 66%
Bicycle Paths	22% / 28% / 8% / 42%
Mountain Bike Trails	8% / 20% / 10% / 62%
Off-Road Motorcycling Trails	14% / 18% / 8% / 60%
ATV Trails	19% / 21% / 8% / 52%
Four-Wheel Driving Trails	18% / 17% / 4% / 61%
Scenic Drives	23% / 20% / 8% / 48%
Greenways	20% / 8% / 6% / 65%
<b><u>Viewing/Learning Activities</u></b>	
Environmental Education Areas	28% / 32% / 9% / 30%
Heritage Parks/Historical Sites	32% / 25% / 7% / 35%
Outdoor Performance Areas	21% / 26% / 11% / 42%
Wildlife Areas	37% / 31% / 7% / 25%
Natural Areas	30% / 31% / 11% / 28%
Wilderness Areas	30% / 33% / 8% / 29%
<b><u>Group Sports</u></b>	
Baseball Fields	39% / 11% / 18% / 32%
Softball Fields	37% / 10% / 13% / 39%
Football Fields	39% / 15% / 9% / 36%
Soccer Fields	34% / 14% / 14% / 38%
Basketball Courts	22% / 22% / 9% / 47%
Volleyball Courts	18% / 23% / 12% / 47%
Lacrosse Fields	15% / 8% / 8% / 69%
<b><u>Individual Sports</u></b>	
Skateboarding and Rollerblading Areas	7% / 37% / 8% / 48%
Handball Courts	22% / 15% / 3% / 60%
Tennis Courts	28% / 15% / 6% / 51%
Archery Ranges	19% / 26% / 4% / 51%
Rifle and Handgun Ranges	15% / 25% / 9% / 52%
Horseshoe Pits	19% / 13% / 5% / 62%
Golf Courses	51% / 8% / 2% / 38%
Disc Golf Courses	17% / 8% / 75%
<b><u>Winter Sports</u></b>	
Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Areas	22% / 23% / 6% / 48%
Sledding Areas	8% / 44% / 5% / 42%
Cross-Country Ski Areas	20% / 25% / 3% / 51%
Ice Skating Areas	13% / 37% / 5% / 45%
Ice Hockey Rinks	19% / 22% / 4% / 54%
Snowmobile Trails	23% / 17% / 5% / 54%
<b><u>Hunting% / Trapping Areas</u></b>	
Big Game	35% / 19% / 4% / 42%
Small Game	37% / 17% / 4% / 42%
Waterfowl	37% / 13% / 3% / 53%
<b><u>Swimming</u></b>	
Indoor Pools	20% / 33% / 10% / 37%
Outdoor Pools	31% / 18% / 15% / 36%
Lake and Stream Swimming Areas	26% / 20% / 15% / 39%
Snorkeling and Scuba Areas	10% / 15% / 8% / 67%

*Continued*

***Mercer County Survey Results***

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**Social Activities**

Picnic Areas	42% / 15% / 22% / 21%
Playgrounds	30% / 22% / 20% / 27%
Sitting and Passive Areas	34% / 22% / 10% / 34%
Senior Centers	33% / 25% / 13% / 29%
Community Recreation Centers	22% / 21% / 12% / 45%
Dog Parks	13% / 26% / 4% / 56%
Open Play Areas	23% / 21% / 13% / 43%

**Camping**

Campgrounds (with hookups)	23% / 21% / 15% / 41%
Campgrounds (without hookups)	32% / 12% / 12% / 45%
Cabin Rentals	23% / 30% / 8% / 39%

**Boating and Floating**

Boating Areas (non-motorized)	46% / 11% / 3% / 40%
Boating Areas (limited horsepower)	47% / 8% / 5% / 40%
Boating Areas (unlimited horsepower)	38% / 11% / 6% / 45%
Canoe and Kayak River Access	24% / 28% / 3% / 45%
Water Trails	22% / 17% / 6% / 55%

**Fishing Areas**

Warmwater	39% / 6% / 3% / 52%
Coldwater	36% / 5% / 4% / 55%
Ice	35% / 6% / 41% / 59%
Anadromous (e.g., Shad, Salmon)	19% / 6% / 2% / 73%
Special Regulation Areas	25% / 2% / 2% / 71%

10. Please check those recreational programs which should be expanded in your area:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Arts and Crafts/Hobbies 26%                                   | ▪ Fairs/Ethnic Cultural Events 19% |
| ▪ Athletics/Sports (tennis, golf, soccer, basketball, etc.) 22% | ▪ Fitness Programs 26%             |
| ▪ Cultural Arts (theater, dance, music) 40%                     | ▪ Adult Education 10%              |
| ▪ Environmental Education 18%                                   | ▪ Senior Programs 30%              |
| ▪ Before and After School Programs 34%                          | ▪ Preschool Programs 32%           |
| ▪ Teen Programs 52%   | ▪ Other 1%                         |

11. If you or someone you know is mentally or physically disabled, list the types of recreational resources near where you live that should be provided or expanded to meet their needs.

**Facilities and equipment**

- Fishing piers for wheelchairs, fishing areas
- Indoor sports, swimming
- Handicapped events
- Heated pools, health spa
- More in general
- Other
- Parking closer to trails
- Road side rest stops, bathrooms
- No Response 90%

**Activities and programs**

- Handicap accessibility
- More in general
- Support group, buddy system
- Sportsman activity, fish, hut
- Exercise program
- Horseback riding
- Other
- No response 88%

12. If you or someone you know is a senior citizen, list the types of recreational resources near where you live that should be provided or expanded to meet their needs.

**Facilities and equipment**

- Walking, hiking trails
- Benches, rail on trails
- Churches, public buildings
- Water sport, slides
- Affordable pools, swimming

- Senior programs
- Handicapped parking, ramps, access
- Equipment for the disabled
- Other
- No Response 88%

12. If you or someone you know is a senior citizen, list the types of recreational resources near where you live that should be provided or expanded to meet their needs.

Activities and programs

Lunches	Organized team sports
More in general	Exercise program, nutrition
Urban walking trails	No Response 91%
Public buildings	

13a. How satisfied are you with the recreation areas and opportunities available to you in Pennsylvania?

Municipal parks and recreation areas	3.63/5.00 Neutral-Agree
County parks and recreation areas	3.91/5.00 Neutral-Agree
State Parks	3.82/5.00 Neutral-Agree
State Forests	4.27/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree
State Game Lands	4.47/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree
Federal parks, forests, and recreation areas	4.38/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree
Private recreation areas	4.26/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree

13b. If you are unsatisfied, please help us understand by telling us why:

Municipal 21% / No Response 77%	State Forests 5% / No Response 95%
Offer more, very few	Need more in general
Unsafe conditions, unsupervised	Area not maintained
Offer more, very few	Allow ATV riding
Should be cleaned up, litter	State Game Lands 8% / No Response 92%
More for kids	Too much unused land
More funding	Area not maintained
Need walking, biking trails	Need more in general
Area not maintained	Need horse trails
Need more for adults, seniors	Federal 6% / No Response 94%
Need more parks and rec. areas	Improvements in general
Underuse of walking paths	Need more in general
County 14% / No Response 86%	Need more fishing
Area not maintained	Allegheny Forest too far away
Need more in general	Private 11% / No Response 89%
Access unavailable, not handicap accessible	Need more funding
Rec areas are being removed	Need general improvements
State Parks 11% / No Response 89%	Update play equipment
More in general	Not open at convenient times
Facilities not clean	Grove City College is not open to public
Area not maintained	Improve management, cleanliness
Need campgrounds	
Should allow pets	

14 - Open space and Greenways

- a. Open space near where I live is threatened by development  
2.80/5.00 Disagree-Neutral / No Response 18%
- b. There is enough protected open space near where I live  
3.21/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 15%
- c. Public access to open space near where I live should be increased  
3.06/5.00 Disagree-Neutral / No Response 18%
- d. Municipalities near where I live currently work together to protect and link park and open space resources  
3.13 Disagree-Neutral /5.00 / No Response 16%
- e. It is important that greenways/trails connect neighborhoods and other elements of my community  
3.46 Neutral-Agree /5.00 / No Response 15%
- f. It is important that greenways/trails connect municipalities and parks within Pennsylvania  
3.63/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 17%
- g. Streams and rivers are in good condition near where I live  
2.83/5.00 Disagree-Neutral / No Response 14%

## *Mercer County Survey Results*

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- h. Streams and rivers are accessible near where I live  
3.67/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 13%

### 15 - Public recreation quality

- a. Public recreation areas near where I live are well maintained  
3.44/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 13%
- b. Public recreation areas near where I live are adequately policed  
2.91/5.00 Disagree-Neutral / No Response 16%
- c. The environmental quality of public recreation areas near where I live is good  
3.47 Neutral-Agree /5.00 / No Response 16%

### 16 - Public recreation availability

- a. There are enough public recreation areas close to where I live  
3.28/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 9%
- b. Public recreation areas near where I live are open at times convenient for me  
3.54/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 14%
- c. Public recreation areas and programs near where I live are accessible to people with physical and mental disabilities  
3.51 /5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 17%
- d. Public transportation to recreation areas near where I live meets my needs  
2.66/5.00 Disagree-Neutral / No Response 18%
- e. Maintaining the public recreation areas we now have is more important than adding new parks in Pennsylvania  
3.56 Neutral-Agree /5.00 / No Response 13%
- f. Local government should do more to increase public awareness about the availability of recreation areas and opportunities  
4.12 Agree-Strongly Agree /5.00 / No Response 14%
- g. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should do more to increase awareness of recreation opportunities at State Parks and Forests  
4.07/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree / No Response 15%
- h. Municipalities in my area should join together to form a park and recreation department  
3.55/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 12%
- i. The availability of local recreation programs reduces youth crime  
4.06/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree / No Response 11%
- j. Parks and natural areas increase the value of nearby properties  
4.20/5.00 Agree-Strongly Agree / No Response 13%
- k. Greenways and trails increase the value of nearby properties  
3.88/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 13%

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- 18a. My municipality should have a permanent source of funding based on general tax revenues for park and recreation opportunities  
3.43/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 12%

- 18b. The State should increase its permanent source of funding based on general tax revenues for park and recreation opportunities  
3.41/5.00 Neutral-Agree / No Response 13%

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- 26. Do you use the internet?  
56% Yes / 44% No / No Response 0%

- 27. Do you use the internet for information on your recreational pursuits?  
48% Yes / 47% No / No Response 5%

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