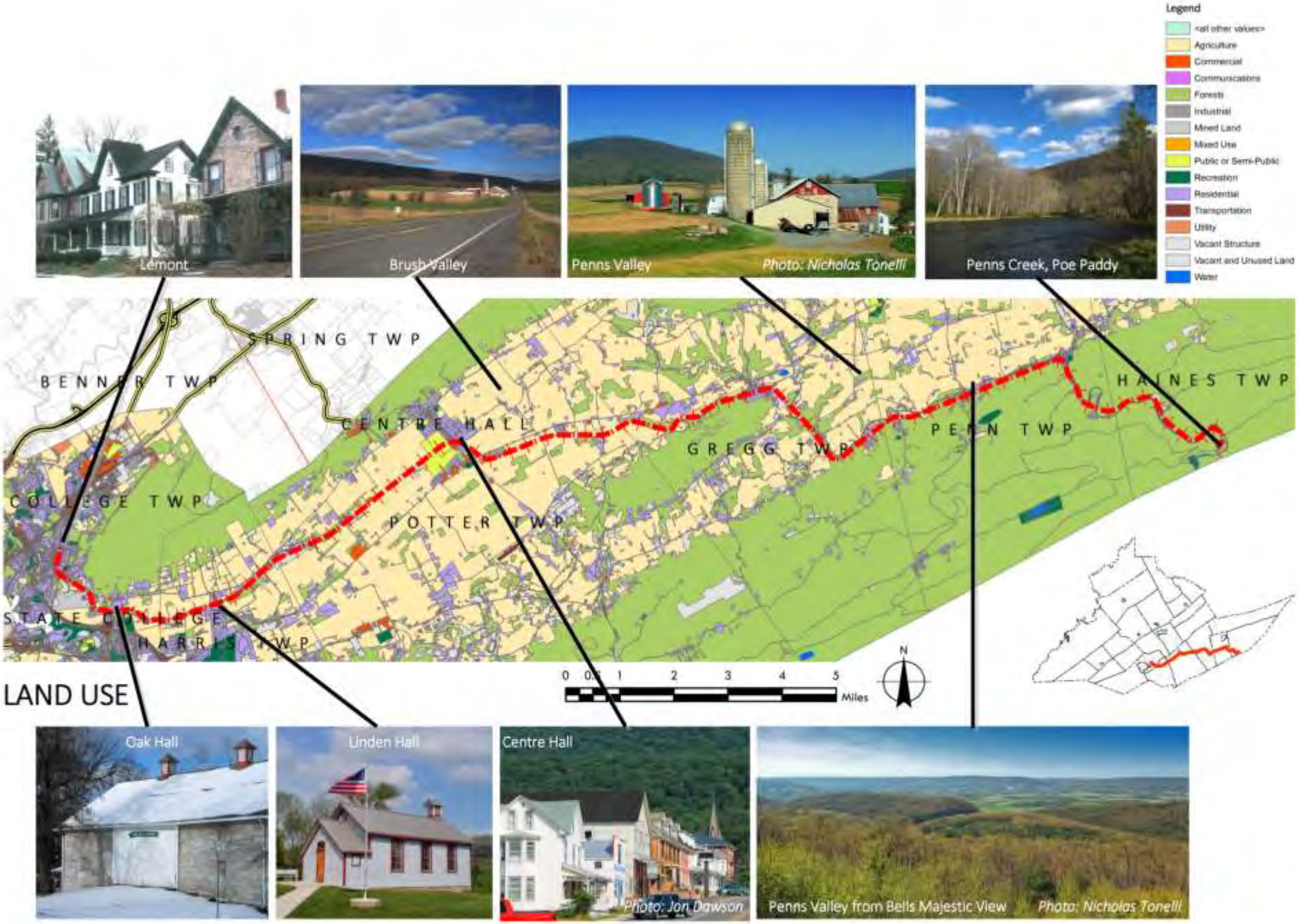
CHAPTER 2 PHYSICAL FEASIBILITY— what is the condition of the railbed now, and what are the opportunities and constraints to repurposing it as a rail trail?

Like the ingenuous footpaths Native Americans mapped out along the most dry level and direct route through the ridges and valleys centuries ago, the L&T's surveyors and engineers followed the lowlands near the center of the valley and the gaps through the mountains carved by the creek to avoid steep slopes, locating the railbed on the natural bench above the creek or creating a new bench for the railbed where none existed before to avoid wet areas and washouts from annual Spring freshets and the occasional 100 year flood or hurricane. For the most part, that strategy worked, explaining why much of the railbed remains intact today, more than a century after it was built. Nevertheless, the corridor is not without its issues. Many sections of the railbed are overgrown with small trees and impassable thickets of invasive shrubs, the stone ballast oftentimes hidden from view beneath verdant beds of grass and moss. Puddling occurs in places where culverts filled in after the railbed was abandoned. In some areas, the railbed has been altered, removed or already repurposed for driveways, fencerows and cropland, or more intensive uses, like the Penn Township sewer plant and the Grange Fair concessions area. Some lands are in ag preservation, which prohibits non-agricultural activities, including trails. The floor of both tunnels are littered with rock, calling into question the safety of their use by the general public. Most bridges lack decking and some are missing altogether. While some of these constraints can be worked around, others cannot. Nevertheless, much of the gravel ballast railbed, bridge and tunnel structures and drainage system remain viable candidates for repurposing as a rail trail. The first set of maps on the following pages describe key natural and manmade features along the entire corridor from the perspective of 1":12,500 feet. The second set of maps, zoomed in to 1":3,125 feet, identify opportunities and constraints to repurposing the railbed as a rail trail, dividing the corridor into 6 segments corresponding to historic stops along the former L&T. Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) maps identifying areas where rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals could be impacted are included in the Appendix. Two areas, the Sinking Creek Prairie west of Spring Mills and the Penns Creek Conservation/ Hardwood Areas in Bald Eagle State Forest east of Ingleby, will require further review by state agencies. The entire Penns/Brush valley region was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a Conservation Landscape, meaning a Section 106 review will be required before any publicly funded trail development occurs.


Legend
<all other values>
Agriculture
Commercial
Communications
Forests
Industrial
Mined Land
Mixed Use
Public or Semi-Public
Recreation
Residential
Transportation
Utility
Vacant Structure
Vacant and Unused Land
Water
Lemont
Brush Valley
Penns Valley
Photo: Nicholas Tonelli
Penns Creek, Poe Paddy
SPRING TWP
BENNER TWP
CENTRE HALL
GREGG TWP
PENN TWP
HAINES TWP
COLLEGE TWP
POTTER TWP
STATE COLLEGE
HARRIS TWP
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5
Miles
N
LAND USE
Oak Hall
Linden Hall
Centre Hall
Photo: Jon Dawson
Penns Valley from Bells Majestic View
Photo: Nicholas Tonelli

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION EASEMENTS

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's statewide Agricultural Easement Program was established in 1988 to protect productive farmlands from development through the use of agricultural easements. This Program was built on the *Agricultural Area Securities Law* (also known as *PA Act 43* of 1981) and was established PA Act 149 of 1988 and is administered by the State Department of Agriculture.

Limitations

Protecting farmlands through agricultural conservation easements limits public access due to concerns regarding food security and the fact that farms are privately owned businesses usually closed to the general public. As a result, each community should be proactive and seek to establish trails consistent with their adopted land use plan well in advance of farmland preservation efforts. A majority of farmland easements do not allow for additional uses or restrictions to be placed over the land once it is in place. Therefore, it is important to consider whether public access is desirable as early as possible. If public trails are not desired and inappropriate for the location, an ALPB administered program may be the best fit. If a public trail is desired or if it is uncertain but might be at some point, the Municipal Grants or Conservancy Grants Program is more appropriate

Boalsburg Road Hillside BDA (Exceptional Significance)
This small area is designated around a population of a rare species of serviceberry, *Amelanchire humilis.*
Threats and Stresses:
The serviceberry are at risk for damage or elimination by adjacent mining activities.
Recommendations:
Physical Disturbance of the substrate in the area where the plants grow should be avoided.

Sinking Creek Prairie BDA (Exceptional Significance)
A side-oats gramma grassland community that hosts a number of plant species of special concern in PA. Two rare butterflies have also been documented at the site.
Threats and Stresses: The re is general public understanding that the site is significant and access to the site is restricted. Invasive species could lead to a decline in native species.
Recommendations: Discourage invasive species, establish native plant buffers, educate the community.

Penns Creek Conservation Area LCA (Notable Significance)
The most intact natural landscape surrounding Penns Creek in Centre County, and habitat for several rare animal species. The area is used for recreation and is a first priority group "A" designee for the PA scenic Rivers Program.
Threats and Stresses: Major threats to water quality are development along the creek and logging on steep slopes in the gorge.
Recommendations: Manage lands and water quality to protect ecological systems and aquatic organisms

NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY

Linden Hall Park BDA (Exceptional Significance)
This site is a private park maintained by the Linden Hall Village Association. Within the park grows the only population of handsome sedge (*Carex Formosa)* known to exist in PA. Several clusters of Canada Lily *(Lilium canadense)* also grow here.
Threats and Stresses: Sedge and lily fairly secure from threats as park is private and Village Assoc. is aware of these plants.
Recommendations: When maintaining trails use caution to avoid damaging plants.

Penns Creek Hardwoods BDA (Exceptional Significance)
A unique forest community type, a seepage community, and habitat to three animal species of special concern in PA.
Threats and Stresses: The contiguity of the forest community has been disturbed by construction of many cabins, and mechanical removal of underbrush prevents forest regeneration.
Recommendations: Large scale removal of tree cover, particularly along strem bank should be avoided. Traffic through the tunnel at Poe Paddy should be restricted Nov.-March to avoid disturbance of bats that hibernate there.

Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, 2002

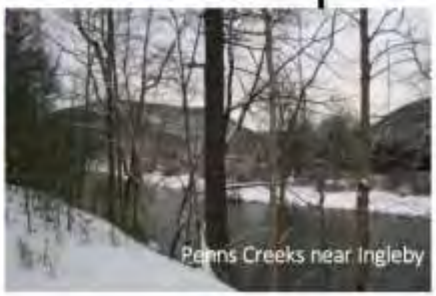
Mackeys Run at Bergenblick Farms

Confluence of Penns and Pine Creeks

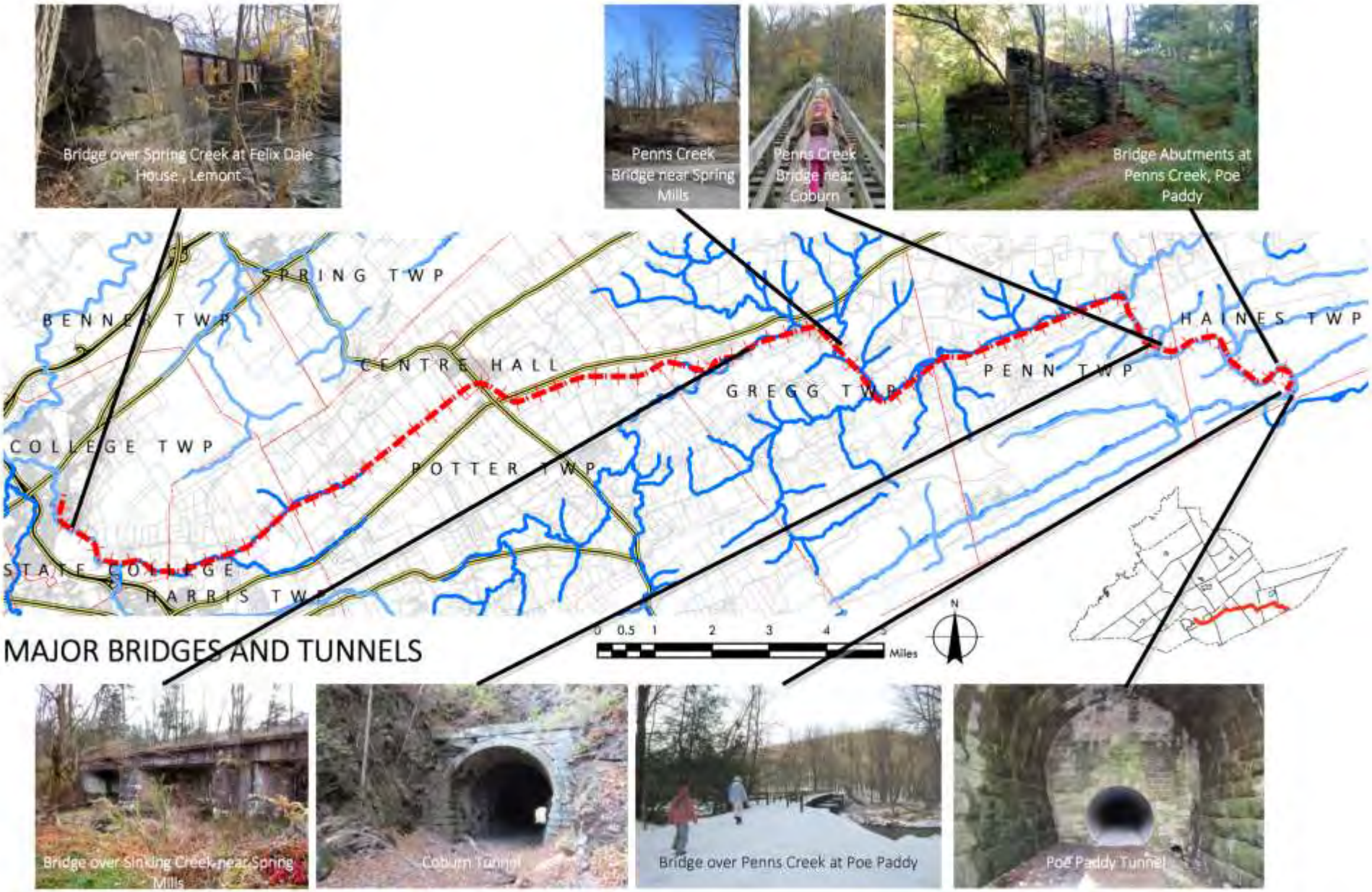
STREAMS, WETLANDS AND FLOOD PLAINS

Spring Creek at Felix Dale House, Lemont

Penns Creeks passing through Spring Mills


Penns Creeks near Ingleby

STREAM CROSSINGS

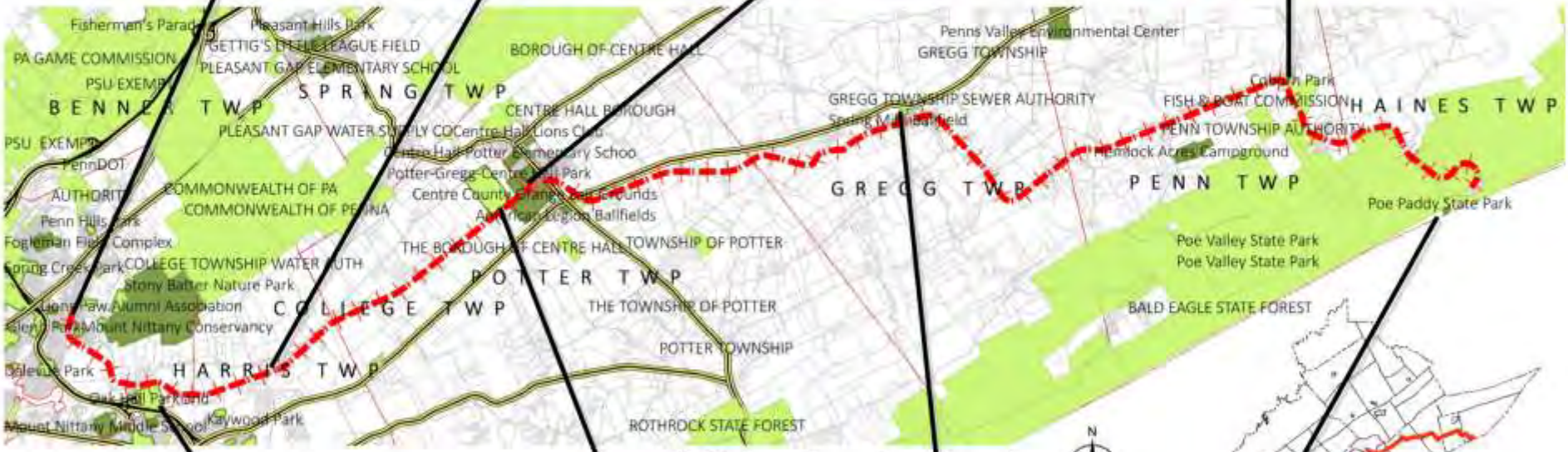

Bridge over Spring Creek at Felix Dale House , Lemont
Penns Creek Bridge near Spring Mills
Penns Creek Bridge near Coburn
Bridge Abutments at Penns Creek, Poe Paddy
SPRING TWP
BENNER TWP
CENTRE HALL
GREGG TWP
PENN TWP
HAINES TWP
COLLEGE TWP
POTTER TWP
STATE COLLEGE
HARRIS TWP
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
N
MAJOR BRIDGES AND TUNNELS
Bridge over Sinking Creek near Spring Mills
Coburn Tunnel
Bridge over Penns Creek at Poe Paddy
Poe Paddy Tunnel

Lemont Village Green

Linden Hall Park (private)

Centre County Grange, Centre Hall

Coburn Park



PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS

Oak Hall Regional Park

Spring Mills Ball Field

Poe Paddy State Park

John Thompson Grain Elevator in the Lemont Historic District

Leonard Rhone House, 1853. Rhone was instrumental in founding the Grange Fair.

The Grange Fair began in 1874 when Leonard Rhone urged his Progress Grange to join their sister subordinate Granges in having a pic-nik to introduce their neighbors to the benefits of membership in the Grange.

Site of the Village of Derby and the Post Office of Sojer

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Felix Dale House in Lemont, PA

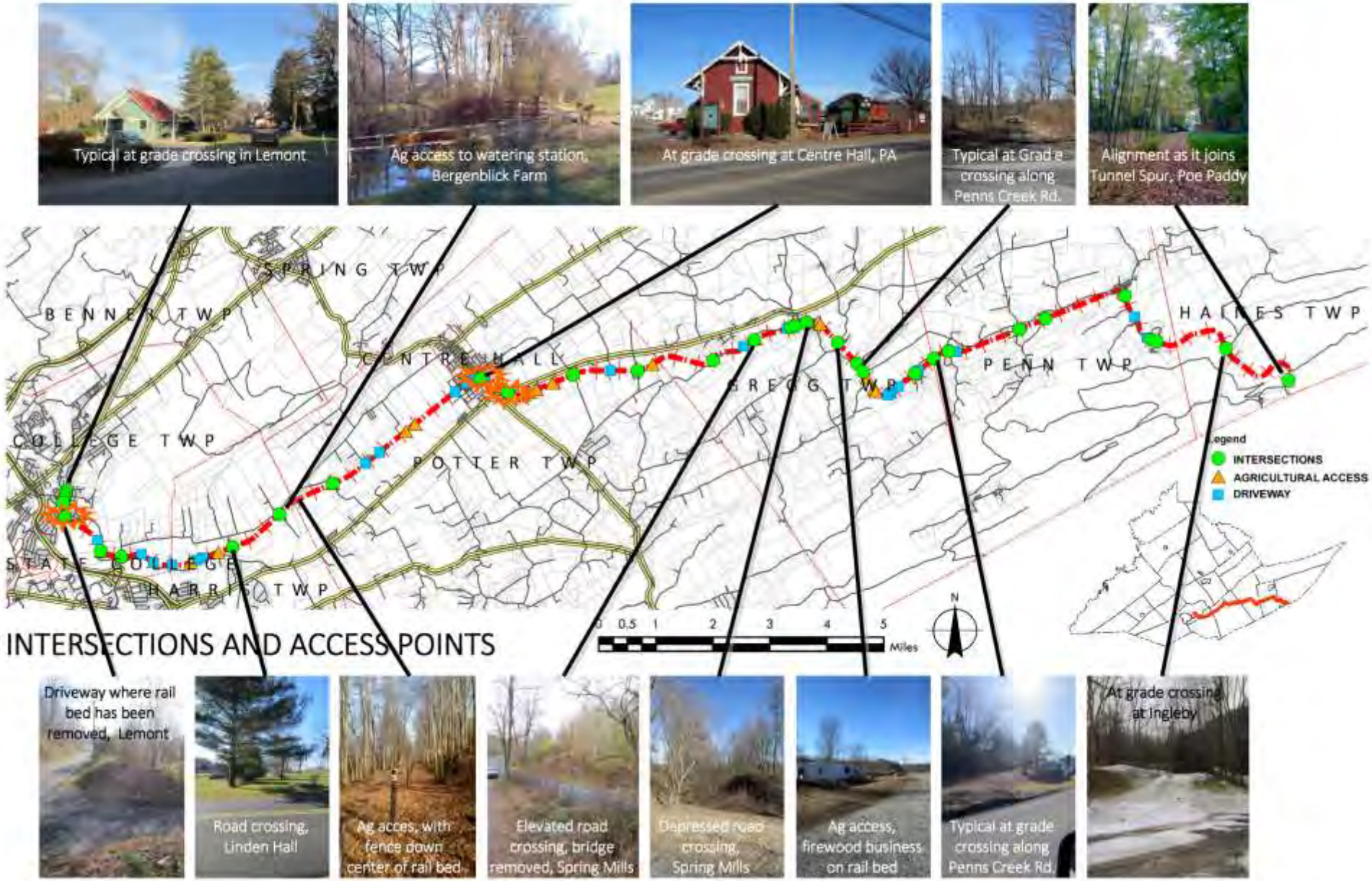
Oak Hall Historic District

Linden Hall Historic District

Penns Creek Feed Mill

Former Site of Poe Mills

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS


Typical at grade crossing in Lemont
Ag access to watering station, Bergenblick Farm
At grade crossing at Centre Hall, PA
Typical at Grade crossing along Penns Creek Rd.
Alignment as it joins Tunnel Spur, Poe Paddy
SPRING TWP
BENNER TWP
CENTRE HALL
GREGG TWP
PENN TWP
HAINES TWP
COLLEGE TWP
POTTER TWP
STATE COLLEGE
HARRIS TWP
Legend
INTERSECTIONS
AGRICULTURAL ACCESS
DRIVEWAY
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5
Miles
N
INTERSECTIONS AND ACCESS POINTS
Driveway where rail bed has been removed, Lemont
Road crossing, Linden Hall
Ag acces, with fence down center of rail bed
Elevated road crossing, bridge removed, Spring Mills
Depressed road crossing, Spring Mills
Ag access, firewood business on rail bed
Typical at grade crossing along Penns Creek Rd.
At grade crossing at Ingleby

TRAILS AND RECREATION CORRIDORS

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREAS

INITIATE INVESTIGATE INFORM INVITE
What is your vision for the abandoned L&T railbed?
LEMONT VILLAGE GREEN
COLLEGE TWP
STATE COLLEGE
Lemont
Oak Hall
albertinvernon architecture
IMAGINE IMPROVE INSPIRE

LEMONT STATION TO OAK HALL STATION

TOUR GUIDES Sue Smith, member of the Study Committee from the Lemont Village Association, and Michael Beck, owner, Café Lemont

OPPORTUNITIES Lemont is a bedroom community for Penn State, and like the University town, a very walkable and bike friendly place. L&T investor Moses Thompson's historic granary and coal shed are visible reminders of the L&T's prominent role in this community. The post office, located near the former railbed, functions as a gathering space for the village, with ample parking and plans for public restrooms that could serve as a trailhead. Several businesses in town, like Café Lemont, could provide trail related amenities to trail users. A connection to the trail in Slab Cabin Park would connect the trail and Lemont to the University. Oak Hall lies at the east end of this segment. Although cut in half when the 322 Bypass was built, much historic fabric remains in this hamlet within view of the railbed, including the first floor of a stone mill repurposed as a home for one of the country's foremost trout anglers, a tiny meticulously restored log house beside the millrace, and the Biddle Family's historic Oak Hall mansion with its elegant wrought iron filigree porch surrounded by pastured Champion Belgian draft horses. A connection to the Oak Hall Regional Park would be a plus for the trail. The park, designed to host regional softball tournaments, includes a perimeter loop trail for hikers and bikers. PennDOT is exploring ways to improve the Oak Hall interchange that could include bike lanes alongside the highway.

CONSTRAINTS A metal building sits on the railbed near Old Boalsburg Road. The railbed's owner has plans for additional development closer to the village that includes a sidewalk that could be used for the trail. The former rail crossing at old Boalsburg Road has poor visibility. A section of the elevated railbed on the property east of the crossing was removed to create a driveway. Although presently designated as PA Bike Route G and Penns Cave Ride, Old Boalsburg Road is narrow and winding, and heavily used by trucks hauling stone from the quarry, so not well suited as a "share the road" option. The bridge on the railbed west of the quarry is missing its deck, although the superstructure and foundations appear to be in good condition for light use as a rail trail. The entrance to the railbed through the quarry is posted with "no trespassing" signs, and it's not clear whether the railbed is intact through the quarry, which is very actively mined, including occasional blasting. Locals say the quarry will be donated to the community after the stone is exhausted in 10 to 20 years, but no one we spoke to could confirm this "rumor." Access to the Oak Hall Regional Park from the railbed would have to be through private property or along existing roads. A "ghost bike" memorial to a cyclist killed at the Oak Hall interchange is a grim reminder that these roads are not well suited to a share the road option.

INITIATE INVESTIGATE INFORM INVITE
What is your vision for the abandoned L&T railbed?
Gregg Station
Linden Hall
Oak Hall
POTTER TWP
HONEY BRANCH
AVA
IMAGINE IMPROVE INSPIRE
albertinvernon
architecture

OAK HALL TO GREGG STATION

TOUR GUIDE: Study Committee member and Harris Township Supervisor Denny Hameister, also a member of The Linden Hall Village Association.

OPPORTUNITIES: Playful Wizard of Oz sculptures occupy the meadow of the farm on the road to Linden Hall. The Linden Hall Village Association owns a 1,200 foot section of the railbed maintained as a private park for the village. Linden Hall was a regular stop on the L&T. Although the station is gone now, the old mill dam and former general store are scenic reminders of busier days captured in the Linden Hall Garden Club's book, *Sketches of Linden Hall.* The Linden Hall Lumber Company operated a tramline between Bear Meadows and a sawmill in the village, described in Benjamin Kline's book, "Wildcatting on the Mountain." The one room Rock Hill schoolhouse is a community center, and although not on the railbed, could function as a trailhead. Hameister maintains a section of the railbed behind his home as a trail, as well a neighboring section of the railbed. Herds of Scottish Highland cattle and bison grazing on pastures between Smith Lane and Rimmey Road add to the area's rural character.

CONSTRAINTS: Sections of the railbed between Oak Hall and Gregg Station have been overbuilt. Several bridges are missing decks along the route. Linden Hall is a quiet place today, functioning mostly as a bedroom community for Penn State, and many people said they value their privacy more than the benefits of a trail. A fence runs down the middle of the railbed in several areas. Several landowners are using the railbed for driveways, and the narrow winding roads are not well suited as alternate share the road options, even though they are marked and often used as bike paths. A landowner installed a trip wire on the railbed and a woman jogger was seriously injured several years ago, resulting in a lawsuit and lingering animosity about the trail. Some members of the village continue to resent the fact that that the township did not act to buy the right of way when it was abandoned by Penn Central.

INITIATE INVESTIGATE INFORM INVITE
What is your vision for the abandoned L&T railbed?
Centre Hall
SPRING TWP
CENTRE HALL
POTTER TWP
Gregg Station
ENCAMPMENT
FAIR
AVA
albertinvernon
architecture
IMAGINE IMPROVE INSPIRE

GREGG STATION TO CENTRE HALL STATION

TOUR GUIDES: Michael Troyan, member of the Study Committee, Potter Township Planning Commission and Tri-Municipal Park; and James Lesher, President of Rhoneymeade's Board of Directors.

OPPORTUNITIES: Plans for the 165 acre Tri-Municipal Park already include improving the railbed on the far (south) end of the park property. S&A Homes owns the right of way opposite the municipal park; the land is zoned for single family homes that would benefit from access to a trail for a Safe Route to School in nearby Centre Hall. The 800 foot section of railbed west of Gregg Station Lane was cleared a decade ago and has been maintained as a trail by Rhoneymeade's manager, James Lesher. Rhoneymeade's historic brick home is on the National Register, and is the homestead of Grange Fair PicNic founder Leonard Rhone. Rhoneymeade's owner Richard Morgan would like to expand the trail to connect the Grange Fair to Rhoneymeade's arboretum, outdoor sculpture garden, and studio, which are open to the public on weekends throughout the summer. The Grange Fair is home to the oldest tent encampment in the United States, with 950 tents, 1,300 RV's, hundreds of concessions and over 7,000 exhibit items. The Grangers recently built a multi-million dollar equestrian facility on land near the railbed. The original train station at Centre Hall has been repurposed as a restaurant called the Whistle Stop, which would be a convenient waystop for trail users.

CONSTRAINTS: The railbed east of Gregg Station Lane is used by Carousel Farm as a driveway for their horse boarding and equestrian training center. The farm owns approximately 1 mile of railbed, and although the owners are advocates for rail trails, are concerned that visitors could spook their high-strung thoroughbreds. A section of the railbed east of Carousel Farm is under an Ag Preservation easement, which prohibits uses that are not agricultural in purposes, including trails. Rhoneymeade's land adjacent to the trail is under a conservation easement with the Clearwater Conservancy, which might pose some limitations for a spur between the railbed and Rhoneymeade's arboretum. The section of railbed through Grange Fair is used for parking and concessions during Progress Grange's annual fair. The Grange property is fenced in to keep vandals out during the off-season. The railbed at the Centre Hall Feed Store has been overbuilt, and there is no clear path around them except through Grange Fair's grounds. Vintage railcars occupy the railbed at the Whistlestop, although the owners are willing to consider alternate ways through or around the property as long as they don't have to relocate the railcars. The railbed crosses Route 144, a heavily traveled road, and would require coordination with PennDOT for a trail crossing this busy highway.

What is your vision for the abandoned L&T railbed?
Centre Hall
CENTRE HALL
POTTER TWP
GREGG TWP
Spring Mills
albertinvernon
architecture
IMAGINE IMPROVE INSPIRE

CENTRE HALL STATION TO SINKING SPRINGS (SPRING MILLS) STATION

TOUR GUIDES: Jane Scheuchenzuber, Doug Bierly, and Joel Myers, Study Committee and Gregg Township Planning Commission members

OPPORTUNITIES: The new Sheetz Gas Station, with restrooms, air pumps, water and convenience items, would make a convenient trailhead for this leg near the geographic center of the corridor and the functional gateway to Penns Valley. A connection to the ball field behind Snappy's would also be a plus, although crossing the highway would have to be well marked to properly alert drivers and cyclists well in advance of the crossing (the same issue as the crossing at Route 144 in Centre Hall). Historic markers at Old Fort and on Indian Lane provide historical context for an expanded interpretation of the valleys first European settlers and the Native Americans who occupied the lands for millennia before them. The railbed travels through open farmland and a Natural Diversity Area known as the Sinking Creek Prairie, another interpretive opportunity. A trail spur trail linking the Kauffman and Stonemeadow Subdivisions to the ball fields and community center at Spring Mills. The Township secured a 15 foot easement along the center line of the railbed in 2007 for a parcel subdivided from the Kauffman Farm east of Wildflower Lane in April of 2007, and has a right of first refusal for the 4,100 foot (.72 mile) section of railbed west of Wildflower Lane (Kauffman's sold the land with the easement in March 2015, and the Township plans to exercise its right to purchase the easement). The Old Gregg School is now a community center and would make an ideal trailhead, with ample parking, restrooms, and path to the ball fields. An historic Clover Store serves ice cream, snacks and water, and the Frosty Hook is a favorite watering hole for locals.

CONSTRAINTS: The railbed on the Wolf Farm has been plowed over east of the Hanover Farms processing plant. Much of the railbed through farmland is overgrown with small trees and invasive shrubs, including honeysuckle and multi-flora rose. The railroad bridge across Sinking Creek Road at Myers Farm has been removed, and the floodplain complicates an at-grade crossing at this location. The railbed is interrupted by Wildflower Lane on the Kauffman Farm subdivision, which is further complicated by steep grades. Sections of the railbed have washed out where natural swales on the steep hillside empty spring and storm water into the creek through culverts beneath the tracks. Some of the culverts on the railbed are clogged with silt, creating puddles on the railbed. The Sinking Creek Prairie Biodiversity Area (BDA) has exceptional significance, and will require a review by DCNR. The railbed comes within 15 feet of some properties as it enters the town.

INITIATE INVESTIGATE INFORM INVITE
What is your vision for the abandoned L&T railbed?
Spring Mills
Coburn
GREGG
PENN TWP
albertinvernon
architecture
IMAGINE IMPROVE INSPIRE

SINKING SPRINGS (SPRING MILLS) STATION TO COBURN STATION

TOUR GUIDE:

Jane Scheuchenzuber, Study Committee and Gregg Township Planning Commission

OPPORTUNITIES:

Most of the railbed through town is intact, with little overbuilding. A large section of the railbed in Spring Mills owned by Gettig Industries recently sold through a bankruptcy auction to Chris Kunes, a local builder, member of the County Planning Commission and trail advocate. Muddy Paws Nature Center east of Spring Mills could be a destination for educational opportunities. The bridges along the railbed between Spring Mills and Coburn that are missing cross ties appear to have solid structures and foundations that would be sufficient for trail use. The L&T's flag stop at Zerby, marked with a sign commemorating a railway water station, could set a precedent for further interpretation of the L&T. The vacant Penns Creek Feed Mill, a local landmark occasionally advertised for sale, would make a nice trailhead or trail related business. The railbed along Penns Creek was used for the Wilderness 101, a 101 mile cross country mountain bike ultra-endurance event run primarily by Shenandoah Mountain Touring of Harrisonburg, VA between 1991 and 2011. The race attracted riders from all over the country to the 12,000 foot climb through Bald Eagle State Forest near Coburn. Coburn Park is one of the few locations in the area with ample room for parking horse trailers. Crikfest, a local music event celebrating the confluence of Penns, Pine and Elk Creek, attracts hundreds of visitors to the region each fall. Coburn is a popular destination for anglers who flock to the area for the Green Drake hatch in June.

CONSTRAINTS:

The railbed comes very close to several homes east of Spring Mills. The railbed is interrupted by the road embankment at Maple Lane. Although the railbed east of Maple Lane was deeded to the Township for a rail trail, the easement includes a section of the railbed purchased through a quit claim that is beyond the land owned in fee simple by the grantor. The adjoining landowner plowed over the railbed in protest shortly after this project was announced. The landowner south of Klines Road removed the railroad bridge and blocked the railbed with firewood. The Sportsman's Club south of Spring Mills uses a section of the railbed as a backstop for a shooting range.

What is your vision for the abandoned L&T railbed?
Coburn
Ingleby
Cherry Springs
albertinvernon
architecture

COBURN STATION TO INGLEBY STATION AND THE COUNTY LINE

TOUR GUIDE: Study Committee member and Ingleby landowner George Wilt

OPPORTUNITIES: The railbed between Coburn and the Coburn (Beaver Dam) Tunnel is a favorite spot for anglers, especially during opening day of trout season. The Coburn Tunnel is also a favorite spot for rafting and kayakers on Penns Creek, who put in upstream of the tunnel and then use the tunnel as a shortcut for their return trip. The state refurbished the bridge beyond the bend, maintaining the crossing to the railbed beyond Penns Creek. The railbed passes through pristine lands for several miles before reaching the small mountain hamlet of Ingleby, a former resort town and home to the famous "weather rock," which is so popular it has a Facebook page. The Wilt family owns a mile of the railbed on the former Barker Resort property in Ingleby, now used as hunting camp they call The Lodge. A second resort community of private holdings is located within the State Forest near Poe Paddy State Park. The park includes structures and foundations built in the 1930's during the Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The railbed passes through a second tunnel, the Poe Paddy Tunnel, built by the railroad to bypass Paddy Mountain, before joining the 3 mile long Cherry Springs Rail Trail in Mifflin County, which is part of the Mid State Trail system. This area is popular among equestrians and mountain bikers, who use the railbed to get access to public lands. Although the state closed the tunnel at Poe Paddy in the Spring on 2013, DCNR awarded a $1.2m contract to repair the tunnel, railbed and bridge at Poe Paddy in April of 2015.

CONSTRAINTS: The Penn Township Sewer Plant is built over the railbed in Coburn. Sections of the railbed near Penns Creek washed out during Hurricane Agnes. The railbed between Coburn and the tunnel is heavily used by visitors from opening day of trout in April through the Green Drake mayfly hatch in June. Visitors often park or trespass on private land, creating tension between landowners and visitors. A large stone dangling at the east entrance to the Coburn Tunnel was removed or fell during the study period, but more stones litter the floor of the unlined tunnel, making it unclear whether it's safe for use by the public. The railbed beyond Ingleby enters State Forest land, and includes the Penns Creek Landscape Conservation Area (LCA) and Penns Creek Hardwoods BDA, which will require further review by DCNR and PA Game Commission. The bridge east of Ingleby and the bridge across Penns Creek between Ingleby and Poe Paddy are missing, although foundations remain at the banks on either side. Access to the railbed east of Ingleby crosses leaseholds owned by the Commonwealth, and many visitors park on leased cabin sites. A parking area maintained by the Fish and Boat Commission east of Ingleby is often wet and inadequate to handle existing visitors.

PENNS/BRUSH VALLEY ELIGIBILITY FOR INCLUSION ON NATIONAL REGISTER

Posted on Centre County Historical Society on line newsletter, Tuesday, July 10, 2007

"In 2003, CCHS began a survey of Penns/Brush Valley to determine its qualifications for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the country's most prestigious record of historic resources. It is one of the ways in which a rural landscape can be given enhanced protection, particularly from state and federal transportation projects through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A National Register listing recognizes unique historic and cultural resources and encourages the preservation of agricultural land, open space, architectural resources, archaeological sites, and less commonly identified resources - hedgerows and vistas.

After several months of identifying, evaluating, and documenting the valley, a large packet of information was submitted to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation (BHP). …As a result of these efforts, Penns/Brush Valley has been declared eligible for listing - the first step in enhancing the preservation of this unique Centre County rural historic landscape, one of the few of its size remaining in Pennsylvania. Work will continue over the next several months to complete the full nomination.

What Makes Penns/Brush Valley Special?

The natural context of the Ridge and Valley landscape played a significant role in the cultural development of Penns Valley and Brush Valley, Centre County, Pennsylvania. Early paths and later roads were located along the fertile limestone valley floor, or through ridges cut by gaps. Fast moving streams or underground fed springs provided the water resources needed for the settlement of crossroad communities. And the agricultural landscape of the valley was, and still is, defined by the vertical edges provided by the forested mountains. A great deal of the proposed district's historical vernacular landscape fabric is still intact within the natural context. Agricultural patterns still persist and are visible on the landscape - farms delineated by historic hedgerows; crop lands and open fields framed by old roads; and the views and vistas from the valley and the ridges that reflect nineteenth and early twentieth century features.

National Significance of Penns/Brush Valley

The rural landscape in Penns Valley and Brush Valley, Centre County, PA is clearly related to important currents in the state's economic and social history. More specifically, agriculture in central PA - and, thus, the rural landscape itself - was initially shaped by the presence of local markets (first the iron industry, later by State College) and by the institution of share tenancy. From early on, the local ironworks supplied important markets for beef, pork, feed grains, and hay. They also likely contributed to the high level of mechanization in the valleys.

A substantial portion of farmers, perhaps as many as 30% to 50%, were actually tenants, farming on shares. By the mid-19th century, a mixed grain-and-livestock economy had taken root, and this was the staple of agricultural production in the valleys well into the twentieth century. By the 1930s, State College became a major local outlet, and its rural environs became part of Eastern urban milksheds. Tenancy, however, outlasted the iron era and persisted to the very end of the period of significance. The significance of the extant historic rural landscape in these interconnected valleys is twofold: first, in the extent to which it conveys this agrarian past, and second, in its high level of integrity."

The study committee met on 4 occasions, providing guidance and feedback prior to and after the public meetings.