

CHAPTER 7 OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY- who would manage and maintain the trail?

The options for managing and maintaining the trail were simplified after it became clear that a single 27 mile long destination type trail was not feasible at this time, avoiding many of the issues that must be worked out when a regional trail corporation is necessary to allocate tasks and assign responsibilities across many municipal and county boundaries. Gregg Township already has established a process for landowners to donate trail easements, and in fact has several easements in place at this time. The township would more than likely want to use its own maintenance staff and equipment to perform heavy maintenance tasks, such as removing dying or downed trees, cleaning out culverts, repairing or replacing damaged signage, and repairing sections of railbed washed out by major storm events. The trail at Rhoneymeade crosses two municipal boundaries, Harris and Potter Township, on Bergenblick Farm. We recommend that trail advocates for this section use the privately owned Lower Trail as a model for their organization, and Google the Hudson River Valleys' booklet, *Getting Involved, A Community Trail Handbook for Landowners*. They should also consider DCNR's suggestion of securing a PEER or Circuit Rider grant to explore how Rhoneymeade's non-profit corporation could work with other property owners and the two municipalities to allocate tasks among them, including the Tri-Municipal Park west of Centre Hall, a regional organization dedicated to promoting outdoor recreation opportunities in Potter Township, Centre Hall and Gregg Township. Both trail organizations should seek help from existing trail organizations to perform routine maintenance tasks like mowing, trash pick-up and cleanup after minor storms. Many organizations that are already active in promoting a cycling culture and cycling events in the community in Penns Valley offered to lend their support to help establish and/or maintain rail trails in the area, including the Bicycle Co-op in Millheim, which sponsors a gravel road bike ride each year, and the organizers of PASA's Bike Fresh Bike Local annual trail ride. Bald Eagle State Forest's 2015 Management Plan also includes continued support for trail and cycling events, including the Wilderness 101 ride in July. Many local bike shops, outfitters and outdoor recreation businesses also offered to support the establishment of more trails in this area, including Penns Valley Outfitters and Trail2Creek of Millheim, Freeze Thaw Cycles of State College and Vargo Outdoors of Lewisburg. The Horton family bought a farm next to the Lower Trail because of the trail and also offered to provide guidance on maintaining trails in this area. The Penns Valley Conservation Association (PVCA), with a membership of a couple hundred people, is also dedicated to promoting causes that improve the region's quality of life and the environment. The President of PVCA was a member of the study committee for the rail trail, and their current Vice President is an avid cyclist and the regional representative for the mid-Atlantic regional chapter of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA).

