

Chapter 8

Goals, Recommendations & Action Plan

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Vision, Mission, and Goals

Vision and mission statements were defined for South Schuylkill County and the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission. The vision and mission statements serve as the foundation for planning and park and recreation initiatives, decision-making, and the allocation of resources.

South Schuylkill County Vision Statement

South Schuylkill County residents live in a vibrant community that celebrates and protects its abundant natural resources and encourages active, healthy lifestyles. The community understands the important role parks and recreation plays in quality of life and economic development and supports funding for park area, trail, and recreation facility improvements. A wide range of recreation programs are offered for all ages in close-to-home locations to keep residents healthy, active and outdoors. Recreation programs and services are well-promoted, coordinated, high quality and affordably priced, with a priority placed on customer satisfaction. Park areas, trails and recreation facilities are well-maintained, accessible, safe community destinations that residents visit regularly. Through a unique, cost-effective regional financing system and the strong support of the Blue Mountain School District, the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission is a valuable community asset and model of cooperation that provides essential, comprehensive parks and recreation services that none of the nine partnering municipalities could provide on their own. Together, the school district and municipalities have achieved a balanced system of passive and active parks, access to creeks and streams, hiking and biking trails, and recreation program opportunities that offers a quality of life and sense of community distinct to the South Schuylkill region.

Blue Mountain Recreation Commission Mission Statement

To provide quality, affordable recreation and learning opportunities including well-maintained park areas, trails and recreation facilities to Blue Mountain residents of all ages.

Goals

The goals are based upon the region's vision, mission and themes that emerged in the planning process. There are three goals for the South Schuylkill region.

Goal 1: Establish parks and recreation facilities as regional destinations where residents can have fun, socialize, experience nature, and lead active, healthy lifestyles.

Goal 2: Connect the South Schuylkill region through a system of trails and greenways.

Goal 3: Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.

Goal 1: Establish parks and recreation facilities as regional destinations where residents can have fun, socialize, experience nature, and lead active, healthy lifestyles.

Objective 1: Complete park planning to maximize the benefit of existing parks, address accessibility and safety requirements, and create a vision for undeveloped park acreage.

- Develop a master plan for Wayne Township Recreation Area that identifies municipal recreation needs and citizen interests.
- Complete a feasibility study to explore the opportunity of developing a passive regional park in the Landingville Borough/South Manheim Township area which includes lands of the Commonwealth of PA, Borough, and Fire Company. (See 3. Below) Seek a grant from PA DCNR for the feasibility study.
- Develop Site Development Drawings for the smaller parks to define a layout for accessibility improvements and new and expanded recreation enhancements.

Objective 2: Maximize the recreation benefit of existing parks by incorporating improvements to enhance the safety, convenience, and overall enjoyment of using the facilities.

Safety Enhancements

- Provide adequate safety zones around athletic fields with consideration of foul balls, spectator seating, and other recreation facilities.
- Provide the required safety surfacing area for playground equipment. Work with manufacture representatives to define the limits of safety areas for existing playground equipment. Install safety surfacing area edging that will define the area of safety surfacing to be maintained.
- Incorporate CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles into park designs.
- Separate playground equipment into age-segregated areas for tots (2-5 years old) and youth (6-12 years old). Provide a physical separation between the two areas.

Convenience Enhancements

- Add convenience amenities to parks (benches, trash receptacles, spectator seating, bike racks, etc.).

- Add benches and picnic tables near playgrounds, in shaded locations, and at activity areas for caregivers to gather, sit, and watch park activities.
- Trails within parks should have benches located at convenient intervals and in shaded locations.
- Add bike racks near park entrances if safe bicycle access is provided to the park site.
- Design park improvements to address the needs of senior adults. Make facilities pedestrian friendly, convenient to use, and provide sitting areas in the shade that are conveniently spaced along trails and near activity areas. Provide pavilions near parking areas for easy access.
- Develop park hubs near park entrances and parking which have information kiosks with site maps and park and recreation program information. Trails should radiate from the hub to explore the park site.

New Recreation Opportunities

- Expand existing playgrounds at East Brunswick Playground, Aaron Kreager Park, Summit Station Playground, Cressona Playground, Cressona Grove, Deer Lake Park, Albright's Woods, Walborn Avenue Park, and Port Clinton Park to be age-segregated.
- Paint lines on the basketball courts at Pleasant Valley Road Park and Walborn Avenue Park.
- Develop loop trails in East Brunswick Playground, Landingville Community Playground, Deer Lake Park, Cressona Ballfield Complex, Fanelli Park, Fisher's Dam, and Auburn Memorial Park.
- Develop a new playground at Auburn Memorial Park.
- Develop a dog park in the region. A dog park is proposed in a new park site in North Manheim Township (see 3., below) The on-line parks and recreation survey had an open-ended question for respondents to share additional comments about parks and recreation in the South Schuylkill Region. The survey received 100 open-ended comments and 20 comments were in favor of developing a dog park in the area. A multiple-choice question on the on-line parks and recreation survey asked how important is it to expand or add a dog park and the combined percentage of respondents that replied "very important" or "somewhat important" was 71.33%.

Park Site Enhancements

- Enhance parks with colorful landscaping and street trees. Plant street trees along park road frontage and colorful perennials and ornamental grasses at entry areas into the park sites.
- Enhance park identity with entry signs with municipal names.
- Develop trails within and connecting to park sites. Trails are enjoyed by all segments of the population and are highly desired recreation facilities. The ADA requires access to recreation facilities and activity areas via an accessible route. Where possible, develop multiple trail loop layouts for diverse walking experiences.

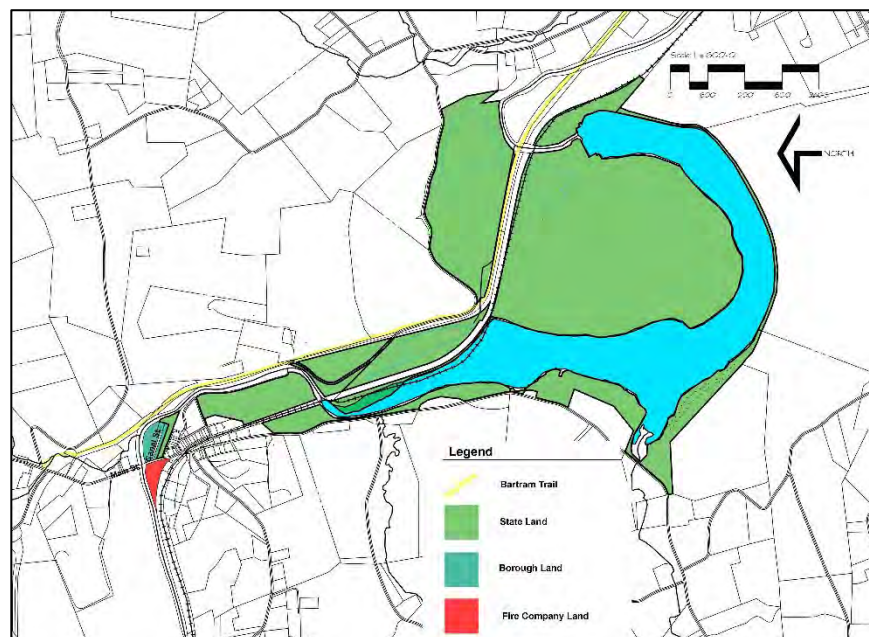
- Complete site improvements identified in this Plan.

Objective 3: Expand recreation opportunities through partnerships, the development of public lands, or the acquisition of parkland to meet current and future needs of the municipalities.

- Acquire parkland contiguous to existing parks to maximize the recreation potential. Prioritize acquisition of land contiguous to community parks to include: Wayne Township Recreation Park, Cressona Ball Fields, Memorial Park/Albright's Woods Park, Auburn Memorial Park, Deer Lake Park, and Catawissa Park. Seek lands to create larger parks that offers both active and passive recreation opportunities and recreation facilities that meet the interests of the overall community.

- South Manheim Township should seek land for acquisition and development of its first municipal park. Consider acquisition of land that could facilitate access to Weiser State Forest.

- Explore the creation of a hub of passive recreation, centrally located in the region, in the Landingville Borough/South Manheim Township area. This concept creates a partnership that builds upon the recreation and community/regional assets to include the



Landingville Community Playground, the Landingville Community Fire Company, and the Schuylkill River Trail/John Bartram Trail and lands of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania associated with the desilting basins along the river. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania owns over 400 acres of land composed primarily of wetlands and marshland south of Landingville Borough in South Manheim Township, known locally as the Landingville Marsh.

The Landingville Community Playground provides traditional community recreation amenities and the Fire Company land is informally used for paddle craft launch and park parking area. These parcels are located along the western bank of the Schuylkill River. On the opposite bank is the John Bartram Trail. Residents currently walk the circuit from the park southeast along the eastern side of Canal Street to the location where Canal Street crosses

the Schuylkill River and then heading north on the Bartram Trail to Main Street in Landingville.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania land includes the only Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission access area on the Schuylkill River in the project region: Auburn Dam Boat Access area, located on Meadow Drive on the west side of the marsh. Auburn Dam Boat Access area includes a boat launch ramp, a dock, and shore fishing areas. The Landingville Marsh is one of Schuylkill County's best birding locations, with over 200 types of birds identified. Birders get excellent views of herons, egrets, Bald Eagles, and various duck species.

A feasibility study is recommended to explore the possibility of partnering with the Commonwealth of PA to develop a passive park that extends along the Schuylkill River to include lands of the Fire Company, Borough, County, and Commonwealth. A passive park in this area could have multiple loop trails and boardwalks to explore the marsh and surrounding land; bird blinds; pavilion; interpretative that provide information about the river heritage and desilting basins, natural resources, and birds; and other facilities determined by the feasibility study. If additional lands are necessary to develop trailheads and facility areas, South Manheim Township could seek contiguous lands as their first public park site. The regional park would be a walking and nature study destination. Landingville Park would continue to offer active recreation amenities for close-to-home recreation for residents while serving as a trailhead and picnic area for the regional park.

The proposed strategy considers the following findings from the on-line survey and outreach to key stakeholders:

- The most popular reason respondents to the on-line survey visit parks is to experience nature (68.70%), fitness and wellness (65.56%), and trail activities (64.07%).
 - The combining of lands to create a regional passive park will improve an existing park and through partnerships, leverage funds for park improvements.
 - The combined parklands will provide additional access to the Schuylkill River and target interests of adults and seniors.
- Develop mandatory dedication of parkland ordinances in each municipality to garner the benefit of dedication of land or fee-in-lieu for new development that occurs in the municipality. Adopt criteria that outlines the characteristics of land acceptable for dedication. In Wayne and East Brunswick Townships update existing mandatory dedication of parkland ordinances to reflect the South Schuylkill Region Parkland Acreage Standard and align with the fair market value of land. Update the fee-in-lieu provision of the mandatory dedication ordinance annually to align with the fair market value of land.
 - An 8.39-acre open space parcel in North Manheim Township was evaluated for potential recreation uses. A conceptual plan was developed which proposes an off-leash dog park to serve residents of North Manheim Township and the South Schuylkill region.

Entrance to the dog park is from Pottsville Street via a drive that parallels the west side of the Hoss's Steak House. The drive extends to the south where it terminates at a 26-space parking area and drop-off. The dog park is designed to include two fenced enclosures: a 1-

acre area for small dogs and a 2.4-acre area for large dogs. The entrance to the dog park areas is through a double-gate bull-pen. A trail surrounds the fence enclosures providing a 0.33-mile walking trail loop. The trail extends to the southeast to the point of land formed by the confluence of the Schuylkill River and the West Branch Schuylkill River. A two-tiered overlook plaza is developed on the point for resting and enjoying river views. The riparian buffer vegetation along the river is enhanced with native species and openings are provided in the buffer to provide views of the river from the trail. Amenities include benches in the plaza area and along the trail, trash receptacles, drinking fountains in the dog park fenced enclosures, an information kiosk at the entrance to the dog park, and step connection to the adjacent parking area for overflow/shared parking.



Pottsville Street Dog Park offer opportunities for dog owners to exercise their dog off-leash while socializing and enjoying the park setting. Dog owners can also walk their dogs on-leash along the trail. The trail offers a short loop for visitors to walk and exercise. Because the loop is 0.33-miles in length, visitors can readily challenge themselves to walk different measured distances. The plaza offers a location for visitors to view the river and relax.

- Seek lands that provide opportunities for access to the Schuylkill River, Little Schuylkill River, and their tributaries for launch of paddle craft and fishing.
- Explore the possibility of partnering with the Bethesda Evangelical Church Meadowbrook Drive Center (former State Police building) to develop the lawn on the west side of the building and parking area as an outdoor gathering and activity area if the site becomes a satellite office of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission (BMRC). The lawn could be

developed to complement the senior adult activities of the Center and programs of the BMRC. The lawn area has the size and characteristics compatible with developing sitting areas, lawn game areas (bocce, horseshoe pits, etc.), gardens, and other site features. Vegetative planting along Route 183 is suggested to buffer the road noise.

Objective 4: Provide recreation facilities for public uses that comply with accessibility and safety regulations and guidelines.

- Provide playground areas and play equipment that meets the safety criteria of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines for Public Playground Safety. Several playgrounds in the region are outdated and need to be replaced with playground equipment that meets the latest safety standards. Two concerns observed, beyond outdated play equipment, are the layout and surface material of the playgrounds. Playgrounds should be developed to be age separated and located within defined area of safety surfacing material.
- Many of the playgrounds in the region are developed without consideration of the age of the child using the equipment. The CPSC recommends the equipment for tots (2-5-year-old) and youth (6-12-year-old) be separated into two play areas. This will require the redesign of many of the playgrounds in the region. Plaza space is suggested to provide physical separation between the tot and youth areas to provide locations for benches and picnic tables. If room is available, the plaza may contain a small pavilion. Benches, picnic tables, and pavilions are amenities that are used by caregivers. These amenities add function by providing locations for caregivers and children to gather, snack, and socialize, extending the recreation time. The CPSC guidelines recommend the age separation of equipment as follows:

Age Separation – For playgrounds intended to serve children of all ages, the layout of pathways and landscaping of the playground should show the distinct areas for the different age groups. The areas should be separated at least by a buffer zone, which could be an area with shrubs or benches. This separation and buffer zone will reduce the chance of injury from older, more active children running through areas filled with younger children with generally slower movement and reaction times.

- Playgrounds must be located over safety surfacing that is specifically designed to meet safety criteria for falls. Several playgrounds in the region do not have acceptable safety surfacing. The CPSC guidelines recommend safety surfacing as follows:

The surfacing under and around playground equipment is one of the most important factors in reducing the likelihood of life-threatening head injuries. A fall onto a shock absorbing surface is less likely to cause a serious head injury than a fall onto a hard surface. However, some injuries from falls, including broken limbs, may occur no matter what playground surfacing material is used.

Safety surfacing can be engineered wood fiber or poured-in-place resilient rubber surfacing. Playground manufacturers can provide the area of safety surfacing for each piece of playground equipment.

- Playground safety inspections should occur on an ongoing basis by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) or under the guidance of a CPSI.
- It is important to identify and prioritize improvements needed to bring existing facilities into compliance with the ADA and CPSC. A phased implementation schedule should be developed, and improvements should be included in the park/municipal capital improvement program budget.
- Address accessibility requirements of the ADA.
 - Accessible route - Develop walkways to provide an accessible route from handicap parking spaces and sidewalks to and between recreation facilities. Accessible routes must extend to playgrounds, game courts, athletic field spectator and players areas, etc. This requirement is lacking in each park site. Walkways should be developed to not exceed five-percent slope to be accessible. Additionally, PA DCNR requires that when benches are provided along a trail that a clear stabilized area for a wheelchair also be provided adjacent to benches.
 - Provide stabilized handicapped parking spaces in each parking area. Paved accessible parking spaces should be developed in each parking area with pavement markings, handicap parking signs, and immediate access to an accessible route.
 - Playgrounds must offer play equipment that provides play options for the physically challenged. Playground manufacturers are aware of this requirement and work with communities as new playground equipment is specified to provide accessible play options.
 - Athletic fields and courts must be accessible and provided with accessible spectator viewing areas and player accommodations. PA DCNR interprets this requirement to include an accessible route to player benches at ballfields and accessible viewing spaces adjacent to bleachers at athletic fields and courts. This accommodation has not been provided at any of the existing facilities.
 - Fences surrounding game courts should have gates with clear opening widths that meet or exceed the ADA requirements to allow use by disabled athletes.
 - Picnic areas should offer accessible picnic tables. Every picnic table in a park need not provide this accommodation, but, as new tables are added, a percentage should be accessible models. There should be accessible picnic tables in each pavilion.
 - Drinking fountains should be accessible models.

Objective 5: Create great public places.

Parks are the public spaces of our communities. The care and dedication we commit to their design, development, operations, and ongoing maintenance speaks volumes about a community. Municipalities should commit to great design and sensitive, thoughtful master planning of new and existing parks.

- Strive to undertake improvements to the parks that are holistic and not piecemeal to provide a sense of presence and accomplishment in the public view.
- Design with nature in a manner that is consistent with sustainable design principles.
 - Protect and enhance natural resources of the park sites.
 - Provide buffer areas around sensitive natural resources that should have limited or no public access.
 - Protect water resources from erosion, pollution, and other negative impacts and promote infiltration of stormwater runoff. Enhance streams and creeks by establishing or expanding riparian buffers within park sites. Plant buffer vegetation native to eastern Pennsylvania. Develop rain gardens to control stormwater runoff and promote groundwater recharge.
 - Limit disturbance of natural areas and consider natural functions when incorporating site improvements.
 - Locate facilities with consideration of prevailing wind and solar orientation.
 - Develop parking, trails, and other pavements with pervious materials, as appropriate for the setting and use.
 - Use native plant material to enhance wildlife habitats and minimize watering and maintenance requirements.
 - Locate shade trees to reduce heat island effect in parking areas, cool buildings in summer, and allow solar access in winter.
 - Consider the site soil, underlying geology, and depth of ground water during the planning and development phase. Soil, geology and depth of ground water and bedrock directly affect facility constructability, drainage, and long-term maintenance.
 - Incorporate wetlands, rock outcrops, hedgerows, and other natural features sensitively into park designs.
 - Develop park sites using Best Management Practices for erosion control and stormwater management.
 - Consider life-cycle costs and use of post-consumption materials when designing improvements.
 - Consider development options that reduce energy consumption and use such as ground source geothermal heating and cooling, connections to trail system to promote non-motorized transportation, solar powered amenities/features, and no-mow/low-mow areas.
- Create great playground areas that promote fun, socialization, learning, creativity, and healthy exercise. Create playground areas that engage children and provide a safe, fun setting for play. Where appropriate, playgrounds should be developed with themes that

relate to the context of the site and its resources. Develop the playgrounds as a space, not just equipment placed in mulch. Include benches for caregivers and small pavilions for story-telling, shaded play or crafts, and traditional picnics. Include shade via shade trees, pavilions, or shade sails. Include pavement areas for pavement games, chalk drawings, and other activities.

- Create great public spaces that promote fun, socializing, and public use.
 - Where playground areas need to be modified to be age-segregated, a plaza area is suggested to provide the needed separation and add a gathering area for caregivers and visitors. Plaza areas with benches provide comfortable places for sitting to view playground activities. Picnic tables could be added for picnics and snacks. Provide deciduous trees or a nearby pavilion for shade.
 - Develop areas at basketball and tennis courts for spectators and for players waiting their turn on the court. Provide benches or sitting walls that promote socializing.
 - Develop pavilion with concrete pads that extend beyond the pavilion structure for activities in sun and shade.
- Design with consideration of safety and security of the parks for users.
 - Provide visual access into parks from surrounding streets and sidewalks. Avoid designs that create “hidden” areas. Provide visual access into these areas as possible by minimizing landscaping that cuts off long views into park activity areas, limbing tree branches up to seven feet, and locating structures and equipment to retain clear sight lines into the parks.
 - Provide adequate safety zones around sports facilities and play equipment.
 - Provide physical barriers as appropriate between park activity areas and adjacent roadways, drives, and parking areas.
 - Where possible, limit the extent of vehicle penetration into park sites and vehicular/pedestrian conflict areas.
 - Provide trails of adequate width for the intended user groups. Multi-use trails should be developed at a minimum width of eight feet wide.
- Provide support and accessory facilities that create a premier recreation destination, such as, dugouts for baseball fields; picnic areas designed as a unit with grills, picnic tables, horseshoe pits, shaded areas and water; restrooms in each park; and benches convenient to courts for depositing equipment and viewing activities.

Objective 6: Plan for the continued revitalization and improvement to municipal parks through a comprehensive capital improvement program that outlines annual capital expenditures and cyclic improvements to the parks. Update the capital improvement program annually.

Goal 2: Connect the South Schuylkill region through a system of trails and greenways.

Objective 1: Coordinate greenway and trail planning and development with regional partners and stakeholders.

- Blue Mountain Recreation Commission should coordinate with the Schuylkill County Planning Commission, Schuylkill County Conservation District, Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, municipalities, and other entities regarding greenway and trail planning efforts and initiatives in the South Schuylkill Region.
- Blue Mountain Recreation Commission should coordinate with adjacent municipalities and Berks County regarding greenway and trail initiatives that could extend regionally and link parks, schools, and community destinations. Schuylkill County should forward this Comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan to entities responsible for regional and municipal plans to promote coordination and incorporation of initiatives into regional implementation efforts.
- Municipalities should work with PennDOT and municipal public works departments to provide bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities and accommodations when public roads and bridges are upgraded or replaced.

Objective 2: Undertake initiatives that set the stage for the successful development of greenways and trails.

- Blue Mountain Recreation Commission should continue to update the public regarding trail initiatives in the region and promote the benefits of greenways and trails. The Blue Mountain Recreation Commission should continue to coordinate with the Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Areas and take the lead locally.
- Municipalities should champion trails and trail initiatives by proactively taking the following steps that set the stage for trail development:
 - Develop trails within each municipal park to provide an accessible route to recreation and support facilities and where there is area, develop park trails that extend throughout park sites to provide for trail activities. Prioritize trail expansion of the trail in East Brunswick Playground and Albright's Woods/Memorial Park/BMSD Middle School. Develop trails in Landingville Community Playground, Deer Lake Park, Cressona Ballfield Complex, Auburn Memorial Park, and Wayne Township Recreation Area.
 - Undertake improvements to make parks convenient for bicycle access by providing bike racks.
 - Consider adopting an Official Map as a tool to acquire and extend trails throughout the municipality.

- Expand the trail network through the municipal planning process.
- Adopt or amend mandatory dedication ordinances to include provisions to permit the dedication of land for trails.
- Seek rights-of-ways and access easements from developers when new residential subdivisions and land developments are proposed in areas designated for trails or trail links.
- Require the construction of sidewalks along street frontage as part of subdivision and land development projects.
- Adopt ordinance provisions that promote “Complete Streets” concepts and strategies.

Objective 3: Develop a greenway and trail network that protects the green corridors and linear natural resources of the South Schuylkill Region and connects neighborhoods, parks, schools, and community destinations.

- Blue Mountain Recreation Commission should be the primary agency working with the Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, Schuylkill County, and local municipalities to develop the missing links of the John B. Bartram Trail.
- The Blue Mountain Recreation Commission champions the exploration of a greenway and trail system for the South Schuylkill Region composed of greenways, bike lanes, multi-purpose trails, trail links, and sidewalks that connect with hubs. Complete a greenway and trail plan for the South Schuylkill Region.
- Municipalities should develop ordinance provisions and seek conservation easements to protect and buffer natural resources along designated greenway corridors.
- Blue Mountain Recreation Commission, Orwigsburg Borough and North Manheim Township should work in partnership to complete a feasibility study that explores the potential to develop the Orwigsburg to Blue Mountain High School trail on the abandoned rail corridor. Coordinate with the Blue Mountain School District. Seek funding for the study from the PA DCNR.
- Municipalities should evaluate local roads in terms of bicycle and pedestrian compatibility, working with transportation engineers familiar with bicycle and pedestrian facility development and integration of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and accommodations into existing roadway networks.
- Develop trails based on the recommendations and guidelines presented in the Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan and AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

Goal 3: Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.

The Blue Mountain Recreation Commission has many opportunities to focus and capitalize on its strengths and improve its services. However, to ensure the agency's future, long-term viability, the Commission should consider shifts in its mission, programming and operations.

Recreation programming is an important municipal service and the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission performs it well. It is essential that exactly what the Commission does, what it's about, and why it matters be better communicated to the leaders of the Blue Mountain community.

The Commission offers many programs; however, three age groups have few programs offered for them: preschoolers, adults and seniors. As a result, four areas are identified for potential program growth: family, preschool, adult and senior.

A greater emphasis should be placed on obtaining partners for programs, especially family special events. With partners, the work planning, conducting and promoting programs can be shared.

Strategic focus areas are major areas to address to enhance or improve the Commission's services. The five strategic focus areas for the Commission are:

- Community Awareness and Support
- Strategic Alliances and Partnerships
- Park Area and Recreation Facility Support
- Recreation Programming
- Financing

Objectives define what issues will be addressed within the strategic focus areas and determine the resources needed to do so. To accomplish the objectives, specific recommendations focus on the necessary action items to strengthen Commission operations.

These strategic focus areas, goals, objectives and recommendations may serve as the start of strategic planning for the Commission. A strategic plan should be prepared on a three-year cycle to chart the future operations of the Commission.

Strategic Focus Area 1 - Community Awareness and Support

The Commission needs viable, expanded marketing and promotion efforts to build public awareness of its value and the benefits to residents of its services.

How does the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission benefit the region?

The Commission programs enable residents to enjoy the outdoors, learn new skills, make friends and be healthier and happier.

Strategic Focus Area 1 Goal: The Commission continues to be a well-respected agency throughout the community that provides essential services residents are not willing to do without.

Objective 1: Promote the Commission's success in the quality of the programs, the positive experiences people have, and how people and the community benefit from programs.

- Prepare a formal annual report each year, with photos of programs in action and testimonials from program participants, program partners and business sponsors about how the programs benefit them. Share this report with all partners.
- Prepare fact sheets with benefits and statistics about the positive results of recreation programs to share with municipal, school district and community leaders on a quarterly basis.
- Publish an every-other-month on-line newsletter that features stories about upcoming programs, staff and volunteer highlights, park development news, and positive comments from program participants.
- Determine the key messages to spread about why the Commission exists. Clearly articulate, in writing, the positive benefits of recreation to individuals and the community and the advantages of municipal and school district cooperation for the Blue Mountain region.
- Streamline the mission of the Commission so that it is easy to understand, remember and repeat. A suggested revised mission statement is: to provide quality, affordable, close-to-home recreation opportunities, with an emphasis on learning and healthy, active living, to Blue Mountain School District residents of all ages.
- Develop a simplified, professionally designed new logo and a corresponding tag line that captures the Commission's purpose and grabs people's attention. Use the tag line in conjunction with the logo. Commission programs give people of all ages an opportunity to be more active – physically, mentally and socially. A tag line that promotes this should be considered.
- Apply for one Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society award each year, and if received, actively promote the award.

Objective 2: Promote programs and participation through a vibrant website and an expanded use of social media.

- Hire a website development company to create a website with a fresh, fun, active look that can be easily updated in-house.
- Develop a weekly outline of programs to promote on Facebook and begin to utilize Instagram and Twitter for program promotion.
- Embrace the critical link between learning, being active and becoming healthier when promoting programs and encouraging visits to the parks, recreation facilities and trails in the region.

Objective 3: Improve the printed promotional material for programs.

- Adopt the name “Blue Mountain Rec” for promotional use to make the agency more recognizable to the public.
- Produce a seasonal program guide.
- Create a template to be used for all program newsletters and flyers to brand the Commission.

Strategic Focus Area 2 – Strategic Alliances and Partnerships

To strengthen and expand its programs, the Commission needs to design and manage partnerships with new and existing entities to maximize use of their resources and talents. Joint sponsorship of recreation programs is a significant opportunity for the Commission.

Strategic Focus Area 2 Goal: Partnership initiatives will result in the Commission being recognized as a valuable community asset that works closely with individuals, groups and businesses in the region to provide a well-rounded recreation service to citizens.

Objective 1: Identify who the key strategic partners should be for the Commission and begin to forge strong relationships to provide expanded programming in partnership with others.

- Seek programming partnerships with a wide variety of entities – parent-teacher organizations, Girl and Boy Scouts, Penn State Extension, Orwigsburg Library, sportsmen’s clubs, churches, Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation, Conservation District, Penn State Schuylkill, etc.
- Reach out to the Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department for possible partnership opportunities and joint operation of programs.
- Contact Lehigh Valley Hospital – Schuylkill to discuss partnership opportunities.
- Build a strong base of volunteers to assist with recreation programs and special events by forming partnerships with service clubs, businesses, etc.
- Explore the possibility of the Bethesda Evangelical Church Meadowbrook Drive Center (former State Police building) as a satellite office site and program location for the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission. Additionally, in partnership with the church and Diakon Living and Learning After 50, provide assistance with the weekly senior adult activities.
- Develop a relationship with the Geisinger-St. Luke’s Hospital, being constructed in West Brunswick Township on the site of the former Deer Lake Drive-In, for funding and support of health and wellness activities for the region’s residents.
- Develop a relationship with Schuylkill County’s VISION ‘Schuylkill on the Move’ to establish walking programs for residents and encourage residents to improve their health through walking.

Objective 2: Leverage the board's expertise, influence, and contacts to strengthen existing and establish new partnerships and provide access to potential resources.

- Ask for replacement of board members who do not attend meetings. Board members should be people who are in touch with the recreational needs of the region and are committed to making regional recreation a success.
- Provide specific information for board members to report monthly to the entity they represent.
- Identify board connections and how board members can help to increase funding, resources, promotion, volunteers, and partnerships.
- Identify how board members can help to strengthen municipal and school district connections.

Objective 3: Embrace the programs and facilities of other recreation providers as a regional network.

- Promote the community recreation programs of other providers and the self-directed recreation opportunities available for residents.
- Continue to promote how to get involved in all youth sports, including links to league or organization websites on the Commission website.

Objective 4: Work towards consolidation of some of the fragmented youth sports programs that are competing for participants.

- Begin discussions with the Blue Mountain youth football organizations about merging into one organization to better serve the Blue Mountain region.
- Begin discussions with the Blue Mountain youth baseball organizations about consolidating their operations where it makes sense.
- Play a leadership role in providing standard education for coaches for each youth sport, with high school coaches running clinics for volunteer coaches.
- Coordinate the background clearance process for youth sports group coaches.
- Encourage sport sampling for children under the age of 12, rather than concentration on one sport year-round

Strategic Focus Area 3 – Park Area and Recreation Facility Support

The region's park areas and recreation facilities are significant assets that can be more actively promoted by the Commission and better maintained by the municipalities for resident use.

Strategic Focus Area 3 Goal: Park areas and recreation facilities are established and recognized as safe community destinations where residents have fun, socialize, experience nature, and lead active, healthy lifestyles.

Objective 1: Make it easier for groups to find out what fields and facilities are available for their use and how to obtain permission to use them.

- Consider developing centralized scheduling and procedures for the reservation and/or rental of the region's municipal recreation facilities, particularly for youth sports group usage. As a first step, develop one field/facility request form to be used by every municipality.
- Provide a list of all municipal and school district park areas, trails and recreation facilities on the Commission website, with photos, map of the region, directions and contact information for rental of the facilities.
- Consider the development of a regional priority list of field users, with those sports programs that are open to and serve all youth receiving priority for use of fields over those programs that are open by try-outs only. Those programs that serve mainly region residents should have higher priority for field use over non-resident groups as well.

Objective 2: Ensure that park areas and recreation facilities are well-maintained, meet current safety standards, and provide an enjoyable environment for residents.

- Play a role in training municipal staff and volunteers for park maintenance duties and standard practices by implementing seasonal in-service training programs for the region. Offer these trainings with the help of a DCNR Peer or RecTAP grant.
- Take advantage of the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute, once it is established, which will be a statewide resource to help local communities with the latest tools, techniques, and strategies for efficient park maintenance, as well as improving the capacity of communities to maintain parks and recreation facilities.
- Coordinate the Young Lungs at Play program, a tobacco-free park signage initiative that promotes the health and well-being of children and families utilizing municipal and school district recreation facilities.
- Have the Commission's Certified Playground Safety Inspector, on a regular basis, inspect municipal and school district playground equipment according to approved standards to identify safety issues to be addressed.
- Standardize park rules, regulations, and opening and closing hours across the region to improve resident understanding and enforcement of the rules and hours of operation.
- Install inexpensive security cameras that link to cell phones at park areas and recreation facilities prone to vandalism or unauthorized use.

- Prepare an inventory of park and field maintenance equipment owned by the municipalities, school district and youth sports groups as a start to coordinate shared use.

Strategic Focus Area 4 – Recreation Programming

Expanded recreation program opportunities for all ages that focus on learning and active, healthy living are needed.

Strategic Focus Area 4 Goal: The Commission will enhance and expand the recreation programs and special events it offers in areas of resident interest, resulting in strong participation numbers and continued program growth.

Objective 1: Grow and modify family programming to provide more opportunities for parents and children to learn and play together.

Recommended programs:

- Community contests – such as Punt, Pass and Kick; Pitch, Hit and Run; Elementary Cross Country Run; Soccer Shootout; or 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
- family special events – such as Fall Hayride/Bonfire, Outdoor Summer Family Film Series, Family Camping Night, Candy Cane Hunt, Halloween Costume Swap, Concerts

Objective 2: Expand programs for preschoolers with a focus on learning and physical activity. Recommended programs:

- Preschool sports programs – coed introductions to sports for ages 3 to 5
- Preschool special interest/educational programs – such as cooking, art and music classes
- Summer preparation for Kindergarten program
- Preschool holiday parties and special events – such as Valentine’s Day, Easter, Halloween and other holidays, princess and super hero parties
- Preschool summer playground program
- Preschool environmental education programs

Objective 3: Provide opportunities for children and adults of all ages to be active outdoors, utilizing the park areas and natural resources throughout the South Schuylkill Region. Recommended programs:

- Lessons, clinics and camps for children and adults in outdoor activities they can pursue independently such as archery, fishing and paddling
- Outdoor adventure programming – such as kayaking, rock climbing and mountain biking

- Safety courses in boating and hunting
- Outdoor hikes for target audiences such as seniors and families
- Environmental education/nature programming for families
- Self-directed recreation activities – such as promotion of hiking and mountain biking trails and river and creek access points

Objective 4: Embrace active, healthy living as a primary theme of programs for children, adults, and seniors. Recommended programs:

- Adult sports activities – such as coed dodgeball, flag football and kickball
- Fitness activities – such as outdoor park workouts, pre-season sports conditioning and 5K training
- Sports for children – such as NFL flag football, lacrosse, volleyball and cross country
- Lessons and clinics for children and adults in lifetime sports such as tennis, golf, bicycling and dancing
- Club programs – such as a walking club for adults and after school environmental club for children
- Nutrition and cooking programs for children and adults
- Volunteer program for adults and seniors to assist with special events
- Senior social group for the South Schuylkill region for trips, cards, and special events
- Adult education programs in partnership with organizations such as Diakon Living and Learning after 50 such as quilting, drawing, painting, bridge and photography
- Outdoor pickle ball and bocce open and league play

Objective 5: Identify more avenues to promote programs.

- Ask current and past participants to spread the word about upcoming programs through social media networks.
- Approach partner organizations such as the Orwigsburg Area Free Public Library to include links to the Commission website on their websites and through their social media networks. The Commission should do the same for all partners. Other recreation-related organizations in the region should be approached to cross-promote with the Commission.
- Utilize Get Outdoors PA to promote outdoor recreation activities.

Objective 6: Update program administration policies to improve customer experiences.

- Update the program refund policy to make it customer friendly and less cumbersome to implement. A 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed policy for recreation programs is the industry standard. This shows a commitment to quality programming and to customer satisfaction. Before a program begins, refunds should be automatically granted. After a program begins, refunds should be pro-rated and provided regardless of the reason. Board approval should not be needed.
- Conduct participant surveys before a program starts to help identify and meet people's expectations, and after a program ends to help identify changes and improvements to make. Evaluations may also gauge the response to program promotion, identify safety hazards, provide testimonials for use in program promotion, and help to control costs. Utilize an on-line application for the surveys.
- Develop a written inclusion statement that promotes and values the involvement of all persons, including those with disabilities, in recreation program offerings. Place this statement on the website and in program newsletters.
- Develop a standard non-resident fee policy.

Objective 7: Enhance non-Blue Mountain Recreation Commission programs.

- To expand and improve recreation program opportunities for their residents, the three municipalities that are located outside of the Blue Mountain School District (Landingville and Port Clinton Boroughs and South Manheim Township), must approach the other, much larger municipality within their school district, Schuylkill Haven Borough, to explore the possibility of working together in partnership with the Schuylkill Haven School District. This effort would be eligible for DCNR Peer-to-Peer grant funding, which provides \$10,000 with a local match of \$1,000 for projects that help municipalities improve their parks and recreation services through a collaborative process. Projects are accomplished through contracts with experienced parks and recreation professionals who work closely with local leaders. A high priority for DCNR is projects that work toward forming new intergovernmental partnerships.

Strategic Focus Area 5 – Financing

The region's municipalities and school district have created a unique, cost-effective parks and recreation financing system that serves the Blue Mountain community well. Continued support for this system is essential.

Strategic Focus Area 5 Goal: The Commission will secure adequate financing for its operations and advocate for adequate financing by the municipalities for park and trail development and maintenance.

Objective 1: Fund parks and recreation operations to expand program opportunities and enhance maintenance and development of park areas, trails, and recreation facilities.

1. Advocate for the municipalities to increase the budget amount allocated for park maintenance. Any increase, however small, will make a difference in the quality of maintenance.
2. Increase program fees to cover costs of program operation and to offer more program opportunities. Program fees were reduced significantly in 2011 and most have not been increased since then.
3. Seek more business sponsors and grant and foundation funding for programs.
4. Develop a signature fund raiser for the Commission to benefit scholarships for those who cannot afford to pay full price for programs
5. Continue to support the funding and municipal access of the Capital Improvement Fund.

Action Plan

The Action Plan sets forth the time frame for the actions that the twelve municipalities of the South Schuylkill Region and the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission will undertake over the short, medium, and long term through 2028 to address the recommendations of this Plan. The Action Plan is organized around the three goals of the Plan.

Goal 1					
Establish parks and recreation facilities as regional destinations where residents can have fun, socialize, experience nature, and lead active healthy lifestyles.					
Project Key		Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project → Continue Implementation					
Complete park planning					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a master plan for Wayne Township Recreation Area. 		Funding in place.	√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a feasibility study to develop a regional passive park in the Landingville Borough/South Manheim Township area. 		\$80,000-\$100,000 / Grants, municipal funds, mandatory dedication / BMRC	√	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Site Development Drawings for park improvements to small parks. 		\$2,500 / BMRC funding / Municipalities			
Incorporate park improvements into existing parks					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade, expand, or renovate playgrounds to include age-segregated play areas, required safety surfacing, nearby seating at East Brunswick Playground, Aaron Kreager, Summit Station, Cressona Playground, Cressona Grove, Deer Lake Park. 		To be determined / Grants, municipal funds, mandatory dedication of parkland ordinance / Municipalities	√	→	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add convenient amenities – benches, trash receptacles, bike racks. 			√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paint lines on basketball courts – Pleasant Valley Road Park and Walborn. 			√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance park aesthetics – colorful landscaping, street trees, entry signs. 			√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the improvements identified for each park in this Plan. 			√	→	
Expand recreation opportunities through partnerships, development of public lands, and acquisition of parkland.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire parkland contiguous to existing parks. Prioritize acquisition contiguous to Wayne Township Recreation Park, Cressona Ball Fields, Memorial Park/Albrights Woods Park, Auburn Memorial Park, Deer Lake Park, and Catawissa Park. 		To be determined / Grants, municipal funds, mandatory dedication of parkland funds / Municipalities and BMRC	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Manheim Township should seek land for first municipal park. 		To be determined	√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore creation of a regional passive park developed through partnerships with Landingville Borough, Landingville Community Fire Co., Schuylkill River Trail/Bartram Trail, lands of Commonwealth of PA and acquired land in South Manheim Township. 		See above			√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt mandatory dedication of parkland ordinances and update annually based on the fair market value of land. 		Staff time / Municipalities	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize acquisition of land in North Manheim Township for development of an off-leash dog park. Develop dog park. Seek DCNR funding for development. 		To be determined / Grants, municipal funds, mandatory dedication of parkland funds / North Manheim Township	√		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek land to establish additional access points to the Schuylkill River and other streams for paddle craft launch and fishing. 		To be determined / Municipalities, BMRC	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the potential of partnering with the Bethesda Evangelical Church Meadowbrook Drive Center to develop outdoor recreation area and satellite office for BMRC. 		To be determined / BMRC		√	

Goal 2					
Connect the South Schuylkill region through a system of trails and greenways.					
Project Key		Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project	→ Continue Implementation				
Coordinate greenway and trail planning and development with regional partners and stakeholders.					
■ BMRC should coordinate with Schuylkill County Planning Commission, Schuylkill County Conservation District, Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, municipalities, and other entities regarding greenway and trail initiatives.		Staff time / BMRC	→	→	→
■ BMRC should coordinate with adjacent municipalities and Berks County regarding greenway and trail initiatives.		Staff time / BMRC	→	→	→
■ Municipalities should work with PennDOT and municipal public works departments to provide bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities.		Staff time / Municipalities	→	→	→
Set the stage for successful greenway and trail development.					
■ BMRC should provide updates to public regarding trail initiatives and promote benefits of greenways and trails.		Staff time	→	→	→
■ Municipalities should champion trail initiatives.		To be determined/Grants, municipal funds/Municipalities	√	→	→
- Develop trails in municipal parks.		To be determined/Grants, municipal funds/Municipalities	√	→	→
- Add amenities to make bicycle use convenient.		Staff time	→	→	→
- Adopt an Official Map.		Staff time	→	→	→
- Expand the trail network through the municipal planning process.		Staff time	→	→	→
- Adopt or amend mandatory dedication ordinance to include trail dedication provisions.		Staff time	→	→	→
- Seek rights-of-ways and easements from developers for trails.		Staff time	→	→	→
- Require the construction of sidewalks in subdivision and land development projects.		Staff time	→	→	→
- Adopt ordinance provisions that promote Complete Streets concepts and strategies.		Staff time	→	→	→
Develop a greenway and trail network that protects green corridors and linear natural resources and connects neighborhoods parks, schools, and community destinations.					
■ BMRC expands role as primary agency working with Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, Schuylkill County, and local municipalities to develop the missing links of the John Bartram Trail.		Staff time	√	→	→
■ Complete a greenway and trail plan for the South Schuylkill region.		Staff time / Grants, municipal funds / Municipalities and BMRC		√	
■ Adopt ordinance provisions that protect natural resources.		Staff time	√		
■ Seek conservation easements to protect greenway corridors.		To be determined / Grants, municipal funds / Staff time	√	→	→
■ Complete a feasibility study to explore a trail linking Orwigsburg and Blue Mountain High School on an abandoned rail line.		\$50,000-75,000 / Grants, municipal funds, BMRC funding / BMRC	√		
■ Integrate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into existing roadway networks.		To be determined / Grants, municipal funds / Municipalities	√	→	→

Goal 3					
Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.					
Project Key		Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project → Continue Implementation					
Coordinate greenway and trail planning and development with regional partners and stakeholders.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">BMRC should coordinate with Schuylkill County Planning Commission, Schuylkill County Conservation District, Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, municipalities, and other entities regarding greenway and trail initiatives.BMRC should coordinate with adjacent municipalities and Berks County regarding greenway and trail initiatives.Municipalities should work with PennDOT and municipal public works departments to provide bicycle and pedestrian friendly facilities.		Staff time / BMRC	→	→	→
			→	→	→
			→	→	→
Promote the Commission’s success in the quality of the programs, the positive experiences people have, and how people and the community benefit from programs.					
Promote programs and participation through a vibrant website and an expanded use of social media.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hire a website development company to create a website with a fresh, fun, active look that can be easily updated in-house.Develop a weekly outline of programs to promote on Facebook and begin to utilize Instagram and Twitter for program promotion.Embrace the critical link between learning, being active and becoming healthier when promoting programs and encouraging visits to the parks, recreation facilities and trails in the region.		Staff time	√	→	→
			√	→	→
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Improve the printed promotional material for programs.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adopt the name “Blue Mountain Rec” for promotional use to make the agency more recognizable to the public.Produce a seasonal program guide.Create a template to be used for all program newsletters and flyers to brand the Commission.		Staff time	√	→	→
			√	→	→
			√	→	→
Leverage the board’s expertise, influence and contacts to strengthen existing and establish new partnerships and provide access to potential resources.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask for replacement of board members who do not attend meetings. Board members should be people who are in touch with the recreational needs of the region and are committed to making regional recreation a success.Provide specific information for board members to report monthly to the entity they represent.Identify board connections and how board members can help to increase funding, resources, promotion, volunteers, and partnerships.Identify how board members can help to strengthen municipal and school district connections.		Staff time	√	→	→
			√	→	→
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Goal 3					
Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.					
Project Key		Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project	→ Continue Implementation				
Identify who the key strategic partners should be for the Commission and begin to forge strong relationships to provide expanded programming in partnership with others.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Seek programming partnerships with a wide variety of entities – parent-teacher organizations, Girl and Boy Scouts, Penn State Extension, Orwigsburg Library, sportsmen’s clubs, churches, Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation, Conservation District, Penn State Schuylkill, etc.■ Reach out to the Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department for possible partnership opportunities and joint operation of programs.■ Contact Lehigh Valley Hospital – Schuylkill to discuss partnership opportunities.■ Build a strong base of volunteers to assist with recreation programs and special events by forming partnerships with service clubs, businesses, etc.■ Explore the possibility of the Bethesda Evangelical Church Meadowbrook Drive Center (former State Police building) as a satellite office site and program location for the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission. Additionally, in partnership with the church and Diakon Living and Learning After 50, provide assistance with the weekly senior adult activities.■ Develop a relationship with the Geisinger-St. Luke’s Hospital, being constructed in West Brunswick Township on the site of the former Deer Lake Drive-In, for funding and support of health and wellness activities for the region’s residents.■ Develop a relationship with Schuylkill County’s VISION ‘Schuylkill on the Move” to establish walking programs for residents and encourage residents to improve their health through walking.	Staff time	√	→	→	
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	Staff time	√	→	→	
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		√	→	→	
Work towards consolidation of some of the fragmented youth sports programs that are competing for participants.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Begin discussions with the Blue Mountain youth football organizations about merging into one organization to better serve the Blue Mountain region.■ Begin discussions with the Blue Mountain youth baseball organizations about consolidating their operations where it makes sense.■ Play a leadership role in providing standard education for coaches for each youth sport, with high school coaches running clinics for volunteer coaches.■ Coordinate the background clearance process for youth sports group coaches.■ Encourage sport sampling for children under the age of 12, rather than concentration on one sport year-round	Staff time	√	→	→	
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	Staff time	√	→	→	
		√	→	→	

Goal 3				
Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.				
Project Key	Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project → Continue Implementation				
Embrace the programs and facilities of other recreation providers as a regional network.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the community recreation programs of other providers and the self-directed recreation opportunities available for residents. 	Staff time	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote how to get involved in all youth sports, including links to league or organization websites on the Commission website. 		√	→	→
Make it easier for groups to find out what fields and facilities are available for their use and how to obtain permission to use them.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider developing centralized scheduling and procedures for the reservation and/or rental of the region's municipal recreation facilities, particularly for youth sports group usage. As a first step, develop one field/facility request form to be used by every municipality. 	Staff time	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a list of all municipal and school district park areas, trails and recreation facilities on the Commission website, with photos, map of the region, directions and contact information for rental of the facilities. 		√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the development of a regional priority list of field users, with those sports programs that are open to and serve all youth receiving priority for use of fields over those programs that are open by try-outs only. Those programs that serve mainly region residents should have higher priority for field use over non-resident groups as well. 		√	→	→
Grow and modify family programming to provide more opportunities for parents and children to learn and play together. Recommended programs:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community contests – such as Punt, Pass and Kick; Pitch, Hit and Run; Elementary Cross Country Run; Soccer Shootout; or 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament 	Staff time	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family special events – such as Fall Hayride/Bonfire, Outdoor Summer Family Film Series, Family Camping Night, Candy Cane Hunt, Halloween Costume Swap, Concerts 		√	→	→
Expand programs for preschoolers with a focus on learning and physical activity. Recommended programs:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool sports programs – coed introductions to sports for ages 3 to 5 	Staff time	√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool special interest/educational programs – such as cooking, art and music classes 		√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer preparation for Kindergarten program 		√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool holiday parties and special events – such as Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween and other holidays, princess and super hero parties 		√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool summer playground program 		√	→	→
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool environmental education programs 		√	→	→

Goal 3					
Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.					
Project Key		Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project → Continue Implementation					
Provide opportunities for children and adults of all ages to be active outdoors, utilizing the park areas and natural resources throughout the South Schuylkill region. Recommended programs:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Lessons, clinics and camps for children and adults in outdoor activities they can pursue independently such as archery, fishing and paddling■ Outdoor adventure programming – such as kayaking, rock climbing and mountain biking■ Safety courses in boating and hunting■ Outdoor hikes for target audiences such as seniors and families■ Environmental education/nature programming for families■ Self-directed recreation activities – such as promotion of hiking and mountain biking trails and river and creek access points		Staff time	√	→	→
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Embrace active, healthy living as a primary theme of programs for children, adults and seniors. Recommended programs:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Adult sports activities – such as coed dodgeball, flag football and kickball■ Fitness activities – such as outdoor park workouts, pre-season sports conditioning and 5K training■ Sports for children – such as NFL flag football, lacrosse, volleyball and cross country■ Lessons and clinics for children and adults in lifetime sports such as tennis, golf, bicycling and dancing■ Club programs – such as a walking club for adults and after school environmental club for children■ Nutrition and cooking programs for children and adults■ Volunteer program for adults and seniors to assist with special events■ Senior social group for the South Schuylkill region for trips, cards, and special events■ Adult education programs in partnership with organizations such as Diakon Living and Learning after 50 such as quilting, drawing, painting, bridge and photography■ Outdoor pickle ball and bocce open and league play		Staff time	√	→	→
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		Staff time	√	→	→
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Identify more avenues to promote programs.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ask current and past participants to spread the word about upcoming programs through social media networks.■ Approach partner organizations such as the Orwigsburg Area Free Public Library to include links to the Commission website on their websites and through their social media networks. The Commission should do the same for all partners. Other recreation-related organizations in the region should be approached to cross-promote with the Commission.■ Utilize Get Outdoors PA to promote outdoor recreation activities.		Staff time	√	→	→
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Goal 3				
Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.				
Project Key	Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project → Continue Implementation				
Ensure that park areas and recreation facilities are well-maintained, meet current safety standards, and provide an enjoyable environment for residents.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Play a role in training municipal staff and volunteers for park maintenance duties and standard practices by implementing seasonal in-service training programs for the region. Offer these trainings with the help of a DCNR Peer or RecTAP grant. ■ Take advantage of the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute, once it is established, which will be a statewide resource to help local communities with the latest tools, techniques and strategies for efficient park maintenance as well as improving the capacity of communities to maintain parks and recreation facilities. ■ Coordinate the Young Lungs at Play program, a tobacco-free park signage initiative that promotes the health and well-being of children and families utilizing municipal and school district recreation facilities. ■ Have the Commission's Certified Playground Safety Inspector, on a regular basis, inspect municipal and school district playground equipment according to approved standards to identify safety issues to be addressed. ■ Standardize park rules, regulations, and opening and closing hours across the region to improve resident understanding and enforcement of the rules and hours of operation. ■ Install inexpensive security cameras that link to cell phones at park areas and recreation facilities prone to vandalism or unauthorized use. ■ Prepare an inventory of park and field maintenance equipment owned by the municipalities, school district and youth sports groups as a start to coordinate shared use. 	Staff time	√	→	→
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		√	→	→
	Staff time	√	→	→
		√	→	→
Enhance non-Blue Mountain Recreation Commission programs.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To expand and improve recreation program opportunities for residents, the three municipalities that are located outside of the Blue Mountain School District (Landingville and Port Clinton Boroughs and South Manheim Township), must approach the other, larger municipality within their school district, Schuylkill Haven Borough, to explore the possibility of partnering with the Schuylkill Haven School District. This effort would be eligible for DCNR Peer-to-Peer grant funding, which provides \$10,000 with a local match of \$1,000 for projects that help municipalities improve their parks and recreation services through a collaborative process. Projects are accomplished through contracts with experienced parks and recreation professionals who work closely with local leaders. A high priority for DCNR is projects that work toward forming new intergovernmental partnerships. 	Municipalities	√	→	→

Goal 3					
Strengthen and improve the services of the Blue Mountain Recreation Commission.					
Project Key		Cost/Source/Responsibilities	2019-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028+
√ Start Project → Continue Implementation					
Update program administration policies to improve customer experiences.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update the program refund policy to make it customer friendly and less cumbersome to implement. A 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed policy for recreation programs is the industry standard. This shows a commitment to quality programming and to customer satisfaction. Before a program begins, refunds should be automatically granted. After a program begins, refunds should be pro-rated and provided regardless of the reason. Board approval should not be needed.Conduct participant surveys before a program starts to help identify and meet people’s expectations, and after a program ends to help identify changes and improvements to make. Evaluations may also gauge the response to program promotion, identify safety hazards, provide testimonials for use in program promotion, and help to control costs. Utilize an on-line application for the surveys.Develop a written inclusion statement that promotes and values the involvement of all persons, including those with disabilities, in recreation program offerings. Place this statement on the website and in program newsletters.Develop a standard non-resident fee policy.	Staff time	√	→	→	
		√	→	→	
		√	→	→	
	Staff time	√	→	→	
Fund parks and recreation operations to expand program opportunities and enhance maintenance and development of park areas, trails and recreation facilities.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Advocate for the municipalities to increase the budget amount allocated for park maintenance. Any increase, however small, will make a difference in the quality of maintenance.Increase program fees to cover costs of program operation and to offer more program opportunities. Program fees were reduced significantly in 2011 and most have not been increased since then.Seek more business sponsors and grant and foundation funding for programs.Develop a signature fund raiser for the Commission to benefit scholarships for those who cannot afford to pay full price for programsContinue to support the funding and municipal access of the Capital Improvement Fund.	Staff time	√	→	→	
		√	→	→	
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