New Horizons

A County-Wide Greenways and Blueways Network
Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

a companion document to
the County's comprehensive land use, parks,
recreation and open space planning efforts

Prepared for:
Westmoreland County Department of Planning & Development
Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation
The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County

Prepared by:
Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

Spring 2008

DCNR

SMART GROWTH
Partnership of Westmoreland County

WESTMORELAND COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

WESTMORELAND COUNTY
Parks & Recreation

PLACEHOLDER
COUNTY OF WESTMORELAND, PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Resolution

Acknowledgments

This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program, Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. This project was made possible through the time, efforts and expertise of the following project stakeholders:

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John Surmacz, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Development

Regional and State-wide Stakeholders
Alex Graziani, Executive Director, Smart Growth Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania
Greg Phillips, Executive Director, Westmoreland Conservation District
Tracy Stack, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Organizations throughout the County and Region working to implement recreation and conservation projects aimed at improving sustainability, health and well-being.
Residents of Westmoreland County

New Horizons ~ A County-wide Greenway and Blueway Network was created with assistance from:
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Preface

New Horizons ~ A County-wide Greenway and Blueway Network is a component of Westmoreland County's land use, parks, recreation and open space planning efforts. As a planning and policy guide, *New Horizons* has been created as a tool to unify the County, municipalities and the development community. The Plan also seeks to set the stage for the County's future work with recreation and conservation organizations to shape and implement natural resource decisions and projects. To complement initiatives outlined in the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and its Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, *New Horizons* presents a series of recommended projects and implementation strategies that will shape the character and relationship of future development, conservation and recreation opportunities in the County.

With more than 370,000 residents, Westmoreland County is one of the Southwestern Pennsylvania region's most populated counties. Within the County's 1,000 square miles, residents live in a variety of environments – urban, suburban and rural. The *New Horizons'* effort was developed through discussion among key stakeholders including the County's Department of Planning and Development, the County's Bureau of Parks and Recreation (Bureau) and the Bureau's Citizens Advisory Board. Key stakeholders helping to formulate the recommendations presented in this document represent the County's residents' interests as well as those of varying recreation, conservation and development pursuits. One of the main challenges the stakeholders pursued was identifying how Westmoreland County can, through the enhancement of its existing natural resources, best leverage its assets and improve the quality of life within all of its communities.

This document presents the findings and recommendations of *New Horizons* as 4 elements:

Element One: Establishing the Mission outlines the project's approach and objectives.

Element Two: Analyzing Opportunities identifies natural resource characteristics and other infrastructure components evaluated as part of defining the County's greenway and blueway network. Element Two is based on key facts, findings and input received throughout the planning process.

Element Three: Creating the Network details features of the proposed greenway and blueway network including various types of Corridors, project descriptions and potential impacts on implementing the recommended network.

Element Four: Defining Actions presents a series of steps needed in order to realize the Plan's recommendations. Element Four contains specific projects, policies and strategies derived from recommendations outlined in previous parts of the Plan. Funding sources and opportunities for building and/or strengthening relationships are also identified.

Appendix: Background Data summarizes existing natural resource and development factors and feedback that have shaped the findings, objectives and recommendations outlined in the document. Background facts and the conclusions of technical mapping analyses are briefly described and illustrated.

Preface

Establishing the Mission

What is a Greenway? What is a Blueway?

A greenway is a linear corridor of land connecting natural resources, open spaces and man-made characteristics. A blueway typically refers to a designated corridor inclusive of a watercourse that links notable destinations and/or habitats.

Defining a Greenway
PA DCNR identifies greenways as "linear corridors of public and private land that serve as the linkages between specifically identified natural resource-based or manmade features. They can be either land-based [greenways] or water-based [blueways] and serve a variety of functions and benefits including recreation, transportation, community revitalization and economic development, natural resource conservation, environmental protection, wildlife habitat and migration and education. These corridors often follow old railways, canals, ridge tops, rivers and stream valleys."

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) definition for greenways recognizes both of these corridor types. Further, DCNR defines a greenway network as a system that:

". . . includes greenways as well as hubs of specifically identified natural resources or open spaces and manmade features or destinations that influence the development of the linear greenway corridor."

New Horizons ~ A County-wide Greenway and Blueway Network presents a series of recommendations for Westmoreland County highlighting significant landscapes that are important for human use and recreation as well as those lands that support resource conservation. Because these lands, open spaces and waterways may be controlled by public entities, private land trusts or placed under private ownership, challenges may undoubtedly exist to weave these spaces together into a comprehensive network. Consequently, this Plan presents actions including a list of tools aimed to continue protection of public natural areas and to encourage conservation of privately held sensitive lands.

The Significance of these Landscapes

Greenways and blueways are fundamental ingredients to enhancing and leveraging existing natural resources as well as adding new opportunities. The addition of a formal open space system inclusive of defined greenways and blueways will provide Westmoreland County with opportunities to fulfill Pennsylvanian's desires to experience the outdoors by foot and bike (see also 2003 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan).

Element One
Establishing the Mission

Why is the development of the County's greenway and blueway open space network important? Such a network enables Westmoreland's communities to achieve a number of goals including enhancing recreation, conservation, economic development, improved mobility, healthy lifestyles and historic/cultural heritage efforts. Furthermore, such a network identifies potential connections with similar opportunities arising in surrounding counties and regions. The County's past land and water trail successes, including the Yough River Trail (a segment of the multi-State Great Allegheny Passage) and on-going development of the Five Star Trail, exemplify the enthusiasm that leaders and residents have for enhancing natural resource opportunities within the County. In designating a formal network of recreation and conservation-oriented Corridors, the County is establishing a system with resource-rich "links" between thousands of acres of existing park, recreation and open spaces.

General Planning Approach

To define the County's greenway network, a geographic information system (GIS) was the primary technical tool used for the project's inventory and analysis phase. This first phase's three main steps include: compiling background mapping, establishing criteria and identifying potential greenway/blueway elements. The second phase, recommendations, presents the components of the County's comprehensive greenway network. A series of specific Corridor Projects, actions and tools for implementing these opportunities are outlined.

Background Mapping and Data

Building on available data, 23 maps document existing natural and man-made resources throughout Westmoreland County. Each map identifies the location and extent of the region's various resources. Each map is also formatted for incorporation into the County Department of Planning and Development's digital mapping system to complement existing comprehensive planning efforts. Demographic analyses and other similar planning data was created and presented as part of the County's other comprehensive land use and recreation planning projects and has been utilized for reference as appropriate throughout the creation of this document.

Criteria

To identify which of the County's areas are most suitable for inclusion in the greenways/blueways network, a series of analyses were then completed. Analysis criteria, selected from features identified during background mapping, include characteristics such as ridgetops, biological diversity areas, steep slopes, high quality water resources and many other resources. Criteria were also "weighted" based

upon their sensitivity to human interaction and their importance for maintaining "sustainable" environments.

Greenway Elements

The components fitting the analysis criteria were then overlain with one another to determine areas most appropriate for inclusion into the network. Areas where multiple criterion exist as well as natural areas that could link the County's existing or planned parks, recreation and open spaces were mapped. Greenway activities proposed within surrounding counties (Indiana, Cambria, Somerset, Fayette, Washington and Allegheny) were also evaluated.

Recommendations

In assessing the relationship and extent of the various potential greenway/blueway elements, a network of Corridors emerges. Implementing any type of County-wide Plan represents a significant commitment. *New Horizons* presents specific Corridor recommendations which define distinctive projects that can be completed over time. In gradually establishing greenway/blueway successes, momentum can build throughout the County. In coming years a cohesive, balanced system will be established from which both man and nature can benefit.

Public Participation Process

New Horizons is a collaborative effort among many stakeholders – Westmoreland County's Department of Planning and Development, County Bureau of Parks and Recreation including its Citizens Advisory Board (borne from the County's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan), regional organizations, State agencies and the general public. Stakeholders met throughout the project to review analysis findings, evaluate potential recommendations and explore options for the Plan's implementation.

A series of public meetings and key stakeholder events co-hosted by the Department of Planning and Development, Bureau of Parks and Recreation and the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County were held at specific points in time to solicit feedback regarding current needs and opportunities as well as to obtain additional knowledge of specific local greenway related activities.

Element One
Establishing the Mission

The Mission of New Horizons

Building upon the goals and recommendations of Westmoreland County's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, a mission statement for *New Horizons ~ A County-wide Greenway and Blueway Network* emerges. *New Horizons* seeks to:

> Establish a formal system of recreation- and conservation-oriented linkages which strengthen connections among parks, recreation areas and open spaces within Westmoreland County and to the surrounding region.

Objectives

The policies and strategies of *New Horizons* are centered on the following objectives:

Objective # 1: Promote resource conservation by defining greenways which incorporate the County's most sensitive, unique and contiguous natural areas.

Objective # 2: Conserve natural resources by encouraging the development community, the County and municipalities to recognize potential opportunities and challenges of growth on the existing environment.

Objective # 3: Expand recreation opportunities by delineating a formal system of land and water trails which connect regionally significant recreation assets and key destinations.

Objective # 4: Encourage greater mobility within the County by establishing greenways which can host various types of transportation alternatives.

Objective # 5: Leverage the County's natural resources and recreation features as mechanisms for bolstering economic development opportunities.

Objective # 6: Encourage the improvement of County resident health and fitness by supporting related programs and providing greenway connections near residential areas, park facilities and schools.

Objective # 7: Celebrate and embrace the heritage of Westmoreland County by improving accessibility to cultural and historical sites.

Analyzing Opportunities

Overview

This section details the step-by-step approach used in completing the Plan's analyses. The three initial steps of this approach include:

- Creating Background Mapping;
- Establishing Criteria; and
- Identifying Greenway Elements.

Creating Background Mapping

Natural resource and infrastructure data previously compiled as part of the County's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (*Parks Horizons)* and Comprehensive Land Use Plan was updated and expanded as needed to reflect recent recreation-related improvements and acquisitions completed in the County. More than 20 types of data, ranging from land coverage and utilities to stream quality and woodland areas, were gathered and mapped. In addition to these County planning documents, other data sources were used including State and Federal agencies, the County's GIS inventory, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's regional Natural Infrastructure GIS database and non-governmental organizations' available resource analyses, such as the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's biological diversity area information.

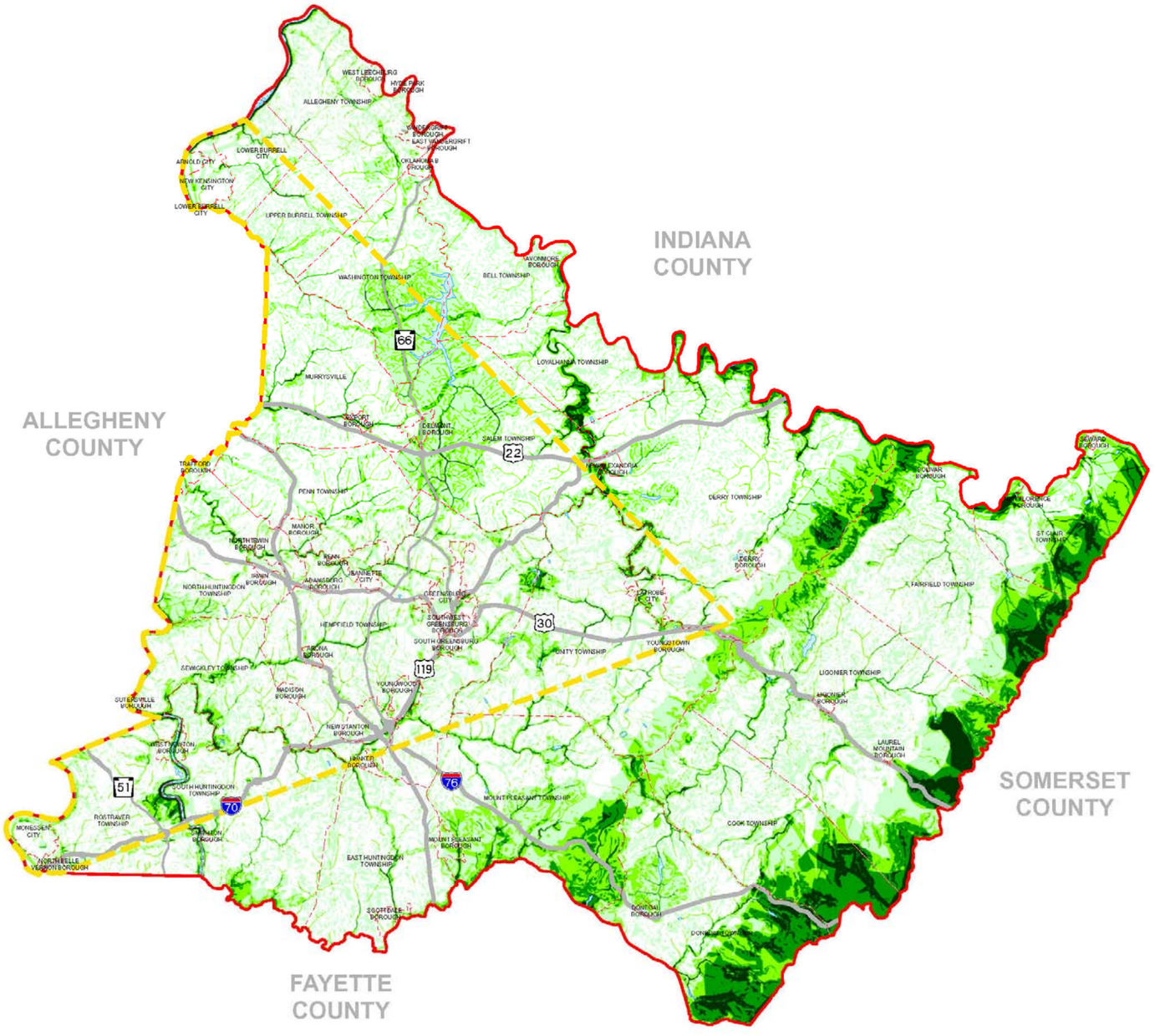
Topography influences the planning and accessibility of greenways and blueways. The location of stream valleys, ridgelines and other landform features can often define the extent of these Corridors. Because digitally-formatted data was not available for all of the County's geographic characteristics, GIS mapping was created by digitizing paper maps and other sources. One example of this is "ridgelines." Ridgeline information was visually identified and digitized using United States Geological Survey topographic information. All background mapping graphics and summary descriptions are included within the Plan's Appendix A.

Element Two
Analyzing Opportunities

Once the individual patterns of the County's various resources were identified, each map was "layered" on top of one another to identify potential areas rich in resources. These resource rich areas were further evaluated to determine if there were any characteristics which may have a greater influence on enhancing the quality of open spaces whether for the benefit of future recreation, development and/or habitat conservation. Based upon feedback gained from the project's Steering Committee as well as the public, the characteristics of Westmoreland County which were determined to fit this criterion included:

- State Forests, Gamelands and Parks
- Federal Parks/Lands
- County and Local Parks
- Exceptional Quality Streams
- Biological Diversity Areas
- High Quality Streams
- Floodplains
- Off-road Trails
- Water Trails
- Normal Streams
- Slopes $\geq$25%
- Ridge-tops
- Abandoned Railroads
- Wetlands
- Off-road Bike Routes
- Active Railroads
- Utility Corridors
- Reservoir Watersheds

An illustration of the locations of these characteristics when layered together is found on the following map. Darker areas represent the presence of a greater number of resources whereas lighter areas represent the presence of fewer resources. This map served as the first building block in establishing resource criteria to formulate *New Horizons'* first planning concepts.



This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Major Highways
- Secondary Highways
- Rivers and Lakes
- Development Triangle

CORRIDOR CRITERIA

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4-9

Corridor Criteria:

Number	Criteria	Buffer
1	State Forest, Gamelands and Parks; Federal Parks/Lands; County/Local Parks	300 ft.
2	Exceptional Quality Streams	100 ft.
3	Biological Diversity Areas	-
4	High Quality Streams	100 ft.
5	Flood Plains	-
6	Off-Road Trails	500 ft.
7	Water Trails	500 ft.
8	Normal Streams	100 ft.
9	Slopes ≥ 25%	-
10	Ridge-Tops	elevations above 1800' ASL
11	Abandoned Railroads	100 ft.
12	Wetlands	-
13	On Road Bike Routes	500 ft.
14	Active Railroads	100 ft.
15	Utility Corridors	100 ft.
16	Reservoir Watersheds	-
17	Class 1 Soils	-

INITIAL GREENWAY CORRIDOR CRITERIA DISCUSSION MAP

WESTMORELAND COUNTY GREENWAYS PLAN

Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

Date: June 2006
1997.06.01r2

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Establishing Criteria

Following review of background mapping and initial open space criteria discussion, project stakeholders selected a range of green and gray infrastructure components to be represented in the greenway/blueway network. Green infrastructure is those items which typically occur in the natural environment (such as streams, forests, biological diversity areas, floodplains and wetlands) while gray infrastructure is a man-made system supporting development (such as utility corridors, sewer and water service, roads and trails).

The types, location and extent of green and gray infrastructure were then evaluated based upon if, and how, each could potentially contribute to the County's overall greenway and blueway network. Imagine this network much like a web a spider weaves. Each strand is delicately and thoughtfully woven to form an integral structure. Each of the silken fibers can be likened to the greenway network's "Corridors," also sometimes called links. Each point where two fibers meet is much like the network's "hubs," also sometimes referred to as nodes. Consequently, each of the green and gray infrastructure criteria were assessed and categorized based upon its relevance to forming the network's hubs and Corridors.

Hubs

In the planning of a greenway and blueway network, hubs can be a number of places – from a community to a historic site. Hubs can also be further classified based upon their environmental sensitivity. In considering this, the two types of hubs considered in Westmoreland County's network are those suitable for destinations and those suitable for habitats. Destination hubs are typically suitable for a greater amount of human activity or recreation; habitat hubs are those places generally with greater sensitivity to human interaction and therefore areas more suitable for conservation.

Elements of green infrastructure and gray infrastructure were selected from an analysis of available digital mapping data compiled as part of existing County comprehensive planning efforts as well as regional planning initiatives such as bio-diversity area analysis provided by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. From those efforts, additional GIS analyses, the assessment of the County's land use and recreation planning goals as well as public input, criteria contributing to destination hubs include:

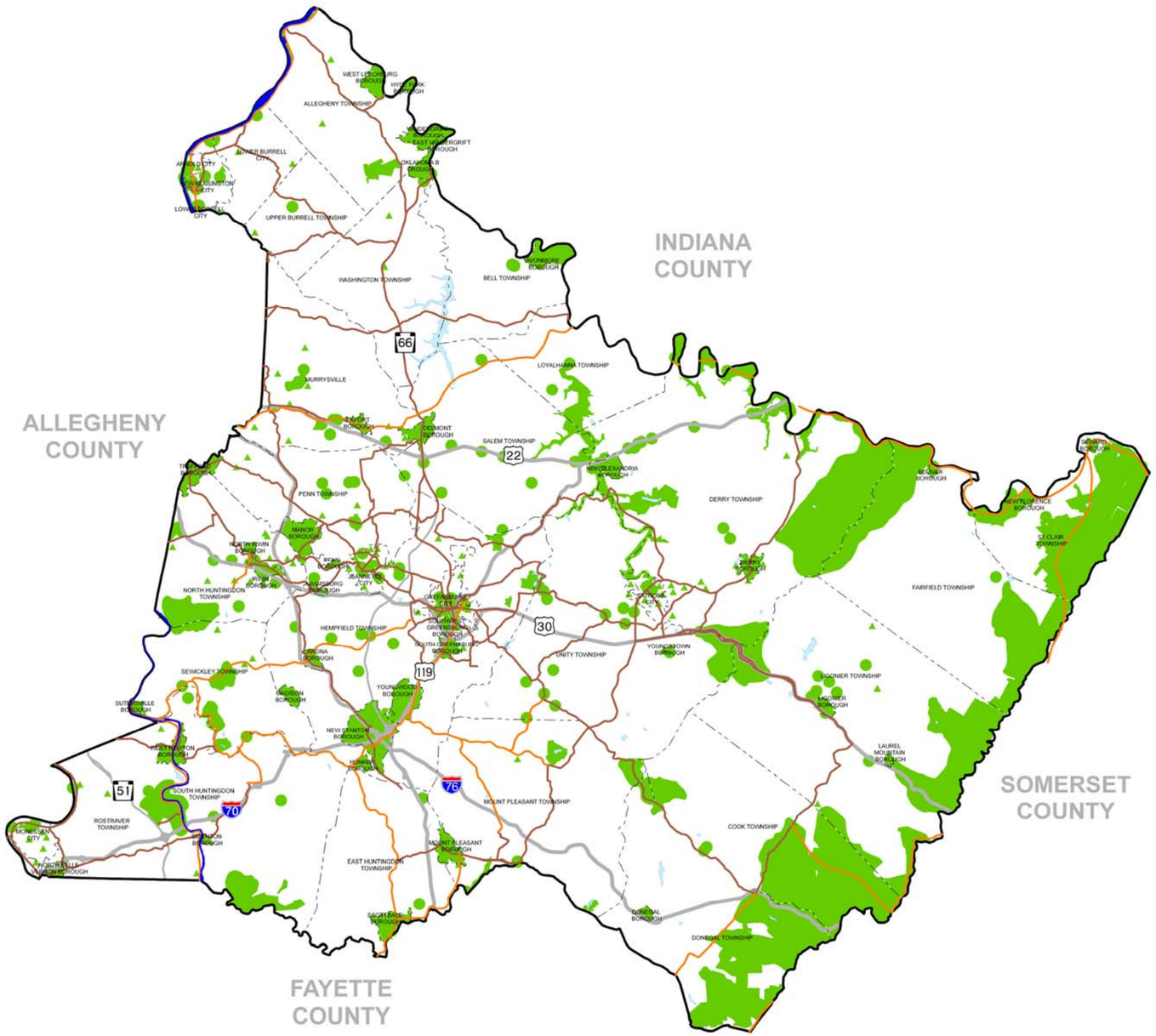
- Boroughs and villages;
- Concentrations of cultural and historic sites;
- Municipal, County, State and Federal parks and recreation areas;
- State Forests; and

- Bio-diversity Areas (BDA), based upon findings from Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's analyses, which can tolerate moderate and higher levels of human use or impact.

Those areas most suitable for habitat hubs are comprised of lands which contain:

- Bio-diversity Areas (BDA), based upon findings from Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's analyses, which can tolerate no or low levels of human use or impact;
- Watersheds which are critical or sensitive to the contribution to the public water supply; and
- Important bird areas as identified through regional resource planning initiatives.

In mapping these criteria, a pattern of potential hubs for inclusion in the County's overall greenways and blueways system emerges. Major hub locations, including those recognized on the following page, highlight places such as the boroughs of Scottdale, Ligonier and Vandergrift as well as biological diversity areas along Sewickley Creek, Chestnut Ridge and Powder Mill Run.



This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Major Highways
- Secondary Highways
- Rivers and Lakes
- Destination
- On-Road Bike Routes
- Off-Road Trails
- Water Trails

HUBS

WESTMORELAND COUNTY
GREENWAYS PLAN

Prepared for: *Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development*
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

Date: April 2006
1997.06.04r1

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Corridors
The second component of a greenway/blueway network is corridors or "links." Corridors generally serve as connectors between hubs. Similar to the process in defining hubs, the criteria mapping of the County's green and gray infrastructure was evaluated to identify which resources could realistically and suitably contribute to the County's greenway/blueway Corridors. Based upon the presence and locations of these resources, several specific green and gray infrastructure characteristics were analyzed in context of Westmoreland's existing development trends as well as the County's identified future land use and recreation planning initiatives. In considering the programs and policies that County, regional and local leaders are promoting and implementing, two types of corridors can be defined in Westmoreland County's greenway/blueway network: recreation corridors and conservation corridors.

There are important distinctions between these two types of corridors. Recreation corridors provide human access and serve to interconnect destinations which can generally tolerate human impact (destination hubs). Conservation corridors minimize human access and interconnect habitats (including habitat hubs). Consequently, based on the evaluation of mapping data, considerations for improving access to existing and planned development, the County's other comprehensive planning initiatives and public input, the following characteristics were determined most suitable to forming the network's proposed recreation corridors.

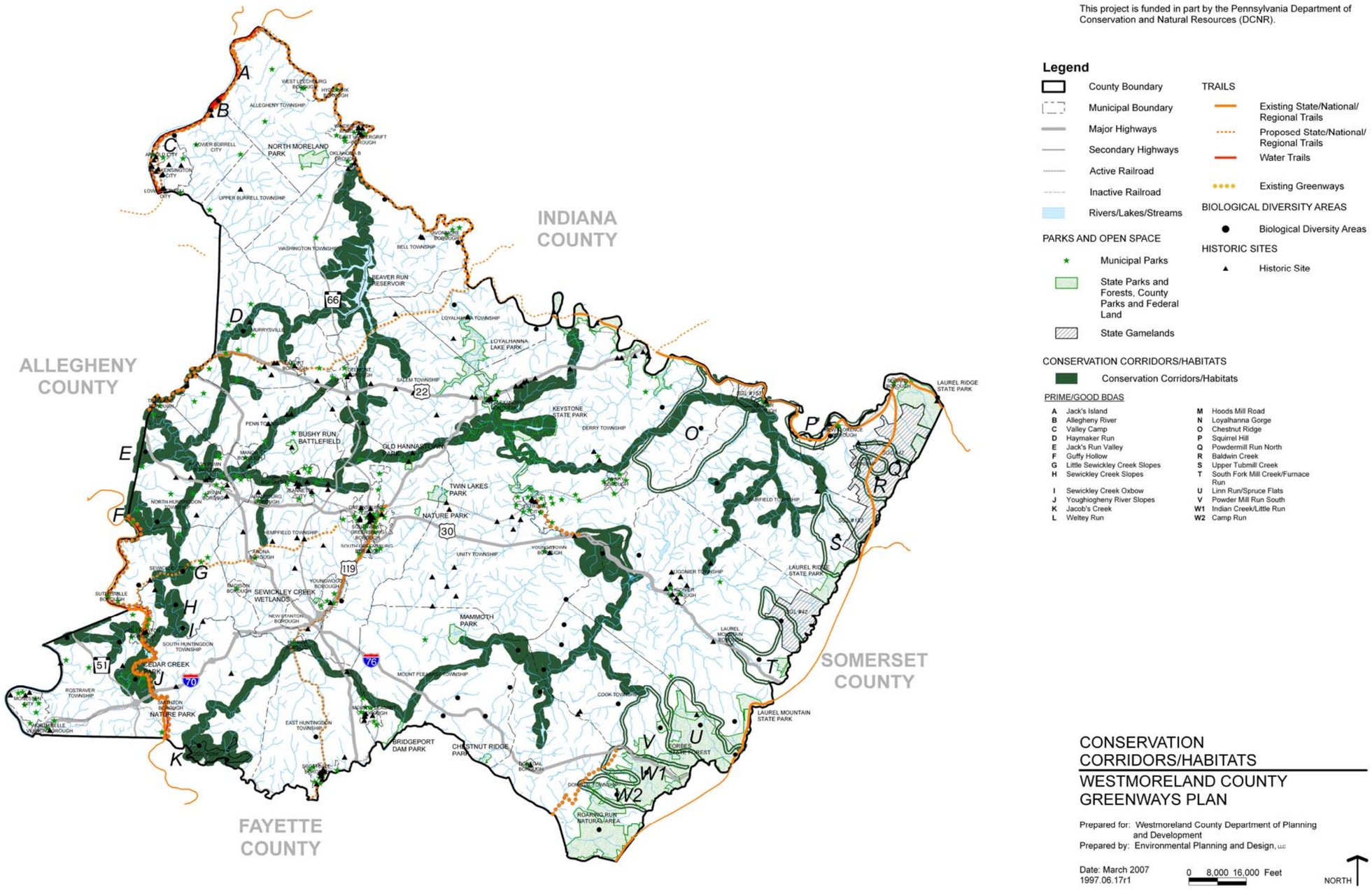
- Riparian buffers (in context of generally more level topography);
- Ridges;
- Floodplains;
- Existing and planned land trails and water trails;
- Utility corridors;
- Abandoned railroads;
- On-road bike routes/scenic roads; and
- Active railroads (likely to be abandoned).

Considerations for identifying lands that could contribute to the County's future greenway and blue way corridors for conservation include the following resource characteristics:

- Riparian buffers;
- Ridges;
- Floodplains;
- Water trails;
- Slopes >25%; and
- Abandoned railroads.

Analyzing Opportunities

Recognizably, some historic development patterns may limit the feasibility of designating an entire corridor accessible for recreation or suitable for conservation. In turn, corridors may possess opportunity for "mixed" conservation/open space/recreation activities. Maps illustrating the location of these corridors are found on the following pages.


This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).
Legend
County Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Major Highways
Secondary Highways
Active Railroad
Inactive Railroad
Rivers/Lakes/Streams
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
Municipal Parks
State Parks and Forests, County Parks and Federal Land
State Gamelands
CONSERVATION CORRIDORS/HABITATS
Conservation Corridors/Habitats
PRIME/GOOD BDAS
A Jack's Island
B Allegheny River
C Valley Camp
D Haymaker Run
E Jack's Run Valley
F Guffy Hollow
G Little Sewickley Creek Slopes
H Sewickley Creek Slopes
I Sewickley Creek Oxbow
J Youghiogheny River Slopes
K Jacob's Creek
L Weltey Run
M Hoods Mill Road
N Loyalhanna Gorge
O Chestnut Ridge
P Squirrel Hill
Q Powdermill Run North
R Baldwin Creek
S Upper Tubmill Creek
T South Fork Mill Creek/Furnace Run
U Linn Run/Spruce Flats
V Powder Mill Run South
W1 Indian Creek/Little Run
W2 Camp Run
TRAILS
Existing State/National/Regional Trails
Proposed State/National/Regional Trails
Water Trails
Existing Greenways
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AREAS
Biological Diversity Areas
HISTORIC SITES
Historic Site
INDIANA COUNTY
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
SOMERSET COUNTY
FAYETTE COUNTY
NORTH MORELAND PARK
BEAVER RUN RESERVOIR
LOYALHANNA LAKE PARK
KEYSTONE STATE PARK
BUSHY RUN BATTLEFIELD
OLD HANNASTOWN PARK
TWIN LAKES PARK
NATURE PARK
SEWICKLEY CREEK WETLANDS
MAMMOTH PARK
CEDAR CREEK PARK
BRIDGEPORT DAM PARK
CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK
ROARING RUN NATURAL AREA
LAUREL RIDGE STATE PARK
LAUREL MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
CONSERVATION CORRIDORS/HABITATS
WESTMORELAND COUNTY GREENWAYS PLAN
Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC
Date: March 2007
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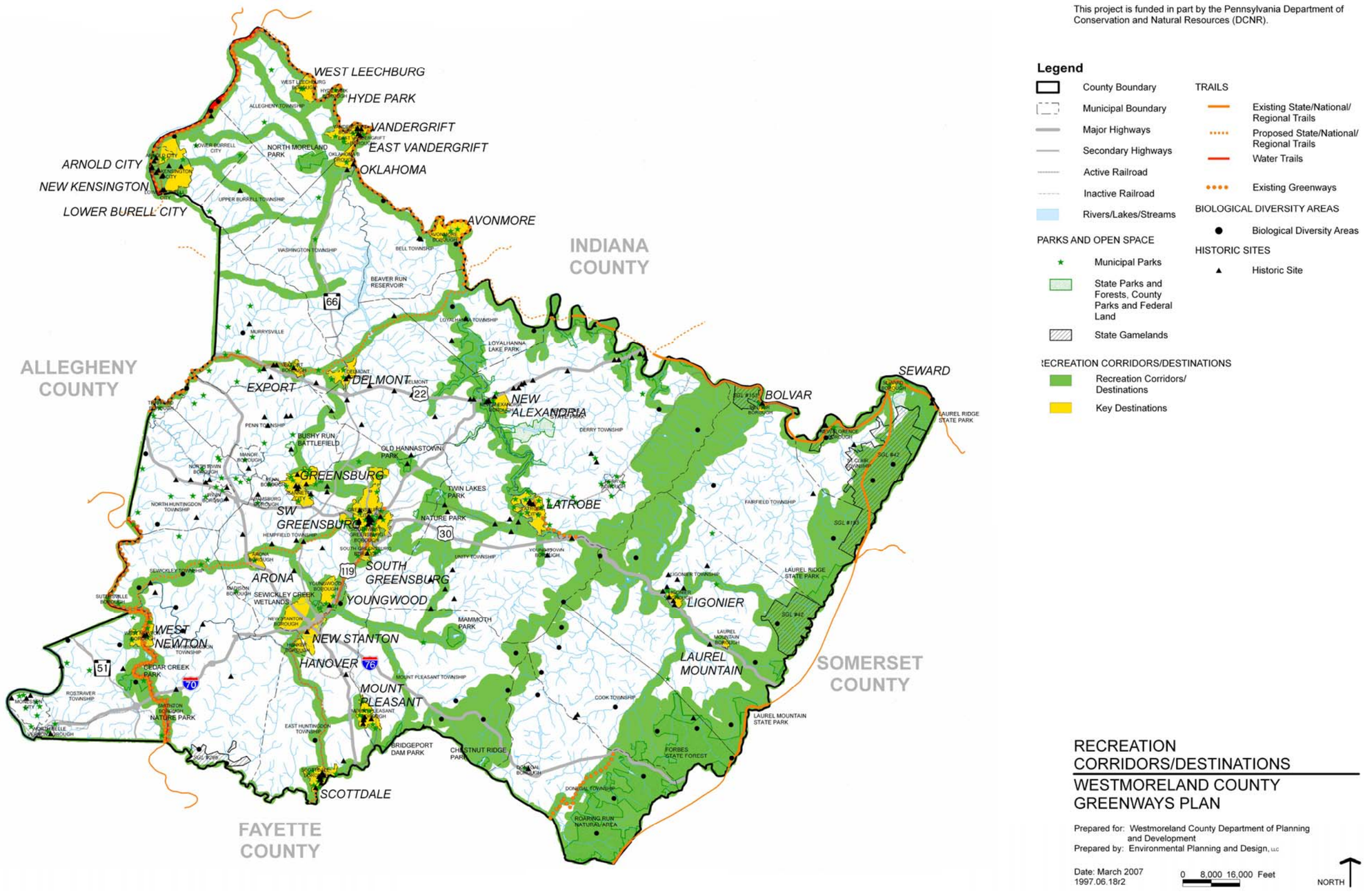
This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).
Legend
County Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Major Highways
Secondary Highways
Active Railroad
Inactive Railroad
Rivers/Lakes/Streams
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
Municipal Parks
State Parks and Forests, County Parks and Federal Land
State Gamelands
RECREATION CORRIDORS/DESTINATIONS
Recreation Corridors/ Destinations
Key Destinations
TRAILS
Existing State/National/ Regional Trails
Proposed State/National/ Regional Trails
Water Trails
Existing Greenways
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AREAS
Biological Diversity Areas
HISTORIC SITES
Historic Site
WEST LEECHBURG
HYDE PARK
VANDERGRIFT
EAST VANDERGRIFT
OKLAHOMA
ARNOLD CITY
NEW KENSINGTON
LOWER BURELL CITY
AVONMORE
INDIANA COUNTY
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
EXPORT
DELMONT
NEW ALEXANDRIA
BOLVAR
SEWARD
GREENSBURG
SW GREENSBURG
LATROBE
ARONA
SOUTH GREENSBURG
YOUNGWOOD
LIGONIER
WEST NEWTON
NEW STANTON
HANOVER
LAUREL MOUNTAIN
SOMERSET COUNTY
MOUNT PLEASANT
SCOTTDALE
FAYETTE COUNTY
RECREATION CORRIDORS/DESTINATIONS
WESTMORELAND COUNTY GREENWAYS PLAN
Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC
Date: March 2007
1997.06.18r2
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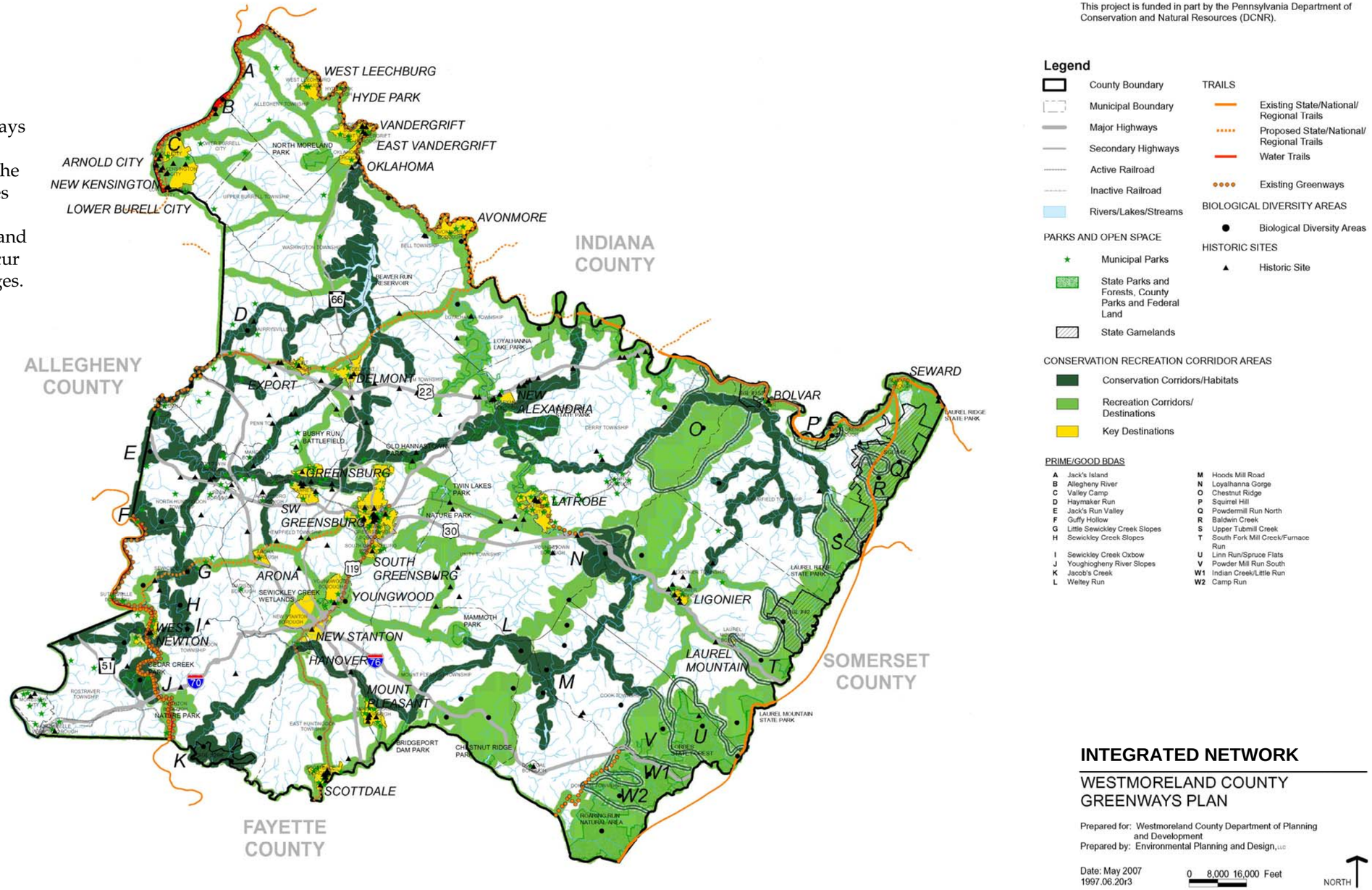
The Integrated Network
Combining the mapping of potential Hub and Corridor components produces an Integrated Network of greenways and blueways. In further evaluating the relationship of the Network's components, a series of projects begins to emerge. Explanations of these projects and the corridors in which they occur are found on the following pages.



Project Corridors

Founded upon the relationship of hubs and corridors identified in the Plan's Integrated Network, Westmoreland County's overall greenways and blueways vision is represented through a series of distinctive Project Corridors.

Classifying Project Corridors

Project Corridors identify specific links in the County's greenways and open space network and represent opportunities to fulfill the objectives of *New Horizons*. Each of these Corridors represents a potential area where land could be conserved and trails could be constructed if appropriate. Typically, a Project Corridor links existing or proposed elements of the greenways plan such as State Parks or Bio-diversity Areas (BDAs). Many Project Corridors also aim to incorporate existing and proposed trails identified in the County's Parks and Recreation Plan. Each of the 21 identified Corridors illustrated on the following maps is classified according to the sensitivity of resources which comprise it, thusly creating a simple interwoven system of recommended recreation-oriented and conservation-oriented projects.

Types of Project Corridors

To assist in the planning, acquisition and designation of the Plan's Project Corridors, each conservation- or recreation-oriented Corridor is also assigned a typology. Five types of corridors exist in Westmoreland County. The typologies represent a range of "impact" - from conservation (no impact) to the development of a maintained, paved trail. Each Project Corridor's type was determined based on the nature of the underlying greenway elements (conservation or recreation) and the nature of the hubs (or nodes) the Corridors are connecting. For example, a conservation corridor connecting two BDAs may result in no impact to the land while a recreation corridor connecting a County Park to a community may require the construction of a paved trail.

Each Corridor will require a varying level of attention or improvement. In some cases, the focus of designating a Corridor may be through conservation of land or adding a buffer. In other cases, a trail may be constructed or invasive species may be cleaned out. Consequently, five Corridor Types of greenways include:

Type I: Open Space
No constructed improvements;
unblazed/unmarked;
public access permitted.

Type II: Maintained Pedestrian Passage

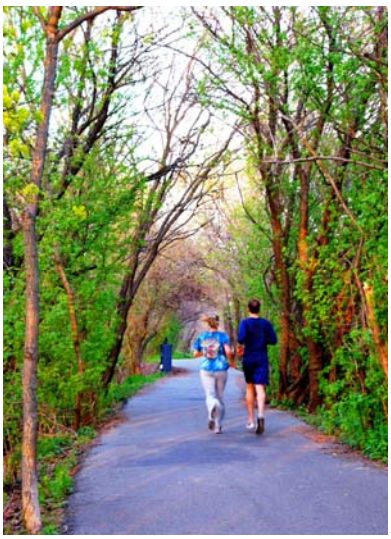
Light impact; blazed/marked pedestrian access approximately 2' wide.

Type III: Improved/Maintained Dirt Trail

Medium impact trails; blazed/marked; multi-purpose trail approximately 6' wide.

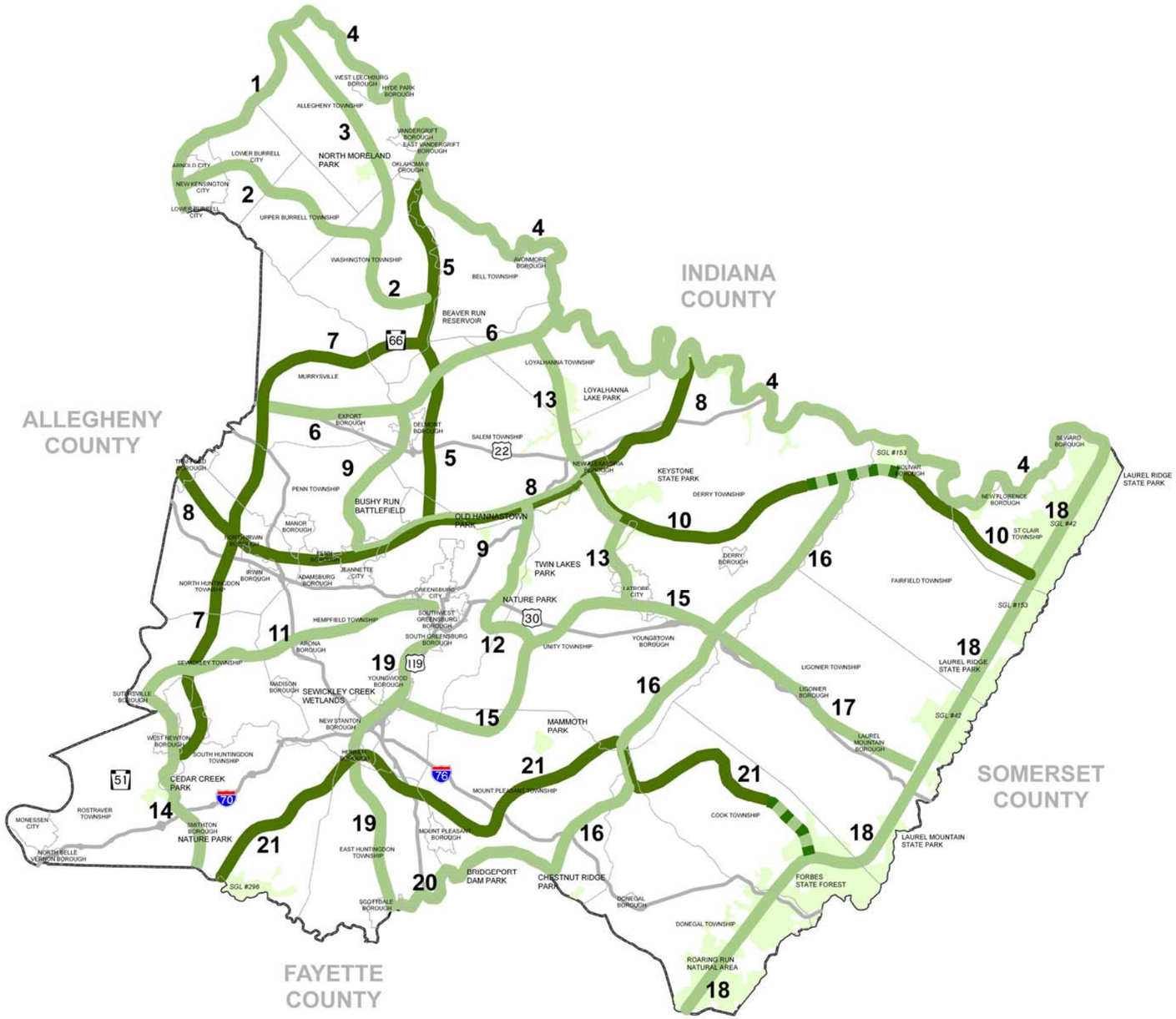
Type IV: Improved/Maintained Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail

High impact trails; blazed/marked multipurpose trail approx. 6'-10' wide.



Type V: Water Trail

Mapped and identified water routes with public access points at least every five miles.



This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Highways

PROJECT CORRIDOR CLASSIFICATIONS

- Conservation Corridor
- Recreation Corridor
- State Forests, Parks, and Gamelands; Federal Lands; County Parks

1. Allegheny River Trail
2. Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway
3. Northmoreland Greenway
4. Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment
5. Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway
6. Westemoreland Heritage Trail
7. Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor
8. Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor
9. Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway
10. Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor
11. Little Sewickley Creek Trail
12. Twin Lakes Connector
13. Loyalhanna Creek Greenway
14. Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage
15. Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail
16. Chestnut Ridge Greenway
17. Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway
18. Laurel Hill Greenway
19. Five Star Trail
20. Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail
21. Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor

PROJECT CORRIDOR CLASSIFICATION DIAGRAM
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
GREENWAYS PLAN

Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

Date: January 2007
1997.06.23r1

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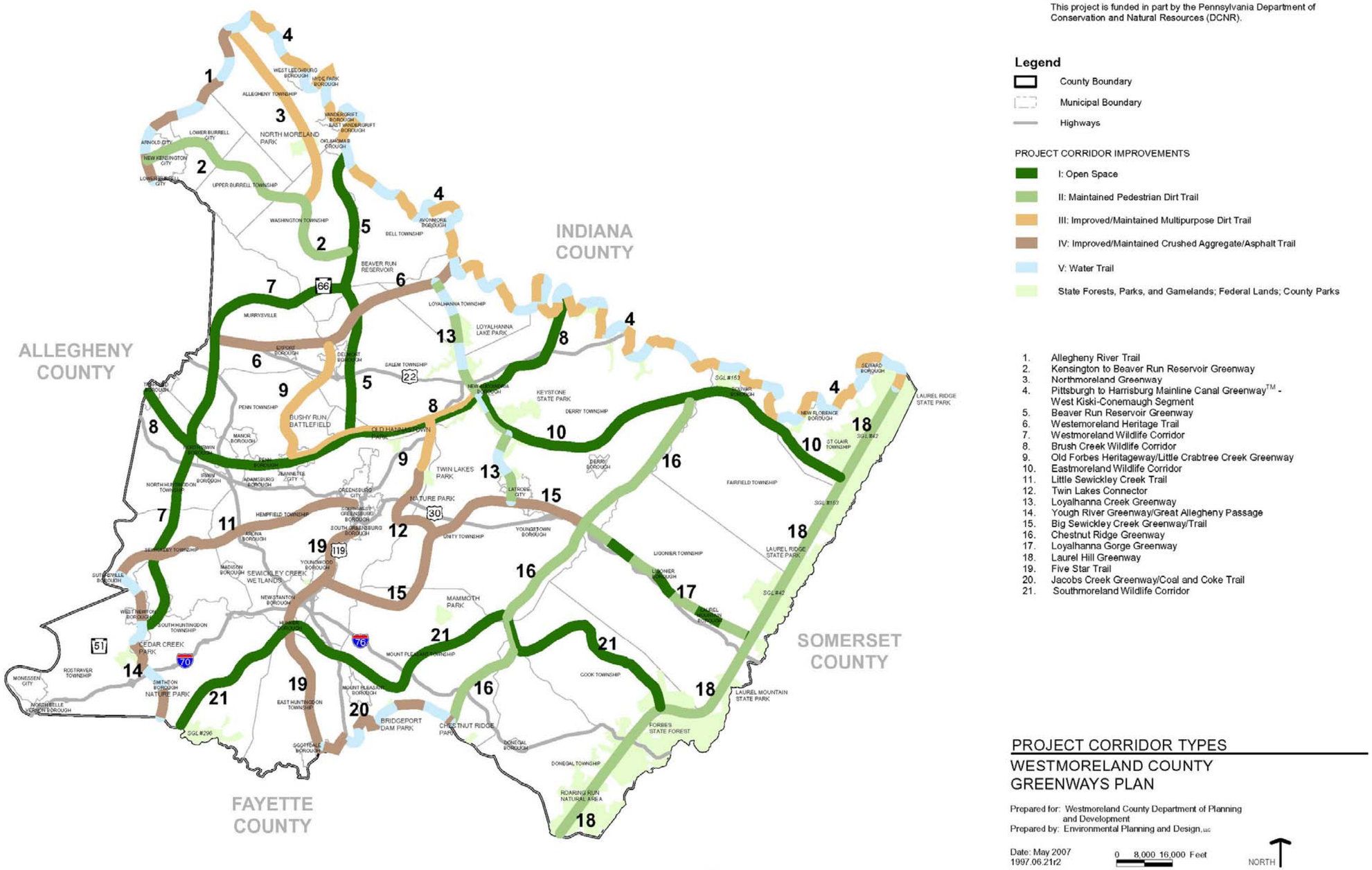
NORTH


This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).
Legend
County Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Highways
PROJECT CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS
I: Open Space
II: Maintained Pedestrian Dirt Trail
III: Improved/Maintained Multipurpose Dirt Trail
IV: Improved/Maintained Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail
V: Water Trail
State Forests, Parks, and Gamelands; Federal Lands; County Parks
1. Allegheny River Trail
2. Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway
3. Northmoreland Greenway
4. Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment
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17. Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway
18. Laurel Hill Greenway
19. Five Star Trail
20. Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail
21. Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
INDIANA COUNTY
SOMERSET COUNTY
FAYETTE COUNTY
PROJECT CORRIDOR TYPES
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
GREENWAYS PLAN
Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC
Date: May 2007
1997.06.21r2
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NORTH

Considerations of Influences and Threats

Leaders, residents and organizations throughout the County are working diligently to promote and implement sound planning. As part of these efforts, several factors are influences to realizing the proposed greenway and blueway Project Corridors. One set of factors includes the initiatives and recommended policies set forth through the County's overall Comprehensive Plan. As identified from that Plan, the County and its residents desire to support:

- Maintaining Westmoreland's predominant rural character, conserve key natural resources and preserve agricultural uses;
- Accommodating future development, primarily within an urban/suburban development triangle, but also preserve contiguous tracts of unimproved open space within this area;
- Implementing planning techniques and enforcing development standards that produce clustered development;
- Promoting new and enhancing existing economic employment centers that are accessible to various areas of the County, thereby minimizing adverse traffic impacts on local neighborhoods and communities.
- Maintaining and enhancing the basic attributes that make the County an attractive place to live, work and play including abundant leisure and recreation opportunities.

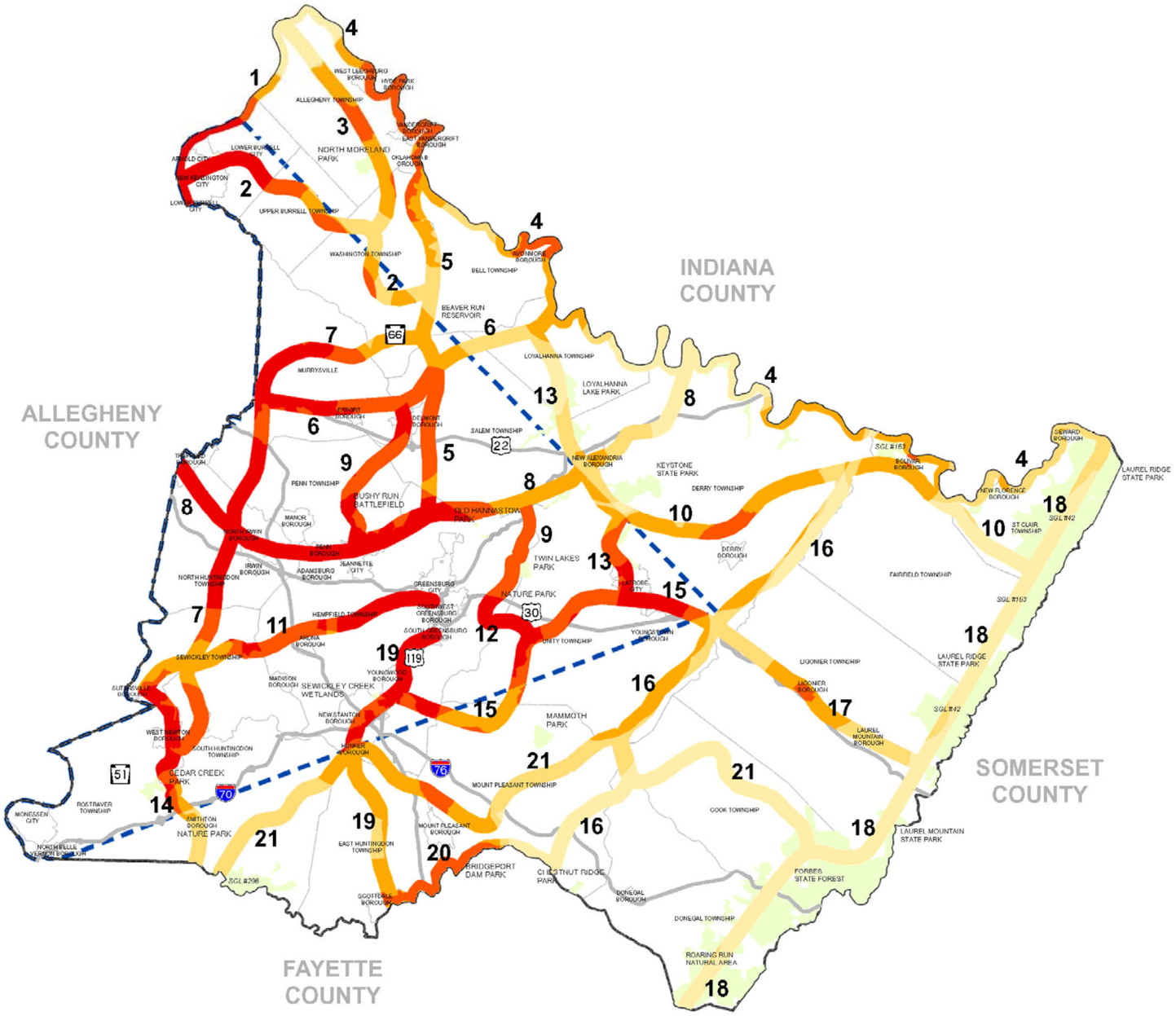
Furthermore, the Comprehensive Plan promotes that there is potential value added to development sites when land is preserved for unimproved open space. From the Comprehensive Plan's surveying efforts, residents identified that open space and access to recreation areas is an important reason why they are attracted to the County and choose to remain in it; in addition, a majority of residents also indicated willingness to support the allocation of County tax dollars for acquisition of land for open space and recreation.

With these considerations, recommended projects identified in *New Horizons* seek to promote many of the Comprehensive Plan's objectives. However, it is recognized that the reality and feasibility of a greenway, whether one corridor or an entire network, is directly affected by development opportunities adjacent to it. The existence of development opportunities may challenge the possibility of the corridor's greenway success. In turn, an assessment of possible negative impacts, or threats, to each Project Corridor was completed. The Project Corridor Threat Analysis Map identifies the potential degree of

"threat" along all 21 Corridors. Reflecting upon the County's existing comprehensive land use recommendations , parks and recreation planning initiatives, criteria considered in this evaluation include:

- Proximity to public water service;
- Proximity to public sanitary service;
- Location within densely populated areas; and
- Location within Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan Development Triangle.

The severity of these threats is determined by the number of criteria that overlay a Project Corridor. The greater the number of criteria existing along a Corridor presents a higher potential challenge to achieving the Project Corridor's improvements. However, as illuminated through stakeholder and public feedback gained throughout the planning process, ensuring the success of desired improvements can be gained through a number of mechanisms. Key mechanisms include the continued promotion of sound planning strategies, preparation of responsive ordinances and encouraged cooperation between the public and private sectors to utilize existing natural resources as assets and enhancements to improving quality of life in the County.



This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Highways
- Development Triangle
- State Forests, Parks, and Gamelands; Federal Lands; County Parks

LEVEL OF THREAT TO GREENWAY SUCCESS

- Lowest Threat Level (Does not meet any of the analysis criteria)
- Moderate Threat Level
- Highest Threat Level (Meets all four analysis criteria)

Threat Analysis Criteria

1. Proximity to Public Water Service
2. Proximity to Public Sanitary Sewer Service
3. Location within Densely Populated Areas
4. Location within Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan Growth Triangle

1. Allegheny River Trail
2. Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway
3. Northmoreland Greenway
4. Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment
5. Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway
6. Westemoreland Heritage Trail
7. Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor
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16. Chestnut Ridge Greenway
17. Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway
18. Laurel Hill Greenway
19. Five Star Trail
20. Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail
21. Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor

PROJECT CORRIDOR THREAT ANALYSIS
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
GREENWAYS PLAN

Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

Date: May 2007
1997.06.24r2

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A summary of each Project Corridor's type and approximate length is outlined in the following table. The table also notes a generalized Project Corridor area (Unsecured Project/Corridor Area) that represents lands not currently identified as those typically accessible to the public. For general planning purposes, this area represents a 200' width for each Project Corridor. This acreage could either be lessened or expanded dependant upon the scale and feasibility of conservation and/or recreation efforts that are ultimately pursued as part of *New Horizons*.

Table 1: Project Corridors

Project / Corridor #	Project / Corridor Name	Type of Corridor	Total Project Length (mi)	Project / Corridor Length Secured / Committed (mi)	Unsecured Project / Corridor Area (acres)	Constructed Project/ Corridor Area (mi)	Length of Water Trail (mi.)
1	Allegheny River Trail	IV, V	12.2	-	4,607	-	12.2
2	Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway	II	15.4	-	5,815	-	
3	Northmoreland Greenway	III	11.1	0.6	3,977	-	
4	Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment	III, V	70.5	18.8	19,541	7.8	70.5
5	Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway	I	15.7	-	5,928	-	
6	Westmoreland Heritage Trail	IV	19.0	9.0	3,776	-	
7	Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor	I	25.6	1.0	9,289	-	
8	Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor	I	20.5	1.7	7,080	-	
9	Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree	III	15.2	2.7	4,702	-	
10	Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor	I	23.3	4.2	7,225	-	
11	Little Sewickley Creek Trail	IV	13.9	-	5,249	-	
12	Twin Lakes Connector	IV	5.1	1.1	1,502	-	
13	Loyalhanna Creek Greenway	II, V	13.5	7.4	2,309	-	
14	Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage	IV, V	9.0	9.0	0	9.0	
15	Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail	IV	18.0	-	6,797	-	
16	Chestnut Ridge Greenway	II	23.1	-	8,723	-	
17	Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway	I, II	10.4	-	3,933	-	
18	Laurel Hill Greenway	II	31.6	19.1	4,709	19.1	
19	Five Star Trail	IV	17.0	7.8	3,474	7.8	
20	Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail	IV, V	8.1	5.0	1,187	-	8.1
21	Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor	I	35.3	1.7	12,686	-	
			413.5	**89.0**	**122,507**	**43.7**	**90.8**

Other Notes

1. Acquisition Costs of Unsecured Area/Easement: Low = $450 acre; High = $1,350 acre

Corrdior Improvement Types

I: Open Space - unblazed / unmarked; public access permitted (price: not applicable)

II: Maintained Dirt Trail - blazed / marked; pedestrian trail approximately 2' wide (price: $1,500/mile)

III: Improved / Maintained Dirt Trail - blazed / marked; multipurpose trail approximately 6' wide (price: $15,000-$25,000/mile)

IV: Improved / Maintained Crushed Aggregate / Asphalt Trail - blazed / marked; multipurpose trail approximately 6'-10' wide (price: $75,000-$120,000/mile)

V: Water Trail - public access points (price: $10,000 per access point approximately every 5 miles)

Project Corridor Highlights

The following descriptions summarize the general characteristics of the Project Corridors included in *New Horizons*. Each summary includes identification of the Corridor's relevance to recreation and/or conservation, estimate of corridor length, identification of the key points along the Corridor, the Corridor Type and presence of potential encumbrances, or "threats," to the Corridor's continuity. So within the context of identified planning strategies, it is recognized that as part of assessing detailed feasibility, improving and/or maintaining each of these Corridors, the County, communities and stakeholders will need to identify how each Corridor can best host opportunities for recreation, conservation or a combination of the two. Furthermore, past, current and local open space/recreation initiatives should be evaluated in context of their potential contribution and/or smaller-scale complement to the County-wide greenway/blueway network. Detailed assessment of proposed Corridors, or extension of existing ones, should illuminate specific ways in which the landscape can respond to the Plan's goals, balance demands on natural resources and best showcase the character and habitats of the surrounding landscape. Also, several Project Corridors are in proximity to the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor. This vehicular oriented Corridor is one of twelve such heritage areas in Pennsylvania. Interconnecting access to greenway opportunities along this heavily traveled, historic Corridor should be optimized to the greatest extent possible.

1. **Allegheny River Trail**
   The Allegheny River Trail is a 12-mile recreation corridor linking Lower Burrell City to the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment. This Trail is comprised of two types of improvements – where feasible portions developed on land can be Improved/Maintained Multipurpose Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail *(Type IV)* as well as Water Trail (*Type V*) on the Allegheny River itself. Potential hubs for recreation exist in New Kensington City, Arnold City and Lower Burrell Township. In proximity to the Corridor are key destinations including several municipal parks and one biological diversity area. A variety of historic sites are also on or near to the Trail including: Arnold Homestead, Zillman Hotel, portions of the Schreiber Industrial Park, U.S. Post Office at New Kensington, Allegheny Valley Railroad, Parnassus Presbyterian Church, Mt. Saint Peter Roman Catholic Church and the Aluminum Club. Three Historic Districts are accessible from Allegheny River Trail: New Kensington Downtown Historic District, Arnold Historic District and New

Kensington Production Works Historic District. In analyzing threats of development on this Corridor, they range from highest in the southern half to lowest toward its northern extents. The Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway links to this Trail's southern section and the Northmoreland Greenway links to this Trail's northern section. *http://www.avta-trails.org/allegheny-samuel-trails.html*

2. **Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway**
The Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway is a 15-mile long recreation corridor linking the Allegheny River Trail to the Beaver Run Wildlife Corridor. Key destinations include Arnold City and New Kensington. Based upon the type of resources present, this greenway should be designated as a *Maintained Pedestrian Passage (Type II).* In proximity to the greenway's junction with the Allegheny River Trail, several historic sites exist; several other historically designated structures/areas on or near the Corridor include the Aluminum Research Laboratories, Byerly House and the Aluminum City Terrace Historic District.

Depending upon the provision of safe pedestrian access, several municipal parks could be accessible from the greenway. Threats analyzed for this greenway are identified as moderate to highest. This is primarily based upon the potential for future community development to expand to undeveloped lands as portions of the Corridor are within the County's Development Triangle.

3. **Northmoreland Greenway**
Also found within the northwest corner of Westmoreland County, the Northmoreland Greenway is an 11-mile recreation corridor. This *Improved/Maintained Multipurpose Dirt Trail (Type III)* links the Allegheny River Trail to the Kensington to Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway, with Northmoreland Park in close proximity. The threat level analyzed for this greenway is lowest in the northern section and high within the County's designated Development Triangle.

4. **Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment**
The Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment is a joint recreation corridor with Indiana County and is a section of the State-designated Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™. An established trail within this greenway is the West Penn Trail. It integrates the Conemaugh State Recreation Area, two State gamelands and five biological diversity areas. More than a dozen municipal parks are in proximity to the Corridor as are numerous historic sites including:

- Saint Constantine & Elena Greek Orthodox Church
- Casino Theatre
- Saint Gertrude Roman Catholic Church
- Holy Trinity Slovak Catholic Church
- Hotel Belvedere
- The Cochran House
- 1852 Railroad Tunnel (W. Pennsylvania Railroad)
- McCray House
- Adams House
- Spruce Lane Dairy
- Baird House
- Western Division, PA Canal
- Bolivar Jail
- Vandergrift Historic District
- Salina Historic District

The Greenway links with the Laurel Hill Greenway and the Allegheny River Trail at the County's northeast corner and follows the Conemaugh River. Key destinations include Seward Borough, New Florence Borough, Bolivar Borough, Avonmore Borough, Oklahoma Borough, East Vandergrift Borough, Vandergrift Borough, Hyde Park and West Leechburg. The Project Corridor improvements are designated for both *Improved/ Maintained Crushed Aggregate/ Asphalt Trail* (Type IV) and *Water Trail* (Type V). The threat levels generally are designated lowest to moderate, with areas near the boroughs rising slightly above moderate.
http://www.alleghenyridge.org/greenway.htm

5. **Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway**
   The Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway is a 15-mile conservation corridor running north to south. The Corridor links the Kiski River and Kensington to Beaver Run Wildlife Corridor, Westmoreland Heritage Trail, Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor and Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor and includes two biological diversity areas. Two notable historic sites in proximity to the greenway are Fairview Park and a parcel designated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as the Bush Property. The greenway Corridor Type is *Open Space* (Type I). The threat level is moderate to highest for the length of the Corridor. Portions of the greenway fall within the Development Triangle.

6. **Westmoreland Heritage Trail**
   The Westmoreland Heritage Trail is a 19-mile conservation corridor running west from the West Penn Trail portion (Loyalhanna Township/Saltsburg) of the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ and ending in Trafford. To enrich experiences along this Trail, efforts should be made to develop connections to emerging local greenway planning efforts where possible. Based upon other evolving local and County planning initiatives and recognizing the resources of the Turtle Creek Gorge, it is anticipated that this trail system will in the short-term course from Saltsburg to Delmont portion of trail. In the long-term, the trail could be extended from Delmont to Trafford, or possibly to Monroeville.

   Key destinations along the Corridor are Delmont and Export Boroughs, nearby municipal parks and one biological diversity area. Also in proximity to the Trail are several historic sites: the McCall/Latta Property, Clark Viola House, the Haymaker House, Northern Turnpike Tollhouse, Duff Elementary School, Delmont High School, Damtenders Dwellings (Loyalhanna Dam), Torrance Residence, Gallagher Store & House, Rue House and the Slickville Historic District. The Project Corridor Improvements Diagram designates the trail *Improved/Maintained Crushed Aggregate/ Asphalt Trail* (Type IV). The threat levels are low/moderate at the eastern end of the trail and high as the trail approaches Allegheny County.
   http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks (see trails link)

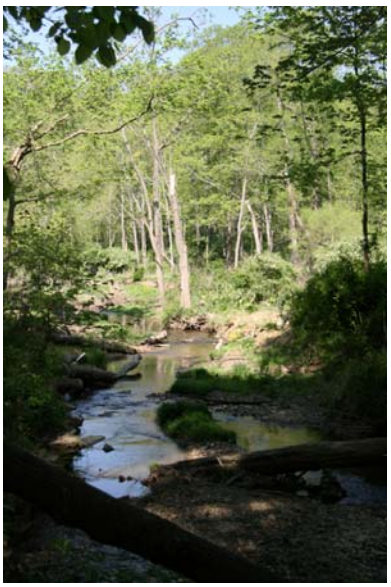
ENHANCING THE GREENWAY NETWORK THROUGH LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION
Based upon open space planning efforts evolving in the Murrysville area, Steel(s) Run riparian corridor is an example of potential local implementation of the Plan. The Steel(s) Run corridor could connect Export and the prospective extension of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail to Murrysville Community Park, along with a number of other interconnected areas, including a significant cross-Murrysville greenway. Steel(s) Run is a High-Quality Stream tributary to Turtle Creek, extending west through Murrysville. The Steel(s) Run corridor has the potential to provide a connection to many recreational opportunities and conservation areas. It leads to:

- Part of the Export/Old William Penn residential/commercial corridor

- A point near the historic Andrew Mellon home
- The 305-acre Murrysville Community Park (305-acres) and the 28-acre Walters Nature Reserve; also Murrysville Community Park leads to the following by direct linear connection or a road crossing:
    - The Caywood parcel, from which acreage has been willed to the Westmoreland Conservancy.
    - Dominion parcel, for which a hiking crossing is in discussion.
    - The 96-acre King Nature Reserve (owned by the Westmoreland Conservancy) which is also adjacent to the 228-acre Crowfoot Rod and Gun Club.
    - Potter's Corner (owned by the Westmoreland Conservancy).
    - Sloan School Complex (98.5 acres) with playground and significant undeveloped acreage.
    - Murrysville Municipal Complex at 4100 Sardis Road (with two rectangular playing fields, Municipal Building and Library).
    - The Municipality of Murrysville's Townsend Park via a Municipal-owned trail easement. Townsend Park provides a near-connection with the 17+-acre Tomer Nature Reserve (owned by the Westmoreland Conservancy).
    - Tomer Nature Reserve is not far from the 52-acre McGinnis Nature Reserve (owned by the Westmoreland Conservancy).
    - McGinnis Nature Reserve is not far from 10.8-acre Sardis Park (owned and operated by volunteers).
- The Steel(s) Run corridor also provides an excellent connection alternative to Hills Church Road, a main feeder road through a portion of Murrysville.

7. **Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor**
The Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor is a 25-mile conservation corridor. The Corridor runs north from the Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage, intersecting Little Sewickley Creek Trail, Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor and Westmoreland Heritage Trail. In addition to four biological diversity areas, there are numerous historic sites in proximity to the Corridor including Billy House, Coke Ovens of the Penn-Gas Coal Co., Hezekiah Family Homestead, The Larimar House, Fullerton Inn, The Irwin House, Irwin High School and Rugh House. The Corridor improvement designation is *Open Space* (Type I); notably, the entire Wildlife Corridor is located in the Development Triangle with threat levels moderate to highest. Consequently, as with this Corridor and other similar ones in the County, conservation efforts are encouraged to the greatest extent feasible; where conservation may be challenging, the feasibility of low-impact recreation opportunities could be evaluated.

8. **Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor**
The Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor is a conservation corridor running east to west from Trafford Borough to the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment linking the Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor, the Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway, the Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway and Loyalhanna Creek Greenway while providing key destinations in Jeanette City, the City of Greensburg and New Alexandria Borough. Numerous municipal parks are in proximity to the Corridor as are historic sites including the Fawcet Property, Brush Creek Salem Reformed Church, Columbe Hotel, Jeanette Glass (McKee Glass), Tiberi Stone House, Westmoreland Glass Co., Spanish Villa Residential Subdivision Historic District Byerly Myers Property, the site of Old Hannastown, Hannastown Farm, the John Dickey House, Gallagher Store & House, New Alexandria Historic District, Samuel Patterson House, Simpson-Geffen Tavern, the Rush Residence, the Emeric Property and James Patterson House.



The corridor threat analysis designation is moderate to highest in the development triangle and low and lowest near the intersection with the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment. The improvements designation is *Open Space* (Type I).

9. **Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway**
The Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway is a 15-mile recreation corridor that has opportunity for improvement both in the immediate future and in coming years. Portions of this greenway suitable for construction include segments from Crabtree to Hannastown, Crabtree to New Alexandria, Twin Lakes to Crabtree and extending to key destinations of Jeanette and Delmont. The Greenway connects to the Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor, Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor, Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway and the Twin Lakes Connector. The Greenway is in proximity to Bushy Run Battlefield, Holtzer/Pecora Dairy, the Borland/Cassol Property, the Lauffner/ Radakovich Farm, Salem Cross Roads Historic District, Delmont High School, Ramaley/Campbell House and other historic family farms. The Project Corridor improvement is designated *Improved/Maintained Multi-Purpose Dirt Trail* (Type III). The Corridor threat level is high near the connection to both the

Westmoreland Heritage Trail and the Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor with moderate threats occurring midway along the trail.

10. Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor

Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor runs east from the Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor, passing the Chestnut Ridge Greenway to the Laurel Greenway and includes portions of Keystone State Park, State Gamelands #153 and Laurel Ridge State Park. The Corridor is primarily a conservation corridor with recreation designations at the junction of the Chestnut Ridge Greenway including numerous historic sites (Atlantic School House, Fulton Inn, Bolivar Jail Ross Furnace) and municipal parks. The Corridor Type is *Open Space* (Type I) with moderate to high threat levels in the west and lowest levels in the east.

11. Little Sewickley Creek Trail

The Little Sewickley Creek Trail is a recreation corridor approximately 13-miles in length, running east from Suttersville to Greensburg City, linking with the Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny and Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor. The Corridor has two key destinations in Arona Borough (Arona Park) and Greensburg City and provides four historic sites, numerous municipal parks and two bio-diversity areas. The corridor improvement designation is *Improved/ Maintained Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail* (Type IV). The entire Corridor is located in the development triangle with subsequent threat analysis levels moderate to highest.

12. Twin Lakes Connector

Twin Lakes Connector is a 5-mile recreation corridor running south from Twin Lakes Park to Unity Township and including portions of Twin Lakes Park and Nature Park. Based upon the intensity and patterns of existing development within this area, the alignment of this Corridor will need to be carefully planned. However, the connection is an important one – from Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail and Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway. Historic sites within proximity include coke ovens (Penn-Gas Coal Co), the Myers House, Henry House, J. Baughman Farmstead. The corridor improvement designation is *Improved/ Maintained Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail* (Type IV). Corridor threat levels range

from moderate near Twin Lakes Park to high as the connector approaches Unity Township.

13. Loyalhanna Creek Greenway

The Loyalhanna Creek Greenway is a 13-mile recreation corridor connecting Loyalhanna Township to Latrobe Borough, linking the Westmoreland Heritage Trail and Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail while intersecting Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor. The Corridor has key destinations in New Alexandria Borough and Latrobe, as well as portions of Loyalhanna Recreation Area/ Keystone State Park. Many historic sites in proximity to the Corridor include Samuel Hurst Miller House, Pennsylvania Railroad Station at Latrobe, Mozart Hall, Latrobe Armory, New Alexander Historic District, Rugh house, Gallagher House, Torrance Residence, Watt House and Damtenders Dwellings (Loyalhanna Dam). Municipal parks and a biological diversity area are also located in close proximity to the Greenway. The improvement standards designation is *Maintained Pedestrian Passage* (Type II) and *Water Trail* (Type V). The majority of the Greenway is designated as low to moderate threat level with the levels rising from moderate to high as the trail approaches Latrobe.

14. Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage

The Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage has nine miles of this multi-State trail within Westmoreland County. The Greenway is a recreation trail with a key destination in West Newton Borough, other town stops and connects eight municipal parks, Plumer House, the historic Dick Building and one biological diversity area. One of the main programs helping to unify opportunities along the Great Allegheny Passage is the Trail Town Program. The Program, put into place through the Allegheny Trail Alliance and now managed by the Progress Fund, is envisioned "to create a corridor of revitalized trailside communities reaping economic benefits of trail-based tourism and recreation as part of a larger, coordinated approach to regional economic development. The long-term economic viability of participating communities is to be achieved through concentrated business development efforts that capitalize on the trail user market."

The County should encourage the Regional Trail Corporation, the Progress Fund and the Trail Town communities along the Passage to work with the Pennsylvania

Fish and Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and other interested parties to develop a formally designated water trail inclusive of guide maps, coordinated access points, signage and management strategies. Potential short-term goals could be developing a water trail map/guide as well as suitable access points to the Yough River. The communities and leadership of Westmoreland County are in a unique position in Western Pennsylvania and within the Commonwealth in that they have the potential to offer both residents and visitors an "interconnected" land and water trail corridor. Furthermore, such a corridor can accommodate and balance recreation, conservation and economic development opportunities.

The Corridor's designation is *Improved/ Maintained Crushed Aggregate/ Asphalt Trail (*Type IV) and *Water Trail (*Type V) with a corridor threat level of lowest at the southern end and highest in the northern end. *http://www.atatrail.org/*

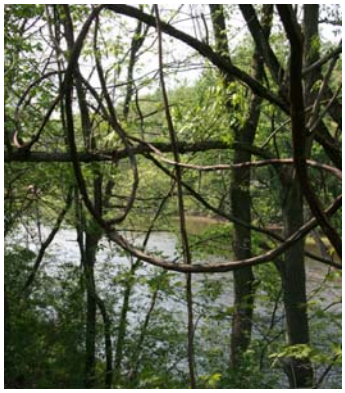
15. Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail

The Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail is an 18-mile recreation corridor linking the Five Star Trail, Twin Lakes Connector, Loyalhanna Creek Greenway and Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway. The Corridor has two key destinations of Youngwood and Latrobe and provides multiple historic sites, municipal parks and one biological diversity area. The corridor improvements designation is I*mproved/Maintained Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail (*Type IV) and the corridor threat level is moderate to highest.

16. Chestnut Ridge Greenway

The Chestnut Ridge Greenway is a 23-mile recreation corridor linking the Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail, Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor, Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail, Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway and Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor. Numerous biodiversity areas are in close proximity to the Greenway. The corridor improvements designation is *Maintained Pedestrian Passage* (Type II). The threat analysis level is low to moderate.

17. Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway



The Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway is a 10-mile recreation corridor linking the Chestnut Ridge Greenway and Laurel Hill Greenway. The Greenway's key destinations are Laurel Mountain Borough and Ligonier Borough. Where possible, a connection north of Ligonier to the Wilpen Trail should be evaluated for consideration. In proximity to the Greenway are historic sites, some of which include the McKelvey Farm, McConnaughey Farm, Ligonier Armory, Ligonier Historic District and the Fort Ligonier Site. Numerous municipal parks and three biological diversity areas are also in proximity to the Corridor. Based upon the resources in the area suitable for greenway use, the corridor improvement designation is *Open Space* (Type I) and *Maintained Pedestrian Passage* (Type II) and the threat analysis level is moderate to high at Ligonier Borough and lowest for the remainder of the Greenway. *http://www.loyalhannawatershed.org/*

18. Laurel Hill Greenway

The Laurel Hill Greenway in Westmoreland County is a 32-mile recreation corridor running north to south, parallel to the Somerset County border, including the PW & S Trail within the Roaring Run Natural Area, Forbes State Forest, Laurel Mountain State Park, Laurel Ridge State Park and one State Gameland (SGL 42). This greenway is one of the richest in the County for inclusion of biological diversity areas. The Greenway is designated as a *Maintained Pedestrian Passage* (Type II) where possible. The Laurel Highlands Scenic Trail (also known as Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail) is in need of a formal plan for improvements and connections to neighboring towns for economic development opportunities. Potential connections exist in neighboring Somerset, Cambria and Fayette Counties. Threat level for implementation encumbrances is generally low as this Corridor incorporates numerous public lands.

19. Five Star Trail

The Five Star Trail is a 17-mile recreation corridor linking Scottdale Borough to Greensburg. The trail has key destinations in Scottdale Borough, Hunker Borough, New Stanton Borough, Youngwood Borough, South Greensburg, Southwest Greensburg and Greensburg. The Trail is highlighted for its proximity to numerous municipal parks, two biological diversity areas and historic sites such as the J.P.

Brennan House, Helper's Grist Mill and Scottdale Savings and Trust. The project corridor designation is *Improved/ Maintained Crushed Aggregate/ Asphalt Trail* (Type IV). The corridor threat level ranges from low/moderate in the southern end to moderate and highest near South Greensburg. One specific challenge to extending this Corridor is the potential development of increased rail traffic likely to result from the creation of an ethanol plant within the Corridor's vicinity. w*ww.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks (see Trails link)*

20. Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail

Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail is an 8-mile recreation corridor running east from Scottdale Borough to Chestnut Ridge Park by way of Bridgeport Dam Park, with Scottdale Borough being a key destination. Another northern connection of the greenway is nearing completion, with a connection at Willows Park to Scottdale's Kendi Park. The Greenway, sharing the border with Fayette County, is in the vicinity of numerous historic sites, municipal parks and one biological diverse area. Consequently, partnership with Fayette County in the development of this trail is highly encouraged. The overall greenway project corridor improvement is designated with several types of trails –*Improved/ Maintained Multipurpose Dirt Trail* (Type III), *Improved/ Maintained Crushed Aggregate/Asphalt Trail* (Type IV) and *Water Trail* (Type V). The corridor threat level is moderate between Scottdale and Bridgeport Dam Park and lowest between Bridgeport Dam Park and Chestnut Ridge Park. *www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks (see Trails link)*

21. Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor

The Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor is a 35-mile conservation corridor linking the Laurel Hill Greenway and the Chestnut Ridge Greenway and portions of Forbes State Forest. The Corridor has three biological diverse areas and one historic site – the Linn Run State Park Family Cabin District. The corridor improvements designation is *Open Space* (Type I) and the level of threat for its conservation is low.

As part of additional analyses completed, generalized costs were evaluated for each Project Corridor. Based upon typical greenway acquisition and improvement cost patterns experienced in different areas of the Commonwealth, a range of low- to high-unit costs for acreage (acquisition) and mileage (improvement) were identified. Costs generally account for lands within the greenway corridor which have been previously secured for public use. Actual costs for acquisition and/or improvement will vary depending on a variety of factors including the width that will ultimately characterize each Corridor. The ranges provided on the following pages are intended to serve as a comparative reference guide for general planning purposes only. Costs should be studied in more detail as the feasibility of each project is studied and as planning projects progress.

Table 2: Generalized Corridor Estimates

Project / Corridor #	Name	Low and High Corridor Acquisition Cost Estimates[1]			Low and High Land Trail Improvement Cost Estimates		
1	Allegheny River Trail	$ 2,073,000	to	$ 6,219,000	$ 915,000	to	$ 1,464,000
2	Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway	$ 2,617,000	to	$ 7,850,000	$ 23,000	to	$ 23,000
3	Northmoreland Greenway	$ 1,790,000	to	$ 5,369,000	$ 167,000	to	$ 278,000
4	Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment	$ 8,793,000	to	$ 26,380,000	$ 941,000	to	$ 1,568,000
5	Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway	$ 2,668,000	to	$ 8,003,000	$ -	to	$ -
6	Westmoreland Heritage Trail	$ 2,974,000	to	$ 8,921,000	$ 1,425,000	to	$ 2,280,000
7	Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor	$ 4,180,000	to	$ 12,540,000	$ -	to	$ -
8	Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor	$ 3,186,000	to	$ 9,558,000	$ -	to	$ -
9	Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree	$ 2,362,000		$ 7,086,000	$ 227,000	to	$ 379,000
10	Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor	$ 3,251,000	to	$ 9,753,000	$ -	to	$ -
11	Little Sewickley Creek Trail	$ 2,362,000	to	$ 7,086,000	$ 1,043,000	to	$ 1,668,000
12	Twin Lakes Connector	$ 676,000	to	$ 2,027,000	$ 384,000	to	$ 614,000
13	Loyalhanna Creek Greenway	$ 1,039,000	to	$ 3,116,000	$ 20,000	to	$ 20,000
14	Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage	$ -	to	$ -	$ -	to	$ -
15	Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail	$ 3,059,000	to	$ 9,176,000	$ 1,350,000	to	$ 2,160,000
16	Chestnut Ridge Greenway	$ 3,925,000	to	$ 11,775,000	$ 35,000	to	$ 35,000
17	Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway	$ 1,770,000	to	$ 5,310,000	$ 16,000	to	$ 16,000
18	Laurel Hill Greenway	$ 2,119,000	to	$ 6,357,000	$ 19,000	to	$ 19,000
19	Five Star Trail	$ 1,563,000	to	$ 4,690,000	$ 690,000	to	$ 1,104,000
20	Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail	$ 1,223,000	to	$ 3,669,000	$ 611,000	to	$ 977,000
21	Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor	$ 5,709,000	to	$ 17,126,000	$ -	to	$ -
		$ 57,339,000	to	$ 172,011,000	$ 7,866,000	to	$ 12,605,000

Other Notes

1 Acquisition Costs of Unsecured Area/Easement: Low = $450 acre; High = $1,350 acre

Corrdior Improvement Types

I: Open Space - unblazed / unmarked; public access permitted (price: not applicable)

II: Maintained Dirt Trail - blazed / marked; pedestrian trail approximately 2' wide (price: $1,500/mile)

III: Improved / Maintained Dirt Trail - blazed / marked; multipurpose trail approximately 6' wide (price: $15,000-$25,000/mile)

IV: Improved / Maintained Crushed Aggregate / Asphalt Trail - blazed / marked; multipurpose trail approximately 6'-10' wide (price: $75,000-$120,000/mile)

V: Water Trail - public access points (price: $10,000 per access point approximately every 5 miles)

Table 2: Generalized Corridor Estimates (cont'd.)

Project / Corridor #	Name	Water Trail Improvement Cost Estimate	Low and High Total Cost Estimates (Acquisition and Improvement)		
1	Allegheny River Trail	$ 24,400	$ 3,012,400	to	$ 7,707,400
2	Kensington to Beaver Run Reservoir Greenway	$ -	$ 2,640,000	to	$ 7,873,000
3	Northmoreland Greenway	$ -	$ 1,957,000	to	$ 5,647,000
4	Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment	$ 141,000	$ 9,875,000	to	$ 28,089,000
5	Beaver Run Wildlife Greenway	$ -	$ 2,668,000	to	$ 8,003,000
6	Westmoreland Heritage Trail	$ -	$ 4,399,000	to	$ 11,201,000
7	Westmoreland Wildlife Corridor	$ -	$ 4,180,000	to	$ 12,540,000
8	Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor	$ -	$ 3,186,000	to	$ 9,558,000
9	Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree	$ -	$ 2,589,000	to	$ 7,465,000
10	Eastmoreland Wildlife Corridor	$ -	$ 3,251,000	to	$ 9,753,000
11	Little Sewickley Creek Trail	$ -	$ 3,405,000	to	$ 8,754,000
12	Twin Lakes Connector	$ -	$ 1,060,000	to	$ 2,641,000
13	Loyalhanna Creek Greenway	$ -	$ 1,059,000	to	$ 3,136,000
14	Yough River Greenway/Great Allegheny Passage	$ -	$ -	to	$ -
15	Big Sewickley Creek Greenway/Trail	$ -	$ 4,409,000	to	$ 11,336,000
16	Chestnut Ridge Greenway	$ -	$ 3,960,000	to	$ 11,810,000
17	Loyalhanna Gorge Greenway	$ -	$ 1,786,000	to	$ 5,326,000
18	Laurel Hill Greenway	$ -	$ 2,138,000	to	$ 6,376,000
19	Five Star Trail	$ -	$ 2,253,000	to	$ 5,794,000
20	Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail	$ 16,200	$ 1,850,200	to	$ 4,662,200
21	Southmoreland Wildlife Corridor	$ -	$ 5,709,000	to	$ 17,126,000
		$ 181,600	$ 65,386,600	to	$ 184,797,600

Introduction

The greenway, blueway and open space network identified within this Plan represents a system of important connections between the County's natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic resources. Secondly, this network presents opportunities for such connections to be established and/or strengthened with surrounding counties. To ensure these recreation and conservation linkages can be promoted adequately and used appropriately, a formal Implementation Strategy should be established. This Strategy provides the framework for developing a County-wide system to manage, support and pursue funding for identified Greenway projects. The success of existing planning efforts and support in the County, including entities such as the Regional Trail Corporation, are a testament to resident and public leaders' commitment to strengthening positive experiences with the outdoors. The fourth Element of *New Horizons*, Defining Actions, summarizes the key components of this Implementation Strategy:

- Identifying priority Corridors;
- Creating potential demonstration projects; and
- Outlining major actions and responsibilities.

Identifying Priority Corridors

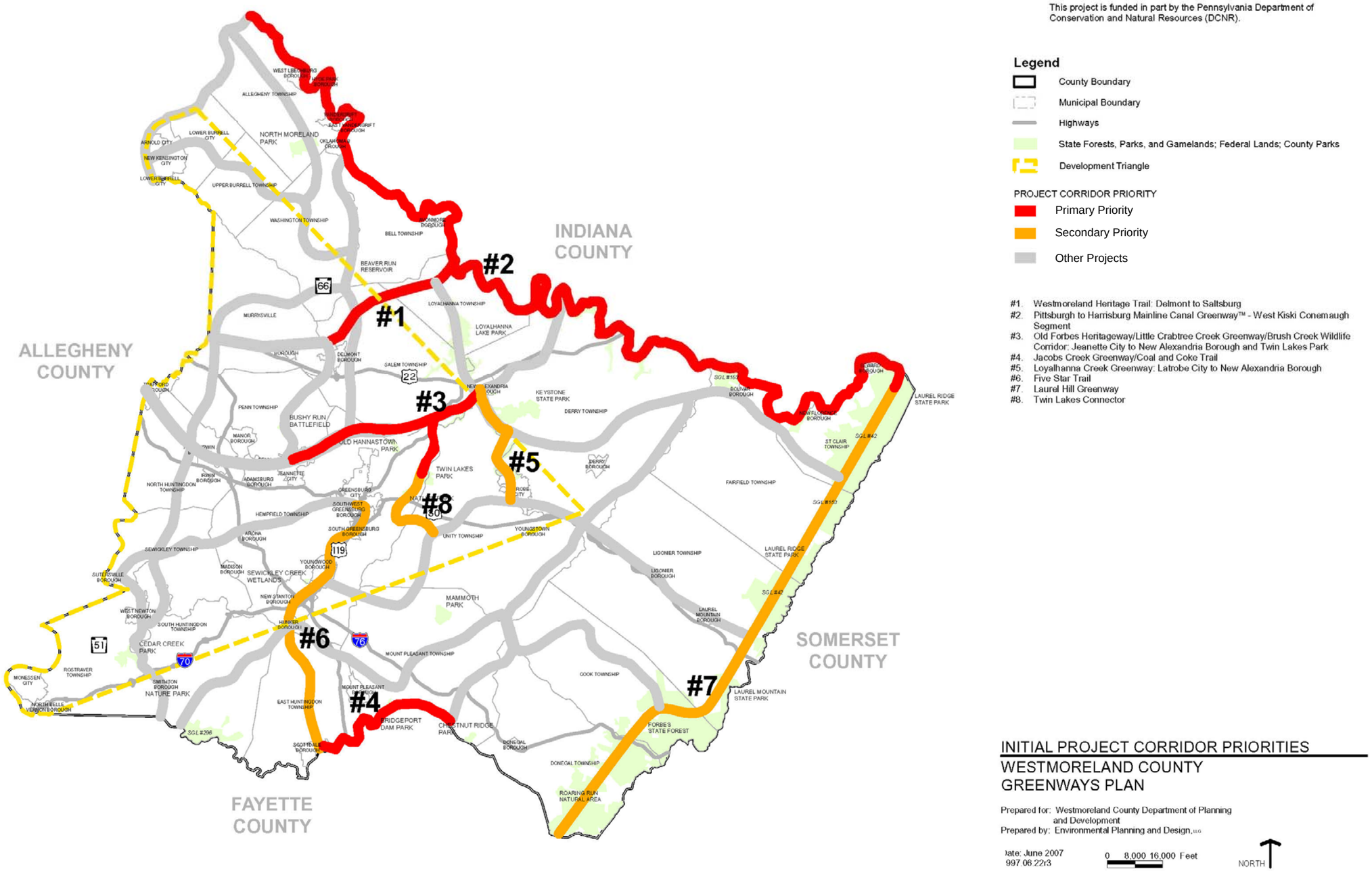
Of the Plan's 21 identified Project Corridor, ten emerge as priorities. A priority corridor is a response to a combination of factors including:

1. Planning initiatives and policies presented in the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, in the County's Comprehensive Parks/Recreation Plan and as part of the Commonwealth's recreation and open space efforts;
2. Extent and type of potential "threats" on existing open spaces;
3. The Corridor's relationship to recreation and/or conservation;
4. Presence of existing trails and secured open space projects;
5. The Corridor's type (e.g. maintained surface, water trail, etc.) and length; and
6. Quantity and/or extent of existing public investments in proximity to the proposed greenway Corridors.

Based upon the evaluation of these criteria, primary and secondary priorities emerge. Consequently, it is recommended that, as time and resources are available, the County should encourage investments for greenway implementation within these priority areas. Moreover, the County should encourage multi-municipal collaboration among the communities in which these priority Corridors are located. As part of this collaboration, the County can promote the preparation of joint-municipal greenway/open space/recreation plans. The scale of these plans enable leadership, residents and organizations organized with planning and policies at the local and/or regional level to assist Westmoreland County in proactively conserving greenway and open space areas.

Defining Actions

Primary and secondary priorities are illustrated on the following page. As projects are completed, the County should re-evaluate remaining projects for inclusion on the overall priority list.


This project is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).
Legend
County Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Highways
State Forests, Parks, and Gamelands; Federal Lands; County Parks
Development Triangle
PROJECT CORRIDOR PRIORITY
Primary Priority
Secondary Priority
Other Projects
#1. Westmoreland Heritage Trail: Delmont to Saltsburg
#2. Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski Conemaugh Segment
#3. Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway/Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor: Jeanette City to New Alexandria Borough and Twin Lakes Park
#4. Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail
#5. Loyalhanna Creek Greenway: Latrobe City to New Alexandria Borough
#6. Five Star Trail
#7. Laurel Hill Greenway
#8. Twin Lakes Connector
INDIANA COUNTY
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
SOMERSET COUNTY
FAYETTE COUNTY
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
#6
#7
#8
INITIAL PROJECT CORRIDOR PRIORITIES
WESTMORELAND COUNTY
GREENWAYS PLAN
Prepared for: Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC
Date: June 2007
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Creating Potential Demonstration Projects

Of the identified priority projects, the first County-wide greenway initiatives that the leadership and residents of Westmoreland County should pursue include two "demonstration" projects. A demonstration project provides the opportunity to establish a planning and policy model for pursuing the many intricate facets required in designating, securing and maintaining greenways and open spaces. Given the existing pattern of trails constructed within the County as well as opportunities to strengthen connections between existing County and regional park/recreation facilities, the two recommended demonstration projects are located near the County's geographic center.

One of these demonstration projects should focus on conservation while another should highlight recreation. Based upon meeting discussions throughout the development of *New Horizons* and the assessment of County-wide land use planning and recreation goals, the conservation demonstration project should include the portion of the Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor from Old Hannastown Park to New Alexandria Borough. This segment of the east-west Corridor can help conserve sensitive natural resources while also providing a green link between two future recreation-oriented Corridors – Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway (see Demonstration Project #2 below) and the Loyalhanna Creek Greenway. From the Plan's analyses, this portion of the Brush Creek Wildlife Corridor is impacted by a moderate level of threat. The Corridor presents some challenges to the County and local stakeholders in cooperatively exploring and implementing practical and fair ways in which lands can be successfully designated for conservation while balancing the challenges stemming, in part, from pressures of growth and development.

Concurrent to the above area identified for conservation is the opportunity to highlight a recreation-oriented demonstration project inclusive of a portion of the Old Forbes Heritageway/Little Crabtree Creek Greenway Project Corridor. Immediate and short-term work in this Corridor that can be completed to extend the County's overall trail network should focus on the construction and maintenance of trail portions from Twin Lakes Park to Crabtree followed by segments between Crabtree to Old Hannastown. Longer-term trail recreation efforts that can be pursued as part of this demonstration project area include the trail's extension to Jeanette and, lastly, from Jeanette to Delmont.

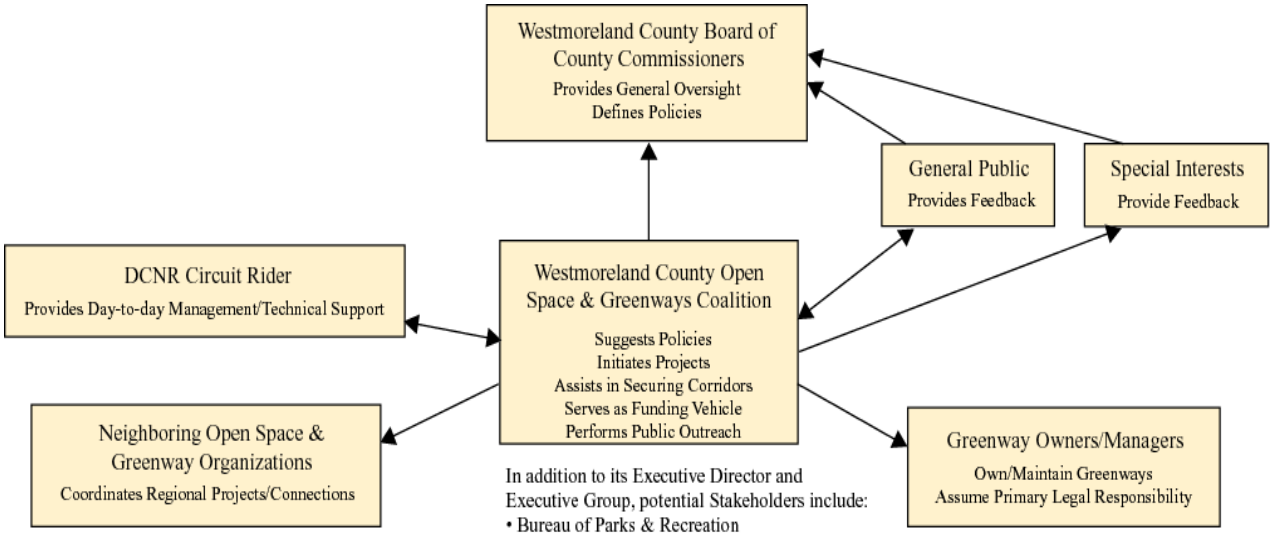
Another important recreation opportunity is the Westmoreland Heritage Trail. Currently, five miles of trail in this Corridor (between Saltsburg and Slickville) is under construction. In the next few years, extending this trail could be realized with construction to Delmont; long-term efforts of this demonstration project could also be explored with the trails extension from Delmont to Trafford. Substantial consideration should be given to the planning and pursuit of this Corridor given its potential contribution and enhancement to

the Turtle Creek gorge/watershed planning efforts which stakeholders in the County are pursuing.

Along the County's perimeter, a third recreation-oriented corridor that should be considered as a demonstration project is the extension of trails along the Mainline Canal Greenway. Pursuing these efforts with Indiana County and Conemaugh Valley Conservancy would strengthen not only opportunities for additional regional recreation, but would assist the Commonwealth in pursuing its initiative to provide recreation-goers with a unique long distance experience.

Outlining Major Actions

Implementing greenway and blueway initiatives will require the commitment of many – the County; municipalities, conservation and recreation organizations; and property owners as well as other supportive stakeholders. Based upon Stakeholder meeting discussions through the project, the following Implementation Diagram was conceived. Public, quasi-public and private organizations all will come together in improving open space and greenway opportunities in Westmoreland County. Each group on the following chart serves a vital role in the establishment and expansion of the County's public open spaces. Additional facets of these various roles and responsibilities are provided on the following pages.



Potential Organizations include:
- Allegheny County
- Armstrong County
- Fayette County
- Indiana County
- Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Corporation

In addition to its Executive Director and Executive Group, potential Stakeholders include:
- Bureau of Parks & Recreation Citizens' Advisory Board
- Department of Planning & Development
- Excela Health
- Home Builders' Assocation
- PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- PA Department of Transportation
- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- PA Game Commission
- PA Cleanways
- Regional Recreation Alliance
- Regional Trail Corporation
- Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County
- Westmoreland Land Trust
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Westmoreland County Conservation District
- Other Conservancies/Trusts
- Other Local Foundations
- Other

Potential Owners/Managers include:
- PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- PA Game Commission
- Local Municipalities
- Regional Trail Corporation
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Westmoreland Land Trust
- Other

Defining Actions

To date, significant contributors in establishing trail and greenway efforts in the County include numerous local- and regional-level citizen-supported entities. The above Implementation Strategy seeks to build on these past successes. Success in realizing the County's comprehensive greenway and blueway network depends largely upon strengthening the relationships, communication and coordination between the County and these local and regional public, quasi-public and private organizations.

In order for the County to fulfill its greenway objectives, a series of steps, or major actions, will be required. On the following table, these major actions are identified along with the general intended outcome(s), parties with the primary responsibility in coordinating the actions' efforts and general timeframe in which Actions should be completed. Following the outline of Major Actions, brief descriptions of proposed immediate and short-term tasks are outlined. Implementation timeframes are envisioned as follows:

- Immediate 0-2 years
- Short-term >2-5 years
- Long-term >5 years
- On-going

It is a goal of this Plan to encourage the coming together of public agencies with the private development community. Consequently, it is ultimately encouraged that the incorporation of identified greenways from County plans transforms into initiatives pursued at both the local and regional scale. Where possible, the designation and coordination of greenway and blueway projects should be encouraged as part of multi-municipal planning efforts. As part of municipal and multi-municipal comprehensive plan endeavors, the extent of analysis and recommendations related to open space, greenways, trails and related recreation should be expanded. This should be done to identify how sensitive resources can be conserved and/or made appropriately available for varying levels of recreation. Also, the County should proactively seek municipal support in areas with high priority greenways and/or those areas influenced by development or other identified threats.

How can municipalities benefit in being a part of *New Horizons*? One example is in Murrysville. Residents of the Municipality have joined together to begin to address opportunities of potential local greenway projects. Citizens have identified desired purposes and recognized challenges and presented these findings to the greater community. With this type of information, the Municipality, in turn, is able to evaluate how these Corridors may expand the community's overall open space network, may improve stormwater management impacts that could be created by future development as well as identify what maintenance and costs could be associated with greenway projects if pursued. In addition, local projects such as these can springboard to multi-municipal efforts with neighboring communities.

Several goals can be accomplished through the completion of multi-municipal greenway efforts. These include:

- Identifying larger-scale open spaces potentially suitable for enhancing development character and values;
- Promoting the adoption of natural resource conservation/assessment ordinances at the local level;
- Consideration for funding as part of the Commonwealth's initiatives to promote joint community projects;
- Forming stronger community relationships as evidenced by those begun through the Citizens Advisory Board's successes of unifying parks and recreation in the County; and
- Identifying potential opportunities for shared staffing which can both optimize economic investments and improve communication between local and regional planning efforts.

In addition to benefits for public entities, how is *New Horizons* advantageous to the development community, and what does it take to get involved? As not all land identified as part of the Project Corridors is public, the development community is a key participant to realizing the greenways network. As discussed as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan and through other efforts like those promoted by the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County, research has shown that quality conserved open spaces integral to development can equate to increased values – both in optimizing development return and in promoting the conservation of existing natural resources.

These following actions, responsible parties and timeframes are outlined as a guide for implementing the recommendations of *New Horizons* in the spirit of this goal. As each action will require a varying level of resources, an estimation of hard costs and man-hour commitments should be completed as part of early project phases. Broader budgeting and funding pursuits can then be strategized accordingly. As opportunities arise for further collaboration, land acquisition and/or funding, the County should determine if, and to what extent, priorities may need to be re-evaluated so that the implementation impacts can be optimized. There are several ways in which the Plan's recommended outcomes can be measured. Some outcomes will be physically obvious such as the construction of identified recreation corridors and through the recording of dedicated lands for conservation. However, many types of successes will stem from the collaborations and discussions that occur among stakeholder groups. It is recommended that prior to each Annual Summit (discussed in Task K), attendees submit summaries highlighting their respective successes. The Westmoreland County Greenway and Open Space Coalition's (discussed in Task A) Executive Director and Executive Group can evaluate and report these successes in comparison to that year's identified goals and objectives. At the Summit, the following

year's goals and objectives can be discussed and established thus giving stakeholders the next endeavors to work toward.

In the following sections regarding the Major Actions Table and corresponding Summary of Immediate Actions, the term "county planners" refers to involvement of the County's Department of Planning and Development and/or the Bureau of Parks and Recreation as applicable to overall project objectives and resource availability.

Table 3: Major Actions

Nature of Strategy	ID	Action	Outcome(s)	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
Establishing the Plan's Purpose and Projects	A	Convene the Westmoreland County Greenways & Open Space Coalition (Coalition)	Coalition by-laws and mission statement	County Planners & Board of County Commissioners	Immediate
	B	Support the formation and involvement of the Westmoreland Land Trust in the management of greenway projects	Westmoreland Land Trust	Westmoreland County Conservation District & County Planners	Immediate
	C	Conduct DCNR-sponsored peer review group to evaluate feasibility of utilizing a Circuit Rider	DCNR approval of Circuit Rider and formal application executed	County Planners and Westmoreland Land Trust	Immediate
	D	Develop a Work Plan to achieve the Vision	Work Plan	County Planners and Coalition	Immediate
	E	Facilitate annual Coalition meeting	Coordination of implementation efforts	Coalition	On-going
	F	Analyze the status of existing projects	Understanding of projects and their status, timeline, and various needs	County Planners and Coalition	On-going
	G	Compile inventory of additional quasi-public protected lands as appropriate for inclusion within greenway corridors	Develop a uniform protected/conservation lands GIS layer	County Planners and Coalition	Short-term
	H	Prepare grants to complete feasibility studies of identified Greenway Demonstration Projects	Grant application package	Coalition	Immediate
	I	Submit the Feasibility Study Grant Application	Grant funding	Coalition	Immediate
	J	Conduct a Feasibility Study for identified Demonstration Projects	Feasibility Study Reports	Community Stakeholders and Coalition	Short-term
Enhancing Partnerships	K	Convene County Greenways Summit	Shared goals and commitment to the Vision and Plan Development of on-going strategy for project coordination between State, County, local and regional stakeholders	Executive Committee of Coalition	Immediate
	L	Verify ownership of greenway elements (state, county, conservation group, etc.)	Continued stewardship of greenway plan elements	Westmoreland Land Trust	On-going

Table 3: Major Actions (cont'd.)

Nature of Strategy	ID	Action	Outcome(s)	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
Enhancing Partnerships	**M**	Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian enhancements with larger scale transportation projects	Additional recreation opportunities / corridors within the greenway network	Coalition	On-going
	N	Demonstrate appropriate land management techniques within publicly held (or quasi-public) lands to implement portions of the greenway network	Example for the preparation of a greenway-oriented management plan	Westmoreland Land Trust	Long-term
	O	Promote the incorporation of appropriate greenway network and recreation provisions in County and Municipal planning efforts	Consistent planning for the greenway network	Coalition & County Planners	On-going
Sharing the Greenways Message	**P**	Develop a Westmoreland Clearinghouse for Technical Assistance to projects	One stop shop for groups looking for assistance on project development, funding, etc Home of the Circuit Rider	Westmoreland Land Trust and County Planners	Long-term
	Q	Create a Greenway specific job description and hire a Circuit Rider	Deployment of a resource person to aid regional partners in successful completion of projects	Westmoreland Land Trust and County Planners	Immediate
	R	Prepare marketing materials for the Vision	A unified message to municipalities, funders, agencies, legislators, media, and the public regarding the vision, its status, and progress	Coalition	Short-term
	S	Develop Regional "Ask" for priority projects identified in Vision and Work Plan	A clear message to legislators, funders, and agencies showing the value of investments and the commitment of local partners working together in achieving the Vision	Westmoreland County Planners, Coalition and Surrounding County Greenway Planners	Short-term
	T	Create and install a comprehensive greenway signage system identifying project corridors where some form of implementation has occurred	Erection of Greenway identification signs at stream/road crossing/bridge crossings/trail heads, etc.	Coalition and Westmoreland Land Trust	On-going

Summary of Immediate Actions

A. Convene the Westmoreland County Greenways & Open Space Coalition

A keystone to implementing *New Horizons* is actually through the cooperation of multiple stakeholders forming a County Greenway Coalition. Serving an advisory role to the Board of County Commissioners, the Coalition should be comprised of numerous representatives from public and private entities advising and assisting in the development of greenway policies. The Coalition also should initiate projects, serve as a funding vehicle, suggest policies, work with others to secure corridors and perform public outreach.

Upon the creation of the Coalition, the Board of County Commissioners should define its Executive Group. There are two options for organizing this lead entity. One option could be composing five to seven members with representation from the County's Department of Planning and Development, the County's Bureau of Parks and Recreation, the Parks and Recreation's Citizens Advisory Board, the Westmoreland County Conservation District and the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. The second option could be utilizing the newly forming Westmoreland Land Trust, which in its early stages appears to contain similar representation as that which is outlined above, to serve as the Executive Committee.

The purpose of this Group is two-fold: first, as the Greenways Plan moves forward, the Executive Group will guide/coordinate initial project implementation; secondly, as the Coalition's membership and activities expand, the Executive Group will be the key point of contact for Coalition members. The Executive Group should meet bi-monthly or as needed to stay abreast of evolving projects and policies. With this structure, it is anticipated that Coalition, under the direction of the Executive Group, could meet two to three times per year in the short-term and more frequently, if desired, as projects are implemented.

The Coalition will be the central figure for the following types of tasks.

1. Develop a Five-Year Plan for achieving the *New Horizons'* vision and update it as appropriate;
2. Interacting with a broader range of stakeholders interested in developing the greenways and blueways network;
3. Prioritize projects and funding opportunities on a periodic basis as related to the vision;
4. Initiate key immediate actions and primary projects as appropriate;
5. Ensuring that planning entities and organizations implementing projects are receiving needed technical assistance; and
6. Report regularly to Westmoreland County Commissioners.

Additional discussion and a diagram illustrating the relationship of these stakeholders' involvement in context of the County's overall open space network are outlined, respectively, under *Implementation Stakeholders* and *Outlining Major Actions*.

B. Support the formation and involvement of the Westmoreland Land Trust in the management of greenway/blueway projects
Emerging from planning efforts led in part by the Westmoreland County Conservation District, the formation of a Westmoreland Land Trust is an important component to both the Coalition's success and cohesive management of the County's future open space system. With a focus on ensuring the continuity, quality and management of the County's conservation-oriented greenway projects, the Westmoreland Land Trust should be one of the first managing bodies to emerge prior to or concurrently with the adoption of *New Horizons*. As part of forming the organization, criteria will need to be defined for the group's management responsibilities such as accepting land donations, pursuing purchases, etc.

As of 2006, five land trust-oriented entities with varying missions serve lands within Westmoreland County. If desired, these groups could be participants in the newly-formed, broader reaching "county-wide" Land Trust. Operating as a non-profit organization, it is recommended that the Westmoreland Land Trust become a member of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA) to benefit from the organization's established knowledge and available resources. The goals of PALTA are to:

"1. Strengthen the effectiveness of land conservation efforts.

2. Improve governmental policy impacting land and water conservation.

3. Raise public awareness of land conservation tools, benefits, needs and opportunities, while fostering positive relationships between land conservation organizations and others.

4. Build a stronger, more effective [land trust] organization."

C/Q. Conduct DCNR-sponsored peer review group to evaluate feasibility of utilizing a Circuit Rider/Create a Job Description and Hire a Circuit Rider
Staffing to support the County's mission to develop a formal interconnected system of greenways is a necessity to enhancing open space opportunities for Westmoreland County residents. The extensive system of greenways and open space proposed as part of *New Horizons* is anticipated to entail the commitment of a full-time person(s). Because of the Coalition's advisory nature, the group's members

will likely not have day-to-day capacity to provide the necessary staffing. Therefore, it is highly recommended that County Planners, County Parks and the Westmoreland Land Trust work with DCNR to evaluate the feasibility of hiring of a "Circuit Rider" to assist the County and Coalition in this mission. In essence, this Circuit Rider will serve as the Coalition's Executive Director.

DCNR sponsors a Circuit Rider program to help build local and multi-municipal capacity for implementing open space and recreation plans. As of 2006, DCNR has extended the Circuit Rider program to single counties; it is no longer limited to two or more municipalities/counties. Circuit Rider grants provide four-years of scaled funding to allow the hiring of a full-time employee to share services through an intergovernmental cooperative effort created by two or more municipalities. Available grant funding for the Circuit Rider's salary decreases from 100 percent the first year to 75 percent the second, 50 percent the third and 25 percent the fourth year thereby allowing the grantee to build the fiscal support necessary to sustain the position. By the fifth year the Circuit Rider shall be supported 100% by the entity in the County ultimately housing this position; based on the nature of coordination needed between development and conservation projects, it is recommended that this position be embedded within the County's Department of Planning and Development. The County could apply funding; the Circuit Rider would be employed by the Department and report to the Coalition.

Responsibilities of the Circuit Rider would include, but not be limited to:

- Working with County Planners and Westmoreland Land Trust to develop a summit of all stakeholders in the Plan;
- Woring with County Planners, the Westmoreland Land Trust and Coalition to develop the detailed work plan for implementation of the Plan;
- Coordination with trail/greenway organizations and other conservation non-profit groups in the County;
- Coordination with State agencies, especially DCNR, PennDOT, PA DCED and the Game Commission regarding project status and funding opportunities.

D. Work Plan

The County's comprehensive land use planning, including the establishment of the Comprehensive Plan's Development Triangle and continued implementation of trail construction as recommended by the County's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan serves as successes from which the network open spaces and greenways can grow.

To fully understand how *New Horizons'* recommendations fit within the spirit of the projects in which all identified Stakeholders have interest, the Coalition, represented in the immediate future through the Executive Group and the Westmoreland Land Trust, should develop a Work Plan. Overall, the Work Plan should be aimed at identifying the Coalition's roles in:

- Continuing to support the strengths of existing initiatives
- Convening an annual County Open Space, Trails and Greenways "Summit," led by the Westmoreland Land Trust, to
  - Develop analyses of existing projects and their:
    - Status
    - Technical assistance needs
    - Funding needs
    - Timing
  - Identify Critical gaps
- Developing a clearinghouse for technical assistance through the Coalition and the County
- Developing a marketing publications and supportive materials relevant to the County's Open Space, Trails and Greenways vision
- Convening group presentations to County, State agencies and the regional legislative delegation to apprise them of the projects, progress and needs of the region.

H-I. Grant Applications for Feasibility Studies of Identified Demonstration Projects
The Coalition should prepare a grant application to submit to DCNR in pursuing a feasibility study for identified Demonstration Projects. Existing feasibility study work, being completed as part of the Loyalhanna Watershed Association's trail efforts, should be identified as information and success from which to build upon the project's opportunities and challenges.

As demonstration projects are completed, it is recommended that the Coalition continue to pursue grant funding for additional feasibility studies to understand the intricate opportunities and challenges that each new Greenway Corridor possesses prior to significant acquisition and/or improvement investments are made.

K. Convene a County Greenways Summit
The purpose of the Summit is to share the goals of the *New Horizons* Plan with Coalition Members, County Leadership and other greenway groups completing projects in adjacent counties. The Summit seeks to build upon the Round Table discussions conducted as part of preparation of the *New Horizons* Plan. Similar to the Round Table forum, vested interest groups are able to identify opportunities and challenges they foresee with implementation. However, the greater purpose of the

Summit is to develop a formal on-going strategy and agreement for project coordination between State, County, local and regional stakeholders. Summit discussions should also establish the general message and approach intended to be pursued as part of the Regional "Ask." (See Task S.) If desired, the Summit venue could also be conducted annually to discuss the Plan's implementation progress and identify additional opportunities for stakeholder collaboration.

Summary of Short-term Actions

G. Compile inventory of additional quasi-public protect lands
Land ownership information is currently established through Westmoreland County's GIS database. As part of feasibility study work and on-going implementation efforts, the Coalition should work with County planning staff to compile and update land ownership data specifically relevant to all greenway Project Corridor areas. As quasi-public lands are acquired or become available for improvement, the database should be updated and the Coalition, through its member representatives, can identify opportunities to expand greenway implementation and partnerships.

J. Conduct a Feasibility Study for Identified Demonstration Projects
Because is it is necessary to manage and protect lands through regulation and planning, a feasibility study for the two initial Demonstration Projects should examine existing plans for conserving lands at the local level. The effectiveness of local and County-wide regulatory measures for conserving natural resources should also be evaluated. The following criteria should be considered as part of this assessment:

1. What do local comprehensive plans, zoning and natural resource protection ordinances promote in terms of open space planning within the vicinity of lands which are important for the greenway Project Corridors?
2. Does it appear that such provisions could be updated to better address the effects of development on and protection of significant resources?
3. Does the community utilize an Official Map, as described in the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code*, to identify the location of future public areas and preserve right-of-way areas for recreation and open space?
4. Are there any advisory bodies at the local level, such as an Environmental Advisory Council, which reviews zoning and rezoning proposals, subdivision and site plans or other development concepts to identify impacts on the community's landscape?

R. Prepare Marketing Materials for the Network's Vision
A Marketing Plan and materials are vital to the success of *New Horizons*. The marketing materials shall promote the entire greenway network to organizations, residents and visitors as well as working with service organizations and should include a theme and logo. The marketing plan and materials may also assist in securing funding as well as serve as an awareness tool to develop interest and support.

Graphics and information developed as part of the marketing package can also serve as the basis for the Open Space Network's comprehensive signage system.

S. Develop a Regional "Ask"
A Regional "Ask" represents a multi-county effort which can fulfill a significant goal of agencies in the Commonwealth. In the case of realizing Westmoreland County's greenway, blueway and open space initiatives, the County is encouraged to develop collaborative efforts with surrounding counties such as Fayette, Somerset and Indiana to pursue State funding and implementation of corridor projects including the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ - West Kiski-Conemaugh Segment, the Jacobs Creek Greenway/Coal and Coke Trail as well as connections to the Laurel Hill Greenway.

Implementation Stakeholders

Who is at the table to advance the successes of open space, greenways and blueways planning in Westmoreland County? As illustrated in the previous Implementation Diagram, *New Horizons* is based upon the cooperation of many stakeholders.

A. The Greenways Coalition
The following is a listing of some of the major agencies and organizations coming together as a Coalition to implement *New Horizons*. As open space opportunities expand within the County and connections to surrounding counties emerge, the listing of additional stakeholders may be expanded. The Coalition's leading entity is the Westmoreland Land Trust, in collaboration with an Executive Director and advisory Executive Group (see also Task A).

<u>Department of Planning & Development</u>
The Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development (WCDPD) has been the administering agency delivering community development programs and formulates policies to protect the well-being of residents and the environment in Westmoreland County. The WCDPD is committed to providing community development services to the public in an efficient and professional manner. Based upon the depth to which corridor projects should be coordinated with the County's

other development activity, the Coalition's Executive Director should be housed in this Department.

Bureau of Parks & Recreation Citizens Advisory Board
The Bureau of Parks & Recreation Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) was borne from the Westmoreland County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as a resident-based advisory entity. The CAB assists the Bureau in conceptualizing, reviewing and refining long-term park and recreation planning initiatives and funding strategies.

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
A major landowner in the region, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) owns and operates State Parks and Forests and works closely with local governments and nonprofits to achieve conservation and recreation goals and projects.

PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
The Department of Environmental Protection protects Pennsylvania's air, land and water from pollution and provides for the health and safety of its citizens through a cleaner environment. The DEP works as a partner with individuals, organizations, governments and businesses to prevent pollution and restore Pennsylvania's natural resources.

PA Department of Transportation
The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) can provide funding and technical assistance for trail and other transportation-related greenway initiatives. Safety of pedestrians in context of an overall transportation network is one of the Department's objectives.

PA Game Commission
Another public landowner within the County is the Pennsylvania Game Commission, which owns and operates State Gamelands.

Regional Recreation Alliance
The Regional Recreation Alliance unites and supports area professionals and promotes parks & recreation services in Westmoreland County through cooperation, networking, joint programming efforts and regional development.

Regional Trail Corporation
The Regional Trail Corporation is a non-profit partnership who acquires, develops and manages appropriate trail corridors in southwestern Pennsylvania while

creating and promoting opportunities for recreation, tourism, economic development and historic and environment conservation.

Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County
The Smart Growth Partnership works with County's cities, townships and boroughs to address the challenges associated with economic growth and revitalization. Through educational outreach and planning advocacy, the Partnership is designed to promote cooperative land-use strategies that will improve the quality of growth in southwestern Pennsylvania, particularly Westmoreland County.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has conserved over 250,000 acres of land in Western Pennsylvania and focuses much of its work on the important biological and natural habitats of the region.

Westmoreland County Conservation District
The Westmoreland County Conservation District is dedicated to the conservation, restoration and proper use of the County's natural resources. Functioning as a unit of government, the directors and their associates commit themselves to the leadership and service required in pursuing activities beneficial to the environment.

Excela Health
Excela Health represents three hospital entities along with their various subsidiaries located in Westmoreland County and parts of Fayette and Indiana Counties. Excela Health joins over 575 physicians representing some 35 clinical specialties to provide traditional inpatient care, outpatient treatment and specialty services while serving as the region's third largest health care employer. Promoting healthy lifestyles through interaction with and exercise in the outdoors, Excela Health strives to improve health and well-being in the Southwestern Pennsylvania region.

Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh (BAMP)
Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh (BAMP) promotes home ownership and the improvement of the residential building industry in western Pennsylvania. BAMP is a non-profit trade organization comprised of home builders, light commercial builders and associate members including suppliers, subcontractors, lenders, manufacturers, utilities, realtors and architects.

Conservancies, Trusts, Local Foundations and Others
Communication with local and regional conservation and recreation-oriented entities is a key component in ensuring coordination and understanding of community-driven day-to-day greenway activities.

B. Westmoreland County Board of County Commissioners

The Westmoreland County Board of County Commissioners (WCBCC) will have the primary responsibility for seeing that *New Horizons* is implemented. The Commissioners are situated to guide the vision of the long term. Greenway activities are an important facet of enhancing the County's assets of providing vibrant, cohesive transportation, economic development, recreation and tourism opportunities for County residents and visitors.

C. Greenway Owners/Managers

There are a variety of organizations which will actually be charged with owning and managing greenways in the County. To ensure continuity of implementation, a chief coordinating entity between this group of owners/managers and the Coalition is necessary. Based upon expertise and the overall implementation structure of the Greenways Plan, the most appropriate entity is the Westmoreland Land Trust.

Implementation Tools

Overview

Several techniques for implementing the *New Horizons* Plan are described below. These tools range from creating land management policies and land use controls to purchasing rights to land.

Land Management

Land management tools provide specific policies for managing valuable resources.

Land Management Plan

Land management plans establish a specific set of policies for the use of publicly-owned land. Management plans typically identify valuable natural, historic and heritage resources; determine compatible uses for the land; determine the administrative needs of the land, such as maintenance, security and funding requirements; and identify recommended short-term and long-term strategies/actions for the treatment and protection of identified resources. Because land management plans are prepared for publicly owned land, few or no other regulatory or acquisition-related tools are necessary to ensure implementation of the Plan's policies.

Example. A State Park could implement a land management plan that identifies areas of specific importance due to existing natural resources as well as areas suitable for development of trail/greenway facilities. The plan could include

recommended actions that would result in the preservation of the natural resources and the development of the trail.
Conservation strategies on lands that are not publicly owned must be implemented using regulatory or acquisition related tools.

Regulation

Land may be protected through government regulation, which controls land use and development through legislative powers. Examples of various land use and development ordinances and components of these ordinances, which regulate community growth and protect natural resources, are listed below:

Dedication/Density Transfers

The dedication/density transfer tool allows a developer/landowner to transfer allowable development density from one portion of his or her parcel/development to another portion. In exchange for the increase in allowable density, the landowner must dedicate the undeveloped open space portion to the municipality/county. This tool is applicable for a single parcel or contiguous parcels of land that are part of a common development plan.

Example. A portion of land included within a subdivision/development could potentially provide an integral link for the municipal trail system. The municipal planning commission could grant the developer increased allowable density on appropriate portions of his or her site in exchange for dedicating the remaining portions of the land for preservation purposes.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR allows communities to provide additional density in areas where growth is desired and discourage growth/development in areas desirable as preserved open Space. The community identifies an area to be developed and an area to be preserved. The municipality's comprehensive plan is a useful guide for identifying these areas. Owners within the area to be preserved are given development credits that can be sold to land owners in the area to be developed. In order to sell these credits, landowners must place a permanent conservation easement on their property. The purchasing landowner within the area to be developed may then develop at a density that is higher than previously allowed by the municipality. The American Planning Association (APA) has an extensive set of information regarding TDRs.

Example. A municipality contains a portion that is experiencing increased development pressures and another area with sensitive and important natural resources. The municipal comprehensive plan identifies the former as a future

growth area and the latter as an ideal preservation area. The municipality could adopt a TDR policy allowing landowners in the preservation area to sell development credits to the growth area. This action optimizes the development of the growth area and the preservation of the important natural area.

Negotiated Dedications

In instances where parcels are deemed beneficial to the protection and preservations of stream corridors, a municipality/county may request that a landowner enter into negotiations for those specific parcels. Additionally, during the subdivision review process, the municipality/county may ask for the dedication of land in order to provide public open spaces. Such dedication should be proportionate to the impact the subdivision will have on the services provided by the municipality.

Example. A subdivision/development plan requires the extension of existing municipal infrastructure. The municipality can request that the developer dedicate a portion of the property to the municipality in exchange for the extension of municipal infrastructure and services. The size of the dedication should be relative to the impact on existing municipal services.

Dedication of Land

Dedication of Land can be coordinated with negotiated dedications to bolster the effectiveness of a municipality's land conservation opportunities. Using this tool, landowners have the option to pay the municipality/county, in an amount relative to the density at which they are developing, instead of dedicating the appropriate portion of their land for preservation. The municipality/county may then utilize these funds to acquire land elsewhere in order to implement land conservation projects. An ordinance and an adopted recreation plan are required to implement this tool.

Example. Applying dedication of land techniques along with a form of negotiated dedication increases the options presented to developers within the municipality. The developer then has a choice of dedicating the appropriate portion of land to the municipality or paying a lump sum fee to the municipality in lieu of the dedication of land.

Buffer/Transition Zones

Buffer/transition zones are formally identified within the municipality's zoning ordinance. The situation of these zones is determined by potential interaction of incompatible land uses. Open space is then preserved along these potential interaction points in order to provide a buffer or transition between the incompatible uses.

Example. Buffer/transition zones could be used in instances where land zoned for intense uses such as highway commercial or manufacturing abut less intense properties or open spaces. The buffer/transition zone could be situated along the border of the two zones so as not to unduly make large portions of each unusable, but could be large enough to effectively screen one use from the other. The area within the buffer/transition zone could be used to situate a trail.

Zoning/Overlay Zones

Also identified within a municipality's zoning ordinance, zoning overlays allow a municipality to introduce specific controls related to land conservation, or enhance the underlying zone's existing land use regulations. Examples of these controls include increased setbacks, reduced maximum allowable land coverage, etc.

Example. Zoning overlays could be applied along potential key trail corridors. By increasing setbacks and reducing land coverage, more open space can be provided along these key corridors than would be provided by the underlying zoning districts.

Conservation Subdivision

Municipal and county subdivision ordinances may contain requirements related to public park sites, trails and greenways. Agency works with landowners to secure necessary right-of-way for trails, etc. A conservation subdivision could allow an overall density bonus in exchange for clustering development and creating open space and trail facilities.

The following is an excerpt from the Natural Lands Trust's *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* approach for effective policies to address greenway planning efforts.

> *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* is a collaborative program of Natural Lands Trust, a non-profit land conservancy located in Media, PA; the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR); the Governor's Center for Local Government Services, DCED; and an advisory committee comprised of officials from State, local and non-profit agencies and the private sector. The Governor's 1999 State-wide environmental funding initiative shares the same *Growing Greener* name, but is a separate program funding natural resource protection and land preservation efforts across the Commonwealth.

As of January 2007, 27 communities in nine counties have adopted rigorous versions of the model *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* ordinance. These Townships are preserving an average of 62% of land subject to development as permanently protected open space.

In order to implement conservation subdivision design, zoning and subdivision ordinances are revised to focus not only on development-related issues (such as lot dimensions, street geometry, stormwater management, etc.), but to place equal emphasis on conserving a variety of environmental, cultural, historic and scenic features. It is precisely those features that typically give a community its special character and are often destroyed by conventional development practices. When local land use regulations require developers to design around special natural and cultural features, developers can become the municipality's greatest conservationists, at no cost to the community. To achieve this, several revisions must usually be made to the subdivision and zoning ordinances.

Subdivision ordinances must contain, at a minimum:

- Procedures that strongly encourage dialogue between the applicant and municipality before detailed plans are engineered.
- Standards for the configuration and location of the conservation lands.
- A requirement for a context map, showing all natural and manmade features surrounding the site.
- A requirement for a detailed site inventory of existing features upon which to base decisions regarding the location of areas to be protected.
- A required site visit by the planning commission members accompanied by the developer, with the site inventory in hand.
- A four-step design process in which the conservation areas are determined first, before houses, streets and lot lines are established.

Revisions to the zoning ordinance create a "menu of options" for developers to choose from, relating density to the provision of open space. The options offer density increases when greater open space is proposed and reduced density when less open space is proposed. In addition, the zoning ordinance needs to be made flexible to accommodate development in patterns that preserve natural resources.

Zoning ordinances must contain, at a minimum:

- The ability for an applicant to obtain full-density, through a "by-right" (versus conditional use) approval process, but only when a conservation option is selected.

- A requirement that protected lands in conservation subdivisions are comprised of at least 50% of the buildable ground, whenever the underlying density is one unit per acre or lower.
- Strong disincentives to discourage "conventional" development, usually by reducing the density by half.
- Restrictive covenants that ensure that the conservation lands are perpetually restricted from further development.
- Open space locational design standards.

Successful communities employ a wide array of conservation planning techniques simultaneously, over an extended period of time. Complementary tools which a community should consider adding to it's "toolbox" of techniques include the purchase of development rights; donations of sales to conservancies; the transfer of development rights; and "landowner compacts" involving density shifts between contiguous parcels. Other techniques can be effective, but their potential for influencing the "big picture" is limited. The *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* approach offers the greatest potential because it:

- does not require public expenditure;
- does not depend upon landowner charity;
- does not involve complicated regulations for shifting rights to other parcels; and
- does not depend upon the cooperation of two or ore adjoining landowners to make it work.

Additional informational material describing *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* concepts is available from Natural Lands Trust (610-353-5587 or www.natlands.org).

Subdivision Exaction

This tool requires as a condition of development approval, that the developer provide public facilities or the financing for the provision of public facilities. The size of the facility or amount of financing should be relative to the impact that the development will have on existing public facilities and/or the demand for additional public facilities that the development will create. The facilities, which can include open Space, are then dedicated to the municipality/county.

Example. A developer could be required to build a park or reserve an area of his land for open space because the number of new residents generated by the development will cause an existing park to exceed its service capacity and/or create need for additional park facilities.

Acquisition

Property may be acquired outright as a way of protecting/creating land for open space purposes. In general, all of the following techniques can be applied in order to acquire property or rights of way for the purposes of creating greenways.

Donation/Tax Incentives

Landowners can dedicate their property to the municipality and typically realize tax benefits such as Federal and State deductions on personal income as well as the ability to avoid inheritance taxes, capital gains taxes and recurring property taxes. This tool results in the municipality/county receiving fee-simple title to a parcel of land at no cost.

Fee Simple Purchase

This is the outright purchase of land by the county/municipality where it receives fee-simple title to a parcel of land.

Easements

Easements can be used by the county/municipality to acquire explicit rights to certain areas of a property. Easements result in local government receiving a specific interest in a parcel while the property owner retains responsibility for all taxes associated with the property, less the value of the easement granted. Easements are generally categorized by their interest in a property.

Conservation

Typically, conservation easements are designed to protect natural resources and permanently limit the use and/or development intensity of land. These easements are generally applied to the entire property or relatively large portions of the property. Benefits to property owners who participate in a conservation easement include potential qualification for Federal income tax deductions and/or State tax credits.

Preservation

Preservation easements can be used to protect significant built and/or natural features of a property. When applied for the purposes of protecting built assets, the easement's general intent is the preservation of a structure's historical value and integrity. Additionally, when used in concert with best management practices, these easements can protect important elements of the property's landscape. These easements can be applied to the entire property or specific portions of the property. Tax incentives for preservation easements are similar to those associated with conservation easements.

Public Access

The general intent of public access easements is to provide passage and access through a property in order to link to assets/amenities on adjacent properties. These easements are typically applied to portions of a property rather than the entire property. Public access clauses may be included within conservation and preservation easements or the public access easement may be utilized individually.

Easement Purchase

Negotiations with property owners may fail to yield desired donations of land for the purposes of various easements. In these instances, a county/municipality may purchase an easement on the desired portions of the property. Because easements typically do not affect the entire property or the entire bundle of rights, the purchase price will be less than the title's value.

Deed Restriction/Purchase of Development Rights

A county/municipality can encourage protection of sensitive resources such as prime agricultural land by instituting a purchase of development rights program. Under such a program, the property owner would forfeit any further rights to develop his or her land in exchange for payment from the county/municipality. This type of program includes the fair market value purchase of property development rights from an owner and is typically reciprocated by the landowner including development restrictions beyond the current use within the deed to the land. The property owner continues to utilize the property and keeps all ownership rights associated with the land in its current condition.

Purchase/Lease Back

A county/municipality can purchase land and lease it back to the original owner with additional use and development restrictions.

Option/First Right of Refusal

Owners who intend to sell their property can agree to give the county/municipality the right to decide whether they want to purchase the land before the owner sells to a private entity. When coupled with other tools, this technique can allow a municipality time to acquire funds necessary to purchase a property for greenway use.

Condemnation

Condemnation could be used in instances where property or property rights are unusually difficult to acquire. This is usually the result of unclear ownership or the unavailability of the owner. Condemnation is not always warranted as other techniques may achieve the desired result.

Implementation Resources

The following funding sources provide financial assistance for purposes ranging from planning to land acquisition and generally take the form of grants and/or loans. Programs described below are grouped by the agency that provides the funds. In addition to these funding avenues, additional resources may be found through Pennsylvania's Greenway Clearinghouse –- pagreenways.org

Pennsylvania DCNR[1]

The **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania** provides grant moneys, through the **Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)**, to county and municipal governments to support greenway and park planning, acquisition, design and development. The following sub-grants are also available:

Heritage Park Grants are available to municipalities or nonprofit organizations for promoting public-private partnerships that preserve and enhance natural, cultural, historic and recreation resources to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism.

Land Trust Grants are available to land trusts and conservancies to acquire land for areas that face imminent loss. Land must be open to public use and priority is given to habitats where threatened species exist.

Rails-to-Trails Grants are available to municipalities and nonprofit organizations to fund the planning, acquisition or development to preserve and protect abandoned railroad corridors.

Community Grants are awarded to municipalities for recreation, park and conservation projects including the rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities; acquisition of land for park and conservation purposes; and technical assistance for feasibility studies, trails studies and site development planning.

River Conservation Grants are available to municipalities, counties, municipal and inter-municipal authorities and river support groups to conserve and enhance river

[1] http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/general02.aspx

resources. Planning and implementation grants are available to develop or carry out projects or activities defined in an approved river conservation plan.

Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program Grants provide funds to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreation. Eligible applicants include Federal and State agencies, local governments and private organizations. Eligible projects include: maintenance, restoration, development, construction of new recreational trails and acquisition of easements or property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors.

The **Land and Water Conservation Fund**[2] provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

The **Recreational Trails Program**[3] is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that provides assistance by making funds available to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

Pennsylvania DCED[4]

The **Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)** provides grant funds for the preparation of community comprehensive plans and the ordinances to implement them. Multi-municipal ventures are given priority within this fund. LUPTAP funds could be used to implement greenway components of municipal comprehensive plans.

The Community Revitalization Program provides grant funds to support local initiatives that promote community stability and quality of life.

The Floodplain Land Use Assistance Program provides grants and technical assistance to encourage the proper use of land and the management of floodplain lands within Pennsylvania.

[2] http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/lwcf/ (accessed 5/8/06)
[3] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/index.htm (accessed 5/8/06)
[4] http://www.newpa.com/programFinder.aspx (accessed 5/8/06)

PA Fish and Boat Commission[5]

A **Boating Facilities Grant Program** is available to municipalities to develop access points on municipally-owned land. The Fish and Boat Commission also provides in-kind engineering services for the creation of these access points.

The **Coldwater Heritage Partnership** provides leadership, coordination, technical assistance and funding support for the evaluation, conservation and protection of Pennsylvania's coldwater streams.

The **State Wildlife Grant Program** provides Federal funding for high-priority conservation projects impacting endangered, threatened and at-risk species across Pennsylvania.

The Fish and Boat Commission also supports a **Water Trail Brochure Program**. The program encourages and promotes water trails by creating brochures that delineate water trail locations and access points for any interested water trail group. These groups must provide a map of the water trail and content for the brochure. The Fish and Boat Commission provides in-kind design and layout services as well as reproduction services, which are available for a nominal fee.

Federal Funding

The **Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**[6] funds numerous transportation programs to improve the nation's transportation infrastructure, enhance economic growth and protect the environment. A portion of Pennsylvania's SAFETEA-LU funds, administered through **PENNDOT**, go to greenway projects with ties to transportation, historic preservation, bicycle/pedestrian improvements and/or environmental quality.

The **Farmland Protection Program**[7] provides funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, the United States Department of Agriculture joins with State, tribal or local governments to acquire conservation easements or other interests from landowners.

The **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program**[8] from 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.

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[5] http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Fish_Boat/grants.htm (accessed 5/9/06)
[6] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/ (accessed 5/8/06)
[7] http://www.info.usda.gov/nrcs/fpcp/fpp.htm (accessed 5/8/06)
[8] http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/rtca/ContactUs/cu_apply.html (accessed 5/8/06)

The **Wetlands Reserve Program**[9] is a voluntary program in which the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts and providing the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property.

The **Kodak American Greenways Awards Program**[10] provides grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout the United States.

Bond referendums have been successfully placed on local ballots throughout the United States to support greenway development. Extensive informational campaigns greatly enhance the success rate of referendum votes because of increased public and voter support.[11]

Land donations from private parties, whether fee simple or in the form of easements, supply municipalities with usable land for little to no expense and offer the landowner tax incentives.

Charitable organizations such as land trusts or foundations can provide funds to municipalities or non-profit organizations to acquire land and/or develop trails.

[9] http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/ (accessed 5/8/06)
[10] http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2372
[11] http://www.pagreenways.org/funding-local.htm