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Chapter 8

# Juniata and Mifflin Counties Rural Recreation and Tourism



## Recreation

Recreation is an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle. People who are engaged in active healthy lifestyles live longer<sup>1</sup>, are less in danger from heart disease and stroke<sup>2</sup>, are at significantly reduced risk of cancer<sup>3</sup>, and have improved chances of combating a wide range of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma and depression<sup>4</sup>.

Participation in a broad range of leisure activities has the potential to improve physiological and mental health. It contributes to personality development and improves psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and stress. Recreation participation increases sense of well-being, deters addictions, and assists in the social learning of tolerance and respect for others.

Recreation plays an important role in promoting a strong sense of community by providing settings for people to socialize and share common interests and is a major driver of community interaction and pride. Recreation facilities make an important contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities. They provide a social focus for the community and affect people's perception of their neighborhood. It is widely accepted that parks and recreation influence how a community looks, feels and functions.

## Recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties can be characterized in three main categories: recreation in the great outdoors, close-to-home recreation and tourism.

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1 Gibbons LW, Macera CA. 1995. Changes in physical fitness and all-cause mortality: a prospective study of healthy and unhealthy men. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 273:1093-1098

2 Blair SN, Kohl HW and Gordon NF. 1992. How much physical activity is good for health? *Annual Reviews of Public Health*. 13:99-126

3 Slattery ML. 1996. How much physical activity do we need to maintain health prevent disease? *Difference diseases –different mechanisms. Research Quarterly Exercise and Sport* 67(2):209-212  
Slattery ML, Potter J, Caan B et al. 1997.

4 United States Department of Health and Human Services; Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. 1996. *PhysicalActivity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, Georgia. Glasgow RE, Ruggerio L, Eakin EG et al. 1997.

## Trends in Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation participation continues to increase. In 2007, participation in outdoor activities increased to 50 percent of all Americans up from 48.5 percent in 2006.<sup>5</sup>



### America's Favorite Outdoor Recreation Activities in 2008

Running/Jogging/Trail Running, Bicycling, Fishing, Wildlife Viewing and Skateboarding

Growth in activities is focused on activities that “can be done in a day”. Participants prefer activities for which there is easy access, that are easy to learn, can be done in a day and less specialized technical gear is required.

## Trends Affecting Participation

Several trends are affecting participation in outdoor recreation. For many important groups, activities could take the place of people being in the outdoors.

- All the time youth spend on media including video games, internet chatting, and television watching add up to more than a full-time job: 44 hours a week!<sup>6</sup>
- Youth physical activities plummets from middle school to high school with teens

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5 Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2008. *Outdoor Recreation Participation Study*. Outdoor Industry Foundation: Boulder Colorado.

6 Pope, Tara Parker. 2008. *Chores to Vidoe Games: How Children Spend their Time*. New York Times. September 19,2008.

becoming less than one-third active than they were as nine year olds.

- Since the 1970’s, children have been spending less time outdoors in nature producing the emergence of the term “Nature Deficit Disorder”. This is associated with fear and lack understanding about nature.
- Fitness activities such as exercise, walking and yoga are increasing for women displacing their outdoor activities which are on the decline

**Outdoor Pursuits**

Outdoor recreation pursuits include a wide range of activities. According to Pennsylvania’s Outdoor Recreation Plan, the top ten activities in which people of the Juniata and Mifflin Counties participate are in Table 8 - 1.

Activity	% Participating
Walking	71%
Sightseeing	54
View Nature	52
Picnicking	49
Swimming	45
Visit wild areas	35
Hiking	33
Fishing	32
Camping	30

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural resources. *Recreation Participation Survey*. (2004) **Pennsylvania’s Recreation Plan**. p 21.

**Hunting and Fishing in Pennsylvania**

Hunting and fishing are not only important recreational pursuits in Pennsylvania; they contribute significantly to the state’s economy. About 51,000 jobs in Pennsylvania are related to hunting and fishing. Table 8 - 2 shows how Pennsylvania ranks nationwide among the 50 states in hunting and fishing in terms of participation, spending and jobs.

7 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan. 2004-2008. Harrisburg: PADCNR. p 21.

**Hunting: Economic Stimulus**

The average hunter spends \$1,992 annually on food, drinks, gas, clothing, lodging, supplies, and equipment, in Juniata and Mifflin Counties that translates into \$26 million annually. If only half that were spent here, it would still be over \$13 million.

Participation	Rank
Days afield	1
Resident hunters	2
Out of state hunters	4
Resident sportsmen	5
Days on the water	6
Resident anglers	12
Out of state anglers	17
Spending	Rank
Hunting	2
Sportsmen	4
Fishing	6
Jobs	Rank
Hunting	2
Sportsmen	6
Fishing	8

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 2006.

**Hunting in Juniata and Mifflin Counties**

There is no official tracking of the annual visitation figures in the state game lands in Pennsylvania. Table 8 - 3 presents the license sales figures for the years 1999-2000 and 2007-2008. The table shows the following trends in hunting in Juniata and Mifflin Counties:

- Declining participation of six percent in Juniata and 11 percent in Mifflin.
- Shifts from adult licenses to Senior and Senior Lifetime licenses as the baby boomers age.

8 United States Fish & Wildlife Service. 2006. National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior.

Table 8-3 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties General Hunting License Sales Years 1999-2000 and 2007-2008				
Type	1999-2000	2007-2008	Numeric Change 1999-2000	% Change 1999-2000
<b>Juniata County</b>				
<b>Resident</b>				
Adult	3,159	2,760	-399	-13%
Junior	281	216	-65	-23%
Junior Combo	210	270	60	28%
Senior	241	166	-48	-20%
<b>Fur taking</b>				
Adult	121	200	79	65%
Junior	2	0	-2	-100%
Senior	6	15	9	150%
<b>Non-Resident</b>				
Adult	66	36	-30	45%
Junior	2	0	-2	-100%
7-Day	9	2	-7	-78%
Senior Lifetime	181	338	157	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>-275</b>	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Mifflin County</b>				
<b>Resident</b>				
Adult	7,955	6,740	-1,215	-15%
Junior	724	466	-258	-36%
Junior Combo	361	573	212	59%
Senior	396	244	-152	-38%
<b>Fur taking</b>				
Adult	149	205	56	38%
Junior	9	1	-8	-89%
Senior	5	7	2	40%
<b>Non-Resident</b>				
Adult	198	89	-108	-54%
Junior	8	2	-6	-75%
7-Day	18	9	-9	-50%
Senior Lifetime	364	750	386	106%
<b>Total</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>-11%</b>

Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission interview.

### Fishing in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

The Juniata and Susquehanna Rivers and creeks in the region provide access for fishing. Table 8 - 4 has the number of licenses sold in Juniata and Mifflin Counties in 2004 and 2008.

The number of fishing licenses decreased by five percent in Juniata County and nine percent in Mifflin County from 2004 to 2009. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission reported that fishing license sales in 2009 had the largest

one-year percentage increase since 1980<sup>9</sup>. Fishing license sales were up by five percent over 2008 reinforcing thinking that people have returned to fishing as an affordable family activity. Reports on sales by county for 2009 are not yet available to present the Juniata and Mifflin County trends.

Table 8-4 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Fishing License and Permit Sales Years 2004 and 2008 <sup>10</sup>				
Type	2004	2008	Numeric Change 2004-2008	% Change 2004-2008
<b>Juniata County</b>				
Resident	1,424	1,238	-186	-13%
Senior Resident	21	27	6	28%
Lifetime	48	37	-11	-23%
Non-resident	31	15	-16	-52%
Tourist	36	29	-7	-19%
Guard/Reserve	0	8	8	New
Free	0	1	1	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>1,355</b>		<b>-5%</b>
Stamps	1,232	971	-205	-17%
<b>Mifflin County</b>				
Resident	7,071	6,432	-639	-9%
Senior Resident	70	108	27	39%
Lifetime	125	132	26	6%
Non-resident	141	86	-55	-39%
Tourist	151	109	-42	-28%
Guard/Reserve	0	6	5	New
Free	2	12	10	500%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,560</b>	<b>6,885</b>	<b>-675</b>	<b>-9%</b>
Stamps	5,641	4,863	-679	-14%

Source: Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

### Fishing for Dollars

The average angler spends \$1,400 annually on food, drinks, gas, clothing, lodging, supplies, and equipment. In Juniata and Mifflin Counties, that translates into \$11.5 million annually. If only half that were spent here, it would still be \$5.7 million.

### State Rank in Fishing Licenses

Among Pennsylvania's 67 counties, Juniata County ranked 63 and Mifflin County 45 in 2007 in fishing license sales.

<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Report. [http://www.fish.state.pa.us/newsreleases/2009/licsales\\_5yr\\_high.pdf](http://www.fish.state.pa.us/newsreleases/2009/licsales_5yr_high.pdf)  
<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. 2009. [http://www.fish.state.pa.us/images/admin/lars/fishlice\\_county2008.htm](http://www.fish.state.pa.us/images/admin/lars/fishlice_county2008.htm)



### Boating

Boating registrations increased in Juniata County by five percent from 1997 to 2008 while they decreased by five percent in Mifflin County as shown in Table 8 - 5. Juniata County ranked 59 and Mifflin County 49 among Pennsylvania’s counties in 2008.

Type	1997	2008	Numeric Change 2004-2007	% Change
Juniata County	1,115	1,167	52	5%
Mifflin County	2,178	2,078	-100	-5%
TOTAL	5,290	5,253	48	1%

Source: Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

### Non-Consumptive Recreation

Activities that do not reduce the supply of resources in the environment include wildlife watching, bicycling, hiking, camping, picnicking, and so on. These are among the most popular activities and are gaining in participation.

While bicycling in the scenic rural areas of the region is unlimited, bicycling close to home is difficult and can be dangerous in the area with higher traffic. Consequently planning for safe bicycle routes close to where people live, schools and parks is crucial. This is more fully explored in the trails chapter of this plan.

### Close-to-Home Recreation

While the outdoor recreation resources abound in Juniata and Mifflin Counties, recreation close-to-home offers different types of experiences for the

<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. 2009  
<http://www.fish.state.pa.us/boatregsales.htm>

citizens. Fitness, wellness, fun, sports, volunteerism, relaxation, de-stressing and spending time with family and friends enrich people’s lives. Recreation can include scheduled organized programs as well as activities that people of all ages can undertake on their own. Fitness, the arts, music, drama, self-improvement, volunteerism, special events, and nature all provide a range of leisure pursuits that are important to people of all ages. Having lots of things to do is important to the quality of life as well as in attracting and retaining businesses, families and in keeping young people in the community.



Recreation in rural communities is traditionally focused on youth, sports, summer months and the outdoors. Furthermore, recreation providers are usually volunteer sports groups, faith based organizations and schools. Not-for-profit or non-profit enterprises sometimes emerge to provide fee-based recreation. Municipal recreation is limited due to limited funding, staffing and small populations.

### Recreation Services

Organized recreation services in Juniata and Mifflin Counties are the result of many people and organizations pitching in, volunteering their time and seeking creating methods of financing. The parks described in the parks chapter offer opportunities for self-directed recreation for citizens of all ages and variety of interests.

### Governmental Units

#### State

Reeds Gap State Park offers a host of activities year round. The park also partners with other recreation providers in offering activities such as geo-caching, a high-tech treasure hunting game

played with GPS (global positioning system) devices.

### County

Neither county has a parks and recreation department. None of the municipalities have recreation staff. The road crews provide maintenance of public parks and recreation facilities. Volunteers serve on parks and recreation boards. They often plan and implement recreation events.

Mifflin and Juniata Counties operate Senior Centers through the Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging. The four centers in Juniata County are located in East Waterford, McAlisterville, Mifflintown and Richfield. The centers in Mifflin County are in the boroughs of Lewistown, McVeytown, and Milroy and in the townships of Derry and Wayne. Operating hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

### Municipal

Lewistown Borough has been operating an indoor community center since 2005. It has a small community room and meeting space. At one time, the Borough had a Recreation Director who programmed the center for recreation. Skateboarding has been under discussion for several years.

Municipalities generally provide recreation facilities but not services except for one major program: the Summer Playground Program. The Mifflin County Playground Association provides the summer playground program in 12 municipalities in conjunction with the United Way. It is a volunteer-based program. Community and volunteer organizations provide organized recreation using municipally owned parks and recreation facilities.

### School Districts

Each county has one school district: the Juniata County School District and the Mifflin County School District.

Juniata County School District is undertaking a strategic plan. One of the items for exploration is the potential for how district facilities could be open more to the community. The district's track

is not open to the public. The district has experienced challenges in opening school facilities for community use in terms of security and control. Community sports organizations use school district facilities for youth leagues. School grounds are used for community special events such as Dutch Days. Penn State University has provided sports camps and assemblies for the district.



Mifflin County School District has a goal in its strategic plan to enhance community partnerships. Indian Valley High School offers an innovative physical education curriculum that includes bicycling. The high school also offers a bicycle club as an after school activity. The club has been growing since its formation in 2005. It has three sections: BMX, on-road cycling and bicycle repair. The club has about 120 members. In addition to creating interest in active pursuits, the club has spurred internships and employment in bicycle shops. This program is only offered at Indian Valley High School and not at Lewistown High School. The Indian Valley High School also offers a Health Club with a focus on walking. Safe places to walk and bicycle are needed by both clubs. Although a new track was recently constructed at the high school, it is locked and not available to the public.

### Private Organizations

The Juniata Valley YMCA in Burnham provides year round seven-days-a week recreation opportunities to members. The indoor swimming pool, gym, fitness center and activity rooms serve as home base for recreation classes and activities. In addition to many programs for children, youth families and adults, the YMCA offers the popular

Silver Sneakers Program for senior adults.



The Silver Sneakers Fitness Program is a proven, results-oriented program that enables older adults, often burdened with chronic conditions, to take charge of their health and maintain an active, independent lifestyle. Participating health care providers such as Geisinger offer a free membership to fitness centers including the Juniata Valley YMCA.

The Delauter Center in Mifflintown offers drop in services for children and youth. A board oversees the center's operation. Volunteers operate the center with a budget of \$12,000 raised privately. There is no municipal support of this facility. Three to four volunteers open the center at no charge for two nights for older youth and town nights for younger youth due to the small size of the building. About 20 youths regularly, including Spanish speaking, use this center. A family purchased this former fire hall and donated it for use as a youth center. The United Way provides limited grant funding for programs.

Fayette Area Lion's Den in McAlisterville is a large indoor sports and fitness facility. Visitors can play sports including indoor soccer, basketball, volleyball and hockey. The fitness center and free weight room provide a place for people to workout year round. A major attraction is the 500-foot indoor track. The Lion's Den offers a year round calendar of programs, events and activities. The Silver Sneakers Program is also available here. The facility is available for rental. With a kitchen and multi-purpose rooms, the Lion's Den offers the community the

opportunity to rent facilities for meetings and parties.

The Lumina Center in Lewistown offers recreation programs year round. They include weekend drop-in programs for youth 6-18, Tuesday evening programs for youth 6-12; a teen/young adult program on Wednesday evenings; an after school drop-in program for elementary school children; two summer camp programs, senior adult computer classes and a basketball league.

Mifflin/Juniata Special Needs Center offers a wide variety of services to help those with special needs from infants through adults live a life of dignity and with their own capability. To that end the Center offers a wide variety of education, therapy, programs and services. With respect to social recreation, the Center offers: a Young at Heart Club that operates during the day weekdays, a teen club, an adult recreation program for socialization, a summer recreation program, a bowling league and t-ball. The organization uses the YMCA for swimming programs.

### **Youth Programs for Agriculture: Recreational and Educational**

Since agriculture is vital to the way of life in Juniata and Mifflin Counties, several organizations are in place to spur youth interest in agriculture. These programs are at once educational and recreational and foster the way of life here. These include the following:

- **FFA** (Future Farmers of America) makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. FFA chapters are in Mifflin Juniata Career and Technology Center, called the Big Valley FFA, one in Mount Union, and the Juniata School District's High School and Middle School.
- **4-H** - 4-H is a community of young people who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. Mifflin County has 23 clubs for youth ages 8 through 18 organized around three themes including

community, shooting sports and livestock. Juniata County has 21 clubs for youth 8 through 19 years of age. Activities include livestock, square dancing, Seeing Eye puppies, nutrition, cake decorating, quilting, teen councils, textiles and scrapbooking.

### United Way of Mifflin-Juniata

This organization operates with the mission of improving people's lives by mobilizing the caring power of the community. The United Way has been organizing and providing programs for youth through the Mifflin County Playground Association. This includes a summer playground program in 12 municipalities in Mifflin County. The Fayette Area Lion's Den in Juniata County assists with this program by hiring the playground staff and developing the program. The United Way also funds the Lumina Center and Mifflin-Juniata Special Needs Center. The Special Needs Center recreation program would not exist without the United Way support.

### Mifflin County Communities That Care

The goal of Communities that Care is to help youth feel safe in and connected to their community. CTC promotes the healthy development of the children of Mifflin County to prevent:

- Juvenile delinquency
- Violence by and among children
- Teen pregnancy
- Truancy
- School dropout
- Substance abuse
- Undesirable actions and attitudes that may be harmful to youth.

Rec-Connect works with the CTC Youth Council and Mifflin County's boroughs and townships to develop and distribute a Community Activity Directory. They work with the Mifflin County Regional Police to clean up graffiti around town; link recreation centers with local civic groups and other officials to find funding for and establish

new youth programs; and locate scholarships to cover youth's fees for recreation centers and other activities and programs. Plans are underway to seek funding to establish CTC in Juniata County.



### PANA

The Pennsylvania Activity and Nutrition Advocates was originally formed to facilitate the implementation of Pennsylvania's Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan to Prevent Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases. PANA works with partners in communities to make it easier to be healthy in the places we live, learn, work and play by changing environments to support healthier eating and physical activity options. PANA operates in 64 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties with the exception of Juniata, Mifflin and Warren Counties. Indian Valley High School joins PANA efforts in some academic years. Collaboration with PANA would benefit the area's citizens in healthy lifestyle initiatives especially for youth. PANA offers expertise, partnerships, programs and grant funding.

### MJ PATH

MJ Path (Mifflin-Juniata Partners Advancing Tomorrow's Health), a SHIP (State Health Improvement Plan) partner is a collaboration of municipal, public, private and voluntary organizations, agencies and individuals in Juniata and Mifflin Counties dedicated to promoting the health and fitness and individuals and the community.

### PEER Project

Recently, the United Way, Communities that Care, 12 municipalities (16 municipalities were invited to participate), and the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department joined forces to secure a PEER grant. The purpose of the grant is to explore how multiple municipalities and associated partners can provide regional recreation in Mifflin County. If the study, funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, results in consensus among the potential partners that they could work together in regional recreation, the emerging partnership could seek another grant that would provide funding for a professional park and recreation position over a four-year period. The partners would match the grant. The goal of the four-year funding is to enable the professional to “grow” the recreation system in the direction of community support with a range of public and private revenues to support operations once the grant is expired.

### Commercial Recreation

Commercial recreation enterprises provide services for both residents and visitors. A variety of recreational opportunities ranging from camping to kayaking and golf is available here. These operations provide activities and opportunities that government could not provide. They offer community activities such as Family Night at Locust Campground which features food from fine local restaurants. Some of these businesses include:

- Buttonwood Campground
- Locust Campground
- Lewistown Country Club
- Historic Pennsylvania Canal Boat Ride
- Tuscarora Academy Museum
- Steele’s Rentals in Lewistown
- Juniata River Adventure in Mifflintown
- Zook and Lyter Cottages in Mifflintown
- JC Kayak Trips

### Tourism

The Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau serves Juniata and Mifflin Counties. The annual economic value of tourism to the region is over \$82 million. Over 760 jobs are tourism related in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Tourism types include eco-tourism, agri-tourism, outdoor recreation tourism, and heritage tourism.

#### Special Events = Visitors & Revenue

Reeds Gap Fall Festival, Festival of Ice, Independence Day River Fest, Freedom Walk, Juniata RiverFest



The Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau is working towards increasing tourism in the region. The Bureau in collaboration with the Mifflin County Planning and Development Department developed the **Juniata River Valley Regional Tourism Plan** in 2002, which builds upon the area’s beauty, historical and natural resources. A hotel tax on hotel room occupancy helps to support the operation of the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau. Of the \$11 million the state of Pennsylvania distributes among tourism agencies, the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau only receives \$8,000 annually. Juniata and Mifflin Counties can be a destination instead of a “pass-through” for people to go to other places. Tourism destinations also need support facilities such as variety of numerous good places to eat and for lodging.<sup>12</sup>

While tourism and recreation are inextricably linked, three important aspects of tourism in this region stand out in this recreation plan: making

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12 Shepstone, Thomas. (2002) Juniata River Valley Regional Tourism Plan. Lewistown: Juniata River Valley Tourism Bureau. p 8.

better use of the Juniata River as a recreational resource, capitalizing on the Big Valley which in this plan has recommendations for bicycle trails and agri-tourism. The Juniata River and bicycle trails are explored in other chapters of this plan. Agri-tourism considerations are presented below.

**VISION**

**Tourism Development for the Juniata River Valley Region**

*The Juniata River Valley is a region of attractive historical and natural resources. Its blend of history, working landscapes and spectacular features offers visitors relaxing, yet intriguing, experiences. These will be developed and promoted in ways that preserve the Valley's essential character. The Juniata River Valley will be marketed in a coordinated manner as a single region with links to adjoining regions. Tourism development and promotion will be focused on heritage and natural resources based tourism, preserving the quality of life for residents and continuously improving the quality of experience for visitors.*



One of the primary goals of the tourism plan is to undertake agri-tourism. As agricultural counties, agri-tourism emerged in this rural recreation, greenways and open space plan as a consideration with both advocates and opponents. Agri-tourism is an activity conducted for the enjoyment of visitors on a working farm, ranch or plant that earns income for the owner. Still in its infancy in Pennsylvania, especially in this region, agri-tourism will require the involvements of key stakeholders in sound planning for this aspect of tourism in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Agri-tourism may appeal to some agricultural owners and not to others in the area. Figuring out what would work and who would like to participate would be an important task in tourism planning. Figure 8 -1 presents the categories for agricultural tourism along with activities that fall under these four categories.

**Figure 8-1  
Agricultural Tourism Activities**

<b>Farm Retail/Dining</b>	<b>Agri-tainment</b>
Roadside stand	Rodeo
Farm Market	Agricultural fair/festivals
Christmas tree farm	Children's activities
U-pick operation	Petting Zoo
Gift shop/ag. Crafts	Horseback Riding
Restaurant/concessions	Corn Maze
Ice cream/bakery	Haunted houses/hayrides
Corporate events	Wagon Rides
Weddings/events	Sleigh Rides
Brewery	Outdoor recreation
Winery	
<b>Agri-education</b>	<b>Agri-lodging (provided on an operating or historic farm)</b>
School tours	Bed and breakfast
Farm related museum	Dude/guest ranch
Garden/nursery tours	Country inn
Winery/brewery tours	Hostel
Agriculture exhibits/tours	Camping/campgrounds
Crop identification program	

Source: Ryan, Susan; DeBord Kristy; and McClellan, Kristin. (2006) Agritourism in Pennsylvania: An Industry Assessment. Harrisburg: Center for Rural Pennsylvania. p 8.

## Juniata River Valley Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce offers the major large-scale community festivals and events in the region. These include the RiverFest and the Ice Fest, Freedom Walk, and family nights in the summer. Tours involving wineries are an up and coming opportunity in this region of Pennsylvania.

### Main Line Canal Greenway

The Main Line Canal Greenway represents a major opportunity for increasing recreation experiences and tourism in the region such as interpretive exhibits, destinations and activities. Designated as a Millennium Trail, it links heritage, culture, and recreation along 320 miles and is seen as nationally significant. The Juniata River Water Trail was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 2009 as part of the Main Line Canal Greenway. These assets can become tremendous tourist destinations for the area.

### Recreation Opportunity: Tool to Attract and Retain Residents and Business

A major finding of the public involvement process was the goal of attracting and retaining youth in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. While many factors influence participation in recreation such as income, ethnicity, gender, and health, interest was keen regarding recreation by age group. While the traditional emphasis of recreation in this bi-county region has been on youth and sports, expanding recreation opportunities to all ages from youth through senior adults is important. To attract and retain business and industry it is important for people of all ages, especially families, to have a lot of things to do for recreation. Connecting recreational opportunities is critical to creating lifestyles, which is an essential factor in deciding whether to live or establish a business in a particular location.

Recreation interests are clearly linked to age. Participation in active recreational activities as well as engaging in new activities is the purview of youth through teens and mid-twenties when participation begins to decrease over time. Teenagers have triple the activities and five times the participation of people over the age of 60. However, the Baby Boomer generation re-defining active healthy lifestyles with increasing both the range of activities as well as in level of participation in a wide range of outdoor recreation pursuits. The following generalizations about outdoor recreation interests can serve as a guide for Juniata and Mifflin Counties in creating recreation opportunities for various age groups<sup>13</sup>:

- 6 to 17: Participation in outdoor recreation dropped by over 16 percent from 2006 – 2008. The decline is stemming perhaps due to recent programs to connect youth and the outdoors. While participation among youth is the highest

of all generations, their decreasing participation may lead to shrinking numbers of outdoor enthusiasts in the future.

- People age 18 to 40 are more engaged in outdoor recreation than they were in 1960.
- Ages 18-24: Running, jogging and trail running; car, backyard and RV camping; road biking, mountain biking, and BMX biking; and hiking
- Over 30 and Under 30: walking, bird watching, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding are more popular among those over 30 than those under 30.
- 25 through 40: Activity continues in these activities but at decreasing levels.
- Ages 40 – 55: Walking, cross country skiing, bicycling, wildlife viewing, visiting nature and cultural centers, canoeing, power boating, RV camping, horseback riding and hunting. Those who engage in activities like hiking and skiing in this age group are likely to continue doing so later as they age.
- Over 55: walking continues to a major interest while there is a substantial drop off in outdoor recreation participation even in wildlife viewing, nature and cultural center participation, and non-local park visitation.
- 60+: Walking, hiking, bird watching, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and fishing.
- Baby Boomers: health and fitness activities including swimming, golf, fishing and canoeing/kayaking. Increasing in popularity is hiking/climbing/rappelling; river rafting; downhill skiing; In-line skating; competitive running and hang gliding/parasailing and parachuting.
- Across the Age Groups: backpacking, mountain biking and trail running are showing double digit increase in

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<sup>13</sup> Jenson, Clayne and Guthrie, Steven. (2006) Outdoor Recreation in America. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Del Webb. 2007. Active Recreation Tops Desires for Baby Boomers, Senior Citizens. <http://seniorjournal.com/NEWS/Features/2007/7-04-13-ActiveRecreation.htm>. Outdoor Foundation. 2009 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report. 2009. Outdoor Foundation: Boulder, CO.

participation, while road running and bicycling are relatively flat.

While information about recreation activity interests by age group is powerful, in and of itself is not enough. To really use recreation as a tool to attract and retain residents and businesses, the outdoor recreation facilities must be developed, maintained, programmed and advertised. This will require harnessing all of the public and private partners with an interest in recreation, tourism, economic development and planning to join forces in implementing this plan.

## Conclusions

### Strengths

**Bountiful Outdoors** - Juniata and Mifflin Counties offer desirable quality of life in part through the scenic beauty, experiences in the great outdoors and a host of community volunteers that have stepped up to create recreation opportunities.

**Civic Involvement** - Recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties truly is a civic effort with many interested and committed individual and organizations that have worked towards providing the service that are available.

**Positive Views on Collaboration** - Municipalities and the counties have long recognized the benefit of collaboration. Both Juniata County and Mifflin County have a school district that encompasses all of the jurisdictions within the respective county. Sports teams operate regionally. Mifflin County has a COG (Council of Government). The Mifflin County Playground Association includes 12 municipalities that work together in providing youth recreational services. United Way has harnessed partnerships. This can continue and be expanded through new partnerships such as the PEER Study. The Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce and the Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging are other examples of collaboration.

### Challenges

**Public Health Issues** - Despite the availability of

outdoor recreation resources and several public and quasi-public indoor recreation facilities, the citizenry is experiencing higher than average levels of disease associated with the lack of physical activity including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cardio-vascular problems, and addictions. Creating organized efforts to motivate people to lead active healthy lifestyles through recreation is essential for individuals, families, society and the economy that is struggling with high health care costs in part due to these same factors.

**Fragmented Services** - Recreation services are fragmented. Organizations that provide recreation activities and events operate fairly independently. However, they do join forces in providing recreation programs, opportunities and events on an ad hoc basis. The United Way and Communities That Care have been instrumental in facilitating collaboration for community recreation purposes. Organizations that offer facilities for recreation opportunities and/or recreation programs include State Game Lands, State Forests, Reeds Gap State Park, the Fish & Boat Commission, some municipalities, Mifflin County School District, the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau, Juniata Valley YMCA, the community centers, quasi-public recreation centers, commercial operations, youth sports organizations, Lewistown Hospital and others.

**Traditional Focus** - Most recreation is focused on the outdoors, summer months, youth and sports. Broader recreational opportunities are needed in the arts, culture, fitness, social connections, winter activities and year round opportunities. There is no environmental education program or center in Juniata or Mifflin Counties. However, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center (SCEC), is Penn State's nature center located twelve miles south of the University Park campus in the Stone Valley Recreation Area. SCEC offers environmental education programs and services to the public conveniently located to Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Also convenient to this area is the Greenwood Furnace Environmental Education Center in Greenwood Furnace State Park.

**Financial Challenges in Providing Public Recreational Services** - Juniata and Mifflin Counties operate with very tight budgets and

small staffs. Neither county has recreation staff or funding. The municipalities have limited financial resources and small staffs thus resulting in scarce resources for recreation services.

**Apathy and lack of urgency: A concern** - The public participation process revealed concern in the community about the level of apathy and lack of a sense of urgency to move ahead with recreation and parks.

### Opportunities

**Target Groups** - While recreation is vital for people of all ages, it is particularly important for children and youth. The activities in which adults engage are usually the ones they were exposed to through family and friends before the age of 18. Creating opportunities for adults, especially those ages 25 to 40 will help to attract business and retaining young people in the community. Family-oriented recreation could be increased in the area. Providing ways for families to connect through shared recreational experiences will help to strengthen strong family bonds, the foundation of our society.

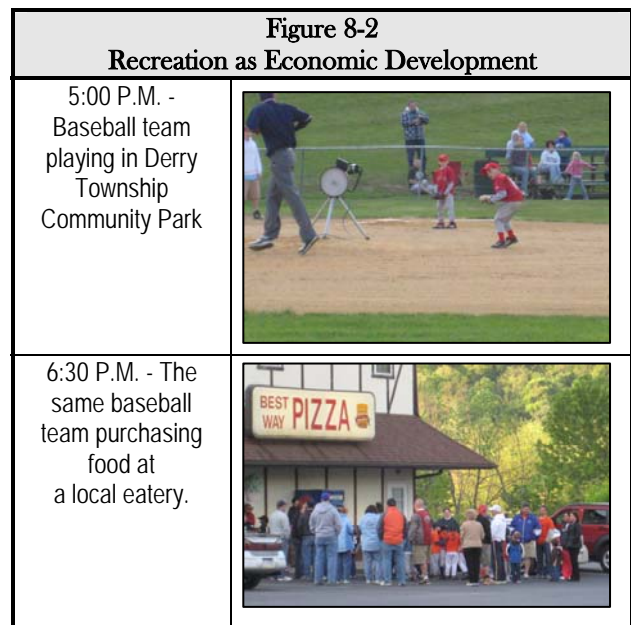
Recreation deters crime and substance abuse. Incarceration of a juvenile offender costs 218 times more than public recreation for one youth over a lifetime. The cost of incarcerating a juvenile offender in Pennsylvania is \$362 per day or \$132,130 annually<sup>14</sup>. The average municipal investment in public recreation is about \$7.78 per capita in rural communities in Pennsylvania<sup>15</sup>. Over a 77.9 year life expectancy<sup>16</sup>, the \$7.78 per year investment in recreation equals \$606 in 2009 dollar value, less than one half of one percent of the cost of a year in prison!

<sup>14</sup> Melissa Sickmund, T.J.Sladky and Wei Kang. (2008) "Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook." [http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/cjrp/asp/State\\_Adj.asp](http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/cjrp/asp/State_Adj.asp); American Correctional Association, 2008 Directory: Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, and Probation and Parole Authorities (Alexandria, VA: American Correctional Association, 2008).  
<sup>15</sup> Center for Rural Pennsylvania. 2004 Rural and Urban Municipalities for Parks and Recreation. Center for Rural Pennsylvania: Harrisburg, PA p.1. Note: per capita investment was adjusted to the 2009 dollar value.  
<sup>16</sup> Jiaquan Xu, M.D.; Kenneth D. Kochanek, M.A.; and Betzaida Tejada-Vera, B.S. 2007. Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2007. National Vital Statistics Reports Volume 58(1). Center for Disease Control: Washington, D.C. p.1.

**Increasing School District Involvement in Recreation** - The School Districts have the potential to be more involved in community recreation. Representatives of the districts expressed their desire to have more community outreach.

**Recreation & Tourism: Economic Development** - The recreation issues/opportunities and the tourism issues/opportunities are similar here. What will benefit residents will attract tourists. Recreation is viewed as a cost in Juniata and Mifflin Counties; it is actually an investment that increases property values, attracts business, deters health care costs, prevents juvenile delinquency expenditures, and brings in tourists with their dollars.

Figure 8-2 shows a baseball team playing in Derry Township Community Park at 5:00 P.M. At 6:30 P.M., the same team is buying food at a local restaurant. While one team buying pizza, soda and ice cream might seem like no big deal, consider this event on a larger scale. The economic impact of a youth soccer tournament is \$71 per participant per day. Softball tournaments yield an economic impact of \$129 per participant per day as adjusted to the 2008-dollar value. Therefore a softball tournament over a weekend with 20 teams with 15 players per team would yield \$116,100 in local economic impact<sup>17</sup>.



<sup>17</sup> Crompton, John L. (September 1999) **Parks & Recreation: The Economic Impact of Sports Tournaments and Events.** p. 26.



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Chapter 9

# Planning, Management, and Financing



## Organization and Financing

Open space, greenway, and recreation efforts require a broad spectrum of entities and individuals working together in a proactive way. Since the amount of money needed to conserve open space and provide recreation opportunities would be beyond the capacity of Juniata and Mifflin Counties alone, a mix of public and private funding sources would be needed. This chapter assesses the counties' capacity to operate, manage and finance open space, greenways and rural recreation.

## Organization

In order to harness the resources necessary to provide open space conservation, recreation, greenways and trails, effective organization needs to be in place. Creatively and collaboratively organizing the diverse stakeholders in the bi-county region would help to make the best use of limited resources, tap into a wealth of interested community organizations and uncover new sources of support. Developing public/private partnerships, encouraging volunteers through these arrangements, incorporating volunteers, and establishing stable funding as well as philanthropic organizations will be keys to success in open space, greenways and recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties.

*The opportunities for the successful conservation of Juniata and Mifflin Counties' rural character as well as creating vibrant communities through recreation lie in uniting the various constituencies*

## Civic Engagement

Organizational support for initiatives in open space, greenways, and rural recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties is dispersed among many different public and private entities. What is remarkable about it all is the level of civic engagement of key stakeholders, individuals and organizations that have stepped up to meet needs that government alone could not provide. Although a frequent refrain among providers is the level of apathy in the area and that the same people are those involved in everything, the fact

is that good things are happening – with potential for more with the right organization!

Parks and recreation in Juniata and Mifflin Counties is largely in response to pressing needs and citizens or organizations finding ways to meet those needs. A few examples of this include youth sports organizations, the summer playground program through United Way, the Indian Valley High School Bicycle program and the Chamber of Commerce's facilitation of special events.



In rural communities, parks and recreation usually falls to community volunteers, faith based organizations, and school districts. This is due to the small municipal populations, limited budgets, sparse staff working restricted hours, and tight county budgets that struggle with state mandates.

## State Outdoor Recreation/Conservation Entities

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania operates in Juniata and Mifflin Counties through Reeds Gap State Park, the State Forests and the Fish & Boat Commission. The Pennsylvania Game Commission operates extensive areas of gamelands in the region. They operate independently in providing recreation opportunities and conservation consistent with their missions.

## Juniata and Mifflin Counties

This bi-county open space, greenways and rural recreation plan represents a huge accomplishment in regional efforts. The two counties joining forces in a common purpose presents a shining example of maximizing community resources for the public good. Continued joint planning efforts especially in greenways and trails will be productive.

Juniata County has a full time planning director and one part time planner shared with Mifflin County. Juniata County does not provide any parks and recreation facilities or services. There is no parks and recreation board. The Juniata County Conservation District manages the Juniata County Agricultural Land Preservation program.

Mifflin County owns one one-acre park and provides no recreation services. The Mifflin County Planning and Development Department undertakes park, trail, recreation and greenway planning as time and staff permit. The department pursues the creation of parks in the area, promotes and provides support for grants, and works towards tapping opportunities uncovered in the normal course of their planning work. The department offers technical assistance to municipalities in land conservation and land use planning. There is no parks and recreation board. The county did create an advisory committee for this plan. In 2009, Mifflin County secured a Peer Study grant as part of a partnership with the United Way and CTC (Communities That Care) for the purpose of exploring regional recreation. The Mifflin County Conservation District manages the county's Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

### **The Municipalities**

The municipal populations are small; 31 of the 33 jurisdictions have a population under 5,000 including one with only 272. None of these is large enough to have a parks and recreation director even if the budget were available. Lewistown has a part-time recreation coordinator. In the region, 21 of the 33 municipalities have public parks. Park maintenance is the responsibility of the municipal road departments. One jurisdiction, Lewistown Borough, has a parks and recreation board.



None of the municipalities has a parks, recreation, greenway, open space or trail plan. Consequently no mandatory dedication of land ordinances are in place that could help to gain park land and recreation facilities. Derry Township has provisions in its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance regarding parkland.

Two park and recreation systems serve as regional hubs of recreation: Lewistown Borough and Derry Township. They each offer ballfields, concession stands, playgrounds and Derry Township offers camping while Lewistown offers a swimming pool and community center. They serve a much broader clientele than their own citizens. Citizens from the smaller more rural communities look to these communities for recreation opportunities.

Twelve municipalities and Mifflin County joined forces in undertaking the Peer Study. They are exploring how to provide recreation as a regional partnership. If the study produces a consensus in moving forward in regional recreation, the partnership would be able to pursue grant funding to hire a recreation professional over a four year period. During this period, the professional would work toward establishing a financially stable operation through a variety of public and private funding sources and partners.

### **The School Districts**

There is one school district in each county: the Juniata County School District and the Mifflin County School District. Both school districts rank on the lower end of investment in comparison with the other 463 school districts in the state.

The Juniata County School District has identified the increased use of school facilities by the community in a responsible manner as one of its main goals in the District's Strategic Plan. Working towards this goal will have the dual benefit of increased public use of important school based recreation facilities as well as enhanced community relations through more conscientious use of the facilities during non-school hours by community groups. This should help to create an active and involved citizenry as well as help to generate support for school district initiatives.

The Mifflin County School District participates in community organizations devoted to issues facing Mifflin County such as United Way committees, Communities that Care, and this open space greenway and rural recreation plan by appointing the Assistant Superintendent to serve as their liaison. The District permits facility use to community sports groups and anticipates public use of the new Indian Valley High School currently in construction. The district's physical education program includes a model bicycle component at Indian Valley High School that promotes active healthy lifestyles that will foster a lifelong interest in cycling, activity and health.

Due to funding and tradition, the school districts' role beyond the classroom has been limited in community recreation. With the region's issues in youth obesity and disease, consideration could be given to fostering more community partnerships in recreation. Community school parks have a long history of success in the United States especially in rural communities. Safe Routes to School is another area for potential involvement especially in the planning of new schools or school improvements as a means to establish safer ways for students to get to school by walking or cycling. Sidewalks and safe bicycle routes are needed to do that. The following models of community recreation in school districts have demonstrated successful community relationships and support in these districts because they serve and involve a broad constituency beyond the students in the classroom.

### Models of Community Recreation in Pennsylvania School Districts

**Mechanicsburg Area School District** serves as the major partner in regional recreation along with Mechanicsburg Borough, Upper Allen Township, and Shiremanstown Borough. The District provides the funds to support 75 percent of the Mechanicsburg Area Recreation Commission budget as a way to serve all citizens in the district regardless of whether they have children in the schools or not, for environmental education and to deal with community issues related to the lack of physical activity resulting in disease and shortened life spans.

The **Wilson School District** has a position of Community Recreation Coordinator. The Coordinator

schedules use of school facilities after school hours and plans and directs recreation activities for the community at large.

The **Blue Mountain School District** supports the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission as part of the district's mission and operations. The Commission is a full service recreation operation serving the students and the community at large including adults, households without children in the schools and senior citizens with a year round program using school facilities.

### Partnerships

The Juniata and Mifflin County region has a track record of undertaking partnerships with largely successful results. Some partnerships operate in both Mifflin and Juniata Counties while other partnerships serve the region or include several partners in each of the counties but not both of them. The important point is that partnerships have made great advances in the Juniata and Mifflin County area. The following list presents organizations that are rooted in partnerships as examples of how community based organizations join forces for common goals.

- Mifflin County Council of Governments (COG)
- Mifflin Juniata Area Agency on Aging/Regional Services Corp.
- MJ PATH
- Juniata County School District
- Mifflin County School District
- Mifflin County Playground Association
- Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau
- Mifflin-Juniata Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Police
- Lewistown Hospital (serves the region)
- Mifflin County Industrial Development
- Team Mifflin County
- Juniata River Trail
- Allegheny Ridge Corporation
- United Way
- Communities that Care
- Playground Association
- Rec Connect
- Community sports organizations
- Juniata County Conservation District
- Mifflin County Conservation District
- Penn State Cooperative Extension Service



### Quasi-Public, Non-Profit and Private Organizations

Since governmental resources are so limited here, a number of organizations and entities launched their own efforts to conserve the cultural heritage of the area, meet community needs, and enhance the quality of life here. These include

- United Way
- Juniata Clean Water Partnership
- Allegheny Ridge Corporation
- Main Line Canal Greenway
- Susquehanna Greenway
- Communities that Care
- Chamber of Commerce
- Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau
- SEDA-COG
- YMCA
- DeLauter Center
- Lion's Den
- Community Sports Organizations
- Trout Unlimited
- 4-H
- Lumina Center

### Conservancies and Land Trusts

One of the major challenges here in terms of land conservation is the lack of any conservancies or land trusts. While a number of conservancies exist in the area, it is only a tangential relationship without involvement or capacity. The North Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, Linn Conservancy, Nature Conservancy, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy all

theoretically could serve the area but their resources and priorities are directed elsewhere. For land conservation to work effectively, a private non-profit partner is essential to advance government efforts.

### Financing

Funding for parks, recreation, open space, greenways and trails is limited in the area.

### The Counties

Neither county has budget funds for parks and recreation or funding for open space conservation. Each county has a farmland preservation program that helps to conserve a limited amount of agricultural lands, which are essential, both to the industry as well as the scenic character of the area. Table 9-1 presents examples of parks and recreation departments in counties with populations with less than 99,999 elsewhere in Pennsylvania. These counties provide the parks and recreation budget from their general fund and seek grants for projects and programs.

### The Municipalities

According to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's most recent survey on rural recreation adjusted for 2008-dollar value, rural municipalities (townships) spend about \$7.85 per capita on recreation. The urban communities (boroughs) spent an average of \$55.55 per capita.

Most of the jurisdictions in Juniata and Mifflin Counties support recreation through their roads budget since their focus is on park maintenance.

Two municipalities, one borough and one township, stand out in terms of park and recreation systems with both facilities and programs. Derry Township and Lewistown Borough in Mifflin County offer a model of close-to-home recreation.

These municipalities have the largest populations in the area with 7,256 and 8,998 citizens respectively. Juniata County's municipalities have very small populations the largest of which is 3,252 in Fayette. By size of population, none

**Table 9-1**  
**County Parks and Recreation Department in Counties with Population of under 99,999**  
**2002 Pennsylvania Parks & recreation Budget and Salary Survey\***

Department	Sq. Miles	2002 Population	Operating Budget \$	Capital Budget \$	# of Parks	Total Park Acreage	Full-time Staff	Part-time staff	Seasonal Staff	Volunteers
Armstrong County Recreation Belmont Complex	654	79,000	594,010	46,600	2	25	7	5	40	20
Carbon County Parks & Rec. Commission	383	58,802	418,069	0	2	2,800	7	0	26	0
Clarion County Rec. & Parks Dept.	602	41,765	125,862	11,200	1	50	2	5	0	0
Indiana County Park	830	89,605	44,000	60,000	10	2,380	8	6	2	0

\*Most current figures available. 2009 survey is underway. Table will be updated when results are available.

have the capacity to provide public recreation on the scale of community’s size of Derry and Lewistown.

Derry Township’s budget for parks and recreation in 2009 is \$175,500. That is a per capita investment of \$24.05, about three times the state average for rural townships. A portion of this budget is generated from user fees and charges.

Lewistown Borough’s budget for 2009 for recreation and parks is \$452,022 that funds enterprise types of facilities including a swimming pool and the community recreation center. At \$50.23 per capita, this is about \$5 under the state average for boroughs in rural areas. The borough undertakes significant capital improvement projects, especially for the swimming pool, which will have received about a million dollars worth of improvements since 2004. This includes funding from grants from PADNCR and CDBG.

*“Recreation is a very important part of the services that we provide.”*

David Frey,  
Lewistown Borough Manager

### The School Districts

At this time, the school districts have limited budgets for education only. There is no funding of related community programs such as recreation.

## Conclusions

### Strengths

**Civic Involvement** - Civic involvement in recreation is remarkable here. A host of interested and dedicated community organizations and individuals regularly advance creative solutions to community needs for recreation. United Way, the Juniata Valley Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau, the Mifflin County Playground Association, Communities that Care, the Juniata Valley YMCA, community organized sports, the Chamber of Commerce and other are all involved. Influential community members such as a county judge or a teacher who are interested in youth and recreation work towards stimulating recreation programs and projects. The region personifies how important small groups of committed people are in changing the world.

**Peer Study** – 12 partners are participating in and financially supporting the Peer Study, a vitally important project for future recreation service delivery in the region. Mifflin County secured grant funding to pay for most of the project cost. Juniata County can use the findings of this study to move ahead to secure a grant and negotiate partnerships with its own Peer Study benefiting from what works well and what does not in the Mifflin County project.

**County Support for Recreation** – Currently recreation planning comes under the purview of the county planning departments. These departments provide technical assistance, serve as a clearinghouse of information, seek grants, and advance open space, trail, greenway and recreation efforts to the extent that they have staff time available. The commissioners support this type of planning effort.

**Municipal Support** – Municipalities play an important role in public recreation. They provide the close-to-home facilities used by community organizations and individuals for recreation and sports. Volunteer park and recreation boards can help municipal officials to plan, direct, and offer community recreation services through volunteer efforts. However, there are no parks and recreation boards in the municipalities of Juniata County. Only Lewistown Borough in Mifflin County has a recreation board. The municipalities could consider establishing parks and recreation boards. PADCNR provides technical assistance in helping municipalities to establish such boards. The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society also offers an annual conference with a citizen's track to assist municipalities with parks and recreation board sessions. Local parks and recreation boards can help to provide the momentum, time and effort needed to advance community recreation, parks, and trails.

### Challenges

**Land Conservancy** - Neither Juniata nor Mifflin County has a land conservancy. This is vital to advance open space conservation. Conservancies can act in an expeditious manner in protecting land, securing easements, negotiating with landowners, conducting fund-raising, providing education and outreach in ways that county government cannot. Many counties that have been successful in open space conservation work with numerous conservancies and land trusts.

**Public Recreation Service Delivery** – Public recreation is usually provided as close to local residents as possible. That means municipal or multi-municipal recreation services. In these small rural communities, municipal service

delivery is primarily provided by volunteer organizations including organizations such as the United Way, Communities That Care, Mifflin County Playground Association, and organized sports. Lewistown Borough has a part time recreation employee. Mifflin Borough, Derry Township, and Lewistown Borough operate public swimming pools which have paid staff. There is no county parks and recreation department in either county that could provide county type of programs usually in the area of environmental education, special events, and major facilities for people to use at their own discretion.

**Staff Time Limitations** - While the existing planners and program managers at the county level are professional with solid expertise and experience, there is a limit to what they can do with the time and money available. The county planning departments, conservation districts, and extension services have sparse staffs. Additional dedicated staff with professional expertise in planning, parks, recreation and conservation is needed. Although Mifflin County owns some public parkland, the county does not have staff for maintenance. With full recognition that financing is austere, undertaking open space conservation, greenways and recreation does require some basic level of support in order to leverage other sources of revenue beyond the tax dollars within Juniata and Mifflin Counties. A stable source of funding to support these efforts would be an investment. Not everything can be accomplished at once. It is best to take small steps that are successful and meaningful to the people of this region. Consideration could be given to county municipal partnerships in funding a county open space program.

**Dispersed services** - Service planning and delivery is fragmented. A host of providers, community organizations, and committed volunteers are in place in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. An organizational framework needs to be created to harness all of these diverse groups with their rich potential to work collectively toward a common vision and goals.

**Limited Awareness about Recreation Opportunities** – The public involvement process

found that many people were unaware of recreation opportunities in the area. Increasing awareness about the recreational resources in Juniata and Mifflin outside the area is important to increase tourism.

**County Funding** - The county budget is tight. About 85 percent of the counties' budgets are directed towards mandated programs. Neither county allocates funding for parks and recreation. Funding for county programs such as farmland preservation are stretched beyond their capacity.

**Municipal Funding** - Municipal parks and recreation budgets are limited or non-existent with a few exceptions such as Lewistown Borough and Derry Township. Municipal representatives reported that they would like to get information about grants and assistance in undertaking the grant application process.

### Opportunities

**Regional Potential** - Since the municipalities are too small to have their own parks, recreation and open space systems, regional multi-municipal partnerships could be the way to insure close-to-home recreation as well as trails and open space conservation affordably and effectively. The current Peer Study could result in a way to manage future recreation service delivery in the region.

**Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance** - Only one municipality, Derry Township, Mifflin County has a Mandatory Dedication of Parkland Ordinance in place. By not having plans and ordinances in place, the municipalities are losing the potential to obtain parkland at no cost or fees-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland through development. The current state of the economy allows the time for the municipalities to put such ordinances into place. An alternative is for the counties to develop ordinances that the municipalities could use if they adopt this open space, greenways and recreation plan as their own.

**School District Involvement** - Having school districts more involved in community recreation would have a positive effect on the community. Challenges include funding, mission, and consensus on the value of becoming more

involved in serving the broad community.

**Recreation Leadership** - Without recreation staff at the county or municipal levels recreation opportunities are limited. Tapping onto programs and partnerships such as PANA (Pennsylvania Activity and Nutrition Advocates), grant programs, and school district coordination is vitally important.

**Education and Outreach** - Education and outreach about land conservation, open space planning, and recreation would advance open space, greenway and recreation efforts. Dispersing information about the tools, techniques, benefits and strategies for conserving open space and providing recreation to volunteer boards, elected and appointed officials, landowners and community organizations would advance efforts in these areas.

**Making the Case for Open Space, Greenways and Recreation** - While discussions about costs and budgets are compelling and usually the center of focus, information about the benefits of recreation, open space and the rural nature of the area is not generally available to the people who need it most. Data on the economic value of recreation, trails and open space are crucial to building the case for support. Figures that show that an investment in sports fields has a real return, such as the value of a weekend softball tournament in the local economy at over \$116,000, are important to present. The value of outdoor recreation, annual visitation on state lands and so on would help to make the case for recreation and conservation. Public education on open space and recreation as an investment not a cost would help in garnering support for projects and programs.

