

Recreational Resources

Trails

Land

Greenways

Greenways are defined as dedicated corridors of open space. They vary in terms of size, purpose, and amount or quality of green. Some serve mainly as recreational corridors, as in rail trails, while others may be environmental corridors, like riparian (streamside) buffers. Greenways provide many environmental benefits, including improved air and water quality, habitat for wildlife, and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like wetlands and steep slopes. Greenways are also economically beneficial; they increase property values, attract local businesses, connect communities, and improve the quality of life.

The Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission, a coalition of government and private organizations established by Governor Tom Ridge in 1998, has produced an action plan for developing a statewide greenway network by 2020. Called *PA Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections*, the document calls for connecting “hubs” of public lands with national, state, local, or regional greenways.²⁴ The Plan also encourages each county to apply greenways as a land use strategy and to map these important areas.

²³ www.pgc.state.pa.us

²⁴ www.dcnr.state.pa.us/pagreenways/index.htm

Beaver County completed a County Comprehensive Greenways and Trails Plan in 2007, and Lawrence County completed their County Greenways and Open Space Plan in 2008. The Beaver County Greenways Plan identifies twelve potential greenways. Of these, the Brady's Run watershed area and the southern portion of the Beaver River Study Area Watershed possess areas of sensitive natural resources that are commonly identified in Beaver County's Greenway Plan and in the Beaver River Conservation and Management Plan. The Lawrence County Greenway Plan identifies eight potential conservation greenways. Included among these eight are the Beaver/Mahoning River Greenway, which includes corridors along Jenkins Run and Edwards Run, and the McKees Run Greenway. These areas have been identified in the Beaver River Conservation and Management Plan as having sensitive natural resources, particularly areas of dense forests. Contact the County Planning Offices for information about these documents.

Rails to Trails

Rail trails are examples of recreational greenways. Abandoned rail beds provide an ideal starting point for cycling or walking trails: they are free from traffic, have a gentle grade, are close to many communities, and provide closer access to the rivers. Rail trails are made possible due to a 1983 amendment to the National Trail System Act of 1968. The amendment allows old railroad beds to be used by the public and allows for rail banking, which authorizes a railroad company to reclaim the abandoned railways if needed.

In 2006, the Beaver River Rails-to-Trails Association completed Phase 1 of the Beaver River Trail from 11th Street to 23rd Street in Beaver Falls. Phase 2 will involve Geneva College and extend from 28th Street to the northern edge of the College.

The Railbanking Act

In 1976, the federal government deregulated the railroads with the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act. The purpose of this act was to make it easier for the railroad companies to get rid of unprofitable lines freely, either by sale or abandonment, allowing it to become part of the adjacent property.

In 1983, Congress passed the National Trails System Act "to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs...and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation" through trail creation. The National Trails System Act is also known as the "railbanking act." Under "STATE AND METROPOLITAN AREA TRAILS," Section 8 (d) of the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. §1247(d), the Act calls for encouraging State and local agencies and private interests to establish appropriate trails using the provisions of the National Trails System Act in administering the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act. Section 8 (d) spells out the "national policy to preserve established railroad rights-of-way for future reactivation of rail service, to protect rail transportation corridors, and to encourage energy efficient transportation use." The act allows rails-to-trails groups to take over the railroad land, assume responsibility for them, and promise to sell the land back to the railroads if they are ever needed again. As a way to straighten out the railroad transferring process and as a way to preserve the right-of-way for the future, Congress created the railbanking act.

Private Landowners

Commonly, the railroad right-of-ways are acquired through outright purchases, easements, condemnations, and land grants. Usually, it is a combination of all four types. After a railroad "abandons" the line, people may question ownership. At this point a lawyer should be retained

to do a title search to sort through the conflicting ownership claims. Many families who have owned the surrounding land for generations contend that the land was essentially borrowed subject to railroad use. When that use ceased, they believed the land would revert back to the family. This is essentially how an easement works. An easement is “the right to use the real property of another for a specific purpose.” Legal title is retained by the original owner. When that specific purpose ceases, such as an abandonment of the line, the land reverts back to the original owner.

Now, however, the National Trails System Act allows the government to hold onto that land in case railroads are needed in the future, while making productive recreational use of the land in the present. The U.S. Congress was concerned about losing the existing rail network to abandonment, so now a line proposed for abandonment is preserved through interim conversion to trail use. What happened to the private landowners’ rights? Sometimes, a line proposed for abandonment contains sections that are easements as opposed to the railroad outright owning the section. If an abandonment occurs, the land reverts back to the family who owns the land. However, if a line is railbanked, the line is not considered abandoned. Therefore, the land does not revert back to the family. The line can not be broken into segments. The railbanking act deposits the landowners’ interests into a fictitious National Rail Bank, which holds them in public trust for future use.

Constitutionality

In 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that railbanking was constitutional, but it also allowed property owners to seek damage claims through the U.S. Court of Claims in Washington, D.C. Right now, seeking a damage claim seems to be the only redress for a private landowner, and the landowner can only take such action after the trail is created, because there must be an injury to the landowner in order for him or her to bring a claim in court. While private landowner groups have fought rail trails and held up the trail creation process in court, more times than not the trail wins out. The law favors productive use of the land.

Water

Water trails are boat routes suitable for canoes, kayaks and small motorized watercraft. Like conventional trails, water trails are recreational corridors between specific locations. Water trails are comprised of access points, boat launches, day use sites, and -- in some cases -- overnight camping areas. Each water trail is unique, a reflection of Pennsylvania's diverse geology, ecology and communities.

Pennsylvania Water Trails embrace the "Leave No Trace" code of outdoor ethics that promotes the responsible use & enjoyment of the outdoors. Contact the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) or visit www.fish.state.pa.us for more information.

As part of the development of this Plan, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) has conducted preliminary field work related to the development of the Beaver River Water Trail. The biggest challenge to the development of the Beaver River Water Trail is the lack of public boat access. The PFBC and PEC recommend that there be one public boat access point every ten miles and the current system does not support this.

Additionally, much of the riverfront is steeply sloped or has existing active railroads, which limits emergency access to the river. Also, there are three dams that present safety concerns (Eastvale, Beaver Falls and New Brighton). Additional work is required to identify safe portages

around these dams. Despite the challenges to the development of the Beaver River Water Trail, this river presents opportunities for recreational use.

Potential put-ins include:

- Ellwood City at the sewage treatment plant. This is along the Connequenessing Creek. The municipality controls this property; however they have interest in developing a boat access point at this location.
- Rock Creek Boat Club. This is at the confluence of the Connoquenessing Creek and Beaver River. Recently acquired by the Wild Waterways Conservancy this presents opportunities for development of a public access point.

Existing take-outs include:

- Fishing Park in New Brighton.
- Rochester Riverfront Park.
- Bridgewater Riverfront Park.
- On the Ohio River there is a boat access point in Monaca.

Boating

River Access

Access	Ownership	Location	Amenities/Comments
New Brighton	PFBC (public)	New Brighton, Beaver River	Unlimited horsepower, open 24/7, shore fishing, parking, surfaced ramp, loading dock, best for deep-draft high-powered boats
Rochester	PFBC (public)	Rochester Borough, Ohio River	Unlimited horsepower, open 24/7, shore fishing, parking, surfaced ramp, loading dock, best for deep-draft high-powered boats
Monaca	PFBC (local government)	Monaca Borough, Ohio River	Limited horsepower, large parking lot, surfaced ramp, loading dock, primary boating – deep draft, high powered recreation boats

Source: www.fish.state.pa.us

Boating Registrations

The PFBC tracks and regulates all boat and fishing registrations and related activities. Recreational traffic on the river may include motorized (pleasure boats or personal watercraft – see definition below) or non-motorized (canoes, kayaks, or sculls) craft.

Recreational boat registrations by county for 2007:

Beaver – 5,912

Lawrence – 3,573

See www.fish.state.pa.us for a list of boat registrations since 1995 for all counties.

Boating Safety

Conflicts among boaters occur in public waterways. The PFBC has established regulations and educational courses to deal with the conflicts. Beaver County is within the Southwest Region PFBC Law Enforcement Headquarters, which can be reached at 814-445-8974. Lawrence County lies within the Northwest Region; that number is 814-337-0444. A complete guide to boating regulations can be found at www.fish.state.pa.us. A summary of boating regulations can be found at the end of this chapter.

Some safety problems arise when pleasure boaters are not educated about the rules of the river or when alcohol is involved. To help alleviate this problem, mandatory boating safety education for operators of motor boats became effective in February 2003. The regulation requires people born after January 1, 1982, to complete a boating education course and obtain a certificate to operate an internal combustion motor greater than 25 horsepower or to operate a personal watercraft. The certification lasts for a lifetime, and there are exemptions for the owners of private ponds. More information is available from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

"Personal watercraft are often referred to by their trade names such as jet skis or skidoos. PFBC regulations define "personal watercraft" as a boat less than 16 feet in length that uses an internal combustion motor powering a water jet pump as its primary means of propulsion and is operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the craft. Under proposed regulations, it is an unacceptable boating practice to:

- Cause a boat to become airborne while crossing the wake of another boat within 100 feet of the boat causing the wake.
- Weave through congested traffic.
- Follow too closely to another boat at other than slow, minimum height swell speed. For purposes of this regulation a boat is deemed to follow too close if within 100 feet of the rear of the boat or within 50 feet of the side of another boat (except in a narrow channel.)"²⁵

Fishing

Access

No formal inventory of fishing spots along the Beaver River and its tributaries exists. However, there are many informal and some formal fishing areas that are known to local anglers. One popular formal area is the southern end of Big Rock Park, below the Townsend Dam.

Fishing Registrations

See Table 4-13 for information on fish stocking and Table 4-7 for fish consumption advisories.

Fishing license sales/trout stamps by county for 2007:

²⁵ www.fish.state.pa.us

Beaver – 10,176 / 5,188
Lawrence – 7,662 / 3,716

See www.fish.state.pa.us for information on fishing registration sales per county in 2006.

Fishing Tournaments

During the summer months there are many fishing tournaments in the region. Most are small club tournaments with no prizes or fees and are limited to a small number of boats. While all tournaments are required to get a permit from the PFBC, a single list of the tournaments for the region does not exist. Anglers need to watch for notices in the newspaper and search the Internet for tournament notices. The PFBC is exploring ways to create a comprehensive list.²⁶

Recreation and Economics

The Recreation Map illustrates the region's diverse recreation facilities, including several hunting and camping areas in Daugherty Township and Big Beaver Township, as well as golf courses in Patterson Heights, North Sewickley Township, New Beaver Township and Wayne Township. Noteworthy is the limited number of larger-scale formal outdoor recreation facilities within the Study Area.

Advocates for a healthy environment often point to the economic benefits that outdoor recreation can bring to a community. While there are no specific estimates available for this study area, there are national and state figures that illustrate the contribution of outdoor recreation to the local economy.

In a 2001 survey, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calculated that 82 million Americans age 16 and older participated in a wildlife-related activity (fishing, hunting, photography, wildlife watching, etc.) and spent 110 billion dollars on these activities.²⁷ For Pennsylvania, the figures and their expenditures are broken down in Table 4-15.

Activity	Participants	Expenditures*
Fishing	982,000	\$ 1,252,380,000
Hunting	1,027,000	\$11,446,014,000
Wildlife Watching	3,503,000 (resident) 1,185,000 (non-resident)	\$1,269,927,000
* Includes permits, licensing, food, lodging, trip related expenses, equipment, magazine subscriptions, land leasing, etc.		

²⁶ Personal interview with Dennis Tubbs, PA Fish and Boat Commission, 2003

²⁷ 2001 Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation State Overview. July 2007. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

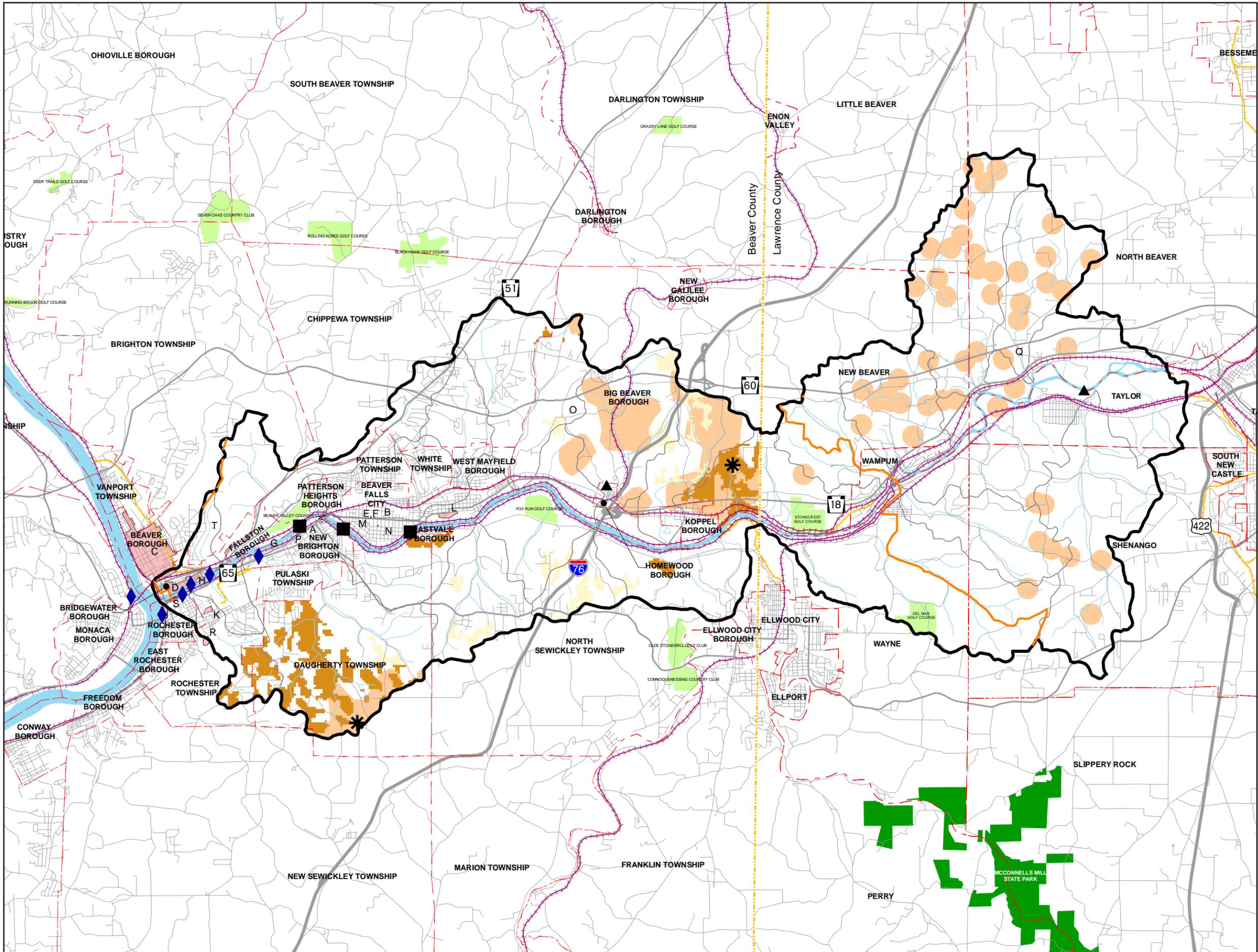
According to the PFBC, Pennsylvania residents age 12 and over spend \$1.7 billion annually on boating, including an average expenditure per recreational boater of \$274.²⁸

In addition to these expenditures, wildlife activities generated worker earnings, state sales taxes, state income taxes, and federal income taxes.

Similarly, trails and greenways improve local economies through tourism and recreation-related spending. A 1998 study on the economic impacts of the Great Allegheny Passage, the trail that is under construction between Pittsburgh and Washington D.C., showed that trail users spent \$14.1 million near six trail heads as well as between \$8.9 and \$12.2 million on bikes and biking equipment.²⁹ Businesses predict that the completion of the trail will have an extremely positive impact on them, and nearly half of the businesses plan to expand.

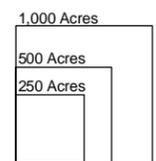
²⁸ PA Fish and Boat Commission Fact Sheet, Economic Value of Fishing and Boating in Pennsylvania.

²⁹ www.atatrail.org/news/econ-study-99.htm



- Legend**
- Watershed Boundary
 - County Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Rivers/Streams/Lakes
 - Highways
 - Major Roads
 - Active Railroads
 - Inactive Railroads
 - Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission Historical Areas
 - Marinas/Boat Launches
 - State Parks
 - Golf Courses
 - Hunting Areas
 - Land Most Suitable for Primitive Camping
 - Land Most Suitable for Non-Primitive Camping
 - Existing Trails
 - Land Most Suitable for ATV Area
 - Hydroelectric Dams
 - Other Dams

- Historic Sites**
- A. New Brighton Armory
 - B. Beaver Falls Firehouse
 - C. Beaver Historic District
 - D. Broadhead Hotel/Broadhead District
 - E. Carnegie Free Library, Beaver Falls
 - F. County Bridge No. 26
 - G. William B. Dunlap Mansion
 - H. Eastvale Dam Complex
 - I. Farmer & Producers Market
 - J. H.C. Frye Glass Company
 - K. Geneva College
 - L. Granada Theatre
 - M. Hotel
 - N. Log House
 - O. Merrick Art Gallery
 - P. North Beaver Grange
 - Q. Passavant Memorial Homes
 - R. Pennsylvania Canal: Girard Locks No. 16 & No. 17
 - S. Wray House



RECREATION MAP
BEAVER RIVER CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared for: Pennsylvania Environmental Council
 Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC

Historic and Cultural Resources

Regional History

The Beaver River area was originally settled by the Monongahela people, of whom little is known, except that they vacated the region by the 1600s and were replaced by members of the Delaware, Shawnee, and Iroquois Tribes. These native people called the river Amockwi-Sipu, or “Beaver Stream.” They remained in the area until the late 1750s when farmers settled much of the region. Although the native people no longer lived in the area, they left behind important travel routes, or trails, along many of the major waterways. The Mahoning Trail followed along the Beaver River and was used to connect people from Pittsburgh to Akron, Ohio, and eventually Detroit, Michigan. The Sandusky Trail followed the Beaver River for a short distance before turning west toward Sandusky, Ohio. These trails eventually became the network used for roads and railroads that are used today. Route 18 follows the approximate path of the Mahoning Trail, and the Sandusky Trail is now Route 51.³⁰

Then, as it became important to establish trade routes with other areas of the country, canals were established. In the 1830s, the Beaver and Erie Canal was built and became one of the more successful canals in Pennsylvania. By the 1850s, however, it was replaced by the faster, more efficient railroads, which were built on both sides of the Beaver River.

The railroads and industrial revolution fueled the increase in population as immigrants came to work in the steel mills. The turn of the nineteenth century saw the largest population in the region. By the late 1900s, much of the industry disappeared along the river. The river now is being viewed for its recreation potential as parks and waterfront developments spring up along its banks.

More history of the region can be found in the book *Rivers of Destiny*, published in 1999, and in the *Inventory and Assessment of Historic and Heritage Sites in Beaver County*, published in 1998. Local historical societies also are excellent sources of information. The website www.bchistory.org contains community histories, historical essays by subject, and a list of local historical societies.

*The National Register of Historic Places*³¹

The Historical and Cultural Sites Map highlights important resources relating to life in the Beaver River Valley. Featuring historical residences, businesses, and institutions, these sites are almost exclusively concentrated in the more populated areas of the region. These resources can also be viewed in context of other recreation-oriented activities in the region as illustrated on the Recreation Map.

The PA Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) manages the National Register of Historic Places for Pennsylvania. The program was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all

³⁰ Rivers of Destiny, 1999, Beaver County Planning Commission.

³¹ Supported and published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) www.phmc.state.pa.us Summary taken from PHMC.

people who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. Listing in the National Register, however, does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage, or dispose of property. It often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of the communities.

Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

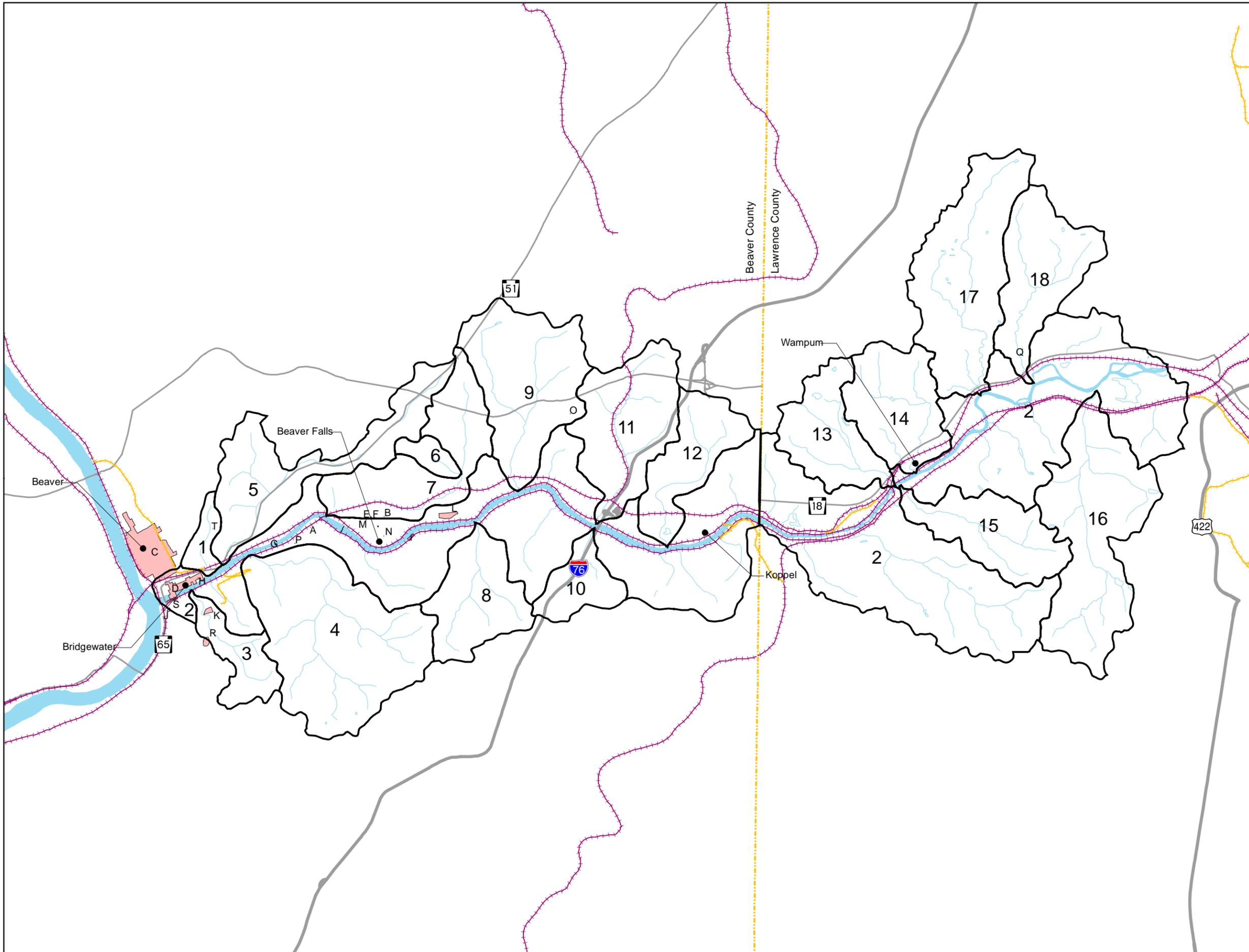
- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community.
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects.
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits.
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

The Historical Marker Program³²

The historical marker program, established in 1946, is one of PHMC's oldest and most popular programs. The blue and gold markers located throughout the state highlight people, places, and events significant in state and national history. Presently, nearly 1,800 markers recognize Pennsylvania's history - from William Penn's country home, to the bloody Homestead Strike of 1892, to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the nation's first long-distance superhighway.

See the list of historical places and markers in Appendix 4.

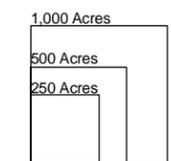
³² Summary taken from PHMC



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 - Municipal Boundary
 - Rivers/Streams/Lakes
 - Highways
 - Major Roads
 - Active Railroads
 - Inactive Railroads
 - Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission Historical Areas

- Notable Sites**
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 - B. Beaver Falls Firehouse
 - C. Beaver Historic District
 - D. Broadhead Hotel/Broadhead District
 - E. Carnegie Free Library, Beaver Falls
 - F. County Bridge No. 26
 - G. William B. Dunlap Mansion
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 - N. Log House
 - O. Merrick Art Gallery
 - P. North Beaver Grange
 - Q. Passavant Memorial Homes
 - R. Pennsylvania Canal: Girardlocks No. 16 & No. 17
 - S. Wray House

- Subwatersheds**
1. Hamilton Run
 2. Beaver River
 3. McKinley Run
 4. Block House Run
 5. Brady Run
 6. Grimms Run
 7. Walnut Bottom Run
 8. Bennett Run
 9. Wallace Run
 10. Thompson Run
 11. Clarks Run
 12. Stockman Run
 13. Wampum Run
 14. Eckles Run
 15. Snake Run
 16. McKee Run
 17. Jenkins Run
 18. Edwards Run



**HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SITES
BEAVER RIVER CONSERVATION
AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Prepared for: Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Prepared by: Environmental Planning and Design, LLC