

## 9. Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resources

### 9.1 Overview

Union County's community character, including cultural, historic, and recreational resources, defines what is special and unique about the region. The County's rich natural features, a longstanding agricultural tradition, and abundant recreational resources are at the core of the County's identity, attracting residents and visitors alike.

#### Cultural Heritage

Union County's regional tourism agency, the Susquehanna River Valley (formerly the Susquehanna Valley Visitors Bureau), promotes culture, heritage, and arts in the tri-county region. The Union County Historical Society, located in the County Court House in Lewisburg, provides a glimpse into the agricultural and industrial heritage of the County through its archives, lectures, and tours throughout the region.

Arts-related cultural resources in Union County include the Weis Center for the Performing Arts at Bucknell University and the Campus Theatre in Lewisburg. The Weis Center hosts professional and student music and dance events and the Campus Theatre holds film festivals each year which draw regional audiences.

#### Historic Resources

The majority of historic buildings and sites in Union County are concentrated in the boroughs of Lewisburg, Mifflinburg, and New Berlin. The Union County Historical Society is the principal organization supporting historic resources and research. At the municipal level, there are few organizations specifically focused on historic preservation. Local supporting organizations include the Lewisburg Downtown Partnership, which was recently accredited as a 2008 National Main Street Program, the Mifflinburg Heritage and Revitalization Association (MHRA), the Mifflinburg Buggy Museum, the Market Street Log House Committee, Preservation Mifflinburg, Inc., the Historic Elias Church Committee, and the New Berlin Heritage Association.

While both Lewisburg and Mifflinburg have Historic Districts listed on the National Register, the only jurisdiction with a local historic district and Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) is Lewisburg. The Mifflinburg Heritage and Revitalization Association is an active local historic and cultural organization.

Increased development activity can threaten the existence of important historic and agricultural structures. Rather than risk losing them forever, municipalities and private owners are beginning to explore reuse of exist-

#### SUSTAINABILITY KEY = ADAPTIVE REUSE

**Adaptive reuse** refers to the modification or rehabilitation of existing structures to serve new uses, for example the "recycling" of former schools or industrial buildings for purposes such as retail stores, offices, and/or residences. Adaptive reuse supports the sustainability principles of the Comprehensive Plan by promoting reinvestment in established communities where existing infrastructure is available, providing an alternative to "greenfield" development, and eliminating the expenditure of energy needed to extract, process, manufacture, transport, and install materials for new building construction (referred to as "embodied energy"). It can also preserve historic architectural features that contribute to community character and sense of place.

While adaptive reuse is a concept typically associated with historic preservation, redevelopment plans for "brownfield" and "grayfield" sites can incorporate parks and recreational facilities to meet identified needs in proximity to existing population centers.

ing buildings.

In addition to historic buildings and districts, Union County is rich in historic/cultural landscapes. Agricultural structures, barns, rural landscapes and covered bridges located throughout the County contribute to the region’s identity. Generally, a cultural landscape is an area associated with a historic event, activity, person, or group and can be an expression of regional history and identity. As defined by the Cultural Landscape Foundation, these landscapes can range from farmlands, public gardens, college campuses, cemeteries, scenic highways, and industrial sites. Penns Valley in Centre and western Union County and Buffalo Valley in Union County are two examples of historic/cultural landscapes. Resources associated with each of these areas include the development of agriculture, rural architecture, transportation, and industry in the region.

**Recreation**

This section classifies recreation into regional and local resources. Regional parks, such as the state lands, serve at least several communities and are generally defined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as areas of natural quality that provide predominantly passive recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking trails), as well as conservation of resources. Local recreational

resources include both neighborhood and community parks and have a service area between 0.5 and 2 miles. Community and neighborhood parks typically provide both active (e.g., ballfields) and passive uses.

The majority of Union County’s land area is state or private woodlands. Public land (state forest, state parks, and gamelands) comprises over 30% of land use in the County and provides generous recreational offerings at the regional level.

**Regional Recreation**

The Bald Eagle State Forest, managed by the PA DCNR, is the largest publicly owned area in Union County. The forest covers parts of five counties: Union, Centre, Clinton, Mifflin, and Snyder. Numerous recreational opportunities, such as hiking trails, multi-use trails, ATV trails, camping sites, picnicking sites, parks, fishing, and hunting, are available for residents and visitors.

In addition to state forestland, there are three state parks located in Union County. They include the R.B. Winter State Park and the Sand Bridge State Park, located in the Bald Eagle forest. The third park, Shickellamy State Park, is located in Union Township, at the southern edge of the county. All of the state parks pro-

**Table 9.1 State Owned Recreational Land**

Type	Total Acreage	% of State Recreation Land
State Parks	701 Acres	1%
State Forests	67,262 Acres	95%
State Gameland	2,984 Acres	4%
Total	70,947 Acres	100%

*Source: Union County Planning Commission, GIS Data*

vide picnic facilities and both R.B. Winter and the Shickellamy have recreational trails. Modern camping sites, swimming facilities, and a public beach are available at the R.B. Winter Park. State gamelands are managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and are located in Hartley, Limestone, Union, and Gregg Townships. A new state gameland is planned for Hartley Township, just west of Hartleton Borough.

Union County’s many watercourses offer excellent recreational opportunities. Fishing is popular along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, Penns Creek, Buffalo Creek, and White Deer Creek. Opportunities for boating, kayaking, and canoeing are available on the Susquehanna River, Penns Creek, and Buffalo Creek. However, public access is not generally available along these waterways. In addition to water based activities, rivers and streams provide obvious scenic benefits.

### Local Recreation

Located in the Eastern Planning Area, the Lewisburg Area Recreational Authority (LARA) provides local programs and activities serving Lewisburg Borough and East Buffalo Township. The Lewisburg Area School District and Bucknell University are partners of LARA. Programs and activities are open to anyone, but are offered at a discounted rate to residents of Lewisburg and East Buffalo. Through a public/private partnership, LARA recently renovated the Lewisburg Area Recreation Park, which attracts local and regional park users. The park provides multi-generational facilities, including a community pool, outdoor ice skating rink, and skate park. Organized recreational activities and programs, such as ice skating, gymnastics, track and field, swimming, and tennis, are offered by LARA at a variety of facilities. In addition, a private indoor pool complex is currently planned in the Lewisburg Area.

Mifflinburg also has a park system that serves surrounding municipalities and local sports leagues are active throughout the County. The West End Youth Group provides activities for children in Union County's western municipalities. In addition, Hartley Township constructed an indoor recreation facility adjacent to the public library near Laurelton.

In order to adequately provide for local park needs, the NRPA has established acreage minimums for the amount of local (neighborhood and community) park land available per 1,000 persons. While the recommendations are meant to be used as guidelines, not standards, they are useful in planning for recreational needs of existing and future residents. Neighborhood parks often serve as the focus of the neighborhood and are typically less than 5 acres and have a ½-mile service radius. Community parks are larger (greater than 5 acres) and have a wider service area (2 miles). Both types of parks can accommodate active and passive uses. The NRPA's recommended guideline, which has also been adopted locally by LARA, is a minimum of 10 acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents.

The Union County Planning Commission recently completed an inventory of 70 parks and recreational sites in the County, which includes a range of public and private parks ranging from neighborhood-level parks to trails and regional facilities. Table 9.2 estimates future park need based on the existing inventory of community and neighborhood level parks. This table uses the NRPA guideline of 10 acres of parkland/1,000 persons applied to each planning area and municipality. The 10-acre guideline is divided between community parks (8 acres) and neighborhood parks (2 acres).



Table 9.2 Park Need Projections (2010 and 2050)*			
Community and Neighborhood Parks			
Municipality	Existing Acres*	Surplus or Deficit (2010)	Surplus or Deficit (2050)
Gregg Township**	-	(11.0)	(13.0)
Eastern Planning Area	92.6	(111.3)	(174.0)
East Buffalo Township	9.5	(57.5)	(85.0)
Kelly Township**	10	(20.6)	(25.6)
Lewisburg Borough	54.5	(3.3)	(5.8)
White Deer Township	18.6	(29.9)	(48.7)
Central Planning Area	36.1	(112.1)	(169.4)
Buffalo Township	-	(35.8)	(50.9)
Limestone Township	-	(17.2)	(24.8)
Mifflinburg Borough	24.5	(15.1)	(26.7)
New Berlin Borough	11.6	2.1	(0.1)
Union Township	-	(16.1)	(22.2)
West Buffalo Township	-	(30.0)	(44.7)
Western Planning Area	43.5	7.6	(2.1)
Hartley Township	37.7	19.3	15.2
Hartleton Borough	1.8	(0.7)	(0.9)
Lewis Township	4.0	(11.0)	(16.4)
Union County Total	172.2	(226.8)	(358.5)

Source: Cultural and Recreational Inventory and Study (Union County Planning Commission)

Future need is based on the 2010 and 2050 Union County population projections. Relying on existing park acreage and population projections, none of the three planning areas will meet the community and neighborhood parks guideline in 2010 and 2050.

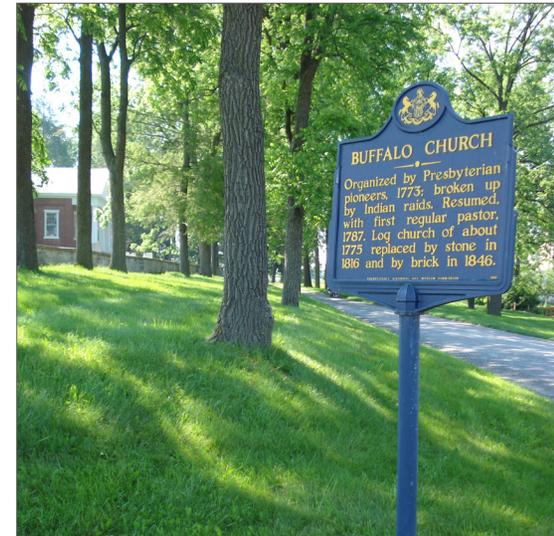
While the majority of municipalities do not meet the park acreage recommendations, it is important to note that these guidelines only apply to neighborhood and community parks, and do not include other recreational options available to residents, such as regional (state) parkland, school facilities, recreational facilities provided by churches, trails, water based recreation, private parks, and recreational programs/leagues. In addition, the inventory does not include park development projects that may be in the early planning stages.

- \* This inventory **only** includes community and neighborhood level parks. Community parks are defined as typically larger than 5 AC in size with a 2-mile service area and include active (e.g., ball fields) and passive use facilities. Neighborhood parks are defined as less than 5 AC in size with a ½-mile service area. Neighborhood parks often have minimal facilities, but may include large conservation areas. There are 70 parks and recreation sites in Union County, of which only 14 fall into the community or neighborhood parks definition applied in Table 9.2. Other park types in Union County consist of schools, special use parks, private parks, state forests, state parks, trailways, and water recreation access points. See *the Cultural and Recreational Inventory and Study (Union County Planning Commission, 2008)* for more information about other park types.
- \*\* This analysis factors out institutionalized group quarters population in Federal Prisons.

## 9.2 Strengths and Issues

### Strengths: Cultural and Historic Resources

- Union County is rich in historic resources. There are two historic districts, located in Mifflinburg and Lewisburg, and 17 sites that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Examples of historic sites include houses, churches, covered bridges, the Union County Courthouse, and the Reading Railroad Freight Station.
- The Susquehanna River Valley, the tourism agency for Snyder, Union, and Northumberland Counties, promotes heritage and arts in the region. The regional agency advertises self-guided historic walking tours of Lewisburg and Mifflinburg. Other initiatives include Art Thrives on Route 45, a campaign directing visitors to local galleries and museums, and Covered Bridges of the Susquehanna Valley, which highlights the five covered bridges located in Union County.
- The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) manages and maintains historical markers, identifying special features, events, or significant events. Signage is located along state highways and near significant sites throughout the County.
- The Union County Historical Society supports local history through lectures, tours, exhibitions, recordings, oral history documentation, research and archival materials, and workshops. The Historical Society also offers tours of the Dale/Engle/Walker house site.
- There are numerous sites and cultural resources that may not be eligible for National Register designation, but are still critical to the community character and agricultural tradition of the County. Many barns and agricultural structures are located throughout the county adding to the area's cultural and agricultural heritage.
- There is a concentration of land held in conservation easements or in Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs) in the Central and Eastern Planning Areas. The continued use of land for agricultural purposes limits conversion to another use, which can result in protection of cultural/rural resources, health of the agricultural economy, and recreational enjoyment by residents and visitors to Union County.
- Local cultural celebrations occur throughout Union County each year. The rich heritage and traditions of the rural, agricultural landscape are highlighted in these festivals. A few examples include:
  - » Mifflinburg Christkindl and Oktoberfest. These annual festivals celebrate the region's Germanic history with handmade arts and crafts, entertainment, food, and drinks each October and December.





- » New Berlin Day. New Berlin celebrated its 38th annual street festival in August of 2008. This event is one of the largest of its kind in Central Pennsylvania with street vendors, artists, music, historic open houses, and samplings of traditional Pennsylvania German food.
- » Rural Heritage Days at the Dale/Engle/Walker House. Sponsored by the Union County Historical Society, this event occurs each August and features children’s games, porch-side history demonstrations, tours, and traditional food.
- » Union County West End Fair. This traditional “country fair” has been held in Laurelton for over 80 years celebrating the area’s agricultural heritage. Located at the fairgrounds (Lincoln Park), the celebration features 4-H and FFA activities, games and rides, the Miss Union County Pageant, and tractor pulls each year in August.
- Union County’s numerous cultural and historic resources are important not only to quality of life and sense of place, but also to the economy. They have the potential to expand heritage tourism and promote sustainable economic development.

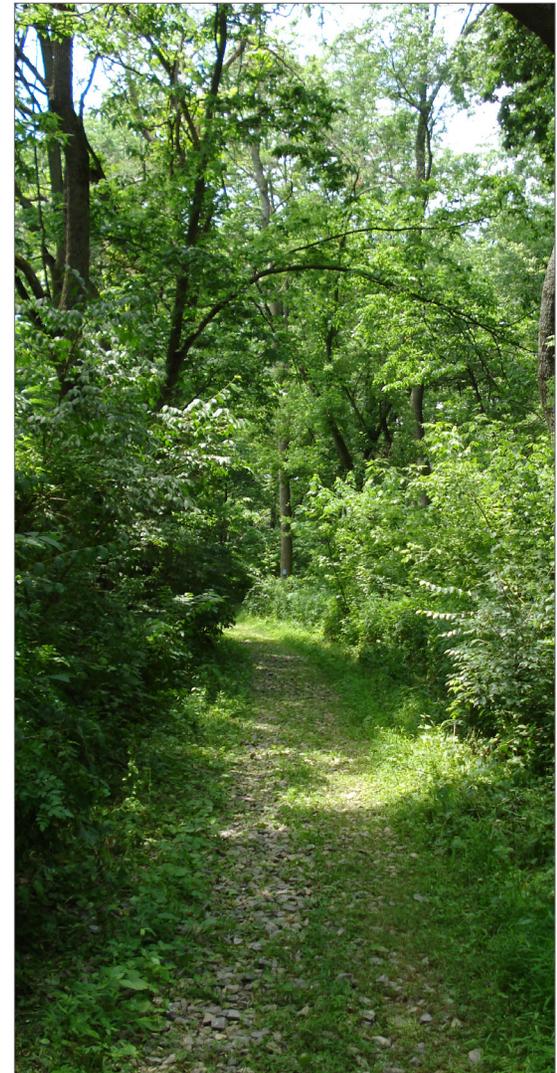
- » There is a growing concentration of historic and cultural resources in Mifflinburg (e.g., Mifflinburg Heritage and Revitalization Association, Buggy Museum, historic buildings, annual festivals, and nearby covered bridges) providing potential support for increased economic activity. A major project of the Mifflinburg Heritage and Revitalization Association (MHRA) is the Elias Church restoration project. The wood structure, built in 1806, will be restored with state grant assistance and reused as a center for performing arts, lectures, and concerts.
- » The Lewisburg Arts Festival, a two-week long celebration of the arts, is held each year at the end of April. The largest event sponsored by the Lewisburg Arts Council, it includes two highlights: the Market Street Festival, with over 100 juried artists, entertainment, and food along Market Street; and Lewisburg Live, with live bands and music in multiple venues downtown.
- The former sites of the Pennsylvania House Company in Lewisburg, the Yorktowne Building in Mifflinburg, and the Laurelton Center in Hartley Township are locally significant historic properties with potential for adaptive reuse and development that supports the local craft and industrial heritage.

### Issues: Cultural and Historic Resources

- While both Lewisburg and Mifflinburg have Historic Districts listed on the National Register, Lewisburg is the only municipality with a local historic district and Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB). Outside of Lewisburg, there is little regulatory protection of historic resources.
  - The Union County Historic Preservation Plan (1978) inventoried over 700 historic sites; 19 sites or districts are now listed on the National Register. While the majority of sites are intact, a number have been altered or destroyed over the years. Future residential and commercial development will threaten more of these valuable resources.
  - Barns and other agricultural structures are an important but disappearing resource in the region. In general, these structures were not well represented in the 1978 Historic Preservation Plan.
  - Covered bridges are an important historical resource in the County. Of Union County's five covered bridges, two are closed to public use and at least one (Red Bridge) is in poor condition.
  - If completed without considering the local context, the widening of roadways and other planned infrastructure projects could greatly impact historic landscapes.
- The greatest population growth is projected in the Central Planning Area. New residential and commercial development that is out of character with existing development has the potential to threaten historic and cultural resources and scenic vistas, particularly along Route 45.

### Strengths: Recreational Resources

- Union County has a tremendous asset in its regional recreational resources, including state forests, gamelands, state parks, and waterways, in particular the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, Penns Creek, White Deer Creek, and Buffalo Creek. These resources contribute to the quality of life of residents, reduce demands for public services, and add to the economy by attracting visitors.
- There are conservation areas offering scenic and recreational activities throughout the County. The largest area, the Bald Eagle State Forest, and the smaller state parks provide year-round recreation, including hiking trails, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and camping, etc. Trails maintained by the Merrill Linn Conservancy provide additional walking paths and scenic vistas (see Section 3.6 for a more complete description of recreational resources).



- The County is currently involved in trail and greenway planning with two organizations: the Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) and the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership. The two trail/greenway projects are the Mifflinburg-Lewisburg Rail Trail, which will connect Lewisburg, Vicksburg, and Mifflinburg, and the Susquehanna Greenway. Both partnerships involve planning for additional recreation opportunities in the eastern and central portions of the County.
- LARA is finalizing the Lewisburg Area Comprehensive Recreation, Park, Open Space and Greenway Plan. The plan evaluates and makes recommendations for park planning, greenways, trails, and open space conservation in Lewisburg, Kelly Township, and East Buffalo Township.
- There are active sports leagues throughout the County. In addition, some of the smaller organizations, such as the West End Youth Group, share recreational space and partner with other private providers (e.g. schools districts, churches). Mifflinburg Borough has a park system that serves surrounding municipalities. Based on population (see Table 10.2), New Berlin has a surplus of both community and neighborhood parks to serve the borough.

### Issues: Recreational Resources

- While there are significant areas of regional parkland and recreational activities, Union County has relatively little parkland at the local level. Most of the regional parkland (e.g. state parks, forests, etc.) is only reached by car and therefore inaccessible for local recreation. Table 10.2 shows a total deficit of about 240 acres of municipal community and neighborhood park space to serve the projected 2010 population based on NRPA.
- LARA is an active recreational provider that uses private recreation centers spread across the County; however, its park, open space, and greenway planning has focused on Lewisburg, East Buffalo, and Kelly Township.
- Recent subdivision typically does not provide parks and trails within walking distance of residents. However, open space and recreational trails are proposed in the Pennsylvania House redevelopment.
- The County lacks a connected walking and biking trail network. Existing facilities include trails within conservation lands and state parks, Lewisburg, Mifflinburg, and western Hartley Township. There are a few bike routes in the County, along Route 192. Many local roads, such as Stein Lane in Lewisburg, lack sidewalks or bike lanes creating a conflict be-

tween vehicles, joggers, and bikers.

- The County lacks sufficient indoor and other recreational facilities serving organized sports. Currently municipalities in the Western and Central Planning Areas share facilities. In addition, the LARA plan notes the need for athletic facilities and gyms to serve sports leagues.
- There is a need for more recreational facilities and programs to serve residents across the County through all phases of life, in particular programs to serve seniors as Union County's population ages, young families, and at-risk teens (15-20 yrs old). The Lewisburg Area Recreation Park is an example of a facility with activities to serve multiple generations – trails were developed in collaboration with Penn State University to provide an inclusive fitness option for older adults.

## 9.3 Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resource Goals

### Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resource Goals

- Union County's valued cultural and historic resources, including structures, buildings, districts, and landscapes, are recognized and protected for their key contributions to community identity and sense of place.
- Older buildings are maintained, restored, and adapted for productive uses.
- New development is designed to respect the historic and rural character of the region.
- Cultural and historic resources are maximized for their educational and economic value through heritage tourism.
- A network of parks, open spaces, greenways, and trails providing recreational, environmental, economic, and transportation benefits extends throughout Union County.
- Citizens' needs for access to quality indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and programs are satisfied.



## 9.4 Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resource Strategies



### Cultural and Historic Resource Strategies

#### 9-1. Maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date inventory of Union County's historic resources.

The most recent inventory of historic sites in the County was prepared in 1978 by the Union County Planning Commission. This inventory focused on historic sites mostly located in Lewisburg, Mifflinburg, and New Berlin and did not address rural resources such as cultural landscapes and historic barns. In addition, many structures listed in the 1978 inventory have subsequently been demolished. A comprehensive update to the 1978 inventory should be conducted. The scope of the update should be expanded to include rural historic resources throughout the County. It can be used to identify additional sites or districts that may be eligible for listing on the National Register and/or local historic designation. National Register listing is a prestigious designation that can provide tax advantages for property owners but does not provide regulatory protection, which requires the adoption of local historic district/landmark ordinances.

#### 9-2. Strengthen existing local historic district regulations and consider new ordinances where warranted to protect historically significant resources.

Lewisburg is the only jurisdiction with a local historic district that provides regulatory protection for historic resources. Lewisburg should evaluate its existing ordinance and other municipalities should consider adopting new ordinances, including a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) or Design Review Commission, to protect designated historic resources. Items that should be covered by ordinances include, but are not limited to:

- Develop a rating system to define the significance of local cultural and historic resources (for non-National Register properties);
- Develop criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of alterations to historic buildings or sites and construction in historic districts;
- Develop a process to determine hardship cases;
- Develop criteria for minimum maintenance standards and to address demolitions by neglect;
- Establish penalties for violations.

### Smart Building Codes

"Smart Building Codes" are intended to encourage and stimulate rehabilitation activity. Studies in New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island have shown that existing building codes often include requirements for new buildings which may be costly in renovations and discourage reuse of older buildings. After New Jersey adopted its revised code, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the International Code Council (ICC) developed model rehabilitation codes for municipalities to tailor and adopt. A 2006 study in the Journal of the American Planning Association found that smart building codes, when compared to traditional codes, do encourage building rehabilitation and reuse. In 2007, Pennsylvania adopted the ICC International Existing Building Code for use throughout the state. Municipalities have the option to adopt the code locally.

### 9-3. Protect cultural landscapes along roadway corridors.

*A cultural landscape has been defined as "a landscape created by people and their culture, simultaneously the product of nature and of human interaction with nature." This definition applies to the agricultural and forest lands that define rural Union County, particularly when viewed along key roadway corridors such as Route 45. Techniques that can be used to protect these landscapes include development rights acquisition through the County's Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) program, working with Merrill Linn Conservancy to obtain conservation easements on privately owned lands, and enactment of a scenic byways program to promote preservation of rural character along key highway corridors.*



### 9-4. Promote infill development that is compatible with traditional development patterns.

*Infill development refers to new development on vacant or underutilized parcels within established communities. Such development can promote the economic vitality of Union County's towns and villages and supports the Comprehensive Plan's land use strategy of directing development to Primary and Secondary Growth Areas as an alternative to rural sprawl. However, such development needs to be carefully managed to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding built context. This strategy should seek to remove barriers to infill (e.g., by adopting smart building codes) in communities such as Lewisburg and Mifflinburg while setting guidance for development character and form through regulatory approaches such as design standards and neighborhood conservation overlay districts.*

**9-5. Promote adaptive reuse of older buildings.**

*Adaptive reuse of existing buildings is the Sustainability Key for the Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resources Element. It applies both to designated historic structures as well as to other structures that may not be formally recognized but that contribute to Union County's historic character. Maintaining productive uses of these buildings is the best way to ensure their survival.*



*Examples of approaches that can be used include incentives (e.g., federal historic preservation tax incentives for buildings located in National Register districts), public-private partnerships, heritage tourism marketing, and the elimination of building code barriers to reuse.*

**9-6. Educate the public on the importance and economic benefits of historic preservation at the local level.**

*Historic preservation activities cannot succeed without the support of the public and particularly those who own historic properties. An ongoing public education and outreach effort can help build local awareness of the importance of cultural and historic resources to Union County's sense of place and to its economy. A range of partners should be involved in this effort, such as the Union County Historical Society, the school districts and Bucknell University through educational programs, the Susquehanna River Valley (formerly the Susquehanna Valley Visitors Bureau), and SEDA-COG through management of the proposed Middle Susquehanna Heritage Area (see Strategy #9-7).*

**9-7. Promote local pride, cultural awareness, and heritage tourism through heritage area designation under the Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program.**

*Pennsylvania's Heritage Area Program was established in 1992 to provide regional economic development through cultural conservation, heritage learning and interpretation, recreation and open space, and capacity building through regional partnerships. There are 12 Pennsylvania designated heritage areas, five of which are also designated at the national level. The state program defines eight industrial heritage themes: coal; lumber; iron and steel; agriculture; transportation; machine and foundry; oil; and textiles.*

*SEDA-COG is completing a feasibility analysis to create the Middle Susquehanna Heritage Area, proposed to include Union, Snyder, Montour, Columbia, and Northumberland Counties. This region is seeking designation with a focus on transportation to highlight early roads, canals, buggies, railroads, rail manufacturers, covered bridges, and major river travel on the Susquehanna. The other industrial heritage themes defined by the state program, with the exception*

### **Historic Preservation Assistance/Incentive Programs**

A variety of assistance programs can be used to promote preservation of historic resources. Examples of these programs include:

- Local matching grants, funded jointly by the county and the participating municipality, to provide incentives to private businesses and building owners to restore and repair historic buildings;
- Design assistance or low-cost architectural services, to help business owners interested in restoring historic building facades;
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission grants, such as the Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program, the PA History and Museum Grant Program, and Historic Preservation Projects;
- Historic Easements for building façade preservation for properties listed on the National Register or within a historic district; and
- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives.

*of oil, will be viewed as sub-themes to support the transportation theme. The feasibility study is expected to be completed in 2008, and pending approval by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), SEDA-COG will prepare a ten-year plan for development of the heritage area. This effort has involved many regional partners in the study and feasibility phase, such as local universities, historical societies, tourism agencies, downtown organizations, chambers of commerce, recreation authorities, and the state parks program.*

*Heritage area designation will build on current events and programs that highlight Union County's cultural and historic resources, such as Buggy Days in Mifflinburg and the West End Fair in Laurelton. Such events should be supported, promoted, and expanded where possible to increase public involvement and awareness of Union County's heritage.*

### **9-8. Promote countywide context-sensitive design solutions to reduce the negative impacts of transportation and infrastructure projects on historic and cultural resources.**

*"Context-sensitive solutions" refer to planning and design of transportation and infrastructure projects that address environmental, scenic, and historic values along with mobility, safety, and economics (see Section 9.3 of the Transportation Element). A concept that has been gaining in acceptance by PennDOT, this approach is designed to adapt conventional engineering approaches to local conditions. It can be used in designing roadway and other improvement projects to maintain the historic fabric of communities such as Lewisburg, Mifflinburg and New Berlin and to ensure that roadway improvements do not compromise the integrity of cultural landscapes in rural parts of Union County.*



**Recreational Resource Strategies**

**9-9. Establish and maintain sufficient publicly accessible parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of Union County’s present and future population for neighborhood and community parkland.**

*As noted in the Recreational Resources Strengths and Issues section, Union County has more than sufficient regional parkland due to the extensive amount of state park, forest, and gamelands but lacks sufficient community and neighborhood parkland to serve the existing and projected population when compared to nationally accepted standards. Additional publicly accessible parkland is needed to address these deficiencies, preferably in or near Growth Areas so as to be readily accessible to the bulk of the County’s population. While there is a need for public acquisition and development of new parkland, other approaches such as partnerships with public schools or other recreational providers can be used to meet a portion of the need.*

*Meeting park and recreational needs will require ongoing efforts to maintain and upgrade existing parks and manage new parkland after it is acquired.*

**9-10. Explore regional/multi-municipal approaches to meeting citizens’ parks and recreation needs.**

*Regional approaches to providing publicly accessible parks and recreational facilities can promote program coordination, sharing of resources, cost savings, and more efficient service delivery. Implementing this strategy can begin with informal networking among existing service providers such as LARA, Mifflinburg, the West End Youth Group, school districts, and R.B. Winter State Park. Such networking can provide a forum for exploring more formal organizational approaches at the regional or countywide level. Preparation of more detailed regional parks, open space, and recreation plans should be considered to guide regional initiatives.*

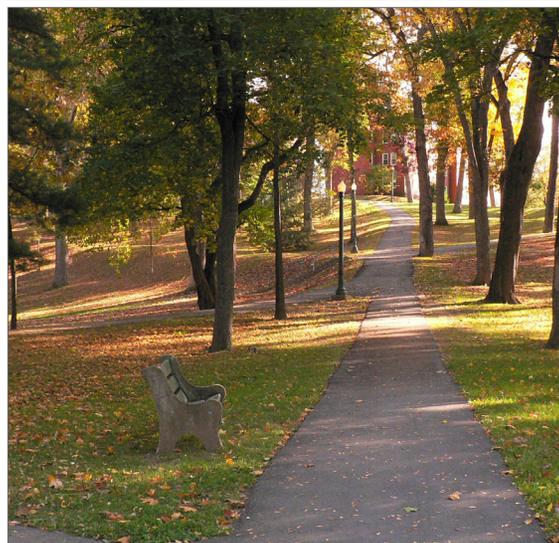
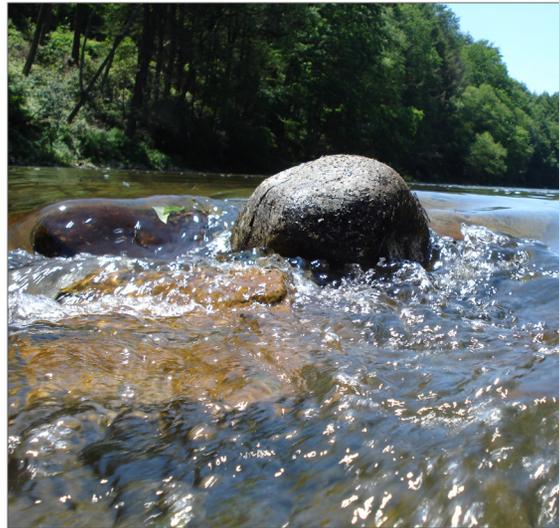
**9-11. Develop a network of recreational trails throughout Union County.**

*Recreational opportunities desired by residents include not only parks and active recreational facilities such as ballfields and indoor gymnasiums, but also walking, hiking, and biking trails. These facilities also serve an alternative transportation function, thus supporting the “Transportation Choices” Sustainability Key identified by the*

*Transportation Element. Park and recreational planning and coordination should address trail development as an integral element.*

**9-12. Define an integrated framework and strategy for establishing, preserving, restoring, developing, and connecting parks, natural areas, greenways, and other “green infrastructure” resources throughout Union County.**

*As described in the Natural and Agricultural Resources Element, parks and trails can be viewed as one component of a larger green infrastructure system – Union County’s natural life support system – that also includes such resources as forestlands and other natural habitat areas; “greenway” corridors along rivers and streams, and “green” components of town and village landscapes such as trees, community gardens, and pocket parks. Development of a countywide green infrastructure plan – for which funding is available from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – can provide an overall framework for provision of parks and trails at the regional and municipal levels.*





**9-13. Enact regulatory provisions and incentives for integrating open space and recreational land into new developments.**

*Parkland dedication ordinances and conservation subdivision ordinances are regulatory approaches to providing parkland or preserving open space within new developments. They are a way to meet the recreational and open space needs of new residents without public investment in land acquisition or facility development.*

*Development of a multi-municipal or municipal parks, open space, and recreation plan is a prerequisite for enactment of a parkland dedication ordinance (required by MPC). Municipalities can utilize existing park and recreation guidelines (e.g., NRPA guideline of 10 Acres of parkland/1,000 persons) to help gauge community need. The call for dedicated park and open space applies both to infill and redevelopment projects within previously developed areas such as the boroughs and to “greenfield” development that may be permitted in the townships.*

**9-14. Pursue partnerships with governmental, nonprofit, and private sector service providers to meet recreational needs throughout the County.**

*Meeting the park and recreational needs of Union County residents should be a collaborative effort that involves a variety of players such as LARA, the County, municipalities, school districts, etc. The private sector can also play an important role as evidenced by the participation of Playworld in the renovation of the Lewisburg Area Recreation Park.*

**Figure 9-1**  
Trails and Open Space Improvements

