

**A PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
PEER-TO-PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT**

**PENNS VALLEY RECREATION STUDY**

FINAL REPORT

By

Kurt Hausammann, Jr. AICP

Peer Consultant

Final Report

April 2006 to November 2007

## Penns Valley Recreation Study

April 2006

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation operates a peer-to peer program, where recreation and parks professionals serve as “peers” on a short term basis to provide communities with technical assistance. The peers are selected based on their knowledge and experience in recreation and parks. Kurt Hausammann, Jr., AICP is the peer who coordinated this peer project. He serves as Lycoming County Planning Commission Executive Director.

### Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who participated or assisted in the completion of this project, especially the Study Committee.

Eloise Brennan

Victoria Brennan Burd

Ray Hankinson

Patrick Leary

Daryl Schafer

Jane Scheuchenzuber

BT Schwier

Tom Sharer

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/STUDY PURPOSE**

In the Spring of 2006 Penns Valley, Centre County applied for a Recreation and Technical Assistance Grant from DCNR's Bureau of Recreation. Their intent was to study the possibility of bringing a more formalized recreation program to the valley. The study group wished to know if the hiring of a recreation director was possible for the valley. The study group also wanted to know what kind of grants are available to supplement local funding for recreation.

The initial meeting of the study group took place in April of 2006. The group met monthly until November of 2007 at which time the final report was delivered. Everyone agreed that a peer study was not only desired but was needed to review the recreation needs of the valley. In the following weeks a scope of work was decided upon and contracts were signed for the study.

The study group carried out the scope of work over the next 19 months. This report covers the details of the public participation process, the issues that face Penns Valley, and recommendations for future action.

The study group focused on four main areas which are listed below:

1. Explore what facilities and programs are currently available in Penns Valley.
2. Explore both existing and possible future funding for parks and recreation services in Penns Valley.
3. Research the feasibility of hiring a full time parks and recreation professional.
4. Seek public input concerning existing services, current issues facing the growth of parks and recreation, and recommendations for the future.

Throughout the process numerous issues were identified. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was performed to identify recreational concerns in Penns Valley. The results of the SWOT analysis follows:

### **Strengths**

Boating

Fishing

Hiking

Hunting

Grange Fair Grounds

Mid State Trail

Millheim Ball fields – 2

Millheim Pool

Outdoor Recreation

Penns Cave

Penns Valley School

Poe Valley Lake

Roller Skating

Shaner Complex

State Forest

Volunteers

Woodward Camp

### **Weaknesses**

Big Valley – Large Area to Cover

Facilities not maintained

Financial Support (taxes)

Many Facilities are Privately Owned

No Coordination of Facilities in General

No Coordination of School Facilities

No Indoor Pool

No Recreation Centers (Programs)

No Regulation Soccer Fields

Very Rural

## **Opportunities**

Acquire Park Land

Economic Effect

More Trails

Partnership with Business – Landscapers

Senior Program

Social Impacts – seniors - Youth

## **Threats**

Guaranteed use of Facilities – Privately Owned

Good Old Boy Attitude – We Don't Need Recreation

Lack of Funding

Penns Valley is very rich in outdoor facilities except for walking trails. Penns Valley is a prime location for rails to trails projects. At the current time persons walk on the roads. This potentially could become a traffic hazard as use increases. Outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, backpacking, canoeing, hunting, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing are abundant.

## Penns Valley Demographics

For the purposes of this study, and the fact that the study area is fairly large, some general demographic information is appropriate to be included in this report. The scope of work of this study concentrates on community recreation opportunities and does not go into much detail on state owned facilities.

Penns Valley is located east of State College and is characterized by a large valley predominantly used for agricultural purposes. Penns Valley has grown from 8,789 persons in 1970 to 11,382 in 2000. Housing development and suburbanization have come to the valley producing the increase in population. The persons moving to the valley want to maintain the rural character of the area however they would like increased recreational opportunities. The region is experiencing a very steady growth rate.

There are seven municipalities that make up the Penns Valley region. The municipalities are Millheim and Centre Hall boroughs and the Townships of Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn, and Potter. The Penns Valley Area School District serves the entire region.

Highlights of the 2000 census follow:

Population-----	11,382
Persons under 5-----	6.9%
Persons under 18-----	29%
Persons 65 and over -----	13.4%
High School Graduates-----	82.8%
College Graduates -----	18.6%
Households in 2000-----	5,136
Persons per Households -----	2.19
Household Income -----	\$40,054

# SCOPE OF WORK

## Penns Valley Regional Recreational Study Group

### PA DCNR Peer-to-Peer Project

Centre Hall Borough, Millheim Borough, Gregg Township, Haines Township,  
Miles Township, Penn Township, and Potter Township

#### Proposed Scope Work

All work will be completed for the seven participating municipalities: Centre Hall Borough, Millheim Borough, Gregg Township, Haines Township, Miles Township, Penn Township, and Potter Township. The Penns Valley School District will also be invited to participate in the process by naming a representative on the committee. Public service organizations in the service area will also be contacted to inventory and discuss their recreation services. These organizations include but are not limited to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Rotary, church groups, fraternal organizations, Lions, Kiwanis, Youth Programs, Women's Club, Civic Club, Historical Society, Business Group, 4H, Grange Fair, Spring Mills Fish & Game, Spring Mills Fire Company etc.

#### **Phase I**

##### **A. Inventory Available Facilities, Programs and Services**

Conduct an inventory of private and public recreation facilities, programs, and services currently available to residents of the seven municipalities:

1. Each member municipality and the school district agree to complete a DCNR survey and provide the peer with requested information such as municipal budgets and in-kind services provided. Peer will review this material and work with the lead municipality to fill any gaps.
2. From above information peer will compile a list of available parks and recreation opportunities and services for the residents of the participating municipalities.

3. Visit all park and recreation facilities in the region available for public recreation use and assess their general condition and potential for expansion, enhancement, and coordination.

## **B. Analysis of Current Services**

Prepare an overall analysis of the parks, recreation, programs, and services provided by the seven municipalities and the school district.

1. Analyze available parks and recreation facilities with respect to condition and general community need. Note any publicly owned space that could be used for expansion of park and recreation facilities. (This will be a general analysis and not include detailed design issues.)
2. Examine the balance of recreation programs currently provided by age, gender, location, program type, etc. to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses. Identify areas for expansion of recreation programs and services. Determine strengths and weaknesses.
3. Examine how each of the seven municipalities are administering park and recreation opportunities. Determine strengths and weaknesses.
4. Analyze each municipalities overall budget and park and recreation budget (if any). Analyze non-tax revenue sources for park and recreation services. Determine strengths and weaknesses. Such as mandatory dedication and fees in lieu of.
5. Seek out public input through these approaches:
  - a. Conduct in-person or telephone interviews to determine the recreational needs and interests of area citizens and identify the level of support for regional recreation. The peer will work with the Study Committee to determine appropriate number of interviews and those selected for those interviews.
  - b. Conduct up to 14 Study Committee meetings.

## **C. Explore Creation of Regional Recreation**

Purpose will be to determine the willingness of the seven municipalities and the school district to form a regional recreation organization (board structure to be determined).

1. Identify the benefits and challenges of regional recreation services.
2. Develop an informational sheet, which highlights the benefits of regional recreation, and possible recreation programs, and services, which could be offered.
3. Determine level of funding, in the form of draft-operating budget, necessary to provide regional recreation services. Identify areas for in-kind contributions of municipalities and school district. Evaluate fund-raising capabilities of committee.

4. Tour Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) and East Lycoming Recreation Authority (ELRA) facilities.
5. Develop a proposed structure for a regional recreation organization (type of board to be determined), which includes the representation for each entity and the funding formula. Propose up to three separate organizational scenarios.
6. Work with Study Committee to determine if there is support to develop a draft intergovernmental agreement. Peer will prepare draft agreement.
7. Train the Study Committee to “promote” the regional recreation concept to key citizens, elected officials, and community organizations. Study Committee members will be responsible for discussing this agreement with their governing bodies and having it reviewed by their solicitors. Peer will work with Study Committee to resolve comments received from solicitors.

## **Phase II**

### **D. Formation of a Regional Recreation Organization**

Assist with organizing the regional recreation organization

1. Assist with recruitment and appointment of organization members.
2. Help develop by-laws for the board and regional park rules and regulations.
3. Explore the feasibility of employing a Director of Parks & Recreation through the Circuit Rider program
4. Recommend an office location, insurance needs, clerical support, computer/office equipment and funding sources and levels.
5. Recommend secondary Peer assistance as necessary.

### **E. Final Report**

The final report will consist of a table of contents, an executive summary of recommendations, a collection of the products from each section, and appendices with examples of appropriate materials. The Peer will provide both hard and digital copies of the final report for distribution.

### **F. Time Line and Budget**

Centre Hall Borough, Millheim Borough, Gregg Township, Haines Township,  
Miles Township, Penn Township, and Potter Township

Penns Valley Recreation Study Committee

Peer-to-Peer Project

Proposed Time Line

**Phase I**

May 2006

Section A

Inventory Facilities, Programs and Services  
Finalize Peer Contract and Scope of Work  
Conduct Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities,  
Threats Analysis (SWOT)

June – August 2006

Section B

Analysis of Current Services  
Tour LARA and ELRA facilities  
Key Person Interviews

September – December 2006

Section C

Exploration of Regional Recreation  
Exploration of Circuit Rider

**Phase II**

January – March 2007

Section D

Details to Form Regional Recreational Organization  
Municipal Solicitor Review of Inter-  
Governmental Agreement

April – December 2007

Section E

Final Report

This time line may take longer, depending on local reviews, schedules and unforeseen challenges which may arise.

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

## **Penns Valley Study Committee**

Eloise Brennan

Victoria Brennan Burd

Ray Hankinson

Kurt Hausammann, Jr.

Patrick Leary

Daryl Schafer

Jane Scheuchenzuber

BT Schwier

Tom Sharer

# **Penns Valley Regional Recreation Study Group**

Agenda – Meeting Thirteen

August 20, 2007 - 7:00PM to 9:00PM

## **Centre Hall Borough Building**

1. Introductions 7:00

Robin Bastress, Eloise P. Brennan, Victoria Brennan Burd, Ray Hankinson,

Kurt Hausammann, Chris Hosterman, Pat Leary, BT Schwier, Tom Sharer

2. Revised Budget 7:05

September meeting

Alternate Budget includes Penn and Miles. We will get \$40,000 from State. Participants need to pay total \$13000. (\$5,000 contingency.) Includes a \$40,000/year full time director. State prefers a full time position. Get a more experienced person who will want to stay longer. Continuity will be very important.

Other programs said that they credit their success to having a full time person. Volunteer board will support the work...depending upon the board. Members of the board have to be willing to be a working board. We want to entice Penn and Miles to come on board. State money has requirements that person must meet. Requirements would include: Parks and Rec degree with experience, Grants, marketing, management/coordination of resources. Salary initially paid with circuit rider grants only (available all year). Other grants are to be used for capital purchases. Some grants can be used for administrative purposes for monitoring the grant. Community revitalization monies are available. Being a partnering with PVASD, municipalities and boroughs is a must.

2009 – Reimbursement goes down to \$30,000 – contingency of \$5300.

2010 – Reimbursement goes down to \$20,000 – eliminate contingency – lower equipment budget. Grant monies will help to make up some of the money. Director at this point should have the program up and running

Two budgets following are without Penn and Miles.

3. Work on Slide Show Presentation 7:25

Review of slides and discussion took place. Kurt will update slide show for presentation and distribution to townships and boroughs.

Township and borough slide presentation schedule:

Miles                    6 September, meets 1st Thursday, 7:00 PM

Penn            6 September, meets 1st Thursday, 7:30 PM  
Potter           10 September, meets 1st & 2nd Mondays, 7:00 PM  
Millheim       11 September, meets 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM  
Gregg           13 September, meets 2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM  
Centre Hall    13 September, meets 2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM  
Haines         18 September, meets 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 PM

4. Prepare Outreach Program for Fall 8:00

5. Questions/Comments 8:30

Discussions covering all aspects of study groups activities and what will be included in the summary report took place.

Chris Hosterman briefed the group about the Penns Valley Endowment Fund.

A summary/description is included.

6. Next Meeting Date 8:40

**Next meeting is October 25, 2007 at**

**Old Gregg School Community & Family Recreation Center**

7. Adjourn 9:00

## Penns Valley Regional Recreational Study Group (PVRRSG)

Call to order by Kurt @ 1900, 26 July 2007

**In attendance:** Eloise P. Brennan, Victoria Brennan Burd, Jason Fiedler, Ray Hankinson, Kurt Hausammann, Pat Leary, BT Schwier, Tom Sharer, Daryl Shafer

### **Gregg Township Elementary School**

Tenants have been identified and leases negotiated

PV Recreation Authority/Commission could be a potential tenant

### **Budget**

Draft six includes other updates from discussions

### **Slide Show/Presentation**

Reviewed briefing/presentation for townships and borough officials

Pictures of the Lewisburg Area Recreation Association (LARA) located in an urban setting and East Lycoming Recreation Association located in a rural setting were compiled and selected Woodward Camp has partnered with Play World to design and sell skate board parks.

Skate board park utilization is "Use at your own risk." To minimize insurance coverage, LARA installed an 8 foot perimeter fence.

### **PSU Land Transfer**

Transfer of 165 acres to Potter Township, Centre Hall Borough, & Gregg Township

### **Future Discussion Items:**

Naming of organization – Commonwealth prefers recreational organizations be identified as a commission versus authority. Commission requires communication with boroughs and townships elected officials for acceptance and future planning.

Township & meeting schedules:

Centre Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday Time: 7:00 PM

Gregg 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday Time: 7:00 PM

Haines 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday Time: 6:30 PM

Miles 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday Time: 7:00 PM

Millheim 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Time: 7:00 PM

Penn 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday Time: 7:30 PM

Potter 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays Time: 7:00 PM

**Next Meeting Date:** Monday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 @ 1900 at Centre Hall Borough Building

**Adjourn:** 8:45 pm

Supporting Information: <http://www.co.centre.pa.us/locator/default.asp>

### **Centre Hall Borough**

Meets: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Place: Borough Office

Address: 134 North Hoffer Avenue

P.O. Box 54

Centre Hall PA 16828

Phone: (814) 364-1772

Fax: (814) 364-2821

### **Gregg Township**

Meets: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Place: Township Office

Address: 3586 Penns Valley Road  
Behind Smith Custom Builders  
PO Box 184  
Spring Mills PA 16875  
Phone: (814) 422-8218  
Phone: (814) 422-8947  
Fax: (814) 422-8080  
E-mail: secretary@greggtownship.org

### **Haines Township**

Meets: 3rd Tuesday  
Meeting Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Meeting Place: Township Building  
Address: 153 South Rachels Way  
PO Box 244  
Aaronsburg PA 16820  
Phone: (814) 349-8193  
Fax: (814) 349-5630  
E-mail: hainestwp@chilitech.com

### **Miles Township**

Meets: 1st Thursday  
Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting Place: Township Building  
Address: 174 East Main Street  
Rebersburg PA 16872  
Phone: (814) 349-8218  
Fax: (814) 237-8337

### **Millheim Borough**

Meets: 2nd Tuesday  
Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting Place: Borough Building  
Address: 225 East Main Street  
P.O. Box 421  
Millheim PA 16854  
Phone: (814) 349-5350  
Fax: (814) 349-5733  
E-mail: millheim@verizon.net

### **Penn Township**

Meets: 1st Thursday  
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.  
Meeting Place: 506 Main Street  
Coburn  
Address: P.O. Box 125  
Coburn PA 16832  
Phone: (814) 349-8886  
Fax: (814) 349-5525  
E-mail: penn townshipcentre@verizon.net

**Potter Township**

Meets: 1st & 2nd Monday

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Place: Township Building

Address: 124 Short Road

Spring Mills PA 16875

Phone: (814) 364-9176

Fax: (814) 364-2809

E-mail: potter\_twp@yahoo.com

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Mon. - Fri.

## **Penns Valley Regional Recreational Study Group (PVRMSG)**

Call to order by Kurt @ 1910, 28 June 2007

In attendance: Kurt Hausammann, Pat Leary, BT Schwier, Jane Scheuchenzuber

Gregg Township Elementary School

Referred to as "Old Gregg School Recreation Center at Spring Mills"

Tenants have been identified that can potentially provide ~ 62 K per year

Adult Day Care may possibly provide ~ 10-15 K per year

Tentatively scheduling a "identify funding sources" meeting with government officials

### Tour Summary

Lewisburg Area Recreation Association (LARA)

Positive reactions to: pool, Senior Citizens Building, exercise equipment, climbing wall, skate board park, handicap area

East Lycoming Recreation Association (ELRA)

### Future Discussion Items:

Master Site Plan for recreation needed

Summarize study and results for public campaign

Prepare briefing/presentation for townships and borough officials

Prepare summaries for community and government officials buy in

Possible to distribute summaries including questions and answers at Grange Fair

Distribute a survey at Grange Fair to get a sense of response for Penns Valley community

Naming of organization

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, July 26th, 2007 @ 1900 at Gregg Township Bldg, Route 45

Adjourn: 8:50 pm

# Penns Valley Regional Recreational Study Group (PVRRSG)

Meeting Summary – September 5, 2006

Meeting started at 1900 hours – Millheim Boro Building

Kurt Hausammann called the meeting to order

Penns Valley Recreation Study Committee Agenda Meeting Four was discussed

Introductions of individuals in attendance

The group created and discussed the Key Person Interview list. Please submit additional information for candidates to PVRRSG email for inclusion into the list.

Discussions pertaining to the usage of the Gregg Township Elementary School were noted. The YMCA will be making a presentation to the PV School Board on September 6, 2006. Pat Leary will be attending and will present highlights at the next meeting.

Peer to peer group should present the results of the study to each municipality to get their support.

Grants are available to develop recreational and park facilities. Collaboration with local government increases the probability for monies.

DCNR prefers to have grants prioritized at the local level so more monies are available for each project.

A preliminary inventory of the Penns Valley Peer Project was completed.

The tour date of the LARA and ELRA facilities has been rescheduled for Spring 2007. Presentations of the LARA and ELRA facilities were suggested as a preview to expose local municipalities to generate interest.

Eloise suggested that alternates be named for each municipality.

Next meeting scheduled for October 26, 2006

7:00 PM (1900 hours) Millheim Boro Building, Route 45

Meeting adjourned at 2110 hours

Attachments:

-Agenda Meeting Four

-Telephone & Interview List

-PV PEER Project

-Rec 4 PV Peer2Peer Study4Parks&Recs

-Introduction\_Key\_Person

Attendees:

Eloise Brennan

Patrick Leary

Bob Fox

Christine Murgans

Ray Hankinson

Jane Scheuchenzuber

Sharon Heckman

BT Schwier

Kurt Hausammann

Tom Sharer

Meeting Summary -- June 29, 2006

Meeting started at 1900 hours - Gregg Township Building

Kurt Hausammann called the meeting to order

Each item on the Penns Valley Recreation Study Committee Agenda was discussed

Introductions of individuals in attendance

Jane Scheuchenzuber spoke about the Greenways; & Trail Summit Program that she and four other individuals from Gregg Township attended. This program has identified current paths that can be used for horse trails and are looking to identify future paths to also be included. These paths were marked on a Gregg Township topographical map. Future discussions will include identifying railroad beds for biking, walking, and horse trails.

DCNR and the Federal Government have monies available for rail trail development.

It was noted that a large quantity of rail beds have been purchased by private land owners which may cause difficulties in accomplishing the trail and path development.

MPO meeting – This group is looking at a bike trail between Boalsburg and Centre Hall through Linden Hall. This project is still on the table for funding in the future.

A request to GIS was suggested to identify property sizes and owners.

To accomplish the PVRRSG goal, an inventory of the area must be taken. The group suggested that the Comprehensive Plan be used as a starting base/point. Ron Woodhead is going to startup the inventory process soon with the aid of other motorcyclists. Additional information concerning grounds and areas that were not included in the Comp Plan also need to be identified by local individuals.

A suggestion to identify a Penns Valley area student to join the PVRRSG for the purpose of getting a perspective from the younger and future generation. Student council or senior project participant were some suggestions. Jane Scheuchenzuber took action item to contact principle at PVHS for process to identify individual.

Tour date has been identified as August 12, 2006 from 0900-1500. Please RSVP to Kurt directly if you are going on the tour of the LARA and ELRA facilities.

A preliminary list of individuals for Key Person Interviews was created:

Allan Darr, Joe Hammaker, Don Hosterman, Rob Markle, Eric Marshall, Lynn McCool, Bill Sharpe, Carol Sharpe, Jacob Tanis, Jane Taylor, Sue Wenrick

Attachment contains additional information on the aforementioned individuals which will be defined as the "Interview List." Please submit additional candidates to BT for inclusion into the list.

Municipal Profiles need to be completed

Updating email address list to include a representative from each municipality

Updating email address list to include township and borough offices

Penns Valley School District has been informed requesting a representative(s)

Kurt will hold interviews during Grange Fair, 26-30 August 2006

Kurt will generate paragraph describing PVRRSO and its function

Please review attachments and submit comments.

Next meeting scheduled for September 5, 2006

1900 hours Gregg Township Building, Route 45

Meeting adjourned at 2100 hours

Attachments:

Interview List

Attendees:

Eloise Brennan            Jane Scheuchenzuber

Ray Hankinson            BT Schwier

Patrick Leary            Tom Sharer

Daryl Schafer            Rod Woodhead

## List of Key Persons

Centre Hall Borough, Millheim Borough, Gregg Township, Haines Township,  
Miles Township, Penn Township, and Potter Township  
Penns Valley Recreation Study Committee

Peer-to-Peer Project

### List of Interview Names

Craig	Collison	I		349-2266
Darlene & Mike	Confer			364-9563
<b>Allan</b>	<b>Darr</b>	T	<a href="mailto:MI16801@aol.com">MI16801@aol.com</a>	364-2545
Denny	Ditmer	I	<a href="mailto:dditmer@scaymca.org">dditmer@scaymca.org</a>	w 814-237-7717 x206
<b>Kevin</b>	<b>Glossner</b>	T	<a href="mailto:glossner@csrlink.net">glossner@csrlink.net</a>	364-2612
Joe	Hammaker	I		364-1670
Joe	Hartle			
Don	Hosterman	I	<a href="mailto:dhosterm@pennsvalley.org">dhosterm@pennsvalley.org</a>	349-8815
Rob	Markle	I	<a href="mailto:robert.markle@tripointglobal.com">robert.markle@tripointglobal.com</a>	349-5713
<b>Eric</b>	<b>Marshall</b>	T	<a href="mailto:lennyk42@hotmail.com">lennyk42@hotmail.com</a>	814-360-0803
Sarah & Chuck	Mason	I	<a href="mailto:web@PennAcadArts.com">web@PennAcadArts.com</a>	364-2424
Lynn	McCool	I		349-8759
<b>Bill &amp; Chris</b>	<b>Palmer</b>	T		364-9101
<b>Gary</b>	<b>Ream</b>	I		466-3025
<b>Bill &amp; Carol</b>	<b>Sharpe</b>	I	<a href="mailto:CRSWES@yahoo.com">CRSWES@yahoo.com</a>	422-8617
Russ	Sliden	T or email		364-1664
<b>Jacob</b>	<b>Tanis</b>	T		364-2123
<b>Jane</b>	<b>Taylor</b>	I		364-9355
Carl	Warntz	T		349-5257
<b>Roni</b>	<b>Warren</b>	T	<a href="mailto:roniw@adelphia.net">roniw@adelphia.net</a>	364-1315
Sue	Wenrick	T		349-8193
Barb	Tobias	I	pennsvalley.org	422-8854
Millheim Pool			Lions Club	

\* **Bold** - persons interviewed

Centre Hall Borough, Millheim Borough, Gregg Township, Haines Township,  
Miles Township, Penn Township, and Potter Township

Penns Valley Regional Recreation Study Group (PVRSSG)

PA DCNR Peer-to-Peer Project

**Key Persons Questions**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Recreation role in the valley:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What makes your community a good place to live?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you like about your community's park and recreation services? What do you dislike?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What age groups appear to be the best served in your area? Least served?

\_\_\_\_\_

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What additions or changes could improve local recreation opportunities? Park opportunities?

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What key issues are facing the provision of parks and recreation opportunities in your community?

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How do you feel about the possibilities of cooperation with the school district and municipalities?

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What type of duplication of program services are in your area?

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---

What kind of additional recreation facilities are needed?

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Is there a need for an umbrella recreation commission?

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Would you be in favor of an in lieu of recreation fee on newly subdivided lots?

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# Centre Hall Borough, Millheim Borough, Gregg Township, Haines Township, Miles Township, Penn Township, and Potter Township

Penns Valley Recreation Study Committee

Peer-to-Peer Project

Key Person Report

The Penns Valley Recreation Study Group identified 22 key persons that are involved in recreation and parks within the valley to be interviewed. Persons chosen to be interviewed were involved with Little League, AYSO, Senior Citizens, and individuals living in the valley. Thus far 10 of the persons have been interviewed. Continued efforts are being made to reach the additional key persons. In person interviews were held on September 23, 2006. A morning and an afternoon session were held. The morning session was held in the Millheim Borough building while the afternoon session was held in the Gregg Township building. In this way, persons being interviewed could be best accommodated at both ends of the valley. Certain themes emerged during the interviews. All of the persons interviewed stated that the most important thing about the valley is the small town rural nature of the Valley. This was the single most important factor in why people choose to live in the valley.

The persons interviewed felt that existing recreation and park services should be increased. Many persons interviewed responded that they did not know of any current services being offered. They view this as a problem. The best served age group is considered to be children. The worst served age group is adults. Persons interviewed stated that there are no services for adults. There is no place for adults to go to play basketball or to work out. A gymnasium is viewed as a primary need for the valley.

Money is viewed as the biggest obstacle to providing improved and expanded recreation and park facilities and programming in the valley. The persons interviewed do not favor the use of tax dollars to provide recreation and park services. They do however favor an in lieu of fee on new subdivisions for funding of recreation and parks. They also believe that cooperation between the school district, the municipalities and the recreation commission is imperative and essential to the successful provision of recreation and parks in the valley.

The persons interviewed were nearly unanimous in their support for a local umbrella recreation commission. They stressed that it should be local. They do not support an outside agency coming into the valley to tell them what they need in terms of recreation and parks. It is felt that a local recreation commission could coordinate all of the different recreation groups in the valley. The recreation commission and their recreation professional would also be looked to for recreation and parks grant writing. This is a skill that is greatly needed in the valley.

The Gregg Township Elementary School was mentioned by several people as a recreation opportunity that should be explored. Perhaps, the recreation commission and the YMCA could work together to provide recreation services at the school. The school would also be a good place to base the recreation staff member.

### Summary

Persons involved in recreation and parks within the valley recognize the need for expanded services in the valley. A recreation professional and a gymnasium are two of the most needed resources. An in lieu of fee on new subdivisions enacted by the municipalities in the valley could serve as a possible funding source for the recreation committee and staff. The Gregg Township Elementary School is a possible resource that should be explored.

# PENNS VALLEY FACILITIES

Penn's Valley PEER Project DCNR Project # \_\_\_\_\_

By Ronald J. Woodhead for Kurt Hausammann Jr.

## Facility Tour Report & Observations on Sat. 15 Jul 06

This report intended to supplement the details provided in the PV Comprehensive Plan prepared by:

Centre County Planning and Community Development Office

c/o Robert B. Jacobs, Director [rbjacobs@co.centre.pa.us](mailto:rbjacobs@co.centre.pa.us)

Willowbank County Office Building

420 Holmes Street, Bellefonte PA 16823-1488

(814) 355-6791 Fax: (814) 355-8661

These sites were visited on 15 Jul 06 (49 photos provided outside this document):

1. American Legion Post 779 Baseball Fields (behind Snappy's Convenience Store, Old Fort)
  - 2 tournament-grade, Little League baseball fields: portable toilets, sponsor boards on fencing, snack building.
  - remarkable level of maintenance appears to be provided by volunteers.
  - facility hosts local league play and special tournaments.
  - no bleachers, no designated, on-site parking (although a Municipal Recycling Area is available adjacent to the ball fields, handy convenience store)
2. Centre Hall Potter Elementary School (Grades K-4), 211 N. Hoffer Ave. Centre Hall, PA 16828  
814-364-1481 Fax 814-364-9631

- This is a newly-constructed facility on the west side of Centre Hall with a playground area and ball field areas: 2 softball backstops (both fields with skinned infields); in addition, the one outfield appears to be used for soccer.

- The grounds maintenance is no doubt provided by PVASD.

3. Centre Hall Lions Club Park, 153 East Church Street, Centre Hall, PA 16828

- 7.1 acre site, off Rt. 192, on the east side of Centre Hall.

- 2 pavilions plus a BBQ pavilion, play equipment, basketball court, stone parking area, paved entrance drive, maintenance building, flush toilet building, air-conditioned event building (year-round). No sport fields were apparent.

- This site is owned and maintained by the Lions Club. I spoke with Dean Crater, who volunteers as the park operator. He related all the rentals they host for group events, most using the air-conditioned building.

4. Gregg Twp. Elem. School, 106 School Street, Spring Mills, Pennsylvania 16875

(814) 422-8822. This school was closed by PVASD at the end of 2005-2006 school year. - This venue is truly in the heart of Spring Mills and also serves as a community-space.

- A \$50K fundraising effort was conducted within the past 4 years in order to purchase and install the new play equipment, involving private donations and a \$10K PA DECD grant in 2003.

5. Penns Valley Area Elementary & Intermediate School, 4528 Penns Valley Rd.

Spring Mills, PA 16875. 814-422-8824, Voice Mail Box: 814-422-8024 Ext. 225

Fax Number: 814-422-0374.

- This is a newly-constructed school facility (12.9 acres), directly across the highway from the 17-acre Jr-Sr. HS.

- Play equipment area and the PVASD baseball field.

- This is a "drive-to" facility with no residential areas nearby.

- The PVASD Admin. Offices are located in this building.

6. Penns Valley Area Junior/Senior High School, 4545 Penns Valley Road,

Spring Mills, PA 16875. 814-422-8854 Fax Number: 814-422-8280

- This 17-acre facility contains 3 tennis courts, football stadium, 2 ball fields, & the track

7. Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Park, Park Road, Millheim. PA 16854

- The Millheim Lions Club has ownership of the land (13.6 acres) built the park facilities. The pool is operated by the "Penns Valley Parks & Recreation Assn." I am not aware of any other operations by this group.

- In 2003 the Penns Valley Park & Recreation Association was awarded a \$35K grant from PA DECD for a "Pool Revitalization Project."

- Maintenance provided by: (unknown)

- The following news item was recently released by Senator Jake Corman: "Millheim Borough, \$11,600, to prepare a Master Site Development Plan for Millheim Borough Recreation Park." It is not know if it refers to this park – the grant may be for the small parklet in the center of town known as "Fountain Park."

8. Millheim Borough Bldg., 225 East Main Street, Millheim, PA 16854 (814) 349-5350.

- This is the former Penns Valley East High School building, now serving as the Borough Office.

- 1.25 acre site with the Borough Bldg, public works yard and 2 Little League fields (which are no doubt maintained by volunteers). Cen-Clear Child Services also plays an unknown role in the building operations.

9. Arronsburg Community Bldg.,

- This building is used for community functions, including municipal meetings, but the ownership and operation must be confirmed.

## **ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study did not duplicate the efforts of the Centre County Planners that prepared the Penns Valley Region Comprehensive Plan adopted January 30, 2006. The Comprehensive Plan goes into some detail concerning recreation needs in Penns Valley beginning on page 106, please see Appendix B, Parks and Recreation. The comp plan also contains a detailed facility inventory. The comprehensive plan recommends that additional soccer fields be constructed on school district property and that neighborhood parks are lacking. The plan also suggests that a peer study be completed to determine the possibility of forming a joint recreation board for the valley.

The current study supplements and builds upon the information and recommendations contained within the comprehensive plan. The recommendations contained in the comprehensive plan proved to be accurate and should be pursued.

### **Recommendations**

1. Form a recreation board made up of two representatives from each of the municipalities in the valley. At least one of the representatives should be an elected official of the municipality.
2. All municipalities should implement an in lieu of fee
3. Form recreational board by June 30, 2008.
4. The board should complete a circuit rider application to hire a fulltime recreation director.
5. Partner with the Penns Valley Area School District (PVASD) and community organizations to utilize existing public facilities.
6. The recreation director could be housed in the Old Gregg School Recreation Center at Spring Mills, the former PVASD Gregg Township Elementary School.
7. School facilities should be expanded for soccer.
8. School facilities should also be open to the public.
9. Develop hiking and biking trails on abandoned railways.
10. Municipal contributions, in lieu of fees, and grants support the program.

# APPENDIX A

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (Bureau)

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM



Planning and Technical Assistance Grants

## CIRCUIT RIDER PROJECTS

### General Information and Guidelines

**PURPOSE:** This document further explains DCNR's Circuit Rider projects outlined in the Manual for Planning and Technical Assistance Grants. After reviewing this information but before completing the grant application, please contact the Bureau's Regional Recreation Advisor to discuss your project (a directory of regional representatives can be found in the Application Manual). Assistance will be provided through the Regional Advisor and/or Bureau Circuit Rider Program Manager to help further develop your project and submit an appropriate grant application. DCNR prefers to meet with a community before a Circuit Rider grant application is submitted to confirm that a Circuit Rider project is the best course of action.

#### 1. Circuit Rider Project Objectives

The Bureau of Recreation and Conservation provides financial assistance for county or regional organizations to hire a professional full-time staff person. The circuit rider's purpose must be to initiate new programs and services either countywide or across multiple municipalities that individually do not have the financial resources to hire a professional staff person. The intended

result of such a hiring is the increased ability of county and/or local officials to more efficiently and effectively meet their recreation, park, greenway, open space and/or natural resource conservation needs.

The project encourages intergovernmental cooperation through a written agreement that enables small communities and organizations to pool their financial resources in order to support a full-time, professional staff person.

A circuit rider is hired to coordinate the recreation, park or conservation efforts of the participating municipalities, school districts, a county, and/or non-profit organizations not to suppress their individuality and autonomy. These cooperative efforts result in a greater availability of facilities and programs than could be achieved by the participants on their own.

## **2. Eligible Applicants and Projects**

To be eligible for Circuit Rider grant funding, two or more municipalities must cooperate in an intergovernmental or regional effort and provide the required local cash match for the project. The application must come from one municipality, a council of government, an authority, or an official agency created under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law (Chapter 23 of Act 1966-177, formerly Act 180). A single county can be eligible without an intergovernmental agreement providing the county is undertaking or has completed the appropriate recreation and/or greenway planning and will be providing services countywide to residents and municipalities.

## **3. Examples of eligible circuit rider projects**

- The first full-time professional recreation director to expand recreation program offerings for a multi-municipal agency or county.
- An executive recreation and parks director is hired to manage an existing agency that expands beyond a single municipality's services and boundaries to integrate the efforts of an adjacent municipality and foster additional cooperation within a regional school district.
- An established recreation and park department serving one municipality hires a recreation program coordinator to provide contracted recreation services to two or more municipalities.

- A county greenway and open space coordinator is hired to help implement a county greenway and open space network plan.

#### 4. Special Requirements and Conditions

- **Grant Application:** Circuit Rider applications are accepted at any time. The application can come from a single county, one municipality on behalf of at least two, a council of governments, an authority or an official agency created under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law.
- **Peer Review:** In most situations, the Bureau will require a peer review under our Peer-to-Peer grants before approving an application for circuit rider funding. (See Grant Application Manual for Peer grants).
- **Eligible project costs:** These include only the circuit rider's salary and Bureau approved technical assistance and training expenses as follows:
  - ◇ First year---one hundred percent (100%) of gross salary.
  - ◇ Second year---seventy-five percent (75%) of gross salary.
  - ◇ Third year---fifty percent (50%) of gross salary
  - ◇ Fourth year---twenty-five percent (25%) of gross salary.
  - ◇ **Training Expenses** – Up to \$2,000 is available for Bureau approved training expenses over the four years of funding.
  - ◇ **Mentoring Expenses** – Up to \$1,500 is available per year for mentoring of the circuit rider by a Bureau approved mentor.
- **Local Match:** Participating parties must provide local funds to cover the circuit rider's employee benefits for all four years, the balance of the salary in years two, three and four and normal support services. Examples of typical project costs not covered by the grant include:

- the up-front, ineligible costs for developing the intergovernmental written agreement (legal fees), job description and advertisement, conducting interviews, sunshine law meeting advertisements, etc.;
- the fringe benefits for the circuit rider (fringe benefits generally include life and health insurance, worker's compensation, unemployment compensation pension plan);
- office arrangements, equipment and supplies, clerical assistance and the initial start-up costs such as a phone and separate phone line, stationary, mileage, travel expenses, training, the establishment and upkeep of separate bank accounts for the grant as well as an account for the contributions from participating municipalities and revenues generated from programs as part of the cooperative effort; and,
- liability insurance for board, director and possibility program participants (check on insurance policies with each municipality to evaluate coverage options); and program expenses.

In year five and beyond, the Bureau expects the local effort to continue on its own.

- **Approval Process:** To request a Circuit Rider grant, an applicant is required to submit a Community Conservation Partnerships grant application. Following receipt of this application, the Bureau will request the submission of a first year budget, draft job description, and when applicable an intergovernmental agreement. If determined an eligible and viable initiative, the Bureau will approve the grant request, provide a grant contract and work with the grantee to begin the hiring process.
- **Continued Funding:** Grant funding in the second, third and fourth years is contingent on the applicant's performance in the previous year(s) of the project, and submission of acceptable requests for additional funding, and the Bureau receiving an appropriation of grant funds.

#### Other Project Information

- **Budget Considerations:** Grantees must consider and budget for the programs that this Circuit Rider will provide and determine whether local funds are needed to cover expenses. Some

programs like adult classes generate sufficient revenue to cover their costs while others, however, do not. For example, a summer playground program traditionally receives local tax support in many communities. These costs should be budgeted. It is not realistic to expect to offer only programs that cover all of their costs. There are residents in every municipality who cannot afford to pay to participate in the programs yet these individuals should not be excluded from participation.

- **In-kind Services:** Providing office space, clerical support, etc. is not considered as an eligible match for the salary. These in-kind services are opportunities, however, to decrease the overall circuit rider expenses.
- **Project Budgeting:** Communities must consider the projected operating costs for the following year in their annual budgeting process. We have found, however, that the circuit rider budget process rarely follows the calendar year (local government's budget cycle). For the first year, project costs will not be incurred immediately. It takes six (6) to nine (9) months from the time a Circuit Rider grant is received to the actual start of the circuit rider. Below is a typical cycle:

**2006** -- Receive grant award in March, director hired October 1st and Year 1 starts.

**2007** -- Year 1 ends October 1, 2007 and Year 2 begins with increased local share.

**2008** -- Year 2 ends October 1, 2008 and Year 3 begins with increased local share.

**2009**-- Year 3. In the fall of 2003 municipalities should evaluate continued participation in the intergovernmental effort without Bureau funds after 2009.

**2010** -- Year 4 and DCNR funding ends October 1, 2010. Agency may need increase in local funding to continue without Bureau funds.

- **Circuit Rider Salary:** We have found that such positions require considerable maturity and experience. Circuit riders are expected to organize a new department, develop new programs, and often oversee the acquisition of land and development of new facilities. In addition, they are expected to foster cooperation between several municipalities where there may have been little or none before this effort on any issue. The skills needed to assume such a position far exceed those of a recent college graduate. We recommend that you hire a

professional with not only a degree in recreation and parks but also several years of experience working in the field. Therefore, please budget for an adequate salary. While there are geographical differences and varying local salary scales, our experience indicates that to attract a qualified professional, an annual starting salary range of \$30,000 - \$40,000 is required.

## 6. DCNR Role

The Bureau will provide technical assistance in the following areas:

- Developing a local cooperative agreement and related arrangements
- Developing a local project program and budget
- Developing the local job description
- Personnel recruitment and selection
- Employee and program/project performance evaluation
- Ongoing technical assistance

The Bureau will assist with the recruitment and selection of a Circuit Rider professional. We will provide a general job description along with the minimum education and experience requirements; however, participating municipalities may set more stringent standards. Municipalities will then advertise the position and develop an interview process, with the Bureau's assistance (the Bureau may request to participate in the applicant interviews), and the participating municipalities will then select a Circuit Rider professional. Prior to the appointment of the Circuit Rider, the Department will review the individual's background and credentials. The Department reserves the right to deny funding for any candidate who does not meet the professional standards for the position as determined by the Department.

# **APPENDIX B**

## **Parks and Recreation**

Extracted from the  
Official Comprehensive Plan  
Penns Valley Region,  
Centre County  
Adopted  
January 30, 2006

<http://www.co.centre.pa.us/planning/compplan/pennsvalley/default.asp>