



Chapter 5

Recreation Programs

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Recreation as a Valuable Public Service

Providing local services to the public is the basic function and responsibility of municipal government. Government's purpose is to provide, on a broad scale, those services that help to meet the significant social needs of citizens but can't be performed as efficiently or economically by individual citizens acting for themselves. This includes providing public parks and offering public recreation programs. The goal is to ensure that the members of every segment of the population – regardless of age, physical or mental condition, or economic or social standing – have opportunities to enjoy broad, satisfying recreation experiences.

Providing park land and recreation facilities are important municipal functions. Equally as important are the recreation experiences residents have through involvement in recreation programs. Recreation programming is the process of creating opportunities for people to engage in recreation experiences – both organized and self-directed activities. Recreation programming encompasses many tasks. Successful recreation programs happen when they have been well planned, staffed, budgeted, promoted, organized and evaluated.

Recreation Programs build community by providing positive activities that encourage a sense of unity, pride and appreciation for community traditions and heritage. Through recreation programs, citizens improve their health and fitness, build relationships, reduce stress and become more involved in community life. Children develop self-confidence, stay physically active and make friends.

The Blue Mountain School District and its nine municipalities have come together to provide citizens with public recreation programming through the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission. The three municipalities in the Schuylkill Haven School District, Landingville and Port Clinton Boroughs and South Manheim Township, may take part in Commission programs by paying non-resident fees. These three municipalities are also served by the Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department with no non-resident fees charged.

The Blue Mountain Recreation Commission and the Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department are not the sole providers of recreation services in the region, however. They are two among inter-related public, nonprofit, private, commercial and other agencies that contribute to the recreation facility and program resources available to South Schuylkill County residents. This chapter addresses the variety of organizations that help to meet the recreation program needs of citizens in the South Schuylkill County region.

Inventory of Recreation Programs and Providers

Blue Mountain Recreation Commission

The Commission's primary role is to provide the citizens of the Blue Mountain area with opportunities to participate in quality community recreation programs, close to home.

Table 5-1 lists the programs offered by the Recreation Commission in 2016.

Table 5-1 Blue Mountain Recreation Commission - 2016 Programs		
Program Type	Program Name	Program Location
Family Special Events (5)	Trunk or Treat and Pumpkin Painting Contest 80's Party and Cinema Swim Christmas in July Valentine's Day Dance	Recreation and Eagle Complex Parking Lot Cressona Pool Cressona Pool BME-East Cafeteria/Gym
Preschool Programs (0)		
Youth Programs (9)	Science Explorers Kids Yoga Summer Playground Program Summer Science Explorers Camp Before & After School Child Care After School Child Care Little Eagles Summer Day Camp Open Gyms – Student, Elementary School, Elementary/Middle School, Middle/High School, High School Painting with a Twist	BME-East and West Buildings Middle School Gym Auburn Memorial Park, Cressona Picnic Grove, Deer Lake Picnic Grove, New Ringgold Church Grove, Orwigsburg Albright's Woods, Wayne Township Higher Ground Grove BME-East Building BME-West Building BME-East and West Buildings BME-West Gym, BME-East Gym, Middle School Gym Schuylkill Country Club
Adult Programs (1)	Dog Obedience Class	Middle School Grounds
Adult Fitness (2)	Open Weight Room Adult Open Gyms	High School Weight Room Middle School Gym
Adult Sports (4)	Power Volleyball League Coed Volleyball League Adult/High School Open Basketball 16+ Coed Volleyball Open Gym	Middle School Gym Middle School Gym Middle School Gym Middle School and BME-East Gyms
Senior Programs (0)		

Youth Sports (23)	Girls' Volleyball Clinic Girls' Volleyball League Boys' and Girls' Basketball Leagues	Middle School Gym Middle School Gym Middle School Gym, BME-East and West Gyms, Memorial Gym
	Biddy Tumbling Biddy Cheer-nastics Cheer-nastics Spring Boys' Middle School Soccer Clinic Summer Boys' Basketball Camp Summer Girls' Basketball Camp Summer Tennis Camp Summer Wrestling Camp Summer Cheerleading Camp Summer Eagle Football Camp Girls' Summer Volleyball Camp Summer Soccer Play Boys' Summer Soccer Clinic Girls' Summer Soccer Clinic Fall Baseball Clinic Indoor Soccer Biddy Wrestling Baseball Pitching and Hitting Clinic Track and Field Coed Lacrosse Clinic	Middle School Wrestling Room Eagle Complex Fields High School Gym High School Gym High School Tennis Courts High School Wrestling Rm Middle School Grounds High School Football Practice Fd High School Gym High School Soccer Field High School Grounds High School Grounds High School Complex Orwigsburg Memorial High School Track High School Grounds
Teen Programs (1)	Teen Adventure Trips	Varies
Environmental Education Programs (2)	Owl Prowls Birding Basics	Auburn Rail Trail, Frog Hollow Environmental Center, Schuylkill County Fairgrounds
Aquatics (17)	Youth Swim Team (School Year) Summer Swim/Dive Team Lifeguarding Open Swim Lap Swim Group Swim Lessons Private Swim Lessons Open Kayak Scuba Diving Class Water Safety Instructor Course Aquatic Exercise Senior Swim Junior Lifeguarding Endurance, Technique and Training Aquatic Club Competitive Swim Clinic Pool Parties and Rentals	Middle School Pool
() = Number of programs Total number of programs = 65 Source: BMRC		

Other Recreation Program Providers

Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department – The Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department provides the Schuylkill Haven community with family-friendly parks, playgrounds, amenities, programs and events. Established in 1959 as a joint effort between the Schuylkill Haven Area School District and

Schuylkill Haven Borough, it is funded by the Borough to provide recreational opportunities to the community. Residents of the School District pay resident rates for recreation programs, which means Landingville and Port Clinton Borough and South Manheim Township residents are considered as residents for Recreation Department services and programs. The Recreation Department offers a variety of family special events, including Art in the Park, Halloween Parade, Children's Fishing Rodeo, Family Safety Night, Spring Out, Community Movie Nights, Family Fun Night and Fireworks, and Children's Christmas Party. Most of its program offerings are for children, and include summer day camps, flag football league, instructional and biddy basketball leagues, basketball tournaments, soccer league, track and field camp, and biddy volleyball camp. The Recreation Department also sponsors an adult coed kickball league. Its programs are held at Borough parks, playgrounds, the Schuylkill Haven Neighborhood/Senior Center, and school locations.

Youth Sports Organizations – A variety of youth sports organizations serve South Schuylkill County region residents. The youth sports programs offered are organized by separate volunteer groups; there is no umbrella athletic association. Groups include: Blue Mountain Soccer Club (ages 4-18); Blue Mountain Tri-County Eagles Football and Cheerleading (ages 6-12 football, ages 6-14 cheerleading); Blue Mountain Midget Football and Cheerleading (ages 6-13); Orwigsburg Area Girls Softball (ages 5-16); Orwigsburg Area Youth T-Ball League (ages 5-6); Orwigsburg Little League (ages 7-12); Orwigsburg Teener Baseball League (ages 13-16); Cressona Area Baseball Association (ages 4-16); Cressona Area Girls Softball (ages 6-16); Southern Area Junior Legion Baseball Youth Team and Prep Team (ages 13-15); Hamburg Area Youth Baseball Association (ages 4-16); Schuylkill Haven Midget Football and Cheerleading (ages 6-12); Schuylkill Haven Little League Baseball (ages 7-12); Schuylkill Haven Teener Baseball (ages 13-16); Schuylkill Haven Area Girls Softball (ages 6-16), Schuylkill Haven Youth Traveling Soccer; West Schuylkill FC Youth Travel Soccer Team.

The following facilities are used by youth sports organizations:

- West Brunswick Park (Blue Mountain Midget Football and Cheerleading, Blue Mountain Soccer Club, Orwigsburg Area Girls Softball)
- Auburn Park (Blue Mountain Soccer Club, Southern Area Junior Legion Baseball)
- Deer Lake Park (Orwigsburg Little League)
- New Ringgold Little League Field (Orwigsburg Little League)
- Orwigsburg Memorial Park (Orwigsburg Little League)
- Cressona Park Baseball Complex (Cressona Area Baseball Association, Blue Mountain Soccer Club)
- Cressona Grove (Cressona Area Girls Softball)
- Wayne Township Park (Blue Mountain Soccer Club)
- East Brunswick Township Park (Blue Mountain Soccer Club)

- Eagle Complex Fields (Blue Mountain Soccer Club, Blue Mountain Tri-County Eagles Football and Cheerleading, Blue Mountain Midget Football and Cheerleading, and Orwigsburg Teener Baseball League)
- Blue Mountain and Schuylkill Haven High School Baseball Fields (Southern Area Legion Baseball)
- Fanelli Park (Orwigsburg Area Youth T-Ball League)
- Landingville Community Playground (Blue Mountain Soccer Club, Schuylkill Haven Youth Traveling Soccer)
- Port Clinton Playground (Hamburg Area Youth Baseball Association)
- Reedsville Church (Bethesda EC) Fields (Blue Mountain Soccer Club, Cressona Area Baseball Association, Cressona Area Girls Softball)

Blue Mountain and Schuylkill Haven Area School Districts – The Blue Mountain School District offers student activities and clubs at its middle school and high school. School activities include Blue Mountain Ski Club, peer tutoring, swimming, student council, art, chorus, computers, library work, spelling bee, Science Fair preparation, Lego team, running club, band, show choir, drama club, chess club and weightlifting. These interscholastic sports are offered at the middle school: Cross Country, Boys and Girls Basketball, Wrestling, Track and Field and Soccer. The high school offers these sports: Baseball, Softball, Cross Country, Track and Field, Boys and Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Swimming, Boys and Girls Basketball, Wrestling, Boys and Girls Tennis, Girls Volleyball, Cheerleading, Football, and Golf. The Schuylkill Haven Area School District also offers a variety of student activities and clubs at its schools. These interscholastic sports are offered at the high school: Swimming, Boys and Girls Soccer, Wrestling, Boys and Girls Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Cross Country, Track and Field, Football, Cheerleading, and Volleyball. Community attendance at sporting events, music concerts and school plays at both school districts is high. School district elementary and middle school parent-teacher organizations sponsor recreation programs such as dances, parties, and special events for each school.

Schuylkill Haven Senior Community Center – The closest senior center to the region is the Schuylkill Haven Senior Community Center, a program of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, supported in part by a grant from the Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services. The Senior Center is located in Schuylkill Haven Borough and serves a free nutritious daily lunch for members. Programs include a computer club with a state-of-the-art computer lab, health screenings and wellness workshops, holiday parties, special events, and exercise classes. The Senior Center is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Orwigsburg Area Free Public Library – The Orwigsburg Area Free Public Library in Orwigsburg Borough is the only library within the region (there is also a public library in Schuylkill Haven Borough). The Orwigsburg Library maintains a selection of materials for all ages. In particular, its children's programming is designed to foster and maintain a love of books and reading in children. Programs include weekly story times for children, science programs, Lego club, and 1,000 books before Kindergarten. Adult programs include knitting, Mahjong and book clubs; art classes, and computer classes. Library services are provided free of charge and include DVD borrowing, public use

computers with internet access, large-print books, wireless internet service, printer, scanner, and fax use; fiction, non-fiction and reference books, and books on CD. As tax-supported funding makes up only 22 percent of the library's budget, it holds fundraising events throughout the year including Casino Night held at the Schuylkill Country Club, Chinese Auction, raffles, book sales, Cupcake Wars and monthly Dine Outs at local area restaurants. Construction on a new library building at 216 W. Independence Avenue in Orwigsburg is underway with a projected move-in date of Spring 2017.

Penn State Extension – Schuylkill County has approximately 200 children ages 5 to 18 participating in nine 4-H Clubs: Schuylkill County 4-H Cloverbuds, Bridle Wild 4-H Horse Club, Blue Mountain 4-H Livestock Club, Grassy Meadows 4-H Club, Schuylkill Stampede 4-H Livestock Club, Schuylkill County 4-H Avenues Therapeutic Riding Program, South Schuylkill 4-H Dairy Club, West Penn 4-H Community Club, and the Knocked and Loaded 4-H Shooting Sports Club.

Schuylkill County's VISION – Schuylkill County's VISION weaves community resources together to help create a better place to live, work, play and raise families. It helps create effective and focused coalitions of community organizations, governmental agencies, congregations, nonprofits, businesses and individuals that address specific Schuylkill County issues that affect the quality of life. Its projects include Heathy Haven, Healthy Schuylkill Summer library reading program, and Schuylkill on the Move walks and hikes.

Diakon Living and Learning After 50 – This program offers courses, events, activities and workshops exclusively designed for the active older adult. Living and Learning After 50 sponsors over 50 general interest, arts, health and wellness, fitness, clubs, travel and special event activities throughout the region, with most programs held at the Living and Learning Center in Pottsville. Programs are held at the Cressona Mall and in Schuylkill Haven Borough as well.

Other Recreation Providers

Dance – Three private dance studios operate in the region: Crystal's School of Dance and Vivian's Dance Studio in Orwigsburg and Artists in Motion Performing Arts in Schuylkill Haven. Classes offered include ballet, creative movement, tap, lyrical, jazz, hip hop, acrobatics, musical theater, acting, pointe, and stretching and conditioning.

Visual Arts – The Arts Barn is an art education center featuring classes, workshops and children's summer art and nature camp in Schuylkill Haven. Students can enroll in art classes to learn painting, drawing, sculpture, woodworking, basket-making, jewelry, fused glass, pottery, hand-knitting, quilting, photography, hand-painting silk scarves and more. The Walk In Art Center is an education-based art center located in Schuylkill Haven that provides 14 individual live working studios for artists to develop, exhibit and sell their work. Along with the studios, the Walk In Art Center houses a main gallery that has revolving exhibitions throughout the year. Each season the studio artists offer various classes, workshops and camps to the public.

Performing Arts – The Anthracite Philharmonic, formed in 2011, is an orchestra comprised of accomplished musicians from throughout Schuylkill County. Concerts are held at the First United Methodist Church in Pottsville. The Gabriel Chamber Ensemble presents concerts throughout the region. It also sponsors the Gabriel Youth Orchestra which provides the only opportunity in the

region for young musicians to play in a professionally managed and conducted setting. The Gabriel Youth Orchestra meets for rehearsals on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7 pm and presents two concerts in Pottsville and a special education concert for all Schuylkill County fourth graders.

Adult Sports Leagues – Approximately 14 men’s teams participate in a church modified-pitch softball league. A fast-pitch men’s softball league plays at the Blue Mountain High School softball field.

Outdoor Education – The Schuylkill County Conservation District environmental education coordinator offers nature programs to school groups and the general public. The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary offers guided hawk watching tours, environmental education programs such as owl prowls, wee ones walks, wonders of wildflowers, and special themed weekend events and workshops. The Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation offers both tent camping and lodges. Boy Scout Troops, Webelos Dens and Cub Scout Packs from inside and outside the Hawk Mountain Council, as well as outside groups, may use the facilities, which include two swimming pools, and rifle, shotgun and pistol ranges. The Scout Reservation offers programming such as climbing and rappelling, orienteering, guided nature walks, geocaching, row boating, kayaking, sailing and archery to scouts and the general public by reservation only.

Martial Arts – Dillman Karate International in Orwigsburg and Mike’s Blue Mountain Karate and Jiu Jitsu in Schuylkill Haven offer karate, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, kettlebell, kickboxing, and self-defense classes for children and adults.

Sportsmen’s Clubs – A large number of membership-based sportsmen’s clubs are active in the region. They include the Auburn Game and Fish Association, Friedensburg Fish and Game Association, Schuylkill Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Second Mountain Rod and Gun Club, Port Clinton Fish and Game Association, and Red Hill Game Association. These clubs sponsor a variety of special programs for the community, such as kids’ fishing rodeos and hunter safety courses.

Racquet Sports – The Schuylkill Racquet and Fitness Club offers indoor tennis and racquetball activities and classes.

Archery – Grass Hollow Archery offers private youth and adult archery lessons and group lessons indoors in Orwigsburg on the 3rd floor of the Boyer’s Corporation Offices.

Youth Groups – Boy Scouts of America Hawk Mountain Council, Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania, and church youth groups are very active in the region.

Fitness Centers – Area adult fitness and gym providers include Planet Fitness, The Jungle, Now and Zen Yoga, CrossFit Fluid, Flex Fitness, Anytime Fitness, and Schuylkill Racquet and Fitness Club. Activities and classes include dodgeball, indoor soccer, basketball, wallyball, weightlifting, yoga, Tai Chi, and group exercise classes.

Special Events – A variety of special events are held throughout the region by volunteer fire companies, service clubs, community groups, the municipalities and area churches. The annual Schuylkill County Fair is held in late July/early August each year. Pioneer Evergreen Farms holds its annual Fall Festival from mid-September to early November. It includes over 40 attractions such as train rides, petting zoo, hayrides, mountain slide, tree maze, and pedal car go-karts. The Orwigsburg Business and Professional Association offers a variety of community special events including its

Heritage Celebration, Family FunFest, Festival of Lights, Farmers Market, June Jamboree and Yappy Hour.

Campgrounds – Christmas Pines Campground provides public camping and recreation facilities in Auburn. Laurel Lake Campsites is located in New Ringgold.

Golf Courses – The 18-hole public Hidden Valley Golf Course is located in Wayne Township and offers a driving range, league play and private instruction. The Schuylkill Country Club is a membership-based private 18-hole golf course. It does allow public play on a limited basis.

Miniature Golf Courses – Heisler’s Cloverleaf Dairy offers two 18-hole miniature golf courses, a lighted driving range, and a games arcade. Heisler’s also sponsors a free summer concert series and car cruises. The region has a second miniature golf course at Burnie’s Italian Ice and Mini Golf.

Frisbee Disc Golf Courses – Frisbee Disc Golf Courses are located at Long Trout Winery and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

No bowling alleys, roller or ice skating rinks, or movie theaters are located in the region. The closest facilities of these types are located in Reading and Pottsville.

Self-Directed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

The Schuylkill River, Weiser State Forest, State Game Lands, Panther Creek Watershed, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and numerous waterways including Cold Run, Little Schuylkill, Pine and Bear Creeks offer facilities for self-directed outdoor recreation activities. Together, they offer hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, boating, paddle boarding, tubing, canoeing and kayaking opportunities.

The Schuylkill County Fairgrounds is a 73-acre site that is open to the public for recreational use. Located within the Schuylkill County Fairgrounds, the Dr. James S. Shadle Nature Center and the Bear Creek Environmental Area includes two fishing ponds, a fresh water stocked trout stream, and walking trails. Trails are open during daylight hours. The nature center is open by reservation only.

The Frog Hollow Environmental Education Center, also known as the Samuel Ryland Garden Park, is a 28-acre tract of land with a small house, nature trails, bird-watching blind, wildflower preserve and picnic pavilion operated by the South Schuylkill Garden Club. The Upper Little Swatara Creek, part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, runs through the property and is available for fishing. Frog Hollow is open for public use, scouting activities, and school programs by reservation only.

A section of the Appalachian Trail passes through the region in Port Clinton Borough, intersecting with the Bartram Trail section of the Schuylkill River Trail.

Recreation Program Needs

Issue #1: Beyond youth sports, there are few recreation program opportunities for children.

Although they are popular activities for many children, not all children participate in youth sports. Program options in areas such as the visual arts, environmental education, hobbies, health and wellness education, outdoor adventure, outdoor recreation, crafts, and performing arts are needed.

Issue #2: Active program opportunities for adults are limited, including sports programs.

Adults must generally travel out of the South Schuylkill region to participate in sports and recreation activities. Close-to-home options would help to fill in this gap in services.

Issue #3: The recreation needs of preschoolers and seniors are not well met.

Few programs are offered for these age groups. Expansion of programs to meet the recreation needs of preschoolers and seniors is needed.

Issue #4: There is no coordinating mechanism for the volunteer youth sports groups.

Citizen involvement in planning and conducting recreation programs is high in the South Schuylkill region. Residents take an active lead in providing sports program opportunities for children. Many groups, organizations, and even individuals are actively involved in sponsoring programs but have little contact with each other. With many different groups planning and conducting youth sports programs, some efforts are duplicated.

Issue #5: A large number of outdoor recreation facility resources are located in the region but few programs are offered.

The abundance of significant natural resources in the region provide opportunities for outdoor recreation programs. More programs designed to help residents enjoy the outdoor environment are needed.

Issue #6: Program providers are promoting their programs separately, not together with other providers.

To make residents aware of the variety of organizations offering programs and the variety of programs being provided, coordinated promotion of recreation programs is needed.

Issue #7: Family special events are limited.

To increase special event programs, program providers will need to work together and share resources.

Issue #8: Landingville and Port Clinton Boroughs and South Manheim Township residents may participate in Blue Mountain Recreation Commission and Schuylkill Haven Borough Recreation Department programs but have no representation or decision-making authority.

As part of the Schuylkill Haven School District, Landingville and Port Clinton Boroughs and South Manheim Township will need to pursue working together with their school district and Schuylkill Haven Borough to expand and improve recreation program opportunities for their residents.