Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan

2014-2019

April 2015

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Introduction

Pennsylvania has been a leader in trail development for several decades. Due to the state's maturity in trail development, many of the easiest trail miles have been built and are currently enjoyed by Pennsylvania's residents and visitors. Several of the state's larger trail systems (e.g., Great Allegheny Passage, York Heritage Trail, Delaware & Lehigh Trail) are complete or nearly complete; a statewide network of trails is gradually being realized. However, this maturity also means that many of the remaining, or unbuilt, trail miles have more significant engineering and land ownership issues that will require significant time and resources to complete. The strategic plan lays out a course of action that will help us realize a statewide network of trails and greenways by effectively focusing time and resources.

The following document is Pennsylvania's trail strategy through 2019. To set the stage for the future of trails in Pennsylvania the plan includes a brief review of events over the last two decades that led us to where we are today, including a summary of the major trail accomplishments over the last five years. Next, Pennsylvania's future course of action is displayed in a set of goals and recommendations. In addition, Pennsylvania's Top 10 Trail Gaps, which represent the most significant trail gaps in the state, are summarized. Finally, a synopsis of the public feedback that shaped this strategy is provided.

BACKGROUND

One of the most significant steps in the history of trail development in Pennsylvania was the Governor's Conference on Greenways & Trails in 1997. This resulted in the creation of the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission in 1998. The Commission developed "Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections" (2001) which cast the vision of "an outstanding network of greenways across the Commonwealth," that is still being realized today. In addition, the plan provided a set of goals and actions, which has positioned Pennsylvania as a leader in greenways and trails.

Continuing with the vision cast in 2001, the 2009-2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) listed the development of "a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation and healthy lifestyles" as a main goal. Some of the actions proposed to reach this goal were the formation of a trails advisory committee to provide leadership and guidance, develop funding criteria that prioritizes closing of trail gaps, launch an online interactive trails website, and continue trail workshops. Today, Pennsylvania has made measurable progress in completing many of these recommendations and continues to develop a statewide trail network.

PURPOSE

Unlike the 2009 SCORP, the 2014 SCORP does not focus specifically on trails. However, the SCORP is supportive of trails and trails will help to advance many of the plan's goals, such as promoting healthy living, creating opportunities for tourism and economic development and enhancing close-to-home recreation. Therefore, to meet the challenges of trail development and to carry forward the efforts of the previous two decades, a stand-alone strategic plan for trails was necessary.

Accomplishments, 2009-2014

A TRAIL IN EVERY COMMUNITY

Through the efforts of DCNR, local partners, state agencies and other statewide organizations DCNR has assembled a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database of trails that allows us to track progress towards meeting state trail goals. Progress toward establishing a trail in every community has been steady. For the first time since the release of the 2001 Greenway Action Plan DCNR has been able to quantify the number of communities with a trail. As of the end of 2014, 1,471 of Pennsylvania's 2,574 municipalities (57%) have or share a trail within their boundaries.

To drill down further, by analyzing trail and US Census GIS data, DCNR can now estimate the percentage of the state's population that is served by a nearby trail. Approximately twenty-nine percent of the state's population lives within one mile of an existing and open trail (Figure 1) and approximately thirty-nine percent are within one mile of an existing or planned trail (Figure 2). The analysis indicates that the completion of currently planned trails will reach an additional ten percent (1.3 million) of Pennsylvania residents.

Figure 1. Population within 1 mile of existing and open trails* = 29% of the state's population or an estimated 3.7 million persons. Existing trails are shown in red, census blocks near trails in green.
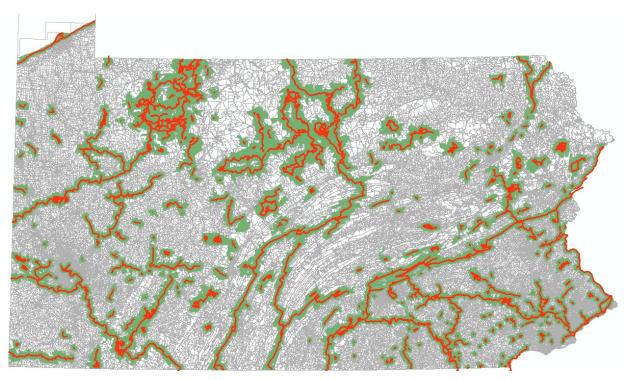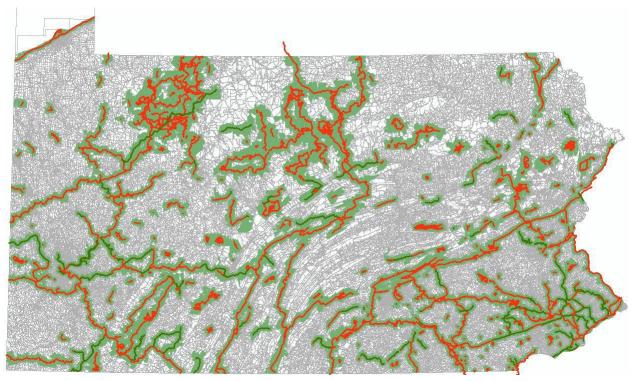*Note: does not include water trails and BicyclePA routes.

Figure 2. Population within 1 mile of existing or planned trails*= 39% of the state's population or an estimated 5.0 million persons. Existing trails are shown in red, planned trails in dark green, census blocks near trails in light green, all other census blocks in gray.

*Note: does not include water trails and BicyclePA routes.

TRAIL FUNDING

In the past six years, DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) awarded a total of $45.6 million in trail grants that supported activities such as trail planning, development and maintenance (Table 1). Estimates show that these grant funds leveraged an additional $50 million in funding from the Federal Highway Administration, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, National Park Service, Coastal Management Program, Commonwealth Financing Authority, private foundations (e.g., William Penn Foundation and Richard King Mellon Foundation) and local matching funds.

Table 1. Trail grant awards through DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program, 2009-2014. Listed by year and funding source.

Year	Round	Funding Type	Projects	Funding Amount
2009	15	Keystone Fund - Community Recreation	8	$943,335
		Keystone Fund - Rails to Trails	2	$456,035
		Keystone Fund - Rivers Conservation	1	$46,000
		Keystone Fund - Land Trust	0	$0
		Environmental Stewardship Fund - Growing Greener 1	12	$1,139,300
		Growing Greener Bond Fund - Growing Greener 2	6	$1,134,495
		Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program	12	$2,111,525
		Snowmobile/ATV Fund	1	$200,000
		Total	42	$6,030,690

Year	Round	Funding Type	Projects	Funding Amount
2010	16	Keystone Fund - Community Recreation	18	$2,450,400
		Keystone Fund - Rails to Trails	0	$0
		Keystone Fund - Rivers Conservation	2	$62,325
		Keystone Fund - Land Trust	0	$0
		Environmental Stewardship Fund - Growing Greener 1	11	$909,775
		Growing Greener Bond Fund - Growing Greener 2	3	$305,700
		Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program	18	$2,160,125
		Snowmobile/ATV Fund	1	$135,000
		Total	53	$6,023,325

Year	Round	Funding Type	Projects	Funding Amount
2011	17	Keystone Fund - Community Recreation	29	$4,696,200
		Keystone Fund - Rails to Trails	1	$100,000
		Keystone Fund - Rivers Conservation	4	$158,200
		Keystone Fund - Land Trust	0	$0
		Environmental Stewardship Fund - Growing Greener 1	13	$1,193,400
		Growing Greener Bond Fund - Growing Greener 2	2	$133,973
		Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program	17	$3,503,594
		Snowmobile/ATV Fund	4	$835,000
		Total	70	$10,620,367

Year	Round	Funding Type	Projects	Funding Amount
2012	18	Keystone Fund - Community Recreation	33	$4,959,028
		Keystone Fund - Rails to Trails	0	$0
		Keystone Fund - Rivers Conservation	1	$18,600
		Keystone Fund - Land Trust	1	$118,700
		Environmental Stewardship Fund - Growing Greener 1	2	$113,000
		Growing Greener Bond Fund - Growing Greener 2	0	$0
		Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program	12	$1,261,422
		Snowmobile/ATV Fund	5	$213,000
		Total	54	$6,683,750

Year	Round	Funding Type	Projects	Funding Amount
2013	19	Keystone Fund - Community Recreation	26	$5,542,700
		Keystone Fund - Rails to Trails	0	$0
		Keystone Fund - Rivers Conservation	0	$0
		Keystone Fund - Land Trust	2	$58,300
		Environmental Stewardship Fund - Growing Greener 1	7	$658,950
		Growing Greener Bond Fund - Growing Greener 2	0	$0
		Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program	8	$1,412,450
		Snowmobile/ATV Fund	2	$176,000
		Total	45	$7,848,400

Year	Round	Funding Type	Projects	Funding Amount
2014	20	Keystone Fund - Community Recreation	35	$5,651,183
		Keystone Fund - Rails to Trails	0	$0
		Keystone Fund - Rivers Conservation	0	$0
		Keystone Fund - Land Trust	1	$84,500
		Environmental Stewardship Fund - Growing Greener 1	5	$512,000
		Growing Greener Bond Fund - Growing Greener 2	0	$0
		Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program	5	$1,952,285
		Snowmobile/ATV Fund	7	$234,921
		Total	53	$8,434,889
		2009 - 2014 Total	**317**	**$45,641,421**

Accomplishments over the previous three years, include the completion of 217 trail projects representing more than $115 million in state, federal, and local grant funds under the DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (Source: PA Trails Advisory Committee annual reports). Data on specific accomplishments is only available for the previous three years as this data was not previously tracked. These projects represent accomplishments in trail planning, land acquisition, development, construction, maintenance and promotion.

MAJOR GREENWAYS

Since 2001, DCNR has maintained a map of the state's major greenways. Major greenways are defined as land or water based greenways/trails that are at least 50 miles in length, go through more than one county and are identified in an official planning document. The purpose of identifying and mapping these corridors was to inform and guide greenway and open space planners, as well as focus trail development efforts on these corridors.

In 2009, the state's major greenways map included 39 major greenways. By 2014, DCNR had designated 47 major greenway corridors (Figure 3). Several, including the 152-mile Great Allegheny Passage and the 65-mile Pine Creek Trail, were competed or nearly completed. Others, such as the Schuylkill River Trail and the D&L Trail are complicated, multi-decade works in progress that are well on their way to completion (Figure 3). More corridors will likely be added to the map as additional long-distance trails are identified.
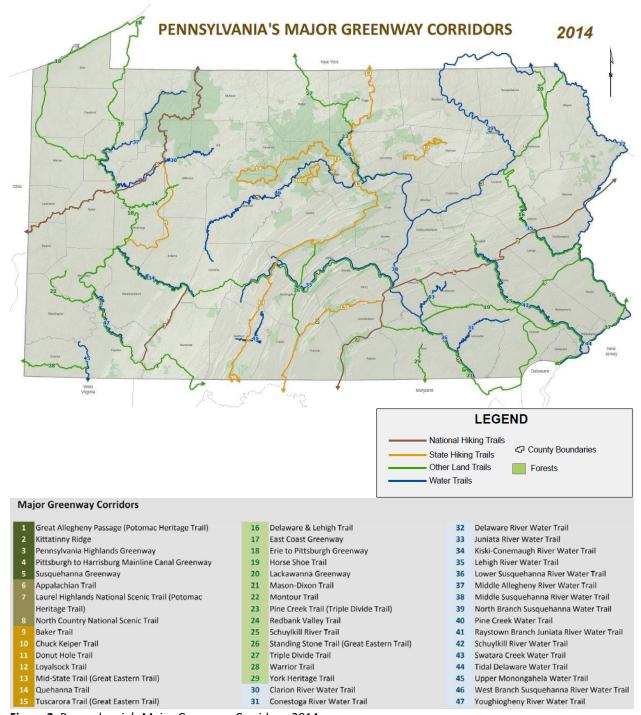
PENNSYLVANIA'S MAJOR GREENWAY CORRIDORS 2014

LEGEND

- National Hiking Trails
- State Hiking Trails
- Other Land Trails
- Water Trails
- County Boundaries
- Forests

Major Greenway Corridors

1	Great Allegheny Passage (Potomac Heritage Trail)	16	Delaware & Lehigh Trail	32	Delaware River Water Trail
2	Kittatinny Ridge	17	East Coast Greenway	33	Juniata River Water Trail
3	Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway	18	Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway	34	Kiski-Conemaugh River Water Trail
4	Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway	19	Horse Shoe Trail	35	Lehigh River Water Trail
5	Susquehanna Greenway	20	Lackawanna Greenway	36	Lower Susquehanna River Water Trail
6	Appalachian Trail	21	Mason-Dixon Trail	37	Middle Allegheny River Water Trail
7	Laurel Highlands National Scenic Trail (Potomac Heritage Trail)	22	Montour Trail	38	Middle Susquehanna River Water Trail
8	North Country National Scenic Trail	23	Pine Creek Trail (Triple Divide Trail)	39	North Branch Susquehanna Water Trail
9	Baker Trail	24	Redbank Valley Trail	40	Pine Creek Water Trail
10	Chuck Keiper Trail	25	Schuylkill River Trail	41	Raystown Branch Juniata River Water Trail
11	Donut Hole Trail	26	Standing Stone Trail (Great Eastern Trail)	42	Schuylkill River Water Trail
12	Loyalsock Trail	27	Triple Divide Trail	43	Swatara Creek Water Trail
13	Mid-State Trail (Great Eastern Trail)	28	Warrior Trail	44	Tidal Delaware Water Trail
14	Quehanna Trail	29	York Heritage Trail	45	Upper Monongahela Water Trail
15	Tuscarora Trail (Great Eastern Trail)	30	Clarion River Water Trail	46	West Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail
		31	Conestoga River Water Trail	47	Youghiogheny River Water Trail

Figure 3. Pennsylvania's Major Greenway Corridors, 2014

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FILLING TRAIL GAPS

In 2009, DCNR worked closely with stakeholders, trail partners and user groups to catalog and map trail gaps in Pennsylvania's major greenway corridors. 107 major trail gaps were identified and published in the 2009 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. In subsequent years, DCNR collect additional trail gaps for major greenway corridors and for regionally significant greenways, which include trails between 10 and 49 miles. By 2014, DCNR had identified a total of 208 trail gaps. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Number of trail gaps, 2009 vs 2014

As of 2014, six of the trail gaps had been filled, including the sole remaining gap in the 152-mile Great Allegheny Passage from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD. Even though the significance of closing these six gaps was enormous, the number of remaining gaps illustrates the challenge of building trails as well as the need for trail funding and other resources. In this Trail Strategy, Pennsylvania's Top 10 Trail Gaps have been identified as the most important and significant gaps to focus on over the next five years. See the Top 10 Trail Gaps section for more information.

EXPLOREPATRAILS

Initiated, in part, by the 2009-2013 Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan, ExplorePAtrails.com serves as Pennsylvania's one-stop trails website, a community resource for searching, mapping and sharing information about trails of all kinds in Pennsylvania. The website displays much of the results of the state's 30+ year effort to fund and support partnerships, planning, construction and maintenance of recreational trails. DCNR, in partnership with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Keystone Trails Association, trail stewards, and volunteers have helped power ExplorePAtrails.com by uploading photos, descriptions, maps, and events for sharing with others about the state's rich network of trails.

Launched in 2009 with 191 trails representing 5,500 open trail miles, the website today contains 493 trails with 11,058 open trail miles and displays more than 2,300 trail photos and more than 600 maps, descriptions and reviews. In addition, the number of website users searching and sharing trails

information at ExplorePAtrails.com reached 253,000 unique visitors (with almost 1 million page views) since its launch. This growth is due mostly to the participation of 1,800+ "trail reporters" who have voluntarily registered with the site and added content such as new trails, trail updates, reviews, photos and calendar events.

ExplorePAtrails.com continues to be the only on-line resource where users can find simple, easy-to-use tools to visualize almost all of Pennsylvania's trails in one centralized, community-driven location designed specifically for collecting and sharing information about trails.

Figure 5. ExplorePAtrails.com user statistics by year, from its launch in September 2009 to September 2014

BUILDPATRAILS

In late 2013, DCNR released a new tool for trail planners called BuildPAtrails (http://maps.dcnr.pa.gov/BuildPAtrails/). BuildPAtrails is designed for those who need information for planning and prioritizing trail projects. With BuildPAtrails, trail planning professionals can access simple web-based tools to accurately visualize locations and attributes of trails, projects, plans, and trail gaps. The web map application helps answer questions about existing and planned trails, their status, gaps, key partners, nearby grant projects, and other public works projects. Users can draw on the map, edit data, and take a snapshot of the map to share in their own presentations. The site is open to any registered user.

RAIL-TRAIL USER SURVEYS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDIES

In 2009, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and DCNR produced a report comparing economic and demographic data from trail user surveys previously completed for 14 rail-trails in the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S. Seven reports focused on rail-trails in Pennsylvania and the other seven focused on rail-trails in other states. Individually, these reports represent an attempt to measure impacts of trails on surrounding communities. The combined report, presented the individual results for each rail-trail. In Table 2, those results have been combined and averaged. The findings of these studies

have helped DCNR and trail-building partners to better understand trail users, as well as assess the return on investment in trails. Table 2 below represents a combination of the survey results.

Table 2. Combined rail-trail user statistics (Source: Rails-to-trails Conservancy, *Trail User Surveys and Economic Impact: A Comparison of Trail User Expenditures, 2009*)

Statistics	Combined Results
Age of majority of trail users	45 and up
Typical gender mix	45% female, 55% male
Number one reason for using trails	health
Percent of trail users from local area	80%
Average annual revenue from soft goods	$4,146,312
Average annual number of user visits	532,740 visits

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Trail projects build on connections, lessons learned, and ideas shared at summits, workshops, and volunteer trainings. These activities spur success and growth in trails for the future. Over the past five years, three statewide greenways and trails summits, two regional trails summits, and numerous public meetings, trainings and workshops were conducted in various locations around the state. Overall, these events attracted more than 3,500 registrations.

Figure 6. Public trails workshop at Delaware Water Gap, July 24, 2012

MAINTAINING TRAILS

Resident surveys show that maintaining existing parks, trails and recreation areas is an important funding priority for outdoor recreation enthusiasts in the state. To improve Pennsylvania's existing trails, DCNR works with local stakeholders to help fund improvements to keep trails in good condition. An estimated 71 miles of trails were rehabilitated in the past five years with federal, state and local investments of over $10 million.

PENNSYLVANIA TRAIL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES: GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE, NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

In 2013, DCNR and Pashek Associates published a compilation of best practices and guidelines for the planning, design, construction, and management of non-motorized trails that are physically and environmentally sustainable. The guide, called *Pennsylvania Trail Design and Development Principles: Guidelines for Sustainable, Non-Motorized Trails* also presents techniques for developing trails that create desirable and enjoyable experiences for trail users.

To complete the guide, DCNR assembled an internal work group with representation from the Bureau of Facility, Design, and Construction, the Bureau of Forestry, the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, and the Bureau of State Parks. Building on the past success in developing the *Pennsylvania Trail Design Manual for Off Highway Recreational Vehicles*, for motorized trails within Pennsylvania, DCNR used this process as a model for the development of these non-motorized trail guidelines.
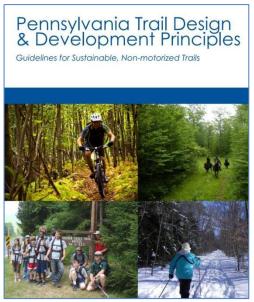

Figure 7. Non-motorized trail guidelines were published in 2013

PENNSYLVANIA TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Building trail networks and completing critical connections was a strong focus of the 2009 Outdoor Recreation Plan. Six recommendations and 20 accompanying action steps focused on making Pennsylvania a top trail state. A priority recommendation was to establish an official, recognized trail committee to recommend policy and coordinate trail efforts in Pennsylvania. In 2012, after a year of planning and deliberations with trail stakeholders, the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board, in existence since 1992, was expanded and renamed the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee. The now 20-member committee assists with carrying out the 2009 trail recommendations while continuing to meet the requirements of the federal Recreational Trails Program. The committee presents an annual report to DCNR on major trail accomplishments that occurred during the year. The 2013 report featured 71 completed trail projects that added 83 new trail miles and advanced trails in 36 counties.

TRAIL OF THE YEAR

One of the Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee's top accomplishments in 2014 was launching the Trail of Year Program. This new designation was intended to build community enthusiasm and support for trails big and small across the state. In addition, the program elevates public awareness of the thousands of miles of trails available for public enjoyment in Pennsylvania.

The first trail of the year was announced in February 2014. The recipient was the 51-mile Redbank Valley Trails in Armstrong, Clarion and Jefferson counties. The trail runs along Redbank Creek and includes many historic bridges, tunnels and beautiful stone arches.
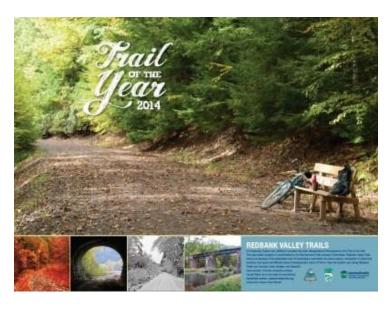
Eighteen trails were nominated for the

Figure 8. Redbank Valley Trails 2014 Trail of the Year Poster

designation, but the Redbank Valley Trails was selected due to the tremendous volunteer effort, scenic beauty and connection to other trail systems. To honor the Trail of the Year, the advisory committee and DCNR distributed a commemorative poster (Figure 8), assisted with promoting the trail and provided a permanent Trail of the Year sign.

WATER TRAILS

Water trails are recreational and educational corridors between specific locations that can be used for both single day and multiple day trips. They are comprised of access points, boat launches, day use sites, and -- in some cases -- overnight camping areas. They provide formalized access to and information about Pennsylvania's waterways while also providing connections to our diverse history, ecology, geology, heritage and wildlife.

Pennsylvania Water Trails provide information to users about general boating safety and also local information that's necessary for enjoying the specific water trail. Information is provided through a combination of materials including a trail map and guide, signage, web site, or other formats. Trail guides and maps, and other key information about Pennsylvania's 27 designated water trails is available online on the PA Fish & Boat Commission website (http://www.fish.state.pa.us/watertrails/trailindex.htm)

Water-based recreation is on the rise, both in Pennsylvania and nationwide. Based on the results of a resident survey distributed to Pennsylvanians as part of the 2014-2019 SCORP research, local citizens have reiterated this increasing interest in water-based recreation. Eighty-four percent of survey respondents find it important or very important to "protect wildlife and fish habitat". Similarly, eighty-one percent of survey respondents noted that "restoring damaged rivers and streams" was important or very important. Water trails contribute to the protection and restoration of aquatic resources by engaging users and promoting an ethic of stewardship that makes the Commonwealth a better place. Pennsylvania Water Trails embrace the "Leave No Trace" code of outdoor ethics that promotes the responsible use & enjoyment of the outdoors.

Figure 9. Map and list of Pennsylvania Water Trails

—	North Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail	—	Conestoga River Water Trail
—	Clarion River Water Trail	—	Ohio River Water Trail
—	Conewango Creek watertrail	—	Pine Creek Water Trail
—	Conodoguinet Creek Water Trail	—	Raystown Branch Juniata River Water Trail
—	Delaware River Water Trail	—	Schuylkill River Water Trail
—	French Creek Water Trail	—	Swatara Creek Water Trail
—	Juniata River Water Trail	—	Three Rivers Water Trail
—	Kiski-Conemaugh River Water Trail	—	Tidal Delaware River Water Trail
—	Lehigh River Water Trail	—	Upper Monongahela River Water Trail
—	Lower Susquehanna River Water Trail	—	Upper Shenango River Water Trail
—	Middle Allegheny River Water Trail	—	West Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail
—	Middle Susquehanna River Water Trail	—	Yellow Breeches Creek Water Trail
		—	Youghiogheny River Water Trail

Establishing a water trail can be a great approach to enhancing recreational access and fostering interest in local water resources. Pennsylvania has adopted eight principles of water trail development, shown below, which are instrumental to the PA Water Trails designation process:

- Partnerships
- Stewardship
- Volunteerism
- Conservation
- Community Vitality
- Diversity

- Education
- Wellness & Wellbeing

PENNSYLVANIA WATER TRAILS PARTNERSHIP

In 2008, DCNR, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and National Park Service – Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and National Park Service - Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program signed an agreement to form the PA Water Trails Partnership. That year, leaders from these organizations came together to sign the PA Water Trails Statement of Purpose, which established the Partnership on the following goals that continue to drive the work of the PA Water Trails Program:

- To encourage and further the development of water trails in Pennsylvania,
- To strengthen the connections between and among existing water trails to promote a system of water trails,
- To better market and promote Pennsylvania's water trails as a recreational resource to residents and visitors alike,
- To provide technical assistance to local project managers who are implementing water trail projects,
- To promote the national recognition of Pennsylvania's water trails,
- To provide assistance to local project manager specifically with the long-term maintenance, stewardship and sustainability of water trails.
- To promote the development and management of water trails as a means to enhance citizen stewardship of local water resources.

In 2011, the PA Water Trails Partnership published the PA Water Trails Program Report to both detail the history of the PA Water Trails Program, and provide technical assistance and an overview of future Partnership initiatives. In 2014, Pennsylvania's Water Trail system grew to 27 designated trails totaling 2,135 river trail miles. Six new water trails have been designated since 2009.

While the PA Water Trails Partnership remains open to creating new water trails, the focus of the organization in the near term is on managing, maintaining, and marketing the 2,000+ miles of water trails already developed in Pennsylvania.

PROMOTING WATER TRAILS

Pennsylvania's work to promote its vast network of water trails has only just begun. The Water Trails Partnership is now working to market and promote water trail mileage through a variety of endeavors including a comprehensive water trail signage initiative, river sojourns, a River of the Year contest, and numerous specific projects involving DCNR funding and/or technical assistance.

Sojourns
Pennsylvania River Sojourns are guided paddling trips, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watershed and Rivers (POWR) with funding support through DCNR and insurance offered by American Canoe Association (ACA). From May through September, local organizers offer one day and/or multi-day water-based journeys for canoeists, kayakers and others to raise awareness of the environmental,

recreational, tourism and heritage values of rivers. These sojourns also serve to acquaint new paddlers to this recreation opportunity, increase stewardship, and enhance the local economy. In 2014, organizations, statewide, arranged nearly 20 sojourn opportunities for the public through the POWR/DCNR/ACA partnership, with many other sojourns occurring outside of this particular program.

River of the Year
Since 1983, DCNR and POWR have annually selected a River of the Year. Through an array of special activities, a poster, and a multi-day Sojourn, the designation helps raise public awareness about the stewardship needs of that particular river, celebrate conservation successes along its course, and highlight the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides. Each year local organizations submit nominations and a public voting process selects the winning river. In 2015, 13 miles of the Conewango Creek in northwestern PA was voted River of the Year. Prior award winners include: the Schuylkill River (2014), Monongahela River (2013), Stonycreek River in south western PA (2012), and Delaware River (2011).

River Towns
The River Town Program, originally launched by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council in 2011, helps communities to recognize their local river as an asset around which community and economic development can occur, and therefore a resource worthy of protection. The goal of this initiative is to improve the vitality, stability, sustainability and prosperity of communities, businesses and neighborhoods in currently distressed regions; to introduce the concepts of outdoor recreational market growth, sustainable development, conservation, and environmental sustainability; and to position these communities to attract new businesses and jobs. Success is built from the work of partners that recognize the inextricable links between the environment, the economy, and quality of life. The program has assisted communities across the state by developing outdoor recreation amenities, hosting special events, and attracting visitors.

WATER TRAIL FUNDING

DCNR administers an annual grant program that provides funding for water trails planning and development, among other conservation and recreation projects. Throughout the program's history, DCNR has funded planning projects related to water trail feasibility studies, public access plans, rivers conservation plans, and capitol project plans and specifications. Funding for development projects such as water trail signage, boat launches, stream stabilization, fishing piers and other amenities is also regularly provided to local communities and non-profits to further common strategies of increasing public waterway access, inspiring natural resource stewardship, and promoting the preservation of local natural assets.

CONCLUSION

Several decades ago, trail leaders began organizing and laying the groundwork for a bright future for a land and water trail network in Pennsylvania. Popularity in both land and water trails continues to increase. To meet the demands of trail users, trail advocates and builders continue to work toward

fulfilling the vision of a trail in every community. However much work needs to be done to plan, develop, maintain and promote trails.

Recommendations and Action Steps

The following recommendations and action steps were developed through public input. The Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee began the process by holding an open comment session at the Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Summit in September of 2013. Stations were created for feedback on specific subjects and each station was manned by DCNR staff and advisory committee members. Approximately 50 summit attendees participated in this session.

Responses from the participants were collated and presented to the Committee at their quarterly meeting in April 2014. The Committee reviewed the feedback and worked to group the results and develop draft recommendations. In June 2014, a facilitated session was held at the Pennsylvania Downtown Center's annual conference to identify additional trail priorities. Participants included DCNR staff, Conservation Landscape leads, Heritage Area staff, Trail Advisory Committee members and several statewide trail partners. DCNR staff took the suggested priorities collected at each of the meetings, identified relationships between the comments and formulated a series of recommendations and action steps. A compilation of feedback from all three meetings is provided in Appendix A.

A set of draft recommendations and action steps were then vetted through the Committee and DCNR staff. Next, the public was asked to provide input on those draft recommendations and action steps by indicating whether they felt each step was a high, medium, or low priority. (See Appendix B: Survey Form – Draft Trail Recommendations) Feedback was solicited through an online survey, three public meetings for the draft 2014 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and at the 2014 Eastern PA Trails Summit. The results of the survey are provided in appendices C and D.

Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan 2014 - 2019

Vision: Develop a Statewide Land and Water Trail Network to Facilitate Recreation, Transportation and Healthy Lifestyles

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. **Close priority gaps in Pennsylvania's statewide land and water trail network to achieve the overall goal of having a trail within 15 minutes of every citizen.**
   a. Analyze status of current statewide gaps.
   b. Re-evaluate process for identifying new gaps.
   c. Complete the Top 10 Trail Gaps.
   d. Evaluate strategic gaps in public access along water trails.

2. **Coordinate state and federal funding programs to leverage maximum investment in priority trail projects.**
   a. Establish Interagency Trail Funding Coordination Committee.
   b. Synchronize funding cycles and project selection.
   c. Identify common priority projects to leverage maximum joint investments.
   d. Integrate trail gap needs into PennDOT project delivery system.

3. **Cultivate diverse partnerships to build capacity to address local and regional trail needs.**
   a. Establish semi-annual regional trail focus groups (DCNR regional offices, MPOs, RPOs, PennDOT district bike/ped coordinators, tourism and visitors' bureaus, trail stakeholders, health organizations, etc.) to develop trail priorities, address trail gaps, identify trail opportunities and regional needs.
   b. Increase sharing of information through newsletters, blogs, websites, etc. to improve communication with trail stakeholders.
   c. Develop and implement trail ambassador programs to increase volunteer engagement in water trails.
   d. Coordinate with stakeholders to increase public access to land and water trails in association with transportation and utility corridor projects.
   e. Work with the motorized trail community to identify and develop off-highway vehicle facilities on non-DCNR lands.
   f. Work with the PA Equine Council to identify and address high priority need areas.

4. Develop a marketing strategy to promote Pennsylvania as a premier land and water trail destination.

  a. Identify Destination Trail Systems in each region.

  b. Create story maps to promote Destination Trail Systems.

  c. Contract with a marketing team to produce statewide and regional strategies to market Pennsylvania trails.

5. Connect community assets through accessible trail networks.

  a. Develop a systematic approach for calculating bicycle and pedestrian needs statewide.

  b. Implement a process to calculate regional bicycle/pedestrian needs.

  c. Conduct local bicycle/walking assessments.

  d. Increase the availability of overnight camping facilities along trail corridors where feasible and supported.

6. Elevate the priority to maintain and improve existing land and water trails and related infrastructure.

  a. Complete studies on the cost of trail maintenance on various trail types and in different locations throughout the state.

  b. Develop a tool to electronically collect and report trail conditions on ExplorePATrails.

  c. Emphasize the use of the non-motorized and motorized trail design manuals in building and maintaining trails for their managed use.

  d. Identify and document best management practices for trail construction and maintenance.

  e. Promote the *Universal Access Trails and Shared Use Paths Design, Management, Ethical and Other Considerations* manual as a best management practices guide for universal access trail development and provide training on implementation of the guidelines.

7. Promote the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of trails through education and outreach.

  a. Complete additional studies on the economic impact / value of trails.

  b. Complete a statewide trail economic study.

  c. Complete an economic impact study of destination off-highway vehicle facilities (e.g., Rock Run Recreation Area and the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area.)

  d. Continue to support statewide and regional greenways and trails summits, workshops and training to share information.

Top 10 Trail Gaps

In 2009, DCNR identified 107 trail gaps from around the state in order to assist with establishing priority trail projects. By 2014, the total number of gaps reached 208, but only 6 gaps were complete. In an effort to complete more of the state's identified trail gaps, this plan identifies the top 10 trails gaps. The intent of top 10 trail gaps is to establish the top priority trail projects for Pennsylvania and to raise public awareness of the need for funding and interagency cooperation to complete these gaps.

Criteria for selecting the top ten gaps:
1. The gap would make possible the connection of a large number of contiguous open miles of trail. It should connect two or more trails or sections of trail - it is not just an extension of an existing trail.
2. To fill the gap requires major infrastructure construction or rehab.
3. The gap itself is not more than 5 miles long.
4. The cost for filling the gap is at least $1.0 million or more.
5. It would be possible to fill this gap within the next 5 years.

A request for nominations was distributed to trail partners across the state including trail building organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), DCNR staff and PennDOT staff in the summer of 2014. DCNR received a total of 38 submissions. The top 10 gap nominations were evaluated by DCNR staff and the final 10 gaps were selected based on how well the gap met the selection criteria and the intent of the program. The results were vetted through the Trails Advisory Committee, MPOs, RPOs, PennDOT staff and DCNR staff prior to being finalized.

Pennsylvania's Top 10 Trail Gaps

Map Legend:

——— Constructed Land Trail   – – – Trail Gap: Planned Route

——— Constructed Water Trail   – – – Trail Gap: Route to be Determined
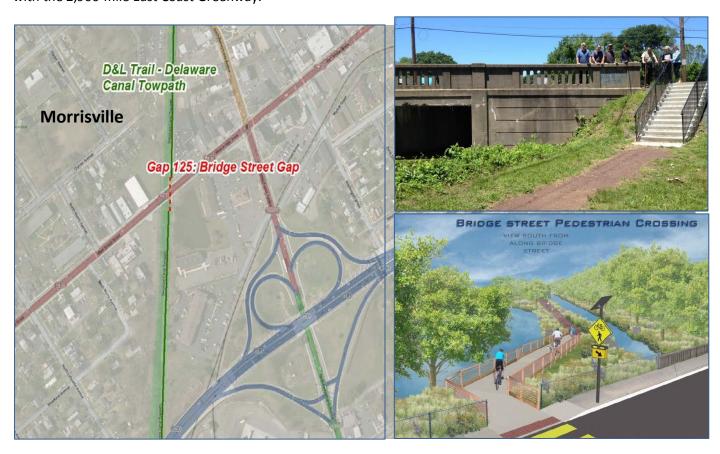
▭ Existing State Park

Enola Low Grade Rail-Trail, Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge (Gap 20) – Lancaster County

Lancaster County Enola Low Grade Trail (formerly called the Atglen-Susquehanna Trail) is a 28-mile trail utilizing the abandoned Enola Branch railroad corridor in western and southern Lancaster County which spans the entire length (east/west) of the County . As of 2015, 14 miles of trail is complete and the remaining 14 miles will be complete in the next 2 years.   The final and most vital piece of infrastructure needed to create a continuous 28-mile trail is the rehabilitation of the former railroad bridge, called the "Safe Harbor Trestle" that spans 1500 feet across the mouth of the Conestoga Creek, along the Susquehanna River. This impressive structure, built in 1904, towers 150 feet above the Creek and serves as the only feasible method for connecting the completed 5 miles of trail to its west in Manor Township with the remaining 23 miles of trail to its east.

Delaware and Lehigh Trail, Bridge Street Gap (Gap 125) – Bucks County

The Delaware and Lehigh Trail is one of Pennsylvania's most complete long-distance trails. The trail follows the railroad lines and canal towpaths that carried anthracite coal from the mines in the Wyoming Valley and Carbon County to markets in Bucks County and Philadelphia. As of 2015, ninety percent of its 165 miles between Center City Philadelphia and Wilkes-Barre are complete.

The Bridge Street gap represents a significant obstacle in finalizing the 165-mile vision. Currently, the trail ends on either side of Bridge Street, requiring trail users to turn around since the elevation of Bridge Street is significantly higher than the trail. The plan to close this gap includes construction of ADA accessible ramps on either side of bridge Street to connect to the trail and provide a signalized road crossing for trail users. As one of five major gaps preventing continuous use of the D&L Trail between Morrisville and Bristol, resolving this gap will help restore full access to 9 miles of trail and users will be able to travel uninterrupted 30 miles to Easton. In addition, this portion of the D&L trail is co-aligned with the 2,900-mile East Coast Greenway.

East Coast Greenway, Spring Garden Street (Gap 127) — City of Philadelphia

The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a 2,900-mile multi-use trail currently being built from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. Nearly thirty percent of the route is already on traffic-free greenways, creating safe, accessible routes for people of all ages and abilities. As one of Pennsylvania's major statewide greenways, the 67-mile ECG route is over thirty percent open with another sixty-one percent in development. One of the biggest challenges is crossing densely populated Center City Philadelphia to connect the Schuylkill River Trail with the Delaware River Trail. The feasibility of this section was studied extensively and Spring Garden Street is the most viable option due in part to its connectivity to multiple recreation and cultural sites, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The concept includes turning the median of Spring Garden Street into a separated bicycle and pedestrian area with trees, landscaping and underground stormwater management, while maintaining current automobile traffic capacity. When complete, the 2.2 miles of Spring Garden Street will not only provide a safe bicycle and pedestrian facility between Philadelphia's riverfronts and safe route for the ECG, but will also serve as critical link in the Circuit – Greater Philadelphia's vision for a 750 mile interconnected trail network.

Redbank Valley Trail, Climax Tunnel (Gap 128) – Clarion County

The Redbank Valley Rail Trail is a 51-mile trail starting at the confluence with the Allegheny River in Clarion County with the mid-point connecting to the Armstrong Trail in Armstrong County and ending in the Borough of Brookville, Jefferson County. The alignment follows the former Mountain Laurel Railroad low grade corridor, built by the Allegheny Valley Railroad in the 1870s. 42 miles of the trail parallels Redbank Creek. Of the 51 miles of trail, several sections are open and additional miles are being improved by the Redbank Valley Trails Association. A significant gap in creating 51 open miles of open trail is the 517 foot-long Climax Tunnel located almost at the halfway point in the trail. As of 2015, the tunnel is not safe for use. The structure needs to be stabilized to allow for trail users to pass through. Once the tunnel is stabilized, it will connect 9 miles of open and uninterrupted trail from the Long Point Tunnel to the west with 3.5 miles of trail that connects into New Bethlehem Borough to the east.

Armstrong Trail, Brady Tunnel (Gap 130) – Clarion County

The Armstrong Trail is a 36-mile multi-use trail that follows the alignment of the former Allegheny Valley Rail Road along the eastern bank of the Allegheny River in Armstrong and Clarion Counties between Rosston Borough and Catfish Run, several miles north of East Brady Borough. 30 miles of the trail, from Rosston to East Brady, is improved trail with several short share-the-road sections. The trail also functions as a section of the planned 333-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. A critical gap in the Armstrong and Erie to Pittsburgh trail is the 2,468-foot Brady Tunnel. The tunnel is closed to the public due to its deteriorated state. Once the tunnel can be rehabilitated, it will connect 4 miles of Armstrong Trail to the north with 32 miles of trail to the south to create a fully-connected 36-mile system and will no longer require trail users to detour through several miles of steeply graded public roads.

Delaware & Lehigh Trail, Jim Thorpe Pedestrian Bridge (Gap 131) – Carbon County

The Delaware and Lehigh Trail is one of Pennsylvania's most complete long-distance trails. The trail follows the railroad lines and canal towpaths that carried anthracite coal from the mines in the Wyoming Valley and Carbon County to markets in Bucks County and Philadelphia. As of 2015, ninety percent of its 165 miles between Center City Philadelphia and Wilkes Barre are complete.

One of the most significant and long-standing gaps in the trail's entire 165 miles is the inability to cross the Lehigh River near Jim Thorpe. Currently, trail users have no viable option for detouring around this gap. In 2005, it was determined that the best and most cost-effective way to fill this gap was to construct a new pedestrian bridge in Jim Thorpe Borough. Once this bridge is constructed, it will connect 40 miles of trail into Wright Township, Luzerne County to the north and 90 miles of trail into the Borough of Bristol, Bucks County to the south.

Lycoming Creek Bikeway, Williamsport Riverwalk and Susquehanna State Park Connection (Gap 132) –
Lycoming County

The Lycoming Creek Bikeway and Williamsport Riverwalk are two local trails located within the Susquehanna Greenway, a 500-mile greenway of parks, trails, river access points and revitalized towns along the Susquehanna River. By closing the gap between these trails and the Susquehanna State Park, this project will help to further the vision of linking natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources along the 500-mile Greenway. Currently, US Highway 15, Interstate 180 and Lycoming Creek present barriers to connecting the two trail systems and Susquehanna State Park. To complete this gap 3 miles of trail and one pedestrian bridge will need to be constructed. Once complete, the 5.5 miles of the Lycoming Creek Bikeway will connect to the 4-mile Williamsport Riverwalk loop to create 12.5 miles of continuous trail.

Oil Creek State Park Trail Gap (Gap 214) – Venango County

The Oil Creek State Park trail system includes 52 miles of hiking trails and approximately 10 miles of multi-use trails. Currently, travelers on the Oil Creek State Park multi-use trail must either end their trip or continue on State Park Road to get to the southern end of the park where there are 35 additional miles of multi-use trail that travels outside of the State Park. To close the gap, 4 miles of trail will need to be constructed from Petroleum Centre, within the park, to the intersection of State Route 8 and Bankson Road on the southern end of the park. Once complete, the gap will create a continuous 49.5 mile trail from the Borough of Emlenton to the Borough of Titusville. In addition, this trail serves as the alignment for the planned 333-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.
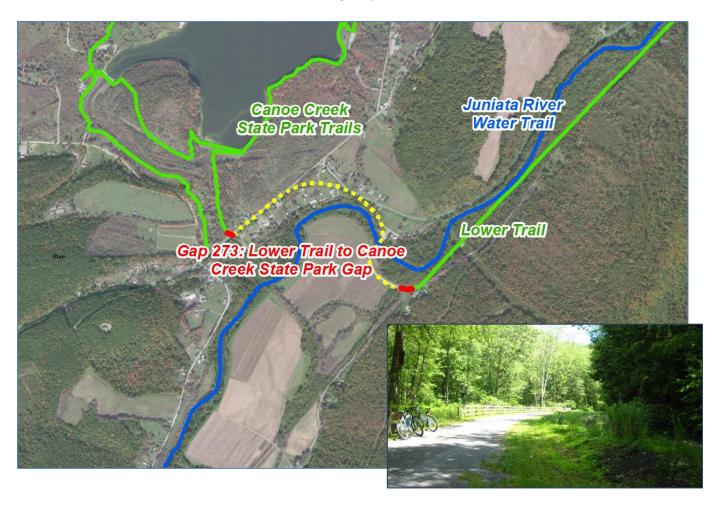
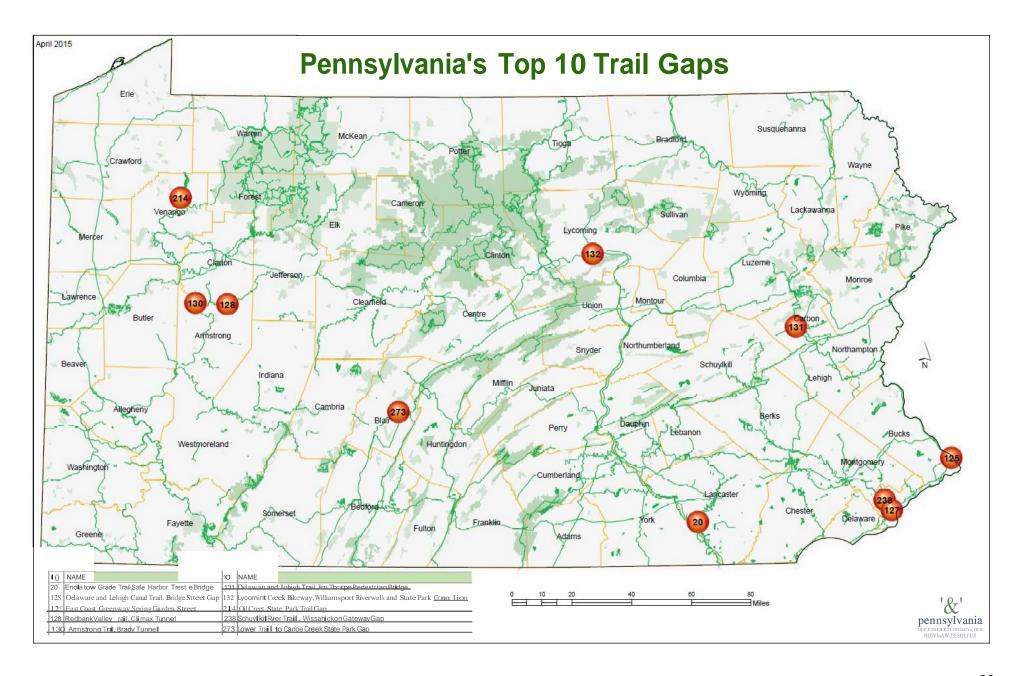**Schuylkill River Trail, Wissahickon Gateway Gap (Gap 238) – Philadelphia City**

The Schuylkill River Trail is a 130-mile multi-use trail that will one day link Pottsville, Schuylkill County with Center City Philadelphia. As of 2015, approximately 60 miles of the trail is complete. The Wissahickon Gateway gap presents one of the most challenging gaps in the trail system. From the South, the trail currently follows Kelly Drive until it reaches the Ridge Avenue Bridge where users must either bike with traffic or ride on the sidewalk into Manayunk where the trail continues. Multiple conflict points, including an active bus stop and eleven curb cuts, prevent many people from continuing any further. The preferred alternative is acquire additional right of way to create a new side-path trail along Ridge Avenue and install a pedestrian/bicycle only bridge over Wissahickon Creek. Once closed, this segment will connect 7 miles of the trail east to Schuylkill Banks in Center City Philadelphia with 20 miles of trail west to Phoenixville, Chester County.

Lower Trail to Canoe Creek State Park Gap (Gap 273) – **Blair County**

The Lower Trail is a 17-mile multi-use trail from Flowing Springs to Alfarata Borough. The trail is part of the 320-mile Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway which follows the alignment of the historic Main Line Canal. As of 2015, trail users cannot travel between the trail and the multi-use trails within Canoe Creek State Park. This gap spans from the current southern terminus of the Lower Trail at the intersection of Flowing Springs and Long roads to Canoe Creek State Park's 1 mile of biking and 8 miles of hiking trails, as well as the Park's overnight accommodations. To make the connection, a new 1-mile trail will need to cross the Juniata River and US Highway 22.

Pennsylvania's Top 10 Trail Gaps

April 2015

I()	NAME	10	NAME
20	Enola tow Grade Trail,Safe Harbor Trest e Bridge	131	Delawan and Lehigh Trail,Jim Thorpe Pedestrian Bridge,
12S	Oelaware and Lehigh Canal Trail. Bridge Stteet Gap	132	Lycomint Creek Bikeway, Williamsport Riverwalk and State Park Conn 1i on
12"	East Coast. Greenway Spring Garden. Street	214	Oil Creet. State. Park Trail Gap
128	Redbank Valley rail, Cli max Tunne1	238	Schuvlkil River Trail . Wissahickon Gateway Gap
130	Armstrong Trail, 8rady Tunnell	273	Lower Trai ll to Canoe Creek State Park Gap

pennsylvania

The following is a compilation of feedback obtained from the Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Summit in September 2013, the Pennsylvania Trail Advisory Committee's meeting in April 2014, and the facilitated session at the Pennsylvania Downtown Centers' annual conference in June 2014. Feedback has been grouped under headings that correlate with the final seven main recommendations (see pages 19-21). The bullets in **black** represent feedback from September 2013; while the bullets in **red** represent the feedback from the April 2014 Trail Advisory Committee; finally the bullets in **green** represent the feedback obtained from June 2014.

1. **Close priority gaps in Pennsylvania's statewide land and water trail network to achieve the overall goal of having a trail within 15 minutes of every citizen.**

   - (1) Definite criteria for prioritizing trail gaps (2)
     - Stick to it when making funding decisions
     - Create a top 10 list of statewide gaps and of regional gaps
   - (2) Use criteria to rank trail gap funding (6)
   - (3) Identify common hurdles to resolve gaps (monetary and non-monetary)
   - Close $2 million + gaps on BIG trails each year (this is included in #1)
   - Prioritize long-distance corridors
   - Support regional / long-distance trail organizations and partners/advocates(4)
     - By promoting and expanding available TA grant programs to build capacity (peers, trail TAP, circuit riders)
     - Remove $500,000 cap for priority GAP projects

2. **Coordinate state and federal funding programs to leverage maximum investment in priority trail projects.**

   - (1) Consolidate various agency trail funding sources under DCNR (2)
     - Coordinate all funding sources into a single application
   - (2) Examine match requirements using a sliding scale
   - (3) Develop more funding opportunities for trails and add flexibility
     - Advocate for flexibility in funding – or new new funding source (legislation restricts.
   - Create more capacity for regional trail development
     - Make it easier (4)
   - Single application for trail assistance / funding (2)
   - Simplify grant application (3)
   - Designated funding source for state-owned trails (1)
   - Lower match requirements for rural areas (2)
     - More funding for maintenance

3. **Cultivate diverse partnerships to build capacity to address local and regional trail needs.**

- (1) Sell relevancy to non-traditional community partners: health, positive community benefits, economic impact (1)
    - Develop trail "clubs" similar to Lion's Clubs, other fraternal organizations
- (2) Improve partnerships w/ PennDOT and RRs (4)
- (3) Create opportunities for business / trail partnerships (3)
    - Adopt a trail programs
    - Identify businesses on trail maps/PATrails
    - Partner with tourism and visitor bureaus
- Organize trail care crew that is specialized and able to cover state or regions
- Overcome lack of capacity and fear of owning bridges and other large infrastructure
- Encourage / assist regional trail organizations (1)
- Create volunteer list / resource for trail orgs to utilize for projects
- Develop municipal trail training program and funding
- PennDOT consistency across districts and with other agencies
- Encourage health care providers to "prescribe" trail use (2)
- Build municipal staff capacity to construct trails

4. **Develop a marketing strategy to promote Pennsylvania as a premier trail destination.**

- (1) Create "PA Destination Trail" program on regional basis (2) in concert with TPAs
    - Create a Trail Story Map
    - Market by trail type (Wilderness, Rail-Trail, OHV, etc)
    - Include water trails/rivers
    - Integrate long distance loop trails as part of the network (include access, lodging, etc.
- (2) Promote trails with signage on highways / major roads (2)
    - Build a cooperative (not lip service) relationship with PennDOT, including bike lanes, bike-ped stuff too
- (3) Uniform trail markings (2)
    - Develop a standard trail marking manual
- Market systems: maps, guides, VisitPA, signage (PennDOT)
- Marketing to age-specific groups
- Marketing outside of PA
- Additional studies on the economic impact / value of trails (1)
- Develop PA trail photo/video contest through social media (2)

- Add tiers to PA Trail of the Year: urban, rural, suburban, or by distance
- Central trail website accurate and complete
  - Complete Explore PA Trails 2.0 to enhance user experience and meet user needs
- Partner with Google to do all trail views like "street view" (2)
  - Incorporate Google "views" into ExplorePATrails

5. **Connect community assets through accessible trail networks.**

- (1) Create safe community access (1)
  - This is a mission statement not a goal or an objective
- (2) Develop criteria / assessment process for urban and rural areas
- (3) create walk/bike opportunities to multimodal trail networks (6)
  - Create urban and rural pilot projects
- Educate decision makers on value of trail funding (2)
- Link trails to community assets: schools, shopping, hospitals, parks, etc. (5)
- Connect to residential neighborhoods (5)
- Focus on linking existing land and water trails to towns (3)
- Collaborate with other state agencies, local & county governments, and funding sources to develop a shared vision of using sidewalks as part of a trail system.
- Develop Joint funded pilot program with PennDOT to encourage shared vision projects (maybe pilot communities) (3)

6. **Elevate the priority to maintain and improve existing trails and related infrastructure.**

- (1) Establish maintenance funding category within DCNR, DCED, and other agencies (4)
- (2) Conduct maintenance operations in reliable and sustainable ways customized to community (1)
  - Have to figure out how to incentivize maintenance (2)
- (3) prioritize trail maintenance needs by using a standard trail assessment tool (2)
- Identify existing infrastructure maintenance needs before developing anything new (5)
- Improve facilities and amenities: kiosks, restrooms, mileposts, toilets
- Add one nature-based playground to five of the most popular regional trails (1)
- Focus resources on prime trails that need maintenance or repairs
- Share adopt a trail programs (2)
- Require an operations and maintenance plan for all trail development projects (adopted by municipality) (3)
- Fund county-wide trail maintenance studies

- Establish 5-year strategic plan locally to identify upcoming maintenance needs, such as replenishing safety surfacing and replacing outdated equipment.

7. **Promote the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of trails through education and outreach.**

   - (1) Use trails as an outdoor classroom that connects and educates users to their environment (4)
     - Support Urban Environmental Outreach
     - Educational signage to explain importance of wildlife areas
   - (2) Create and promote best practices via simple visual aids, tool kits, resource center (1)
     - Greenway website/Dirt and Gravel Roads Program
   - (3) Integrate green infrastructure and BMPs along trails w/ associated interpretive features (1)
     - Educate Maintenance staff on Natural Area Maintenance, including invasive plant management (BOF Invasive Plant Tutorial)
   - Translate outdoor recreation / trails into a broader conservation ethic
   - Integrate heritage info along trails (2)
   - Encourage "green" features and interesting landscaping along trails as ideas for homeowners
   - Create trail etiquette signage or manual for multi-use trails
   - Incorporate natural resource education on key issues
   - Integrate new ADA trail manual into DCNR policy
   - Educate local officials about value of green infrastructure
     - Philadelphia and Pittsburgh models for turning around urban areas/cities

8. **Identify and prioritize strategic planning initiatives to advance the maintenance, development, management and conservation of a statewide network of land and water trails.**

   - (1) Launch county bike / ped / trail plan as update to comp plan (7)
     - Update county greenway plans to include bike/pedestrains (3)
   - (2) Encourage bike / ped audits in every community (3)
   - Consider loop trails along with linear trails (2)
   - Develop and promote trail signage best practices (2)
   - Develop multi-municipal and multi-landowner trails, especially in rural areas
     - Develop templates for landowner shared use agreements
   - Incorporate green infrastructure BMPs into trail systems

- Too much emphasis (points) in C2P2 application
- This is important, but not more important than closing gaps
- Widen rural roads to accommodate cyclists
- Signage about share the road with cyclists
- Identify and prioritize based on 1) need (population/use 2) easiest to complete and 3)willingness of counties to participate and develop a strategy

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR INPUT TO HELP SHAPE TRAIL PRIORITIES FOR THE 2014-2018 SCORP

YOUR PRIORITIES: Please check the boxes that apply.			DRAFT TRAIL GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2014-2018 STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP) UPDATE:
High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	9. Close priority gaps in Pennsylvania's statewide land and water trail network to achieve the overall goal of having a trail within 15 minutes of every citizen.
			e. Analyze current statewide gaps.
			f. Identify progress made in the last 5 years to fill gaps.
			g. Identify actions needed to close gaps.
			h. Re-evaluate priority for gaps.
			10. Coordinate state and federal funding programs to leverage maximum investment in priority trail projects.
			e. Establish Interagency Trail Funding Coordination Committee.
			f. Synchronize funding cycles and project selection.
			g. Identify common priority projects to leverage maximum joint investments.
			h. Integrate trail gap needs into PennDOT project delivery system.
			11. Cultivate diverse partnerships to build capacity to address local and regional trail needs.
			a. Establish semi-annual regional trail focus groups (DCNR regional offices, MPOs, RPOs, PennDOT district bicycle/pedestrian coordinators, tourism and visitors' bureaus, trail stakeholders, health organizations, etc.) to develop trail priorities, address trail gaps, identify trail opportunities and regional needs.
			b. Increase sharing of information through newsletters, blogs, websites, etc. to increase communication with trail stakeholders.

			12. Develop a marketing strategy to promote Pennsylvania as a premier trail destination.
			a. Identify Destination Trail Systems in each region.
			b. Create story maps to promote Destination Trail Systems.
			c. Develop a scope of work and timeline and implement a contract to retain a marketing team to produce statewide and regional strategies to market Pennsylvania trails.
High Priority	**Medium Priority**	**Low Priority**	
			13. Connect community assets through accessible trail networks.
			a. Develop a systematic approach for calculating bicycle and pedestrian needs statewide.
			b. Implement a jointly funded process to calculate regional bicycle/pedestrian needs.
			c. Conduct local bicycle/walking assessments.
			14. Elevate the priority to maintain and improve existing trails and related infrastructure.
			a. Complete studies on the cost of trail maintenance on various trail types and in different locations throughout the state.
			b. Develop a tool to electronically collect and report trail conditions on ExplorePATrails.
			c. Emphasize the use of the non-motorized and motorized trail design manuals in building and maintaining trails for their managed use.
			d. Identify and document best management practices for trail construction and maintenance.
			e. Promote the new Trail Accessibility Manual as a best management practice for trail development and provide training on implementation of the guidelines.
			15. Promote the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of trails through education and outreach.
			a. Complete additional studies on the economic impact / value of trails.
			b. Complete a statewide trail economic study.
			c. Complete an economic impact study of destination off-highway vehicle facilities (i.e., Rock Run Recreation Area and the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area.)
			d. Continue to support statewide and regional greenways and trails summits, workshops and training to share information.

What are we missing?

_____

What else would you like to tell us about this plan?

_____

Please return completed form to DCNR.

Trail Goals and Recommendations

Survey Results

Goal / Recommendation	Value
Identify common projects to leverage joint investment	
Identify actions needed to close gaps	
Establish regional focus groups to address priorities	
Integrate trail gap needs into PennDOT project delivery system	
Synchronize funding cycles and project selection	
Support greenway and trail workshops and training	
Analyze current statewide trail gaps	14
Identify destination trail systems	19
Increase information sharing and communication	13
Establish interagency funding coordination committee	20
Identify and document best management practices for trail..	12
Develop a tool to electronically collect and report trail conditions on ..	3
Complete additional studies on the economic impact / value of trails	
Develop a systematic approach for calculating bicycle and..	3
Conduct local bicycle/walking assessments	7.
Promote the new Trail Accessibility Manual as a best management	2
Create story maps to promote Destination Trail Systems	7
Complete a statewide trail economic study	30
Re-evaluate priority for gaps	22
Implement a jointly funded process to calculate regiona	35
Develop a scope of work and timeline and implement a contract to..	
Complete studies on the cost of trail maintenance on various trail	8
size the use of the non-motorized and motorized trail,	22
Identify progress made in the last 5 years to fill gaps	
Complete an economic impact study of destination off-highway..	

Axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Legend: ●**High Priority** ●**Medium Priority** ●**Low Priority**

APPENDIX D: TRAIL SURVEY COMMENTS

Equestrian-

1. The articles I have read about the trail system usage a Privilege not a Right and making us pay for the use of parks and game lands, for horseback riding, BUT still giving the priority to hunters is not at all fair. I realize Hunting brings in a lot of money to the state but we pay state taxes just as much as hunters. If we are going to pay for the privilege , than we need to have the same rights and considerations as the hunters!
2. Why is PA always behind on everything? We are a state with more open land yet we have inadequate trails for horseback riders.
3. Create horse camping grounds so that out of state people will come and spend their money in our state at our convenience stores, gas stations, and camp grounds...utilizing new horse trails

Positive encouragement-

1. Great stuff and keep up the good work.
2. Keep up the good work!

Multi-Modal Trails-

1. Multi-model forms of transportation need to be included in future Penn-DOT projects
2. All non-motorized use should be allowed on all trails.

Partnerships- (Many want a lesser role for state government)

1. goverment funding for programs are usually sparse and are met with critisism of wasteful spending by taxpayers who do not understand the recreational and economic impact of trails.private industry healthcare providers and health insurance companies should be sought for funding trails based on promoting healthy life style keeping insurance at a affordable rate and reducing medical costs   shale industries current industry that provides economic recovery but is met with criticisum on the unsure enviormental impact of drilling by funding this it would show a concern on thier part of our enviorment and not just leave us brownfeilds as industryu has done in the past
2. encourage each township to talk to each other about their plans
3. This plan is gigantic! The SW part of the State is very active and has changed the landscape of Pittsburgh and surrounding rural towns. The NE is far behind! There are great ideas floating around...but with your initiative and dedicated local individuals...we can change the landscape and open opportunities for all times of Trail users, etc.
4. I think you need to take advantage of the local municipalities and trail organizations without imposing big government philosophies and restrictions. The state needs to give the local government Ownership of the projects while the state takes a more supportive guiding role. If you give the county government and municipalities more ownership they are more likely to embrace the ideas and I feel you would have a higher success & participation rates. Definitely need the economic impact studies. Also including waterways which are vital to our local sportsmen. (Join partnership with the PA Fish & Boat Commission) Thank you!

5. Joint coordinated efforts to leverage gap completion and funding efficiencies should be a top priority. Best practices in design, construction and maintenance (including a web-based reporting system by the public for trail conditions) would help to protect the investment and should be a priority. Nowadays I think making the public aware of the existence of the facility is all the marketing that is needed because, as the saying goes, if you build it they will come.
6. Marketing should be handled by DMO in each region, funding support could come from DCNR, but there is no need to reinvent the wheel by having marketing done in house within DCNR. The full range of trail/recreation product needs to be marketed to create destinations, pulling out just one segment of DCNR trails is inefficient.

Accessibility (Incl udi ng tr ail ' ac c ess or i es ': Maps , si g nag e, r es tr ooms , etc .) -

1. Trail maps are very important for people like myself that can't find my way out of a paper bag. I like the idea of trails within 15 miles from every citizen. We travel to state parks and forests specifically because of their trail systems.Thank you for what you are doing!!!!!!
2. Do all trailheads provide users information on nearby attractions, food, lodging, etc.?
3. I appreciate every trail in my area. Some I hike, some I ride on a horse. Clear signage is important, as is a big enough parking area.
4. Emphasis on accessible trails is resource intensive. Utilize the mandated federal guidelines to efficiently review trail projects for accessibility; there are 5 allowed exemptions and they can easily be documented saving time and resources better spent maintaining and constructing high quality recreation opportunities.
5. Rest stops along the trails with rest rooms facilities and access to clean drinking water.

More Trails/Maintenance/Connect Gaps-

1. Filling trail gaps is an important thing to do. For destination trails, this will greatly improve the experience, increase the number of visitors, and raise the level of spending/economic impact. Locally, I think it is extremely important from a functionality and health standpoint to connect residential neighborhoods with local businesses and restaurants by trails/walkways/sidewalks/bike lanes. It would benefit adults greatly if they would walk or bike to local places instead of driving.
2. In my opinion, studies are nice and helpful, but the main focus and highest priority should be on developing trails and trail connections.
3. Move on, get going , keep us informed of progress.
4. give trail implementers tore the greatest flexibility in implementing their plans. Keep paperwork to a minimum and concentrate in getting the physical work right. no body sees the paperwork--everyone sees and is affected by the physical facility so make this the focus.
5. Get it done.
6. ASSESSING SECTIONS OF ABANDON RAIL ROAD PATHWAYS THAT CAN BE USED IN SMALLTOWN RURAL AREAS.

Less Studies/Research/Paperwork-

1. to much busy work not enough Building. We know where the Gaps are in the system,why one more study.
2. Too many evaluations and studies waste time and money. Concentrate on known facts, not opinions. Make improvements as needed, without a lot of extraneous paperwork. Instead of thinking about it forever, get the jobs done!
3. Don't waste a lot of money on studies!
4. Quit with all the studies, committees and paperwork. Go get your hands dirty building something.
5. Dont get lost in all the studies, data and talking.Make more effort on actual improvements on the research that hasbeen completed.What has been done by the PEC so far has been outstanding.Keep up the good work, and continue to get others involved with the PEC.
6. Knowing the economic impact of trails will not help without the method of communication between the trail builders/managers and the businesses and economic development professionals. They speak different languages.

Other-

1. Some areas have been lied to by DCNR management in the past. Promises made but not kept. Money provided for a region sucked off and used by a few. When I see pilot program...I see back room deals that have already been made.
2. Make sure financing plans are as comprehensive as project planning.
3. I answered all the questions but I don't know what some of the documents are that you refer to.

ITEMS MISSING

Equestrian-

1. Build it we'll come. Remember: horses pre-date bicycles snd represent the largest portion of the recreational industry in dollars spent.
2. Conduct an economic study as to the contributions of horseback riders on trail usage. Develop larger parking areas for horsetrailers to access trails. Develop more rail trail areas for equine trail riders
3. Horseback riding! Please make sure to include equestrians in your plans. We love the outdoors and will travel within the state to ride new trails. Many of us are members of the PA Equine Council and will help with trail maintenance, building and design as needed. If possible, allow for trails in some areas that are for horses and pedestrians only so that horses and bicyclists can have separate areas to enjoy. Thank you!
4. Horses.   You only mention studies, reports, trails, and marketing, etc. for bicycles and pedestrians.   Hundreds of Millions of dollars have been spent on asphalt hike/bike trails. ZERO dollars have been spent on trails friendly to horses. All horses need, generally, is permission -- don't need leveled, graded, asphalted, manicured and marked trails.   Schylukill Trail is really

sad, it would have been so easy to make a dirt path next to the big strip of asphalt to accommodate horses. Please review the 2002 study of the economic impact of horses on PA's economy done by the PA Dept of Agriculture.Also, review Florida's really horse-friendly trails, parks, website, etc.

5. You are addressing hikers and bikers, but what about horseback riders? There are a huge number of people in this state who ride horses and would like to know more about where they can ride without having do hours or research to figure out where they can go. Please don't leave us out!

6. My interest is in equestrian trails / shared use trails. It is important to maintain and increase this trail system. Sharing use between horses and hikers is good - I do both. I am disappointed when hiking trails are made off-limits to equestrians. I think this is selfish on the hikers' part, and an unnecessary limitation on the use of trails that are well-suited to both uses. I think that conflicts between hikers and horses are extremely rare. I agree that some trails should be off limits to motorized vehicles. An expanded trail system encourages people to get outdoors. With regard to trail maintenance, I think that individual trail users should be encouraged to maintain as they go.   This would apply especially to the ingrowth of brush onto the trails, and to deadfalls across the trails. The trail users know where the problems are, and in many cases they could easily fix the problems. This should be encouraged. I think that more trail maps should be available. Excellent maps can be made with a hand-held GPS unit and a computer.

7. Horseback riding should be including in all of this discussion of trails. There is much misinformation (largely coming from hikers who do not have any horse knowledge) about trail damage supposedly being caused by horses.

8. Nowhere is there any mention of horseback trails. I have been searching the state for a trail system. MD had a great horseback trail system. W

9. horses

10. Horseback riding! Equestrians are a very large tax base and they spend a lot of money continually in their areas.

11. Include Horses on the trails

12. I am a horseback rider. I only saw bicyclists and pedestrians mentioned. I would hope these things would include equine activity. I just started doing some longer distance riding and a list of state forests where these events could be held.

13. Horseback riding, was not addressed. We need better more detailed maps and trails that are marked clearly.

14. Expanding equestrian trail use and appropriate construction and maintenance for such trails.

15. include equestrians in the planning

16. Make sure all trail users are included in all proposals. Please include horse back riders and equestrian activities in planning.Move on ,get going

17. You had questions about trails for hikers and bikers but nothing about horses. there are a large number of equestrians using DCNR land.

18. horses. Many trails are mult-use. Horses do Not destroy trails The equine councils have huge resources of people to make, maintain and manage trails -- and the added economics from

horses -- people trailering in buy gas/ food ...having camping areas is a big plus -- many sports are active and generate a lot of income -- plus help in trail care.

19. Equestrians use theses trails as well. Please continue to maintain the trails for this purpose.

Maintenance-

1. Equipment that can be used to manage trails and there upkeep and to create new trails. There is a national Wild Fire Equipment Cache System, if you need equipment and supplies, you call the cache. The equipment is purchased at best price ahead of time, it's standardized and it comes back at the end of the fire.
2. Many trails in PA are well-seasoned and need repair. State funds should be available for reconstruction/repair, not just new construction. Marketing: only market trails that are complete and ready for public use. Promoting trail systems that are not built only confuses the traveling public.
3. need to continually stress the need for patience and perseverance in implementing trail work. it takes more time than it should but so did rehabbing my kitchen. Keep the faith and keep pushing--it will get done
4. Walking trails a re nice to attract people to your area, however, there is little attention paid to rest room facilities and trash collections. We have had several complaints concerning persons on a bicycle trails that just pitch their trash along the trail and this ends up on private property or in the water ways.
5. Please add the following:III. Cultivate diverse partnerships to build capacity... C. Provide technical assistance to local groups for capacity building, leadership training and Board development.VI. Elevate the priority to maintain... D. Identify and document best management practices for trail construction and maintenance - including amenities such as restrooms, water sources, wayfinding, etc.
6. Develop, implement, and maintain an annual DCNR parks and forests Line Items for;a. trail maintenance (labor and materials, inner agency)b. trail construction (in agency and contracting)Create at mandatory, inter bureau, process for DCNR entities to implement trail management and maintenance practices across bureau boundaries.
7. I would like to see funding of three regional Trail Maintenace Workshops with equipment.

Increased Involvement (Partnerships)-

1. Under promoting the economic benefits, we need to get more information out to the public, public officials, Penn Dot and Chambers of Commerce so they can appreciate the economic value of trails to rural municipalities and support trail development. There needs to be an effort to encourage cooperation between government agencies and trail developers, particularly Penn Dot, to reduce burdensome regulations, extensively burdensome agreements and bureaucracy so that they do not constitute a hindrance to trail developers.
2. community involvement with each township a trail goes through
3. Less 'bureauatic talk' and studies. Get the local people involved.
4. Examine opportunities to partner with municipalities and planning commissions, specifically regarding NPDES MS4 permit requirements.

5. bringing the health care community and their wallet to the table in regards to trail design/development/maintenance
6. Open attitudes that can make others want to help the PEC.My view many years is that the PEC is more of a inner circle club. That does not make others feel welcomeor want to get involved.
7. When laying out trails, there should be a hiker, biker and equestrian on the planning committee.
8. I would like to see a focus on local partner support (meaning outdoor recreation enthusiasts and user coalitions) with micro- grant funding. I would also like to see a focus on local trail networks and less on long distance trails. I would suggest looking to partner organizations to go pro for trail maintenance, similar to how the ADK trail crews do a lot of the work on public lands in NY State.
9. We need to emphasis the use of volunteers in building and maintaining trails.

Land Acquisition-

1. Tools for land acquisition and/or standardized legal language for sharing or using property with limited liability.
2. We have no business taking personal property for rails to trails. Railbed property that is being taken, in the interest of a rails to trails program, should revert to the landowner. There is no indication that a railroad would return to areas like Clarion County so land should not and cannot be taken under the pretense of imminent domain. The government has no business using my tax dollars promoting this boondoggle.

Funding-

1. Studies are great, but there also needs to be funding available for the implementation of the recommendations found in those studies or else the studies will be useless.
2. funding should be made available for trail maintenance.
3. The funding to accomplish everything.

Misplaced Trust/Funding-

1. assurance that DCNR management doesn't place trust is LDD or regional personnel that might take advantage and use funds for their own special unspoken dream project instead of including all areas of responsibility.

Facilities/Signage-

1. I'm sure this is embedded somewhere in the plan. Develop Trail Signing Systems throughout the state using DCNR's current system: Intersection numbers, emergency exit, trail name, etc.Is safety discusses in the plan? I.E. what to do if you find yourself facing a bear? What to do if a storm suddenly comes up? What to do if you break a limb? How to handle poison snack bites deep in the woods? When non-hunters should be wearing orange? And so forth.
2. The need for wayfinding systems and interpretation of area/regional history is a very important component to statewide trails. Need to address this regionally and allow set-aside funding for its implementation.
3. Trail facilities were not included specicifally within the questions. It would be beneficialy to have a guideline manual for development of these facilities that engineering firms can refer

during design process.   Regional sigange on long distance trails need to be conhesive for the entire length of the trail. The commonwealth should advocate for this through educational workshops, orother means.

4. Marking the trails that we have with a clear signage system.

Comprehensive Park Locator-

1. a comprehensive easy to locate trail list for the state
2. Statewide Outdoor Communications plan/and document that shows all websites with information on places and events-- co-brand outdoor rec events and make it easy for local and regional partners to use material-- evaluate and provide information on best ways to communicate via websites, mobile, social media to all partners-- most important, make it easy to enter events by providing one website/ event entry area that populates all others.
3. DCNR Trails App for your smartphone. It's a tall task, but an important one.
4. Trail gap analysis needs to include links to none state owned properties such as community trails and federal lands. A system needs to be in place to obtain and share trail development information outside of DCNR system.

Increasing Access (Ex: Elderly, Handicapped, Public Transit)-

1. Identifying handicap accessible trails and those that can be opened up to the handicapped using utvs.
2. I AM impressed. After working with trail building for 25 years in NE PA there is a reality as to the importance of alternative transportation and the building of trails where old RR's used to be. Pennsylvania is full of recreational opportunities. The State is absolutely beautiful with plants, lakes, mountains, etc. The population is elderly and new ways to open land and opportunities would help our State immensely.
3. Is there anyone looking at the use of public transit services (regionally) for people to have alternate transportation to these recreational trails? For example, I know I can take the Beiber bus to NYC. Similarly, I can take the bus to Philly and jump on a trail segment along the Delaware River. I can leave my car at a local park and ride and get shuttled to a drop off point or trailhead in another region. those with limited car access could still venture and explore.

Communication/Promotion-

1. Continue to talk about the importance of outdoor recreation resources in terms of the public health of the community and community members. This is important to public health in the Commonwealth.
2. Under the Connect Community Assets through Accessible Trail Networks, I thought it would offer action steps to connect community assets with trail users. In other words, what is being done on the trails to get users connected with the communities they are moving through?
3. I think that the value of hiking trails is underappreciated. Most hiking trails have few people on them at a time. However, hiking trails provide great opportunities for challenging exercise, connections to nature, exploration, and even education. We should strive to get more people hiking and spending time in the Great Outdoors.

Economic Impact Studies-

1. I would like to see ROI studies and economic impact studies for trails on the local/county level.
2. actual economic development of trail towns currently established enhanced research showing the impact the trail of any type had on a community and get this out to all communities jobs are needed

Building/Connecting Gaps-

1. Too much double talk. Just get the roads safe for bicyclists, protect the forests for hikers and let mountain bikers use the trails, too. Promote a healthy PA, not a PA where our forests are fracked and our water is ruined. There are plenty of volunteers keeping our trails maintained. The addition of more committees and wasted state and Fed govt time and money makes us environmentalists crazy. Just DO IT. Thanks.
2. Pink slips for bureaucrats, and devote more payroll to the common laborers. Train these people and get out the tools for making PA's public space usable.
3. I would like to see priority given to creating links to connect trails for longer bicycle rides similar to the GAP trail.
4. Every greenway does not need a developed trail running through it.

Management-

1. Determine a priority system for trail development that is balanced between expanding well established large trail systems to make connections over greater space, and developing small trail systems that benefit local communities but do not necessarily connect to larger trail systems. These are equally important as the average person using a trail does not use it to travel over long distances. Here lies the ongoing tension!
2. Hire an individual or 2 to manage each trail area by county - who would be responsible for reviewing and submitting needs and promoting the trail. Have an on-line program where the individual from the county could submit their collected date. This would enable the state to collect the data they need to access use, needs and what is missing.
3. The question about regional summits asked about semi-annual. That is probably too often, although the summits need to be done every 18 months or so.
4. Management of special events is needed. Particularly on natural surface trail systems. Trails are degraded by these events, and user impacts suffer (both during via crowding/displacement and after via reduced trail utility or degraded experience) special events as a result.

Motorized Vehicle Use/ATVs-

1. Greater emphasis should be place on developing ATV and off highway motorcycle trails on state forest land. The state with funding from the snowmobile/atv fund should connect riding rock run and aoaa to existing trail on state land.
2. YOU MUST MAINTAIN A SEPERATION BETWEEN MOTORIZED VEHICLES AND HIKERS.

APPENDIX E: WHAT PENNSYLVANIANS SAY ABOUT TRAILS... A SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

Pennsylvania Online Survey

The Pennsylvania online survey was open for nearly two months, from 03/27/2014 until the closing date of 05/19/2014 this past spring. Over 7,000 total respondents participated in the survey, with more than 8,500 individualized comments that were then categorized according to major apparent themes. It was evident that Pennsylvanians highly value the trails and natural areas in their local communities and throughout the state. When asked what they most value about their communities, nearly ninety percent of respondents indicated that trails, natural areas and waterways were what they value most. In addition, when asked about the top priority facility that communities should invest in, respondents overwhelmingly indicated regional and community trails, with seventy-three percent of the survey participants indicating these trails to be a top priority.

"What is the single most important thing that parks and outdoor recreation agencies/ organizations could do to help you participate in outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania?"

After further analysis of the Pennsylvania online resident survey, the most salient finding was the purported need for maintenance and upkeep of existing facilities. This included trails, parks, and physical structures of the recreation infrastructure in place in Pennsylvania. This became especially clear upon analysis of the two open-ended questions; the first of which asked respondents, "What is the single most important thing that parks and outdoor recreation agencies/organizations could do to help you participate in outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania". Nearly twelve percent of respondents gave a response related to maintenance, improvement, and/or safety of the state's current facilities and recreation areas. An example of a common response classified in the maintenance category is the following, to "focus on [the] development and regular maintenance of rail trails. In addition, connect new and existing trails to create a large network of trails". In addition, many of the responses showed an interest in maintaining, increasing and connecting the current rail to trail system with many respondents giving positive feedback, for example, "the rails to trails initiatives in our area are very well used and allow alternate methods of transportation to many users. Linking these trails together to allow long range travel will be helpful".

"Is there anything else we should consider as we develop the next five year outdoor recreation plan for Pennsylvania?"

The second open-ended question asked respondents "Is there anything else we should consider as we develop the next five year outdoor recreation plan for Pennsylvania", with the top response being related to off-highway-vehicles and all-terrain vehicles (OHV/ATVs), with nearly ten percent of responses in this category. Most of these respondents wanted more OHV/ATV trails and several mentioned building a trail system similar to the Hatfield & McCoy system in West Virginia. It was often suggested that OHV/ATV clubs could put forth the maintenance required to maintain extending the system, "open the forest trail networks, improve these networks with input and volunteer aid by the many OHV clubs limiting [the] cost of opening these properties".

Trail Networks

Responses related to trail networks came in at a close second for questions eight and nine, eleven percent and nine percent respectively. Many of these responses relayed the idea of walkable communities; using trails and greenways to provide connections between places of residence and downtown areas, as well as between communities and to longer trails located outside of the community. Some examples include responses such as, "walkable community - enables citizens to participate in outdoor recreation as part of their everyday life (walk to dentist, post office, movie theater, etc.)", "encourage more recreation/transportation opportunities and corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists that are safe, attractive, and accessible, as a way to decrease the amount of motorized vehicles in use on roads". Creating walkable communities included active transportation methods of both walking and biking, and responses often asked for improvements to be made to both bike paths and on-road bike lanes for recreation and work commute purposes.

Regional Differences and Similarities

"What places best reflect what you value about your community?"

Trails were indicated as a highly valued asset, as shown in the following questions. When asked, "What places best reflect what you value about your community, check all that apply", an overwhelming majority chose "trails, natural areas, waterways". This resulted in this category being the top choice, with ninety percent of respondents having chosen this category. This was true for all regions, with the percentage of respondents that chose this category ranging from eighty-nine percent in the southwest region to ninety-two percent in the northwest region.

"Please rate the level of priority your local community should place on investing in each of the following facilities over the next five years."

Another question asked respondents to rank the level of priority that their local community should place on investing in the given facilities over the next five years, with 1 indicating "not at all important" and 5 indicating "extremely important". The weighted average of all of the responses resulted in "community or regional trail systems" being rated 4.00 out of 5.00, the highest weighted average of all of the choices. While the value of the weighted average differed among regions, "community or regional trail systems" had the highest weighted average among every region. A substantial difference between regions was observed in the top ranking (#5-extremely important) of "trails/parks for motorized activities". Both the southwest and north central regions had "trails/parks for motorized activities" place fourth out of fifteen choices for the number of respondents indicating that this was a top priority. In contrast, the southeast and south central regions did not have many respondents indicate that this was a top priority, with a ranking of eleventh out of the fifteen choices for the top priority. "On-road bike lanes" placed fifth or sixth out of the fifteen choices for every region, except for the south central region, in which it placed third for the top priority. "Mountain bike trails" did not place in the upper half of the top priority ranking for any region.

Important Interest Groups

Lastly, throughout the survey there was a small but strong contingent for increased accessibility for the elderly and/or handicapped. Several of these responses gave examples for ways to increase accessibility, such as paving parts of the trails or "consider opening the rail/trail paths to electric powered carts, scooters, etc. for limited use (one day a month) or [providing] passes for the disabled or medically challenged". There was also a push for increased implementation of multi-use areas. However, strife was noted between user groups with a smaller, but still noteworthy, group of users highly opposed to the idea of increasing multi-use areas. Lastly, equine-related responses only comprised approximately One percent of each open-ended question, however, this user group advocated for increased use of trails in every question that enabled open-ended comments, with eleven percent of the comments to the question addressing the level of priority local communities should place on investing in the given facilities over the next five years related to equine activities.

Pennsylvania Resident Survey

The Pennsylvania Resident Survey was designed by the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management at Pennsylvania State University with assistance provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The intention of this survey was to better understand the outdoor recreation patterns and behaviors of Pennsylvania residents so as to best provide for outdoor recreation over the next five years through the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Nearly a twenty percent response rate was obtained through a combination mail and internet surveys, with a total of 2,240 completed surveys.

Popular Activities

Respondents were instructed to choose from a multitude of outdoor activities and indicate which of these they participated in over the course of the past year. Four different types of walking were listed within this list and three of these four were the top grossing activities that respondents chose; these were *"walking (street, sidewalks, trails)"* at seventy-one percent, *"walking on local streets/sidewalk"* at sixty-four percent, *"walking on trails/paths"* at forty-seven percent and the fourth option which was not a high grossing option was *"walking with your dog"* at twenty-nine percent.

Recreation Area and Facility Needs

Respondents were asked to evaluate a variety of facilities and recreation infrastructure and indicate whether it was adequate, in need of improvement, or in need of quantity increase. The item that received the lowest percentage of respondents indicating its adequacy was that of on-road bike lanes, at twenty-nine percent. This item also had the highest percentage of respondents indicate it was in need of improvement, at twenty-nine percent, followed by bike paths/rail trails with the second highest percentage, at seventeen percent. On-road bike lanes had the second highest percentage indicating a need for increase in quantity, at fifty-four percent, closely following behind rental cabins at the greatest indicated need at fifty-six percent.

Behavioral Questions and Responses

More than twenty questions relating to attitude and behavior were asked of respondents. Of these, the strongest response was obtained when asked if parks, trails, and open space are an essential component of the health care system, with seventy-seven percent indicating they agree or strongly agree with that statement. In addition, a majority of residents indicated that they would be more inclined to use a trail if it was in close proximity to where they live, with fifty-five percent indicating they strongly agreed with this statement. This was fourteen percent higher than the next item with the highest percentage of respondents indicating strong agreement. Furthermore, fifty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed that *"it is important that greenways/trails connect neighborhoods with schools, shopping areas, parks and open spaces"*.

Final Input: Draft Trail Goals and Recommendations

Online Survey

A final online survey was posted and advertised on the ExplorePATrails website from 10/06/2014 until 11/19/2014 to collect any final input on the Trail Goals and Recommendations document. The draft of this document was posted with each page of the survey representative of the draft's seven specified goals. Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether each recommendation made to attain these goals was a high, medium or low priority. In addition, two open-ended questions were asked of respondents; if they believed the draft was missing essential components and if there was anything else the respondents would like to contribute.

Top Three Recommendations

Three recommendations received an overwhelming majority, over sixty percent, of respondents indicating that they were a high priority. The recommendation with the highest percentage of respondents was *"identify common priority projects to leverage maximum joint investments"* at an incredible seventy-one percent identifying it as a high priority and twenty-five percent as a medium priority. *"Identify actions needed to close* [trail] *gaps"* received the second highest percentage of respondents identifying it as a top priority, at sixty-nine percent, with twenty-seven percent identifying it as a medium priority. The third top priority was that of *"establish semi-annual regional trail focus groups (DCNR regional offices, MPOs, RPOs, PennDOT district bicycle/pedestrian coordinators, tourism and visitors' bureaus, trail stakeholders, health organizations, etc.) to develop trail priorities, address trail gaps, identify trail opportunities and regional needs"* with sixty-two percent of respondents identifying this recommendation as a high priority and twenty-nine percent as a medium priority.

Funding

The second goal written into the draft document addressed funding needs- "*Coordinate state and federal funding programs to leverage maximum investment in priority trail projects"*. Four recommendations were listed within this goal, three of which were selected by over fifty percent of survey participants as a high priority recommendation, and the fourth had very near fifty percent agreement. The highest grossing percentage was the highest overall and was previously discussed. *"Synchronize funding cycles and project selection"* and *"integrate trail gap needs into PennDOT project*

delivery system" were identified by fifty-eight percent of respondents as a high priority, and *"establish Interagency Trail Funding Coordination Committee"* was identified by forty-nine percent.

Open-Ended Questions

While 499 people responded to this survey, 66 chose to respond to the question addressing whether there were any essential components missing from the draft goals and recommendations, and 33 responded to the question addressing if there was anything else the respondents would like to submit with the survey. Nineteen of the 66 comments dealt with equestrian concerns, many of which voiced concern that equestrians were not well enough addressed in the plan and that more shared-use trails were necessary to properly accommodate equestrian needs.