

## Evaluate the Corridors

---

The next step in the process was to evaluate the corridors so open space and greenway planning efforts can be focused on areas that meet the characteristics of a successful greenway, have the level of support needed to advance the project from planning to implementation, and require more immediate protection and/or attention. This process consisted of ranking each greenway with regard to three components—rating factors, potential threats, and the number of interest groups. All 31 corridors were reviewed by LVPC staff and assigned values for each component, resulting in an overall score. Although parts of this process were subjective, efforts were made to assign values as accurately as possible. A draft of the completed evaluation was presented to the Study Advisory Committee (Committee) at the October 2005 meeting. Comments and suggestions of the Committee were incorporated into the evaluation and priority corridors became evident.

### **Rating Factors**

A list of rating factors was developed as the first component in evaluating the corridors. The following 15 factors are characteristic and/or influence the creation of successful greenways:

1. Identified as a Major Greenway Corridor by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
2. Designated as a National Heritage Corridor by the National Park Service
3. Connects county, state or national parks or recreation areas
4. Connects with existing trails
5. Connects municipal parks or recreation areas
6. Provides long distance recreation opportunities, e.g. hiking, biking, canoeing
7. Identified as a blueway (as defined on page 6 of this document)
8. Designated as a Pennsylvania Scenic Byway by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
9. Identified as an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society
10. Provides a natural corridor/connector for wildlife, e.g., contiguous woodlands, wetlands or waterways
11. Contains or has the potential for multiple access points
12. Connects to a populated area, i.e. city or borough
13. Contains or connects historic resources
14. Identified in *A Natural Areas Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, Pennsylvania* by The Nature Conservancy
15. Contains a stream with a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection rating of Exceptional Value, High Quality or Cold Water Fishes

Based on the overall importance of the factor and its contributions to a greenway, each rating factor listed above was assigned a weight value of 1 (low), 2 (medium), or 3 (high). All 31 corridors were evaluated with regard to each of these factors based on whether the condition was present in the corridor or

the extent of the factor in the creation of that greenway. The rating factor weights were totaled for each greenway and ranking points were assigned based on the following category breaks:

Rating Factor Total Value	Ranking Points Assigned
≥ 25	9
19 - 24	7
13 - 18	5
7 - 12	3
≤ 6	1

### **Potential Threats**

The second component involved estimating the pressure of potential threats on the corridor. Each corridor was evaluated with regard to potential threats with a qualitative value of 1 (low), 3 (medium), or 5 (high). Potential threat factors included in the analysis were:

- Encroaching development and subdivisions
- Proximity to populated areas
- Availability of public water and/or sewer
- Development potential and history

### **Interest Groups**

The third component in the corridor evaluation was tallying the number of interest groups for each greenway. The following interest groups were considered:

- Federal agencies, e.g., National Park Service
- State agencies, e.g., PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Counties
- Municipalities
- Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
- Conservation organizations, e.g., Wildlands Conservancy, Natural Lands Trust, Heritage Conservancy
- Stream conservancies, e.g., Bushkill Conservancy
- Other, e.g., Delaware River Basin Commission, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon PA, etc.

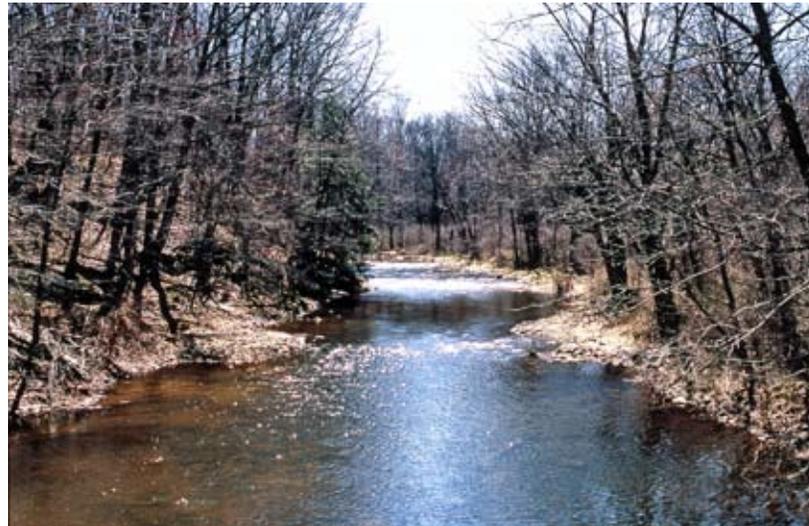
Ranking points were assigned based on the following category breaks:

Number of Interest Groups	Ranking Points Assigned
7 or more	4
5 to 6	3
3 to 4	2
1 to 2	1
0	0

### **Priority Corridors**

After the above three reviews were completed, the ranking points assigned for each component were added together for a grand total for each corridor. The results, combined with input from the Committee, revealed nine priority corridors in the Lehigh Valley greenway network (Map 14, in the pocket at the end of this document).

1. Bushkill Creek Corridor
2. Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge
3. Delaware River
4. Lehigh River
5. Greater Minsi Lake Corridor
6. Jordan Creek
7. Monocacy Creek
8. Pennsylvania Highlands
9. Little Lehigh Creek



Bushkill Creek Corridor

The assignment of priority to a greenway corridor serves to focus implementation and land acquisition efforts and assure the most sensitive and desired resources are emphasized and given prompt attention. Five of the nine priority greenways were selected for early implementation based on detailed planning studies that have either been completed or are underway, high natural resource conservation values, and/or a high level of interest at the county or municipal level. Initial efforts should focus on acquisition projects along the following corridors:

1. Bushkill Creek Corridor
2. Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge
3. Greater Minsi Lake Corridor
4. Jordan Creek
5. Pennsylvania Highlands

## Recommend Goals and Actions

---

The Lehigh Valley greenways network consists of the highest priority natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic resources identified in Lehigh and Northampton counties. Their promotion, preservation and appropriate use require ongoing support, management and funding. Counties, municipalities, residents and other stakeholders will need to integrate their roles and coordinate their efforts to bring an interconnected greenway network into existence.

Permanently protecting environmentally sensitive, culturally significant and/or historically important lands from undesirable development is the ultimate goal of this plan. Since it is neither practical nor desirable to purchase every acre of important land throughout Lehigh and Northampton counties, it is necessary for stakeholders to manage and protect lands in the short term through regulation and planning. Both counties and every municipality should look towards regulatory measures as a means of protecting their natural resources until acquisition can occur, specifically:

- Update and improve comprehensive plans, zoning, natural resource protection ordinances and review procedures to address the effects of development on and protection of significant resources.
- Prepare and 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.
- Create Environmental Advisory Councils for the review of zoning and rezoning proposals, subdivision and site plans, and similar projects for their impact on the environment.

The Implementation Strategy section of this plan provides information on the status of municipal natural resource protection ordinances and offers a range of land conservation techniques that can be used to conserve land from absolute to minimal protection. Counties and municipalities are strongly encouraged to utilize this plan to identify what tools are available and determine the appropriate action to take for success in their communities. The following lists and tables provide specific goals and actions to which the various stakeholders (key stakeholders are in parentheses following the action) can work towards.

### **Recommended Actions for the Entire Greenways Network**

**GOAL: The protection and acquisition of high priority natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic lands.**

- Provide adequate, long term financing for greenways, recreation, open space preservation, and farmland preservation. (county, municipality)
- Expand and improve staff capabilities to facilitate land acquisition. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups)
- Coordinate county and municipal efforts with local land trusts, conservancies, school districts and the private sector to establish greenway connections through acquisitions and easements. (Lehigh Valley Greenways Partnership, county, municipality, local conservation groups, school districts, colleges and universities, local business community, LVPC)
- Coordinate the planning and development of the greenways network with transportation, economic development, tourism, recreation and open space priorities in the region. (state, county, municipality, LVPC)
- Foster the education of elected officials and the general public on the benefits of greenways to the environmental, economic and cultural health of a community. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups, school districts, LVPC)
- Advocate conservation design techniques to protect natural resources and require developers to include open space or recreation land (or fee in lieu) as part of all new residential and commercial development proposals. (county, municipality, developers, landowners)

### **Recommended Actions for Conservation Greenways**

**GOAL: The creation of a regional network of interconnected corridors that preserves high priority natural resource areas and provides critical habitat connections.**

- Maintain a GIS database that provides current information about natural resources and recommended resource protection measures. Assist local governments in the identification and mapping of existing natural resources. (county, municipality, local conservation groups, LVPC)
- Establish a municipally based program to purchase or accept donations of land for natural resource protection and passive limited recreation in and along high priority natural resource areas. (municipality)
- Encourage public and private landowners to place conservation easements on portions of their property that fall within designated natural resource protection areas. Promote the use of best management

- practices in forestry, stewardship and lawn care activities in and along these areas. (county, municipality, local conservation groups, school districts, landowners, developers, concerned citizens)
- Limit development in areas designated for natural resources protection in the Comprehensive Plan or in habitat areas identified in *A Natural Areas Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, Pennsylvania*. (county, municipality, local conservation groups, developers, landowners)
  - Protect rivers and streams and natural floodplains by preserving open spaces along riparian corridors. Install and restore riparian buffer widths of 100 feet along rivers and major streams and 50 feet along all other water bodies where feasible to undertake such measures. Utilize a variety of native vegetation in all buffers. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups, landowners, developers, concerned citizens)
  - Protect the remaining wetland habitat areas in the Lehigh Valley by preserving 100% permanent open space in all wetlands. Manage wetlands on publicly owned land to maintain and enhance their environmental, scenic and educational values. Improve and update existing wetland inventories. (county, municipality, local conservation groups, developers, landowners, LVPC)

### **Recommended Actions for Cultural/Recreational Greenways**

**GOAL: The creation of a regional network of greenways that provides an array of recreational opportunities and access to existing parks/outdoor recreation areas, open space, and areas with cultural/historical significance.**

- Adopt separate recreation, greenway and open space plans with specific recommendations for acquisition and improvements to protect significant resources. (state, county, municipality)
- Utilize cultural/recreational greenways to provide local, close-to-home/work recreation opportunities. Promote the development of new recreation facilities at strategic locations throughout the greenway network. (county, municipality, LVPC)
- Utilize cultural/recreational greenways to meet the recommended National Recreation and Park Association acreage requirements of 10 acres per 1,000 population of recreation space in each municipality and county. (county, municipality)
- Develop a promotional brochure of active and passive cultural/recreational attractions to foster interest in and provide information about the many opportunities available. (convention and visitors bureau, LVPC)
- Protect and promote rivers and streams as a source of numerous recreational benefits to residents and visitors of the Lehigh Valley. Provide safe and easily accessible public access points along the Lehigh and Delaware rivers that encourage recreational use. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups, landowners, LVPC)

- Protect and utilize floodplains and riparian buffers to provide contiguous and substantial trail mileage linking and adjacent to existing recreation areas. (county, municipality, local conservation groups, developers, landowners)
- Encourage dialogue with rail and utility companies on the use and/or acquisition of existing or abandoned right-of ways for trail development. Prioritize existing and abandoned rail corridors for their potential trail use and conduct feasibility studies for priority corridors. Complete a comprehensive bi-county inventory of existing and proposed utility corridors. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups, LVPC)
- Work with PennDOT and local road departments to include bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities when road improvements are planned. Incorporate trails and greenways into the design of proposed roadways where appropriate. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups)
- Encourage historic preservation planning and adopt historic district regulations pursuant to the Pennsylvania Historic District Act (Act 167). Develop trails for historic interpretation and education. Update the LVPC National Register of Historic Places inventory yearly. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups, LVPC)

### **Recommended Actions for Scenic Greenways**

**GOAL: The protection and acquisition of high priority natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic lands to provide visual connections across the landscape for residents and visitors to enjoy.**

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, large contiguous clusters of open space and farmland in areas that have not been substantially urbanized. (county, municipality, local conservation groups, landowners)
- Reduce impacts of urban sprawl in rural communities to retain the rural character of the Lehigh Valley. Where feasible utilize greenways to provide buffers between non-compatible land uses. (county, municipality)
- Update slope protection ordinances to make them more protective. (municipality)
- Protect forested slopes through acquisition and woodland preservation ordinances to maintain large stands of interior woodlands along ridges. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups)
- Preserve scenic historic and transportation corridors. (state, county, municipality, local conservation groups)
- Promote scenic resources through an interconnected network of designated scenic routes and other roadways. Utilize appropriate signage and promotional brochures to educate and interest residents and visitors of the Lehigh Valley. (state, county, municipality, convention and visitors bureau, LVPC)

## **Recommended Actions for Priority Greenways**

The *Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan* identifies a network of 31 greenway corridors throughout Lehigh and Northampton counties (Map 14, in the pocket at the end of this document). Based on input from the Study Advisory Committee, LVPC staff review, and the results of a priority ranking system specifically developed for this plan, nine priority greenways and five Early Implementation Greenways were selected in the network. This plan provides recommended actions for each of the nine priority greenways that build upon the studies and suggestions of the various planning partners and are intended for enactment by the key stakeholders (counties and municipalities through which the priority greenway is located) and the project partners listed. Additionally, this plan emphasizes the actions listed for each of the five early implementation greenways as they offer the most opportunities for advancement of implementation projects. The LVPC will continue to support the stakeholders and partners in the realization of their projects along all identified greenways as they relate to the goals and recommendations of this plan and the *Comprehensive Plan The Lehigh Valley...2030*.

*Note: Assessing the number, size and location of protected lands along the corridors is important for achieving the goals set forth in this plan. Tables providing data on the status of land protection along each priority corridor are provided. Each table provides the assumptions used to calculate the data presented. Protected land is land that is in public ownership and utilized as parkland, other outdoor recreation land, open space and/or agriculture. Privately owned land that is utilized as open space and is under conservation easement, agricultural easement or deed restrictions is also considered protected. The remaining parcels data provided in the tables below gives a benchmark to work from in future land protection strategies. The numbers reflect those parcels that are along the priority greenway corridor but are not currently protected via the methods listed above. The majority of protected lands in the Lehigh Valley are publicly owned and located along or within the priority greenways. However, a quick look at the maps in this plan reveals that there is a long way to go to meet the ultimate goal of permanently protecting every acre of unprotected land from undesirable development.*

### **Early Implementation Greenways**

#### **Recommended Actions for the Bushkill Creek Corridor**

**GOAL: The creation of contiguous multi-use and conservation greenways within the Bushkill Creek Corridor through the protection and acquisition of high priority natural, recreational and culturally significant lands.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Bushkill Creek Corridor</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>4,820</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:	Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:			
Total Protected	697	(14%)	250 or more acres	1
Parks and Open Space	630	(13%)	100 - 249 acres	6
Publicly Owned	628	(13%)	50 - 99 acres	29
Privately Owned	2	(<1%)	49 acres or less	1,706
Agricultural Easements	67	(1%)		
Note: Data was calculated using GIS and was based on a 1,000-ft. corridor width.				

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted within the Bushkill Creek Corridor. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Extend the Plainfield Township Recreation Trail north of Route 512 to connect with the Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Greenway (see map on page 70).
  - Establish a multi-use greenway along the Little Bushkill and Bushkill creeks to connect the Gall Farm to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center (see map on page 70).
  - Continue to work with the various planning partners to establish a multi-use trail on the PPL Utility ROW connecting Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center to the Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Greenway.
  - Connect the Palmer Township trail system along the Bushkill Creek to the Plainfield Township Recreation Trail through the Boroughs of Tatamy and Stockertown.
  - Complete cultural/recreational greenways linking the Bushkill Creek Corridor trail system to existing recreational resources in the City of Easton. Support brownfield redevelopment proposals within the corridor to enhance recreation, tourism and downtown revitalization projects, e.g., Bushkill Creek Corridor Enhancement.
- Support wildlife habitat protection and connectivity by creating wooded conservation greenways along the upper reaches of the Bushkill Creek, Sober’s Run, and all tributaries. Protect streams and natural floodplains of the Bushkill Creek Corridor by restoring riparian buffer widths of 100 feet along the main stem and 50 feet along all tributaries where feasible to undertake such measures. Utilize a variety of native vegetation in all buffers.
- Develop tools and programs to implement the goals and recommendations of this plan and the *Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan* commissioned by the Two Rivers Area Council of Governments.

Additional Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Bushkill Stream Conservancy — *Two Rivers Area Greenway Plan*

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor  
 Graver Arboretum of Muhlenberg College  
 Heritage Conservancy  
 Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center  
 Jacobsburg Historical Society  
 Natural Lands Trust  
 PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

PA Department of Environmental Protection  
 PA Fish and Boat Commission  
 PA Game Commission  
 Trout Unlimited, Forks of the Delaware  
 Two Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Wildlands Conservancy

**Recommended Actions for the Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Greenway**

**GOAL: The protection and acquisition of high priority natural resource lands along the Kittatinny Ridge.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>21,204</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:		Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:		
Total Protected	11,169	(53%)	250 or more acres	3
Parks and Open Space	11,160	(53%)	100 - 249 acres	18
Publicly Owned	11,150	(53%)	50 - 99 acres	19
Privately Owned	10	(<1%)	49 acres or less	1,132
Agricultural Easements	9	(<1%)		
Note: Data was calculated using GIS. The Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Greenway boundary was defined using 2005 aerial photography as contiguous forested tracts, excluding developed areas.				

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted along the Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Greenway. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Establish a contiguous multi-use greenway to connect the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to the PA State Game Lands No. 168 beginning west of Route 33 (see map on page 69). Coordinate the efforts of Northampton County, local conservation groups, and the PA Game Commission.
  - Establish multi-use and conservation greenway connections between the Kittatinny Ridge and the Bushkill Creek Corridor in and around the headwaters of Bushkill Creek, Sober’s Run and their tributaries. Acquire remaining unprotected lands within the Rismiller Woods and Knechts Pools natural areas (see Map 8 on page 34).
  - Establish conservation greenway connectivity between the Kittatinny Ridge and the Jordan Creek Corridor. Encourage the PA Game Commission to acquire remaining unprotected lands in and around the headwaters of Jordan Creek and its tributaries.
  - Lehigh County should continue to work with the Leaser Lake Heritage Foundation and Wildlands Conservancy to acquire and protect the remaining high priority lands north of Leaser Lake connecting to State Game Lands No. 106 and 217 (see map on page 69).
- Initiate dialogue and forge partnerships with the various planning partners to protect and promote the recreational resources along the Kittatinny Ridge (i.e., Appalachian Trail, status as an Important Bird

- Area, PA State Game Lands, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge). Inform and educate the general public about the significance of these recreational opportunities.
- Implement the goals and recommendations of this plan and the *Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project* led by Audubon Pennsylvania.

Additional Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Audubon PA — *Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project*

Appalachian Mountain Club (Lehigh Valley Group)  
 Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
 Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor  
 Natural Lands Trust  
 PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

PA Environmental Council  
 PA Game Commission  
 The Nature Conservancy of PA  
 Wildlands Conservancy  
 Lehigh Gap Nature Center

**Recommended Actions for the Greater Minsi Lake Corridor**

**GOAL: The creation of a multi-use greenway within the Greater Minsi Lake Corridor through the acquisition of unprotected land and/or conservation easements on the remaining high priority natural resource lands to connect it with existing protected areas.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Greater Minsi Lake Corridor</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>3,342</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:	Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:			
Total Protected	962	(29%)	250 or more acres	0
Parks and Open Space	962	(29%)	100 - 249 acres	6
Publicly Owned	860	(26%)	50 - 99 acres	11
Privately Owned	102	(3%)	49 acres or less	264
Agricultural Easements	0	(0%)		
Note: Data was calculated using GIS. The Greater Minsi Lake Corridor boundary was defined by Northampton County and based on the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission's current parks data.				

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted in the Greater Minsi Lake Corridor. Emphasize the following project areas:

- Support Northampton County and The Nature Conservancy’s efforts to acquire the additional lands necessary to create a contiguous corridor of protected acreage from the node at Minsi Lake to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (see map on page 74).
  - Explore the possibility of creating a multi-use trail from Minsi Lake to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.
  - Expand current Northampton County land holdings at the Bear Swamp Archery Complex (see map on page 74).
- Enhance recreation opportunities at Minsi Lake and Bear Swamp. Promote awareness with appropriate signage directing people to the recreation area.
  - Limit development in areas designated for natural resources protection in the Comprehensive Plan or in habitat areas identified in *A Natural Areas Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Counties, Pennsylvania* throughout the Greater Minsi Lake Corridor (see Map 8 on page 34).

Additional Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Northampton County

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor  
 Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area  
 National Park Service  
 William Penn Foundation

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 PA Fish and Boat Commission  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 Wildlands Conservancy

**Recommended Actions for the Jordan Creek Greenway**

**GOAL: The creation of a multi-use greenway along the Jordan Creek through the acquisition of unprotected land and/or conservation easements on the remaining high priority natural, recreational and cultural resource lands to connect it with existing protected areas.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Jordan Creek</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>4,309</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:	Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:			
Total Protected	1,221	(28%)	250 or more acres	1
Parks and Open Space	1,111	(26%)	100 - 249 acres	7
Publicly Owned	1,088	(25%)	50 - 99 acres	21
Privately Owned	23	(<1%)	49 acres or less	1,623
Agricultural Easements	110	(3%)		

Note: Data was calculated using GIS and was based on a 1,000-ft. corridor width.

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted along the Jordan Creek Greenway. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Support Wildlands Conservancy’s work to complete the *Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Feasibility Study* leading to the development of a 20-mile trail linking significant recreational, natural and cultural resources providing recreational opportunities and protection to the Jordan Creek.
  - The City of Allentown and Whitehall Township should acquire additional high priority natural resources lands for open space and passive recreation along the creek between Jordan Meadows (between Jordan Creek and the American Parkway) and Jordan Park (along the Jordan Creek from 7th/MacArthur Road north).
  - Lehigh County should continue to work with South Whitehall Township to extend the Jordan Creek Parkway (at Mauch Chunk Road) to Covered Bridge Park (Covered Bridge Lane and Wehr Mill Road).
  - Explore the possibility of acquiring lands or conservation easements along the greenway from Covered Bridge Park to the Trexler Nature Preserve (see map on page 78) for recreational and conservation use. Encourage landowners to restore natural riparian buffers of 100 feet along the creek.
  - Establish a conservation greenway along the upper reaches of the creek creating a wooded wildlife corridor between State Game Lands No. 205 (Lowhill Township) and No. 217 (Heidelberg Township). Restore riparian buffer widths of 100 feet along the main stem and 50 feet along all tributaries where feasible to undertake such measures. Utilize a variety of native vegetation in all buffers.
- Encourage implementation of the goals and recommendations of this plan and the *Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Feasibility Study* when complete.

Local Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Wildlands Conservancy — *Jordan Creek Greenway/Trail Feasibility Study* (underway)

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 PA Game Commission  
 PA Historical and Museum Commission

Lehigh Valley Zoo  
 Lehigh Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Recommended Actions for the Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway**

**GOAL: The protection and acquisition of high priority natural, recreational, cultural, historical, and scenic lands within the Lehigh Valley section of the Pennsylvania Highlands Region.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Pennsylvania Highlands</b>			
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>10,855</b>		
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:	Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:		
Total Protected	1,149	(11%)	250 or more acres 2
Parks and Open Space	948	(9%)	100 - 249 acres 15
Publicly Owned	98	(<1%)	50 - 99 acres 25
Privately Owned	850	(8%)	49 acres or less 1,309
Agricultural Easements	201	(2%)	
Note: Data was calculated using GIS. The Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway (Conservation Type) boundary was defined using 2005 aerial photography as contiguous forested tracts, excluding developed areas.			

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted within the Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Lehigh County should continue to work with the City of Allentown, Salisbury Township and Wildlands Conservancy to acquire and protect the remaining high priority lands surrounding the Lehigh Uplands Preserve along Constitution Drive( see map on page 87).
  - Support Wildlands Conservancy’s efforts to acquire remaining unprotected lands adjacent to South Mountain Preserve/Robert Rodale Reserve (see map on page 87). Implement the goals and objectives of the *South Mountain Preserve Conservation, Greenways, and Trails Plan*.
  - Continue to work with the various planning partners to establish a large contiguous protected area surrounding Hexenkopf Rock/Hexenkopf Slopes and the Cooks Creek headwaters/Springtown Marsh (see Map 8 on page 34).
  - Explore the possibility of acquiring lands or conservation easements along the tributaries of the Hosensack Creek within the Hosensack Marsh Natural Area (see Map 8 on page 34). Encourage landowners to restore natural riparian buffers of 100 feet along the creek and its tributaries.
  - Engage Lower Macungie Township to encourage conservation efforts along Macungie Mountain (between Mountain Road and Sweetwood Drive).
- Initiate dialogue and forge partnerships with the various planning partners to create and promote the recreational resources throughout the Lehigh Valley Highlands (i.e. Delaware River greenway, Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary, Saucon Park, South Mountain Park, South Mountain Big Rock Park). Inform the general public about these recreational opportunities.
- Educate government officials, landowners and citizens about the Pennsylvania Highlands. Implement the goals and recommendations of this plan and the *Lehigh Valley Highlands Project* (when complete).

Local Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Wildlands Conservancy — *Lehigh Valley Highlands Project* (underway)

Appalachian Mountain Club  
Cooks Creek Watershed Association  
Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission  
Heritage Conservancy  
Highlands Coalition  
Lehigh University

Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary  
Natural Lands Trust  
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
PA Game Commission  
US Forest Service

**Recommended Actions for the Delaware River Greenway**

**GOAL: The preservation and promotion of the existing multi-use greenway along the Delaware River through the protection and acquisition of high priority natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic lands.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Delaware River</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>2,148</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:			Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:	
Total Protected	362	(17%)	250 or more acres	3
Parks and Open Space	362	(17%)	100 - 249 acres	7
Publicly Owned	244	(11%)	50 - 99 acres	11
Privately Owned	118	(5%)	49 acres or less	1,530
Agricultural Easements	0	(0%)		

Note: Data was calculated using GIS and was based on a 500-ft. corridor width (Pennsylvania side only).

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted along the Delaware River. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Enhance recreation opportunities and public river access at Foul Rift (see Map 8 on page 34) and establish connections with the existing Tekening Hiking Trails within the PPL Martins Creek Environmental Preserve (see map on page 72).
  - Expand current Northampton County land holdings at Mount Jack along the Delaware River for the creation of a riverfront park as the opportunity arises (see map on page 72).
  - Northampton County should continue to acquire properties along the Delaware River and Canal as they become available.

- Encourage partnerships between the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Northampton County and municipalities to provide additional public access to the Canal and towpath.
- Continue efforts to restore the canal and towpath through Delaware Canal State Park.
- Preserve and reclaim natural floodplains to improve flood hazard mitigation, water quality protection, and provide habitat, open space and recreational opportunities along the Delaware River.
- Preserve and enhance the scenic qualities of the Delaware River. Implement the goals and objectives of the LVPC *Delaware River Scenic Drive Plan* and the Heritage Conservancy publication, *Shaping the D&L Drive*.

Additional Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Delaware River Greenway Partnership — *Delaware River Water Trail Plan*

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor  
 Delaware Canal State Park  
 Delaware River Basin Commission  
 Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

National Park Service  
 PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 PA Department of Environmental Protection  
 PA Fish and Boat Commission

**Recommended Actions for the Lehigh River Greenway**

**GOAL: The preservation and promotion of the existing multi-use greenway along the Lehigh River through the protection and acquisition of high priority natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic lands.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Lehigh River</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>4,369</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:		Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:		
Total Protected	833 (19%)	250 or more acres	2	
Parks and Open Space	819 (19%)	100 - 249 acres	7	
Publicly Owned	801 (18%)	50 - 99 acres	13	
Privately Owned	18 (<1%)	49 acres or less	2,792	
Agricultural Easements	14 (<1%)			
Note: Data was calculated using GIS and was based on a 1,000-ft. corridor width.				

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted along the Lehigh River. Emphasize the following project areas:

- Lehigh County should continue to work with the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission to acquire the Conrail right-of-way along the western side of the river for use as the D&L Trail as identified in the *Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor and State Heritage Park Management Action Plan*.
  - Northampton County should continue to acquire properties along the Lehigh River and Canal as they become available. Encourage the completion of the D&L Trail, using a combination of trails in existing parks, the canal tow path, and abandoned railroad right-of-way.
  - Establish a safe pedestrian connection between the Nor-Bath Trail (East Allen Township) and the D&L Trail at Canal Street Park in the Borough of Northampton.
  - Encourage partnerships between the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Counties and municipalities to provide additional public access to the Canal and towpath.
- Preserve and reclaim natural floodplains to improve flood hazard mitigation, water quality protection, and provide habitat, open space and recreational opportunities along the Lehigh River.
  - Preserve and enhance the scenic qualities of the Lehigh River. Encourage the creation of a scenic drive along the D&L Drive. Implement the goals and objectives of the Heritage Conservancy publication, *Shaping the D&L Drive*.
  - Continue to support and implement the recommendations outlined in the *Lehigh River Watershed Conservation Management Plan*, by Wildlands Conservancy.

Additional Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Wildlands Conservancy — *Lehigh River Watershed Conservation Management Plan*

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor  
Heritage Conservancy  
National Park Service  
Natural Lands Trust

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
PA Department of Environmental Protection  
PA Fish and Boat Commission  
Lehigh Gap Nature Center

**Recommended Actions for the Little Lehigh Creek Greenway**

**GOAL: The preservation and continuation of the existing multi-use greenway and creation of a conservation greenway along the Little Lehigh Creek through the acquisition of unprotected land and/or conservation easements on the remaining high priority natural, recreational and cultural resource lands to connect it with existing protected areas.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Little Lehigh Creek</b>				
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>2,445</b>			
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:	Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:			
Total Protected	737	(30%)	250 or more acres	0
Parks and Open Space	675	(28%)	100 - 249 acres	4
Publicly Owned	585	(24%)	50 - 99 acres	12
Privately Owned	90	(4%)	49 acres or less	1,321
Agricultural Easements	62	(3%)		
Note: Data was calculated using GIS and was based on a 1,000-ft. corridor width.				

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted along the Little Lehigh Creek. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Extend the parkway along the Little Lehigh Creek, providing an array of active and passive recreational opportunities, from Salisbury Township into Lower Macungie Township (see map on page 81).
  - Encourage agricultural landowners along the creek to restore natural riparian buffers to protect and enhance the environmental health of the Little Lehigh Creek watershed. Establish a wooded corridor along the creek west of Route 100 into Berks County.
- Support the Little Lehigh Creek as a Class-A Wild Trout Stream highly valued for angling and other recreational activities.

Additional Planning Partners and Studies

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 PA Department of Environmental Protection

PA Fish and Boat Commission  
 Wildlands Conservancy

**Recommended Actions for the Monocacy Creek Greenway**

**GOAL: The preservation and continuation of the existing multi-use greenway and creation of a conservation greenway along the Monocacy Creek through the acquisition of unprotected land and/or conservation easements on the remaining high priority natural, recreational and cultural resource lands to connect it with existing protected areas.**

<b>Land Protection Summary: Monocacy Creek</b>			
<b>Total Greenway Area (acres):</b>	<b>2,167</b>		
Acreage Protected [acres (%)]:		Number of Remaining Parcels by Size:	
Total Protected	446 (21%)	250 or more acres	0
Parks and Open Space	184 (8%)	100 - 249 acres	4
Publicly Owned	184 (8%)	50 - 99 acres	16
Privately Owned	0 (0%)	49 acres or less	1,485
Agricultural Easements	262 (12%)		
Note: Data was calculated using GIS and was based on a 1,000-ft. corridor width.			

- Preserve, through acquisition or easement, the remaining high priority parcels not currently in public ownership or deed restricted along the Monocacy Creek greenway. Emphasize the following project areas:
  - Northampton County should revitalize efforts to create a Monocacy Creek parkway connecting Lower Nazareth Township’s Surrey Glen Park to the Monocacy Complex in the City of Bethlehem (see map on page 84).
- Support the Illick’s Mill Project’s goals and objectives for the Illick’s Mill Center for Environmental Education. Emphasize the following projects:
  - Protect and restore the physical and biological health of the Monocacy Creek by conducting a reassessment of the 100-year-floodplain, seeking better compliance with current regulations, and incorporating floodplains into a riparian buffer to ensure their protection.
  - Educate the community on local environmental preservation and protection. Encourage their involvement in hands-on restoration projects such as stream bank restoration, native planting, and clean-ups.
  - Promote the history of Illick’s Mill and the connection these facilities and structures have with the industrial heritage of the Lehigh Valley.
- Educate landowners and farmers in the headwaters of the Monocacy Creek on the geological significance of this waterway and encourage the protection of ground and surface water quality through proper stewardship. Support the Monocacy Creek Watershed Association’s efforts to educate and encourage landowners to use proper landscape maintenance and sustainable farming practices.
- Continue to support and implement the recommendations outlined in the *Monocacy Creek Rivers Conservation Management Plan*, by Wildlands Conservancy.

### Additional Planning Partners and Studies

LEAD AGENCY: Monocacy Creek Watershed Association

Illick's Mill Partnership for Environmental Education  
Monocacy Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
PA Department of Environmental Protection

PA Fish and Boat Commission  
Wildlands Conservancy

### Coordinate with Surrounding Counties

---

Connectivity is the defining characteristic that distinguishes greenways from isolated paths and pockets of open space. While individual parks, preserved lands, undisturbed natural areas and waterways are valuable resources in and of themselves, their conservation and recreation value is compounded when they are linked together.

In an effort to assure that the goals, objectives and recommendations of this Plan are coordinated with the plans and practices of surrounding counties, the greenways planning process included outreach to Monroe, Carbon and Schuylkill counties north of the Lehigh Valley; Bucks and Montgomery counties to the south; and Berks County to the west. Plans were reviewed and meetings arranged to assess coordination and consistency of potential greenway, recreation and open space development projects across county borders. Common values, objectives, and greenway and trail connections were considered in the development of this Plan.

The Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan supports continued cooperation and coordination with neighboring counties throughout implementation. A draft of this Plan was forwarded to representatives of the counties Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Monroe, Montgomery and Schuylkill counties for review and comment. Comments received on county connections to a regional greenway network were considered in the final draft and will continue to be used in future planning efforts to preserve and promote a greenway and open space network at regional and statewide levels.

Since August of 2001 members of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) staff have met on 19 occasions with the Lehigh Valley/Berks Greenways Task Force to discuss and coordinate greenways planning in eastern Pennsylvania. These meetings have engaged numerous organizations and representatives of counties in eastern and southeastern Pennsylvania. It is expected that these meetings and others will be initiated as needed in the future.

The LVPC staff has also coordinated its local planning efforts with representatives of the Pennsylvania Highlands Coalition and the Appalachian Mountain Club concerning preservation efforts in the Pennsylvania Highlands and with Audubon Pennsylvania and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy concerning the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) plays a key role in coordinating these efforts throughout their extent in Pennsylvania.