

Philosophy

This Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan (the Plan) links existing resources by utilizing both natural and man-made environmental features found within the six counties. By incorporating these elements into the greenways network, the region's natural resources are harnessed to create a comprehensive and interconnected network of related elements.

In addition to delineating the elements of the greenway network, the Plan identifies individual project corridors and provides a clear strategy for implementing them. The Plan provides an overall framework for prioritizing among the many project corridors as well as a range of potential tools and support sources.

General Methodology

In order to define a network of resource-based greenways, a geographical information system (GIS) was used as the project's primary analytical tool. This analysis was developed through three key phases: the compilation of background mapping, establishing greenway criteria and the identification of potential greenway elements and corridors. These phases included the following:

Background Mapping

Building on available data, a comprehensive series of GIS maps was prepared to document the natural and man-made resources of the Southern Alleghenies region. Twenty-seven unique maps were

created to clearly portray the location and extent of the region's various resources. These maps and the GIS data used to create them have been made available to each of the counties and the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC) for their use.

Greenway Criteria

To identify those areas of the region that are most appropriate for inclusion in the greenways network, a series of criteria were identified. These criteria, selected from the resources mapped as part of the background data, included elements such as ridge tops and steep slopes which could be used to establish the extents of potential greenway elements.

Greenway Elements and Corridors

Geographic areas most appropriate for inclusion into the greenways network were those with a number of overlapping criteria as well as those located such that they could be used to link existing or potential areas of the network.

Implementation

In addition to clearly defining a network of greenway corridors that are directly related to the landscape of the Southern Alleghenies region, this Plan includes a realistic implementation strategy. This strategy, built on interaction with the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and public meetings in each county, has been tailored to the government structure and political realities of the Southern Alleghenies region.

Public Participation Process

As a compliment to the technical nature of the GIS data gathered, a public review process was incorporated into the planning process so that review and feedback from residents of the counties and other interested parties could be incorporated. This process was sponsored by the SAP&DC. To steer the project through the development of the plan a PAC was formed. The PAC includes the following members: the planning director of each county, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the SAP&DC, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Allegheny Ridge Development Corporation. A brief description of each of the major public participation events (meetings) conducted throughout the process follows:



Figure 12: October 2005 Public Meeting in Fulton County

PAC Meetings

Bi-monthly meetings were held with the PAC and typically included reviews of the initial data analyses, draft products and discussion of methods and ideas as they were being developed.

October 2005 Public Meetings

Over the course of 2 days (October 12th and 13th), Planning Team members conducted meetings in the following five counties:

- Somerset (October 12th at 1:00pm in Somerset)
- Cambria (October 12th at 4:00pm in Ebensburg)
- Bedford (October 12th at 7:00pm in Bedford)
- Fulton (October 13th at 1:00pm in McConnellsburg)
- Huntingdon (October 13th at 4:00pm in Mill Creek)

The purpose of the meetings was to discuss three key aspects of the Plan: the overall purpose and intent of the greenway plan, the proposed dual nature of the plan (recreation and conservation) and the elements and scoring used to develop the plan.

April 2006 Public Meetings

Over the course of 2 days (April 18th and 20th), Planning Team members conducted meetings in the following five counties:

- Fulton (April 18th at 1:00pm in McConnellsburg)
- Huntingdon (April 18th at 4:00pm in Mill Creek)

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- Somerset (April 20th at 1:00pm in Somerset)
- Cambria (April 20th at 4:00pm in Ebensburg)
- Bedford (April 20th at 7:00pm in Bedford)



Figure 13: Bedford County Meeting Held April 2006

The purpose of the meetings was to solicit public feedback regarding: additional corridor suggestions, greenway related activities and current needs and opportunities.

October/November 2006 County Meetings

In late October and early November, meetings were held in the following counties:

- Fulton (October 25th at 7:00pm in McConnellsburg)
- Somerset (October 26th at 10:00am in Somerset)
- Cambria (November 2nd at 1:30pm in Ebensburg)
- Bedford (November 2nd at 7:00pm in Bedford)

- Huntingdon (November 2nd at 7:00pm in Huntingdon)

The purpose of these meetings was to solicit feedback on the draft plan prior to completion of the plan. The Fulton County meeting was held concurrently with a meeting for the ongoing County Comprehensive Plan.

2007 County Adoption Meetings

The final draft of the Plan will be formally incorporated into the comprehensive recreation and open space plan for each of the participating counties. Adopted resolutions from each of the counties will be incorporated into the Plan document itself.