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Chapter 5

# Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties



## The Great Outdoors

Juniata and Mifflin Counties have unrivaled outdoor recreation resources. About 150 square miles of the two Counties are dedicated to outdoor recreation and conservation as state game lands, forests, and parks. That is over one out of every five acres in Juniata and Mifflin Counties! Residents and visitors can hike, camp, mountain bike, horseback ride, watch wildlife, canoe, fish, hunt, and enjoy cultural and historic experiences in more than 96,000 acres of public land including Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission areas, three state forests, five state gamelands, and one state park. The resource-based recreation opportunities available to Juniata and Mifflin County residents are commonly listed among the most positive aspects of life in the Counties.

## Close to Home Parks

Many municipalities throughout the Counties have parks to serve the recreation needs of the community. These parks are diverse in size and facilities, ranging from large community parks like Derry Township Park (45 acres) which attract visitors from throughout Mifflin County to the one acre playground in Newton Hamilton Borough. Fire companies as quasi-public organizations have facilities for outdoor recreation; primarily athletic fields for sports as well as indoor facilities for social gatherings and other public uses. Additionally, the school district campuses in the two Counties contain facilities that could serve the public for recreation. Citizens have expressed the need for additional active recreation facilities, linkages between existing parks, and more recreation programs.

## Commercial Enterprise

Private recreation lands include sportsmen's clubs, golf courses, and campgrounds. These facilities are important destinations that draw visitors to the Counties. The golf courses and other commercial recreation expand upon the facilities offered by the local municipalities.

## Inventory of Park and Recreation Lands

Different types of park and recreation lands serve different recreational purposes. State park and nature-based recreation lands are usually sites of hundreds of acres and larger, set aside primarily for conservation of natural resources with appropriate public use for recreation and enjoying the natural setting. State lands are destinations for day-long or multiple day visits including overnight stays. County parks are usually over one hundred acres and can be as large as thousands of acres. County parks preserve natural, cultural, and historic resources; offer enjoyment of scenic resources; and sometimes house a special use facility such as a skating rink, swimming pool, amphitheatre, camping, environmental education centers and other regionally significant facilities. Visitors tend to spend a half-day to a day in county parks depending on the facilities available. Municipal parks provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for nearby citizens for both scheduled organized programs such as sports, camps and playgrounds, and special events as well as the self-directed opportunities to socialize, relax, exercise and enjoy the outdoors. Visitors tend to spend under an hour to several hours for scheduled events and activities in municipal parks.



## State Recreation Lands in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has 12 public recreation and natural resource areas in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. These landholdings are located primarily along the northern and southern ridgelines of each County.

### State Forests

The mission of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry is to ensure the long-term viability, productivity and health of the Commonwealth's forests and to conserve native plants. The Bureau cares for state forests under sound ecosystem management to retain their wild character and maintain their bio-diversity while providing pure water, opportunities for low density recreation, habitats for forest plants and animals, sustained yields of quality timber, and environmentally sound use of mineral resources.

**The Rothrock State Forest is named for Dr. Joseph Trimbel Rothrock, a native of Mifflin County, who is recognized as the Father of Forestry in Pennsylvania.**

The State Forests provide nature based recreation opportunities including fishing, camping, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, birding, and canoeing. The majority of non-vehicular trails in the two Counties are located within the state forests.

### Rothrock State Forest

Hiking, backpack overnight camping, birdwatching, photographing wildlife, hunting and fishing in season, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, berry picking, auto touring, picnicking, and even firewood cutting are all available in Rothrock State Forest. The Mid-State Trail traverses a portion of the Mifflin/Centre County boundary of Rothrock State Forest.

Table 5-1 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties State Public Lands		
State Lands	Acreage	Location
<b>State Forests</b>		
Bald Eagle State Forest, District #7	33,037	Armagh, Decatur Townships Mifflin Co.
Tuscarora State Forest District #3	36,394	Mifflin Co. (18,804):Wayne, Bratton, Granville Townships Juniata Co.(17,590):Lack, Tuscarora, Beale, Milford Townships
Rothrock State Forest District #5	11,381	Brown Township, Mifflin Co.
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,812</b>	
<b>State Game Lands</b>		
State Game Lands No. 107	7,122	Mifflin Co. (2,731): Derry, Decatur Townships Juniata Co. (4,391):Fayette, Fermangh Townships
State Game Lands No. 113	534	Oliver Township, Mifflin Co.
State Game Lands No. 171	1,086	Delaware Township, Juniata Co.
State Game Lands No. 215	1,263	Lack Township, Juniata Co.
State Game Lands No. 88	6,940	Tuscarora, Spruce Hill, Turbett Townships, Juniata Co.
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,945</b>	
<b>PA Fish &amp; Boat Commission Areas</b>		
5 fish and boat access areas	31.9	Juniata Co.
Van Dyke Research Station	23.2	Thompsontown Borough, Juniata Co.
4 fish and boat access areas	17	Mifflin Co.
Laurel Creek Reservoir	66.8	Mifflin Co.
Penn's Creek	421.9	Mifflin Co.
<b>Total</b>	<b>560.8</b>	
<b>State Park</b>		
Reeds Gap State Park	220	Armagh Township, Mifflin Co.
<b>Other State Recreation Areas</b>		
U.S. Rt. 322 Scenic Overlook & Roadside Rest Area	8.2	Armagh Township, Mifflin Co.

Source: Compiled from State Agency data

## **Bald Eagle State Forest**

The Bald Eagle State Forest hosts all the major game species typically found in Pennsylvania, including deer, bear, wild turkey, and other small game. Along the Mifflin County section of Penn's Creek the Pennsylvania Fish Commission has established a "catch and release" stretch of stream where year-round trout fishing is permitted. Driving and walking for pleasure are major outdoor recreational uses of forest lands. The District has 340 miles of drivable roads and about the same number of miles of trails. There are five designated scenic drives. A segment of the Mid-State Trail and portions of the White Mountain Wild Area and Penn's Creek Wild Area are located in the Bald Eagle State Forest in Mifflin County.

## **Tuscarora State Forest**

Tuscarora State Forest offers nature based recreation opportunities throughout the year. Trails are available for hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and equestrian use. Hunting and fishing are popular throughout the Tuscarora State Forest land in Juniata County. Motorized camping is accommodated in 27 designated camp sites in Tuscarora State Forest in western Juniata County and Huntingdon County. Informal hike-in camping is permitted, but occurs infrequently in the Tuscarora State Forest in Juniata County.

The Karl B. Guss State Forest Picnic Area is located in the State Forest in northwestern Juniata County along East Licking Creek Drive. The area provides facilities for picnicking and fishing and includes an open area for informal field games. The picnic area provides a scenic destination for family outings and is very popular for fishing with a handicap fishing pier and East Licking Creek traversing the picnic site. East Licking Creek is designated as a Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only fishing area, for four-miles from the western boundary of the picnic area to the Texas Eastern gas pipeline crossing downstream. The stream is known for its native brook trout.

## **State Game Lands**

The mission of the State Game Lands is to provide protected lands for hunting and wildlife protection, although recreation activities are permitted on a limited basis. State Game Lands permit hiking and use of designated routes for horses and bicycles during specific periods of the year (prohibited Monday-Saturday from the last Saturday in September to the third Saturday in January, and after one p.m. from the second Saturday in April to the last Saturday in May). Snowmobiles are also permitted on designated routes during specific periods of the year. Juniata County State Game Lands have approximately 15 miles of trails designated for bike and equestrian use and approximately five miles for snowmobiles. Mifflin County has no designed trails on over 3,600 acres of State Game Lands.

## **PA Fish & Boat Commission**

There are nine PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) fish and boat access areas in Juniata and Mifflin Counties, primarily along the Juniata River and one area on Tea Creek. In addition to the five Juniata County access areas, the PFBC owns the Van Dyke Research Station in Thompsettown Borough. In Mifflin County the PFBC owns two properties in addition to the four access areas: Laurel Creek Reservoir north of Milroy and land along Penn's Creek in Armagh Township. One of the five access areas in Juniata County is the newly developed Lewistown Narrows access area that includes a concrete boat ramp, handicap accessible fishing platform, and parking area on 2.6 acres. A towpath trail extends along the Juniata River from the PFBC access area, east to Canal Park, a PennDOT facility.

## **State Park**

Reeds Gap State Park is located in eastern Mifflin County. The park is primarily a natural area characterized by mature hemlock and pine stands and Honey Creek which transverse the park through the New Lancaster Valley. Reeds Gap State Park offers picnic facilities and extensive hiking and fishing. Hunting is permitted on 96 acres of the park and Honey Creek is stocked with trout annually by



Reeds Gap State Park

the PA Fish and Boat Commission. The existing swimming pool in the park is slated for removal due to structural deficiencies and deterioration. The associated bathhouse and concession building have not been targeted for removal.

There are no state parks in Juniata County. There are several State Parks in close proximity to Juniata and Mifflin Counties which are linked to the Counties via trails in State Forests. These nearby State Parks include:

- Poe Valley State Park and Poe Paddy State Park – less than one-half mile and one-quarter mile respectively from the Mifflin County boundary in Centre County within the Bald Eagle State Forest. Park activities include hiking, fishing, picnicking, snowmobiling, boating, and camping.
- Penn Roosevelt State Park – approximately one mile from Mifflin County in Rothrock State Forest in Centre County. Recreational attractions here include horseback riding, hiking, picnicking, wildlife watching, and camping.
- Greenwood Furnace State Park – approximately one-half mile from Mifflin County, in Huntingdon County within Rothrock State Forest. Recreation opportunities include hiking, camping, swimming, fishing, hunting, orienteering, and picnicking.
- Big Spring State Park – approximately two miles from Juniata County in Perry County within the Tuscarora State Forest. No

camping is permitted here, but extensive hiking trails exist along with picnicking and snowmobiling opportunities.

- Little Buffalo State Park – approximately seven miles south from Juniata County in Perry County. The park attracts visitors from across the state for its swimming, camping, boating, hiking, fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, and ice skating opportunities.

### Other State Recreation Land

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has two recreation sites Juniata and Mifflin Counties. The Route 322 Scenic Overlook and Roadside Rest Area at the summit of Front Mountain at the Mifflin/Centre County border provides 8.2 acres for resting, picnicking, and enjoying the scenic forest setting of State Forest lands. The rest stop is a trail head for the Mid-State Trail.

A newly developed park site in Juniata County is Canal Park, also located along Route 322 in the recently reconstructed Lewistown Narrows. PennDOT currently retained Canal Park as part of the highway right-of-way although PennDOT intends, in the future, to transfer joint ownership to Juniata and Mifflin Counties. Canal Park contains the restored stone canal house, open recreation and picnic area, interpretative signage, parking, and towpath trail. The towpath trail extends approximately 1.5 miles to the west to connect to the new PFBC river access area. The stone canal house has potential for use as a museum but the restoration has only stabilized the structure for a future use to be determined. Acreage for the park site to be transferred has not been calculated at this point, but will include the area of Canal Park and the land between the river and the highway right-of-way in the area of the towpath trail.

### Juniata and Mifflin County Parks

Mifflin County's Stone Arch Bridge is the sole County public land holdings in either Mifflin or Juniata Counties. Stone Arch Bridge is a one acre historic site dedicated to preserving the historic and cultural resource of the bridge. The Stone Arch Bridge was built in 1813 as part of the Harrisburg to

Pittsburgh Turnpike and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The bridge spans the boundary between Derry Township and Lewistown Borough and was renovated in 2006 to include structural repairs, sidewalk connections, and several benches.



Stone Arch Bridge Historic Site

Mifflin County has pursued funding for a park in Granville Township along the Juniata River. The 8.8 acre site, which is proposed as the Fort Granville Heritage Park, is located on a former industrial site which has limited environmental contamination. The proposal is to remediate the site to allow redevelopment as a public recreation site offering access to the river, interpretation of regional history, and passive recreation opportunities. The proposed park is viewed as an opportunity to address a distressed property, promote economic development, and promote recreation along the Juniata River.

## Municipal Parks in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

In Juniata County eight of the 17 municipalities have one or more municipal parks. In Mifflin County, 13 of the 16 municipalities have one or more municipal parks. These parks range from large community parks such as Derry Township Community Park in Derry Township, Mifflin County or Lewistown Recreation Park in Lewistown Borough, Mifflin County to traditional neighborhood parks like Moyer Park in Port Royal Borough, Juniata County to small playgrounds like Newton Hamilton Park in Newton Hamilton Borough, Mifflin County and natural areas like Zooks Dam in Milford Township, Juniata County. Tables 5-3 and 5-4 present the number of municipal parks, total acreage, and facilities in each County.



County Park	Acres	Municipality	Description
Stone Arch Bridge Historic Site	1.0	Derry Township and Lewistown Borough	Restored historic stone bridge and adjacent lands

Juniata County does not own any parkland, although the Juniata County Historical Society owns the Pomeroy-Academia covered bridge. The land in the area of the bridge is in private ownership.

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Table 5-3 - Juniata County Municipal Parkland									
Municipality	# of Parks	Park Acreage	Multi- purpose Field	Special Use Facility	Ball Field	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Play- ground
Beale Twp.	0								
Delaware Twp.	0								
Fayette Twp.	0								
Fermanagh Twp.	1								
Cedar Spring Commons		21	1		1				1
Greenwood Twp.	1								
Township Building Park		1				1	1		
Lack Twp.	0								
Mifflin Borough	1								
Softball Association Park		5		Swimming pool	2	1			1
Mifflintown Borough	3								
Central Juniata Park		5			1		2		1
Moist Run Park		14							
Myers Park		0.5							1
Milford Twp.	1								
Zooks Dam		15							
Monroe Twp.	0								
Port Royal Borough	1								
Moyer Park		2.6					1		1
Spruce Hill Twp.	0								
Susquehanna Twp.	0								
Thompsontown Borough	1								
Haldeman Park		9	1		2	1	1		1
Turbett Twp.	0								
Tuscarora Twp.	0								
Walker Twp.	1								
Walker Township Park		12.83	1		2				1
<b>TOTALS*</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>85.93</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>

Source: Compiled from municipal contacts.

Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Table 5-4 - Mifflin County Municipal Parkland									
Municipality	# of Parks	Park Acreage	Multi-purpose Field	Special Use Facility	Ball Field	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Play-ground
Armagh Twp.	1								
Milroy Park		2.5			2				1
Bratton Twp.	1								
Longfellow Playground		6			1				1
Brown Twp.	3								
Bender Park		2		2 Picnic pavilions					
Mifflin County Youth Park		2		Stage and buildings	1				
Reedsville Playground		3.6	1	Pavilion	1	1	2		1
Burnham Borough	1								
Burnham Pool & Playground		2.5		Swimming pool is leased from the Lions Club		1			1
Decatur Twp.	0								
Derry Twp.	3								
Derry Township Community Park		45	2	Miniature golf, camping area	5			2	1
Meadowfield Playground		6							1
Yeagertown Hilltop Playground		4							1
Granville Twp.	2								
Malta Park		25				2		2	1
Memorial Park		40	1		2	2			
Juniata Terrace Borough	3					1		1	
Juniata Terrace Playground		10.3	1		1				1
East End Playground		0.5							1
West End Playground		0.5							1
Kistler Borough	1								
Kistler Borough Park		1				1			1
Kistler Borough Farm		89			2				
Lewistown Borough	5								
Lewistown Recreation Park		26	3	Swimming pool	3	2	3		1
Victory Park		8		Fishing pier Boat launch					

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Table 5-4 - Mifflin County Municipal Parkland, continued									
Municipality	# of Parks	Park Acreage	Multi-purpose Field	Special Use Facility	Ball Field	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Play-ground
Lewistown Borough , Cont.									
Green Acres		6.5			3				
Woodlawn Playground		1.5					2		1
Fifth Ward		30							1
McVeytown Borough	1								
McVeytown Community Park		0.5							1
Menno Twp.	1								
Allensville Playground		4	1		1		2		1
Newton Hamilton Borough	1								
Newton Hamilton Playground		1				1	1		1
Oliver Township	1								
Rothrock Playground		6				2	2		1
Union Township	1								
Belleville Playground		8			4	1	2		1
Wayne Township	1								
Wayne Township Municipal Park		3			1				1
<b>TOTALS*</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>334.4</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: Compiled from municipal contacts.

### Other Park and Recreation Lands in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Private recreation lands in Juniata and Mifflin Counties include private parks, campgrounds, golf courses, and fish and game clubs as shown in Tables 5-5 through 5-8. These sites offer specialized recreation opportunities that, in many cases, supplement public recreation facilities. This is particularly true of the private parks owned and maintained by fire companies, American Legions, or other community-based groups. Campgrounds, fish and game clubs, and golf courses, are typically member-based or commercial (for-fee) operations.

The private parks, golf courses, campgrounds, and fish and game clubs listed in the following tables

cover at least 1,200 acres in the two Counties. This acreage exceeds, by four times, the amount of local public parkland. These facilities offer important recreation opportunities to residents and augment municipal facilities. It is important to retain these facilities and their important contribution to local recreation through acquisition, or other means if their future is in jeopardy.

Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Tables 5-5 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Private Parkland			
Private Parks / Ownership	Acreage	Municipality	Recreation Facilities
<b>Juniata County</b>			
McAlisterville Community Park and Fire Hall / McAlisterville Fire Co.	4	Fayette Twp.	2 Tennis Courts and 2 Ball Fields
Lions Club Park / Port Royal Park	17.9	Milford Twp.	2 Tennis Courts, 1 Volleyball Court
Juniata County Fairgrounds and the Port Royal Speedway / Juniata County Agricultural Society	31	Port Royal Boro.	Race Track
Republic Development's Foot Ball Field	2	Port Royal Boro.	1 Football Field
East Waterford Community Carnival Grounds / East Waterford Community Fire Company	6.17	Tuscarora Twp.	1 Ball Field
<b>Mifflin County</b>			
Burnham Lions Club	2	Burnham Boro.	1 Ball Field
Holy Communion Lutheran Church	0.5	Derry Twp.	1 Playground
K.B. Aerotech L.L. Field / Display, Inc.	4.0	Granville Twp.	1 Ball Field
Maitland Brethren Church Park	2.5	Derry Twp.	1 Volleyball Court, 1 Ball Field
Reedsville Feedmill Pond/Reedsville Milling Co.	2.5	Brown Twp.	Fishing Pond
Siglerville Ballfield / Siglerville Men's Club	1.3	Armagh Twp.	1 Ball Field
Paintersville Christian Church	3.0	Decatur Twp.	1 Ball Field, 1 Basketball Court
Naginey Village Area / Playground Association	3.1	Armagh Twp.	1 Ball Field, 1 Basketball Court, 1 Playground
Sherwood Park	6.9	Decatur Twp.	1 Ball Field
<b>Totals</b>	<b>86.87</b>		

Table 5-6 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Private Golf Courses			
Golf Courses	Acreage	Municipality	Public / Private
<b>Juniata County</b>			
Lost Creek Golf Club	165.0	Fayette Township	Private (Open to the public)
<b>Mifflin County</b>			
Lewistown Country Club	200.0	Granville Township	Private (Club Membership)
Ironwood Golf Course	31.0	Wayne Township	Private (Open to the public)
American Legion Country Club	130.5	Wayne Township	Private (American Legion)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>526.5</b>		

Table 5-7 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Campground Facilities			
Campground Facilities	Acreage	Municipality	Public / Private
<b>Juniata County</b>			
Buttonwood Campground Riverside (formerly The River Rock Campground)	13.2	Walker Township	Private (Open to the public)
Shoop's Country Campground	27.3	Port Royal	Private (Open to the public)
<b>Mifflin County</b>			
Bell's Campground	24.9	Bratton Township	Private
Lewis's Campground	3	Bratton Township	Private
Black's Campground	4	Granville Township	Private
The Locust Campground	141.3	Granville Township	Private (Open to the public)
Denlinger's Campground at Campers Cove	100	Granville Township	Private
Ellinger's Campground	126	Granville Township	Private

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Table 5-7 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties Campground Facilities, continued			
Campground Facilities, continued	Acreage	Municipality	Public/Private
<b>Mifflin County, continued</b>			
Breneman's Campground	84.9	Granville Township	Private
Idle Acres Campground	110.3	Oliver Township	Private (Open to the public)
Harshbarger's Campground	1	Oliver Township	Private
Foust's Campground	161	Oliver Township	Private
Macknair's Campground	80.6	Oliver Township	Private
Knepp's Campground	5	Oliver Township	Private
Barben's Campground	75.9	Wayne Township	Private
Meily's Campground	17.2	Wayne Township	Private
Peachey's Campground	322.7	Wayne Township	Private
Hartman Center Campground	124	Milroy/Armagh Township	Private (Open to the public)
Stewart's Campground	105.46	Wayne Township	Private
Bowser's Campground	106.81	Wayne Township	Private
Varner's Campground	114.48	Wayne Township	Private
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,768.95</b>		

Table 5-8 Juniata and Mifflin Counties Fish and Game Clubs			
Fish and Game Clubs	Acreage	Municipality	Ownership
<b>Juniata County</b>			
Juniata Sportsman's Association	65.44	Milford Township	Juniata Sportsman's Association
<b>Mifflin County</b>			
Mifflin County Sportsmen's Association	349	Granville Township	Mifflin County Sportsmen Association
<b>Totals</b>			

Both the Juniata and Mifflin County Sportsman's Association have shooting ranges. Mifflin County Sportsmen's Association has indoor and outdoor shooting ranges for different firearms as well as large pond for catch and release fishing. Both clubs have the explicit purpose of promoting conservation of natural resources as they pertain to sustaining wildlife and its habitat.

### Indoor Recreation Facilities

While the emphasis of this plan is on outdoor recreation, rural recreation in counties with the climate of Juniata and Mifflin warrant exploration of indoor facilities as well. Mifflin County is fortunate to have the Juniata Valley YMCA in Burnham Borough providing indoor recreation programs and the Lumina Center. The Juniata Valley YMCA provides the only indoor swimming pool within 60 miles. Juniata County is fortunate to have the Fayette Area Lion's Den facility in McAlisterville,

home to the McAlisterville senior center. The facility has an indoor arena used for soccer and field hockey, as well as, summer camps, and fitness programs. . Also in Juniata County is the Delauter Youth Center in Mifflintown, a drop-in center for children and youth. The center is run by volunteers and supported by the United Way.



Juniata Valley YMCA



Delauter Youth Center



Fayette Area Lion's Den

### Public School Recreation Lands in Juniata and Mifflin Counties

The Juniata County School District covers the entire County except for a small portion in Greenwood Township that is a part of the Greenwood School District System. Mifflin County School District covers the majority of Mifflin County except for the western edge of Wayne Township, Kistler Borough and Newton Hamilton Borough which are covered by the Mount Union School District. Juniata and Mifflin County School Districts both have lands dedicated to school sports facilities and prioritize school district-related activities which limit public access to an important public asset. However, school campus land acreage and recreational facilities that are available supplement public

recreation opportunities, especially in rural areas. Schools are often the hub of community recreation in rural communities and through cooperation with municipalities, local recreation opportunities can be expanded with community/school parks.

Tables 5-9, Public School Campuses, inventories school properties. The acreage included in the table is for the entire school site and includes buildings, parking areas, and other areas not used for recreation.



**Table 5-9 - Juniata and Mifflin Counties  
Public School Campuses**

Juniata County School District Facility	Acreage	Municipality
Juniata High School & Tuscarora Junior High School	35	Fermanagh Township
East Juniata High School	31.04	Fayette Township
Fayette Elementary School	4.59	Fayette Township
Fermanagh-Mifflintown Elementary School	11	Mifflintown Borough
Lack-Tuscarora Elementary School	10	Tuscarora Township
Monroe Elementary School	7.02	Monroe Township
Mountain View Elementary School	10.86	Milford Township
Susquehanna Elementary School	4	Susquehanna Township
Thompstontown-Delaware Elementary School	2.2	Delaware Township
Tuscarora Valley Elementary School	9.5	Port Royal Borough
Walker Elementary School	8.9	Walker Township
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>134.11</b>	
Mifflin County School District Facility	Acreage	Municipality
Indian Valley High School	22.0	Derry Township
Lewistown High School	29.0	Lewistown Borough
Indian Valley Middle School	41.9	Armagh Township
Lewistown Middle School	6.8	Lewistown Borough
Strodes Mill Middle School	19.9	Oliver Township
Armagh Elementary School	4.0	Armagh Township
Brown Elementary School	16.5	Brown Township
Burnham Elementary School	6.0	Burnham Borough
Buchanan Elementary School	17.7	Lewistown Borough
East Derry Elementary School	3.0	Derry Township
Highland Elementary School	8.0	Derry Township
Lewistown Elementary School	6.6	Derry Township
Strodes Mill Elementary School	20.7	Oliver Township
Union Elementary School	5.0	Union Township
Kistler Elementary School (Mount Union School District)	8.77	Kistler Borough
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>215.87</b>	

Source: School contact

## Cultural and Historic Resources

Mifflin County was established after the French Indian war in 1789 and Juniata County later in 1831. From the beginning, agriculture and manufacturing industries shaped the development of the two Counties and supported population growth in the Juniata River Valley.

### Mifflin County

Mifflin County has nine properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 12 historic markers through Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's (PHMC) historical marker program, and numerous other historically significant sites throughout the County.



Lewistown, established at an advantageous spot where the Kishacoquillas flows into the Juniata River, was quickly established as the County Seat and center of the area's transportation, iron, and forestry industries. Seven of the nine listings on the National Register and half of the historical markers in the County are located in or directly surrounding Lewistown, including the old Mifflin County Courthouse; The General McCoy House and Museum; the oldest structure built by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Lewistown Station; and the Embassy Theater in downtown Lewistown. See Table 5-10 for a full listing of the PHMC historic markers in Mifflin County.



Historic Marker	Location	Description
Mifflin County	Lewistown Borough, Monument Square	History of the formation of Mifflin County
Fort Granville	Lewistown Borough, 1200 W. 4 <sup>th</sup> St. (Plaque location)	Describes the Fort and its history, exact location of Fort is not known.
Chief Logan	Brown Township, Old 322, .5 mile N of Reedsville	Marks the home and description of the Native American Chief
Freedom Forge	Derry Township, Old 322 at Burnham	Marks the location of the long standing iron and steel company
Juniata Iron	Granville Township, 22&522 at Strodes Mills	Marks the remains of numerous charcoal iron furnaces and forges built in the area
Lewistown Station	Lewistown Borough, Helen St.	Marks the oldest surviving structure and railroad industry
Old Arch Bridge	Derry Township, Rt. 22	Stone bridge that was part of the original PA turnpike
Joseph T. Rothrock	McVeytown Borough 22 & 522	Marks home of conservationist and father of the PA State Forests
Three Locks	Granville Township 22 & 522 at Strodes Mills	Marks three preserved locks from the former PA Canal
Travel History	Lewistown Borough, 22 & 322	Marks the remains of five different types of transportation systems
McCoy Home	Lewistown Borough, 17 N Main St.	Marks the birthplace of Major General Frank R. McCoy

Source: PHMC website

Elsewhere in Mifflin County, what used to be the only way to access Lewistown from the south is the picturesque Stone Arch Bridge that was part of the original Harrisburg to Pittsburgh Turnpike. Another piece of preserved transportation history is the one and a half mile restored section of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal at the privately owned Locust

Campground southwest of Lewistown along the Juniata River. The restored canal section was placed on the National Register for Historic Places in 2002.

The Main Line Canal was Pennsylvania’s first major transportation improvement completed in 1834. The canal provided a link from Philadelphia west across the Allegheny Ridge system to Pittsburgh and points beyond. The canal was quickly superseded however by the Pennsylvania Railroad system which offered a speedier all-rail connection between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. By 1888 the canal ceased to operate and the majority of the canal and its historic corridor have been lost over time. Today, efforts are in place



to establish the former Main Line Canal corridor as a major greenway across the state, with a significant central portion traversing Mifflin and Juniata Counties. Further discussion of the Mail Line Canal greenway can be found in Chapter 6 – Greenways and Trails of Juniata and Mifflin Counties. The Locust Campground has informational signage about the canal, leads tours, and offers public canal boat rides along the restored section of the Main Line Canal.

The Locust Campground is home to a landmark sycamore tree, shown in the adjacent picture. The tree is the second oldest sycamore in Pennsylvania.



## Juniata County

Juniata County is not without its own rich history and historic sites. Juniata County was created from Mifflin County in 1831 and named after the Juniata River. The County has seven sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, five historic markers through PHMC historical marker program, and multiple other historically significant locations throughout the County. See Table 5-11 for a complete listing of the PHMC historic markers in Juniata County.

Historic Marker	Location	Description
Fort Bigham	Walker Township, Rt. 22&322	Site of a stockade blockhouse during the French & Indian War
Juniata County	Mifflintown Borough, County Courthouse	History of the formation of Juniata County
Patterson’s Fort	Walker Township, Rt. 22&322	Marks the stockade built by Captain James Patterson
Tuscarora Academy	Beale Township, Academia	First academy for higher education built in the County in 1836
Tuscarora Path	Walker Township, old 22&322	Marks beginning of a path used by the Five Nations Iroquois that terminates in North Carolina

Source: PHMC website

Juniata County is home to five covered bridges, all of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including Pennsylvania’s longest remaining covered bridge, the Pomeroy-Academia covered bridge. The Pomeroy-Academia covered bridge was built in 1902 and spans just over 271 feet across the Tuscarora Creek between Beale and Spruce Hill Townships. The bridge is owned by the Juniata County Historical Society. The Society has recently restored the bridge.

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

Table 5-12 - Juniata County Covered Bridges		
Covered Bridge	Township	Water Course
Pomeroy-Academia	Beal and Spruce Hill Townships	Tuscarora Creek
Shaeffer	Susquehanna Township and Chapman Township, Snyder County	West Branch Mahatango Creek
Lehman	Milford Township	East Licking Creek
Dimmsville	Greenwood Township	Stony Run
Beaver	Susquehanna Township and Perry Township, Snyder County	West Branch Mahantango Creek

Source: Juniata County Planning Commission

Remnants from the Main Line Canal corridor can also be found in Juniata County. In northern Juniata County, as part of the Route 322 reconstruction project between the Shade Mountain Narrows and the Juniata River, a former lift lock system along the canal was restored and the existing stone lockkeeper's house was stabilized. Interpretive signage offers visitors a past glimpse into the workings of the canal at this site.

Other historic sites in the Juniata County include the French-Indian War Forts, Fort Bigham and Patterson's Fort; the first higher education site in the Juniata River Valley, the Tuscarora Academy founded in 1836 and shown in the adjacent picture; and the archeological remains of a Native American burial mound in Beale Township, the Book Indian Mound. The Book Indian Mound is under private ownership and dated as early as 500 A.D., little remains of the mound or its contents.



The historic places in Juniata and Mifflin Counties are the legacy of our ancestors. These places tell the stories of a shared heritage and provide the foundation for how we envision the future. Many

additional historic places have been documented in Juniata and Mifflin Counties, but haven't been recognized through the National Register of Historic Places or with a Pennsylvania Historical Marker. These places are no less significant to our past.

The Bureau for Historic Preservation, part of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO administers the state's historic preservation program as authorized by the Pennsylvania History Code and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The State Historic Preservation Office also maintains inventories of historic and archaeological sites and surveys. Over 100 properties have been inventoried in Juniata and Mifflin Counties, and these records are on file at the Bureau for Historic Preservation. These inventories however are not exhaustive. The SHPO actively works with property owners, local governments, and conservation organizations to identify, document, and protect locally significant historic resources. To learn more about Pennsylvania's preservation tools and strategies, please visit [www.phmc.state.pa.us/bhp](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bhp).

The County's historical sites attract visitors and tourist dollars to the area. Several agencies such as the Juniata River Valley Visitor's Bureau and the Juniata Valley Area Chamber of Commerce promote the County's historic sites among the area's top destinations.

### Analysis of Parkland

Juniata and Mifflin Counties are fortunate in having over 88,000 acres of state lands for resource based recreation. The State Forests provide the majority of this land with over 96,000 acres in the two Counties.

However, these lands serve special purposes of recreation in the great outdoors for activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, and experiencing nature in many different pursuits from wildlife watching to photography. While these lands contribute to the scenic beauty, conservation, and quality of life here, they do not meet all of the recreation needs for the residents. Residents need access to parkland and recreation facilities that are convenient; designed for a broad range of interests, ages, ability, and uses; suitable for organized

scheduled programs as well as for individuals who want to get out and use them at their discretion. In order to determine how much parkland is needed for present and future residents, a population-based analysis has been traditionally used to evaluate active public parkland. Passive parks, greenways and trails, and nature preserves are not evaluated using an acreage standard because their size and configuration are based on the resources and the area necessary to protect the resource while making them available for appropriate level of public use; therefore the public lands of the Commonwealth are not included in this analysis.

Over the past 30 years, it has been the accepted practice within the recreation and park profession to adopt a uniform national standard such as 10 acres per thousand **as a minimum standard**.  
*-NRPA Park, Recreation, and Open Space Guidelines 1995*

Juniata County has approximately 86 acres of parkland within municipal parks, of which 52 acres are for active recreation. This acreage is distributed among 11 municipal park sites. This equates to 2.28 acres of parkland in Juniata County per 1,000 residents based on the 2000 U.S. census population count of 22,821.

Mifflin County has approximately 334 acres of parkland within municipal parks, of which 210 acres are in active parks. This acreage is distributed among 25 municipal park sites. This equates to 4.5 acres of parkland in Mifflin County per 1,000 residents based on the 2000 U.S. census population count of 46,486.

Juniata and Mifflin Counties should strive to meet the nationally recognized land standard for recreation land of 10 acres per thousand population. The 10 acre standard is the minimum standard, and municipalities may choose to increase this standard based on recognized trends in recreation affecting their community or their commitment to land-bank open space for future recreation needs. Table 5-13 shows that both Counties have a deficit of parkland based on their 2000 population although private parkland available for public use in both Counties does offset the deficit somewhat. Juniata County should have had approximately 228 acres of active public parkland available for residents in 2000 and Mifflin County should have had 465 acres. The

Table 5-13 – Juniata and Mifflin Counties Parkland Acreage Analysis			
Year	Juniata County Population Projections	Parkland Required @ 10 Acre Standard	Parkland Deficit @ 10 Acre Standard
2000	22,821	228	176
2010	24,463	244	192
2020	26,071	261	209
Year	Mifflin County Population Projections	Parkland Required @ 10 Acre Standard	Parkland Deficit @ 10 Acre Standard
2000	46,486	465	255
2010	47,062	471	261
2020	50,862	509	299

deficit of parkland for year 2000 is 176 acres in Juniata County and 255 in Mifflin County. This parkland deficit will grow as the County’s population grows. By 2020 it is estimated that there should be 261 acres of recreation land in Juniata County and 509 acres of recreation land in Mifflin County based on a 10 acre standard.

There are eight municipalities in Juniata County and one in Mifflin County without any municipal parkland. Each municipality should strive to provide one park for their residents to meet their close to home recreation needs. Townships should target a minimum of 10-acres of parkland. This size is adequate to provide the mix of facilities and activity areas traditionally provided in a community setting.

### Mandatory Dedication of Parkland

One mechanism that many municipalities use to ensure that future residents have adequate park and recreation opportunities is mandatory dedication. The mandatory dedication of parkland provision of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) (Article V, Section 503(11) provides municipalities the authority to require developers to dedicate public open space within proposed developments for public recreation purposes. If the developer and municipality agree, an alternative of constructed recreation facilities or fee could be accepted in lieu of land dedication.

This provision of the MPC provides for the expansion of recreation opportunity as communities

grow. The provision can not be used to make up for past deficiencies in parkland. Currently there are no municipalities in Juniata County and only one municipality in Mifflin County (Derry Township) with a mandatory dedication ordinance. To comply with this legislation, a municipality must meet the following requirements:

1. Adopt a recreation plan that establishes open space standards and park service areas, identifies areas in need of open space, and includes a capital improvement program.
2. Develop a mandatory dedication ordinance that contains standards for determining the portion of a development to be dedicated and the amount, if any, of fee to be paid in lieu of land.
3. Create a separate interest bearing account for the placement of any collected fees.

No municipalities in either County have an adopted recreation plan and many municipalities do not have municipal ordinances. The municipalities could consider adopting this Juniata/Mifflin County Greenway, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan as their own plan to address this mandatory dedication requirement. The Counties could adopt a mandatory dedication ordinance as an amendment to their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances, and this provision will then be required of constituent municipalities that have not adopted their own Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances. A model mandatory dedication ordinance is provided in Appendix D.

Mandatory dedication is an important tool to provide recreation land to meet resident needs as a municipality grows. Requiring developers to dedicate land for recreation or provide fee in lieu of dedication relieves current residents from bearing the funding for future parkland necessitated by residential growth. Ordinances should be crafted to define the type, size, location, and configuration of lands that are acceptable for dedication. It is important that dedicated lands be suitable for use for their intended purpose, which is recreation and as such, limitations such as wetlands, stormwater management facilities, floodplain, and other limiting factors should affect only a small percentage of the total tract. Municipalities should also include an option for dedication of land for trail corridors as a

mandatory dedication provision. As new residential areas are developed, trails within the development and linking to other destinations are important community assets.

### **Location and Service Areas of Active Public Parkland**

The Parks and Public Lands Maps for Juniata County and Mifflin County (pages 5-27 and 5-28) illustrate the locations of the larger public community and neighborhood parkland in the counties. In Juniata County there are five parks of at least five acres in size and in Mifflin County there are 12 parks in this category. A five-mile service radius, equating to an approximate 10 minute drive time was used to evaluate the park locations and consider ease of access to these park sites. The location of parkland is considered to determine if residents throughout the Counties have easy, convenient access to recreation opportunities. Distribution analysis of parks was completed for parks at least five acres in size. The five acre size was determined to be adequate to have the mix of facilities for residents to travel to use. Consider that a soccer field occupies approximately two and one half acres and a softball field is approximately two acres in size, necessitating a park in the five acre range to provide the mix of facilities needed to meet community need.

The maps reveal that municipal parks and recreation lands are well located in population centers. In Juniata County, parkland for active recreation is located in the population centers along the Juniata River. Areas to the east and west fall outside of the service areas of these larger parks. Expansive, contiguous areas of protected public lands are located in the northwestern portion of County along the border with Mifflin County. In Mifflin County, municipal parks are clustered in the center of the County in the population centers along the Juniata River, Kishacoquillas Creek, and in Belleville. These active parks are complemented by State Forest lands to the southwest, northwest and northeast areas of the County and State Gamelands to the southeast and smaller municipal parks throughout the Counties. Kistler Borough Farm was not designated with a service radius because although it meets the parcel size criteria, only one facility is currently developed at the site.

In Juniata and Mifflin Counties, as is common across the Commonwealth, parkland has traditionally been provided by the Boroughs and in some instances the first-ring suburban communities. Mifflin County residents look to Lewistown Borough and Derry Township for much of their recreation needs. Likewise in Juniata County, Mifflin, Mifflintown, and Thompsontown Boroughs have long served the recreation needs of out-lying municipalities. This regional use of facilities is typical, but presents financial and personnel challenges for the host communities.

### Parkland Opportunities

The parkland acreage analysis revealed a shortfall in parkland in the Counties and numerous municipalities without any parkland. Acquisition of additional parkland may be challenging for communities for a variety of reasons to include financial, land availability, and capacity to develop and maintain a park. These challenges will require a creative approach to providing additional recreation opportunities and parkland for constituents. Strategies to address the parkland need include maximizing existing recreation land, developing school/community parks, redevelopment of derelict land, and creating regional parks.

### Existing Recreation Lands

Instead of pursuing new tracts of land for park development, first explore opportunities to expand existing parkland through acquisition of contiguous acreage. Additionally, there are significant private parks, golf courses, and sporting clubs in the two Counties. Another strategy is to explore partnerships with private entities to maximize recreation benefit on existing recreation lands.

### School/Community Park

Municipalities could partner with the school district to establish a school/community park by acquiring parkland adjacent to a school that can be used for both community recreation and education purposes. Working together and sharing facilities will maximize public benefit. School sites in both Counties should be evaluated for the opportunity to develop expanded shared facilities.

### Redevelopment Land

Municipalities in the more developed areas should explore parkland opportunities associated with derelict sites. Unused or abandoned lands should be explored for redevelopment potential for public benefit as parkland. There are many successful examples of brownfield redevelopment into parkland. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has funding available for brownfield assessment and cleanup.

### Regional Parks

Developing parks on a regional basis where one or more municipalities partner to create a regional park is an important strategy for providing needed parkland. Regional cooperation maximizes and shares resources, expands opportunities beyond what might be possible in a single municipal park, and is typically looked upon favorably by PA DCNR when ranking funding applications. While it is important to have easy access to recreation opportunities in every community, regional parks could address the special use facilities needs like skate parks and swimming pools while providing supplemental traditional fields and courts.

When municipalities work regionally they are able to harness their collective resources, share management and operations responsibilities, and maximize their financial investment through cost sharing, and avoid unneeded duplication of facilities. Regional parks are typically larger and offer a diverse pallet of facilities and leisure opportunities that cannot be provided within a smaller community park. Reeds Gap State Park and other nearby state parks serve as regional parks for Mifflin County, serving residents from multiple jurisdictions. There are no examples of regional parks developed through municipal partnerships currently in either County.

Regional parks are recommended for Juniata and Mifflin Counties to address, in part, the need for additional parkland and recreation facilities. The suggested locations for the regional parks considered municipal population projections, location of existing recreation facilities, location of important agricultural lands and targeted conservation lands, and geographic features such as ridgelines and the river that limit ease of access.

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

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Three regional parks are suggested for each County. Site selection feasibility studies should be undertaken to define criteria for the park sites and potential locations. The following general locations as suggested for consideration:

- Juniata County - Southern Monroe/Northern Greenwood/Western Susquehanna Townships.
- Juniata County - Northeast Fermanagh/Northwest Fayette Townships.
- Juniata County - Central Milford/Northeast Beale Townships.
- Mifflin County – Armagh Township, Reeds Gap State Park.
- Mifflin County - Northern Brown Township.
- Mifflin County – Kistler Borough, Kistler Borough Farm.

Creating regional parks is one strategy identified for protecting open space. Regional parks should be located adjacent to permanently protected lands, where possible, to expand resource protection benefits. In some instances, regional parks that may be located adjacent to State Forest or Game Lands may help to address fragmentation of resources and offer the opportunity to link to existing trails. Regional parks should be large enough to provide diverse recreation opportunities with areas for both active and passive recreation pursuits. A size range of 80-120 acres is suggested, but size will be dependent upon the availability and characteristics of the land.

Of the six regional parks suggested for Juniata and Mifflin Counties, two have specific locations suggested; Reeds Gap State Park in Armagh Township, Mifflin County and Kistler Borough Farm in Kistler Borough, Mifflin County.

- Reeds Gap State Park – The decommissioning of the swimming pool initiated discussions in the community about the importance of the park and the roles its facilities play in the region. A “Friends of Reeds Gap State Park” support group is under consideration to spearhead

improvements and support of the park. Working together in partnership, the State Parks staff and local “Friends” should explore opportunities to reinvent Reeds Gap State Park and expand its mission to be a regional destination and provider of unique recreation opportunities while continuing to fulfill its State Park mission as a resource-based recreation destination.

While the swimming pool has been closed, the support facilities remain and the idea of introducing a “spray park” with water spray toys, similar to Little Buffalo State Park in Perry County has been discussed in the community. This idea has merit as the bathhouse and concession stand remain as support facilities and a spray park would be a unique recreation facility in the two-county area. Additionally, a spray park would provide some of the same leisure benefits as the recently decommissioned pool.

- Kistler Borough Farm –Kistler Borough owns approximately 89 acres of land along the Juniata River. A portion of the land is currently leased to the Mount Union Baseball Boosters which contains a softball field and a second field is under construction. The remainder of the site is in agricultural fields with a lawn area for parking. The tract was originally deeded to the Kistler Municipal Authority which no longer exists and is now held by the Borough. The full tract offers the size, location, and configuration for a regional park to serve the western portion of Mifflin County. The parcel contains significant frontage on the Juniata River and could provide additional river access opportunities. A vegetated riparian buffer parallels the river and the remainder of the tract is split between woodlands and agricultural fields. The northwestern boundary of the tract is contiguous to the Mount Union-Kistler Elementary School, part of the Mount Union School District expanding the opportunity to develop the tract as a community recreation destination.

The site contains gently sloping open areas suitable for development of active recreation facilities as well as wooded areas compatible with passive recreation opportunities such as trails and picnic areas. The floodplain is a development consideration. A small unnamed tributary to the river traverses the site adding to the ecological diversity of the setting.

The potential of developing a regional park at the site should be explored with Kistler Borough. If a partnership with the Borough for this purpose is feasible, a master plan should be completed for the tract to explore facility and activity area preferences and needs in the region. The master plan should include a public participation process. Funding for the master plan could be sought from PA DCNR.

### Recreation Facilities

Recreation facilities are the fields, courts, paths, picnic areas, scenic areas, playground equipment, and other park features that recreation participants enjoy using. These facilities should be provided throughout the Counties to meet the local needs and demands of individuals, families, community groups, and organized adult and youth leagues. These needs and demands should be defined by current facility usage, input from users and the community at large, and should consider local and regional trends in recreation and leisure activities. Tables 5-3 and 5-4 on pages 5-6 through 5-8 provide the public facility inventory for Juniata County and Mifflin County municipal parks. By facility quantity alone, both Counties have the greatest number of



ballfields followed by playgrounds than other type of facility.

Recreation facilities in numerous parks need upgrades to meet the safety guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines for Public Playground Safety (CPSC) and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The CPSC provides playground development criteria which address fall zones, safety surfacing, age segregation, and equipment spatial criteria. The ADA is civil rights legislation that mandates equal access to public facilities for persons with disabilities. Parks and recreation sites must meet the requirements of the ADA which include providing an accessible route to facilities, providing facilities that are accessible such as picnic tables and playground with play options for the physically challenged, providing accessible parking spaces, developing trails that meet specific slope criteria, among other requirements.



### Access to Special Use Recreation Facilities

#### Environmental Education

The public lands of the Counties provide many opportunities for nature-based recreation and the enjoyment of nature and the great outdoors. Currently students from the Mifflin County School District travel to Camp Blue Diamond in Huntingdon County for the Shaver's Creek Outdoor School once a year as a field trip. From a self-directed standpoint, there are many opportunities to learn about nature and the environment without leaving Juniata or Mifflin Counties. The Counties natural resources present numerous opportunities for environmental education, although a formal setting

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

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such as a nature center does not exist. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has established academic standards for Environment and Ecology. These standards establish the essential elements that students should know about the environment at designated grade levels. This environmental and ecological curriculum is often explored outside the classroom. Nature parks and nature centers offer hands-on learning experiences and their exhibits and facilities are often tied directly to the State Academic Standards. A nature center is not necessary to teach the curriculum and visiting parks such as Malta Park in Granville Township, Mifflin County where pavilions provide protected gathering space could meet this education need. If development of a formal nature center is pursued in the future, the location should be chosen based on consideration of the natural resources as well as travel time from school sites.

### **River and Stream Access**

Access to the Juniata River for fishing and boating was noted as important by residents. The Upper Section and Lower Section of the Juniata River Water Trail contain a total of nine existing river access areas described below.

### **Juniata County River Access Sites**

- Thompsettown – Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) surfaced ramp located along Route 333 south from Thompsettown on left before the bridge.
- Muskrat Springs – PFBC surfaced ramp located 4.5 miles west of Thompsettown Borough at the end of Muskrat Spring Road.
- Walker – PFBC-surfaced ramp located 1.5 mile east of Port Royal Borough on River Road.
- Mifflin – Surfaced ramp located in Mifflin Borough at the eastern end of Tuscarora Street.
- Mifflintown – PFBC-surfaced ramp located two miles north of Mifflintown Borough off of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division Highway.
- Lewistown Narrows – PFBC concrete ramp, parking, and accessible fishing area off of Route 322. A towpath trail extends approximately 1.5 miles along the river from this PFBC area to Canal Park.

### **Mifflin County River Access Sites**

- Victory Park – PFBC surfaced ramp and handicapped accessible fishing pier located in Victory Park in Lewistown Borough off of Route 22.
- Locust Campground – Primitive ramp located in the Locust Campground approximately 3 miles south west of Lewistown Borough on off of Locust Road.
- Granville – PFBC surfaced ramp approximately 3 miles south west of Lewistown Borough off of North River Road next to the rail bridge.
- Newton-Hamilton – PBFC concrete ramp located in Newton-Hamilton Borough off of Ferguson Valley Road.
- Shawmut – Surfaced ramp located approximately three miles south of Newton-Hamilton Borough on Tuscarora State Forest lands off of Route 103.
- Tea Creek – PFBC fishing access area.



Another potential access area in Mifflin County could be located in the proposed Fort Granville Heritage Park outside of Lewistown. In Mifflin County there is a separation of 22 miles of river between the Granville and Newtown-Hamilton access points. Coupled with the desire for river access is access to streams for fishing. Juniata and Mifflin Counties are fortunate to have numerous high quality water courses and streams known for quality trout fishing. Unfortunately, the trend is toward private landowners limiting general public access to these resources. Additional river and stream public access areas should be sought, targeting a minimum separation of approximately five miles between access points.

### Non-Traditional Recreation

Traditional park development typically serves youth who are interested in sports and organized activities very well. Ball fields and game courts are often the only facilities developed in addition to playgrounds when funds or space are limited. This reality often leaves youth interested in non-traditional activities such as skate boarding or in-line street hockey without opportunities for recreation. It is important to offer these non-traditional facilities as part of the mix of recreation opportunities to address the varied interest and engage youth in positive leisure-time activities. The regional parks may present an opportunity for development of non-traditional recreation facilities.

### Public Opinion Survey

In 2007, as part of the planning process, a random public opinion surveys were sent to residents of Juniata and Mifflin Counties. In the surveys, Juniata and Mifflin residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with existing recreation facilities in the Counties, identify which recreation facilities they felt were most important, rate their preference for park type, and rate which priorities the future focus of open space conservation in the Counties should concentrate. A summary of the results are described below and in Chapter 2.

### Evaluation of the Quality of Existing Park and Recreation Facilities by County

- The majority of Juniata County respondents felt that safety was the best quality of the existing park and recreation facilities in the County, followed closely by the location of parks and the cleanliness of the parks.
- The majority of Mifflin County respondents felt that cleanliness was the best quality of existing park and recreation facilities in the County, followed by the recreation programs offered and the overall impression of facilities in the County.
- The fewest respondents of Juniata County felt the variety of recreation facilities and recreation programs was their best quality while Mifflin County ranked safety and variety of facilities lowest of the quality ratings.

### Preferred Park Type by County

- Nature preserves were the preferred park type of respondents from Juniata County, followed by greenways.
- Smaller, closer to home parks were the most preferred park type by respondents from Mifflin County, followed by nature preserves.
- The fewest respondents in both Juniata and Mifflin Counties considered countywide bicycle trails as their preferred recreation park type.

### Priorities for Future Focus for Open Space Conservation, Parks, and Recreation

- Preferred open space conservation priorities for both Counties were maintaining existing parks, natural resource conservation, and open space protection.
- New park development and create trails ranked lowest in both Counties.

### Importance of Recreation Facilities by County

- Over 70-percent of respondents from both Counties felt that public forests were the most important public open space asset, followed by natural areas.
- The fewest respondents felt that biking paths were important recreation facility to have in the two Counties.

The results of the public opinion survey provide valuable information as it sets a baseline on which to measure satisfaction levels with existing facilities in Juniata and Mifflin Counties. The survey results assist in setting priorities for the future recreation and open space priorities as Juniata and Mifflin Counties implement the Greenway, Open Space and Rural Recreation Plan.

### Park Pilot Projects

Resident of Juniata and Mifflin Counties enjoy close to home recreation opportunities in municipal parks or parks offered by community organizations. Many

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

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of the parks of Juniata and Mifflin Counties were viewed as a part of this planning process. While an assessment of each park was not completed, observation from the site visits revealed numerous opportunities to expand the public benefit of these facilities. Four pilot parks have been identified to illustrate development and enhancement opportunities that may be compatible with other parks throughout the Counties.

### **Juniata Terrace Borough Parks, Mifflin County**

East End Playground and West End Playground are small neighborhood parks at either end of Terrace Boulevard in Juniata Terrace Borough. The parks offer play equipment and lawn area. Assessment and recommendations include:

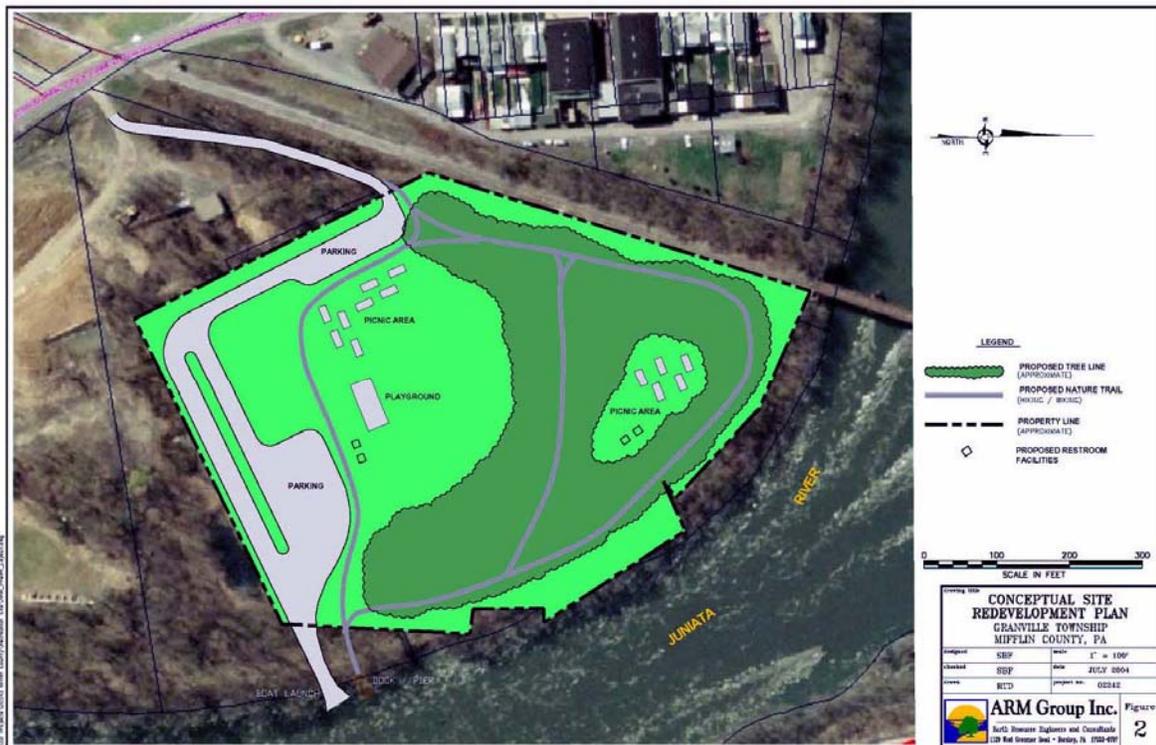
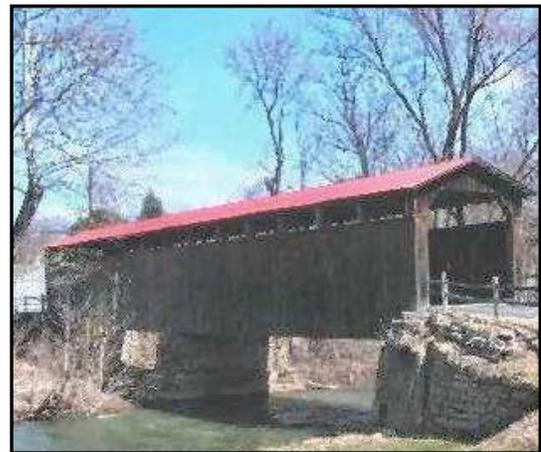
- The parks target the recreation needs of one user group: youth. The small size of the sites is a limiting factor.
- Play equipment –
  - The equipment includes older models that should be tested to assure compliance with the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for playground safety. A cursory review of play equipment revealed issues with non-compliant equipment and lack of safety surfacing. Safety surfacing is required throughout the safety zones. Safety surfacing mulch or resilient pavement should be installed to meet fall criteria and accessibility requirements.
  - Playgrounds must meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which requires that an accessible route be provided from walkways/parking areas to the playground equipment and that a portion of the equipment offer activities that can be utilized by physically challenged children.
  - Playgrounds should be age segregated to accommodate children of different ages and abilities. Typically, play areas are divided to accommodate two to five year olds in one area and six to 12 year olds in a separate area.
- Playgrounds should be designed to stimulate imaginative play as well as physical activity. Playgrounds should be bright, stimulating environments that engage children while providing convenience facilities for adults such as benches and shaded areas. Locate playgrounds for safety. Provide adequate separation from streets, parking areas, and where applicable other recreation facilities such as ballfield foul ball and home run territory.
- The site should be accessible to persons with disabilities. An accessible route is required to provide access to the play equipment from the sidewalks. An accessible parking space should be provided if room exists.
- Site amenities should be added to enhance the convenience of using the parks. Benches for caregivers, picnic tables, trash receptacles, and bike racks are facilities that should be installed throughout the park sites.
- Shade is an important aspect of creating a comfortable outdoor environment, especially for seniors. Shade trees should be located with benches for shaded seating opportunities. If room is available, a small pavilion for one to two picnic tables should be provided for additional shade. Adding a small pavilion will also expand the use of the park.
- A master plan should be completed to address the assessment recommendations and to develop a design for the two parks that targets community needs and maximizes recreation opportunity.

### Fort Granville Heritage Park, Mifflin County

Fort Granville Heritage Park is an 8.8 acre site in Granville Township that has been suggested as a possible park redevelopment project. Preliminary conceptual plans for the parcel include river access, a playground, picnic areas, walking trails, and parking. Remediation of the on-site soils will be necessary as identified in the Phase II Environmental Assessment for the site. Rehabilitation of the site which is entirely in the floodplain would reuse a long vacant parcel and introduce a public recreation amenity in close proximity to the County’s major population area. The location along the Juniata River will provide a scenic amenity as well as a desired additional access point. Potential to connect the park to the Kish RiverWalk via the construction of a footbridge connected to an old railroad bridge spanning the Juniata River is also envisioned for the park. The Conceptual Site Redevelopment Plan completed by ARM Group Inc. is provided below.

### Lehman Covered Bridge Park, Port Royal Borough and Milford Township, Juniata County

Moyer Park in Port Royal Borough and Lions Club Park in Milford Township are located approximately 1.25 miles apart along the Tuscarora Creek and Licking Creek riparian corridors. Midway between these two existing parks is the Lehman Covered Bridge, a historic structure that spans Licking Creek carrying Milford Street.



game courts and play areas. The land use between the two parks along the stream corridors is primarily agricultural with riparian vegetation at the stream. A bicycle and pedestrian trail is suggested to connect the two park sites. The trail would cross the covered bridge to gain access to the both sides of the creek. A small park area is suggested at the covered bridge which could offer a resting area along the trail and interpretative signs. Safety measures will be required at the Routes 75/ 333 crossing. A study is required to determine if the suggested park and trail improvements can be undertaken. Land ownership, physical configuration and constraints, development options, and public interest in the project should be explored through a feasibility study. If the project is feasible, a master plan should be completed to develop the specific design of the improvements.

### **Academia Pomeroy Covered Bridge Park, Beale Township, Juniata County**



The historic Academia Pomeroy Covered Bridge in Beale Township was restored in 2008 and 2009 by the Juniata County Historic Society. The bridge spans 271 feet 6 inches across the Tuscarora Creek and is the longest remaining covered bridge in Pennsylvania. The bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places and is owned by the Juniata County Historical Society, although the land surrounding the bridge is in private ownership. The significance of the historic structure, the recent investment, and the location in an underserved portion of the County offer a compelling rationale for the development of a public park at the bridge site. Ownership of the surrounding land and the willingness of the owners to sell the land or execute an easement or long term lease on the property are the first issues to be explored. If a park is possible in this area components of the facility should include historic interpretation signage, creek access for

fishing, and areas and facilities for the passive enjoyment of the outdoors. The amount of land that can be secured for public use will determine if additional facilities can be developed and a master plan should define the specific improvements proposed.

## **Conclusions**

### **Strengths**

Juniata and Mifflin Counties have bountiful outdoor recreation opportunities. The nearly 100,000 acres of conservation and park lands offer opportunities for a wide variety of outdoor activities from hunting and fishing to picnicking, nature study, hiking, and traditional activities like participating in organized sports leagues and visiting playgrounds. Easy access to the great outdoors is available to all who live in the Counties. The historic and cultural remnants of the County's past provide compelling stories that can be interwoven into recreation experiences today.

### **Challenges**

Although the Counties have many pieces of a comprehensive park system, key components are missing or unrealized and there are significant challenges associated with providing close to home parks and recreation lands to serve residents. Consider the following:

- The approximately 420 acres of local parkland for close-to-home recreation falls short of the nearly 700 acres needed now and approximately 770 acres needed by 2020.
- Neither County has formalized a county park system. Mifflin County has the one-acre Stone Arch Bridge Park while Juniata County has no county parkland. A parks department is not recommended for either County although the Counties could consider working together, along with the host municipalities to promote recreation on a regional basis. Table 5-14 on page 5-26 defines a typical park classification system that should be considered for a bi-county

system. County-owned parks, heritage sites, and other similar public lands should be managed and maintained in partnership with another entity such as a municipality or historic society. Canal Park associated with the Lewistown Narrows Route 322 improvements may be transferred to the Counties and a partnership with the hosting municipality should be explored.

- There are 11 municipalities without a park. Parks and recreation opportunities are essential elements of a high quality of life. Providing recreation opportunities for individual leisure pursuits, family gatherings, community celebrations, competitive sports, and playground programs are important aspects of creating and maintaining a sense of community and providing fitness and wellness benefits to citizens.
- Municipalities have limited financial resources for parkland acquisition, including matching funds for acquisition grants. Personnel resources for maintenance of parkland are equally challenged.
- All but one of the municipalities in Juniata and Mifflin Counties do not have mandatory dedication ordinances that provide for dedication of parkland from developers.
- Key recreation facilities are missing from the offerings in the Counties to include a park or nature center developed for environmental education, convenient access to the river and streams throughout the Counties, and special use facilities such as skate parks.
- The Boroughs and first-ring suburban communities have long provided the majority of parkland and recreation opportunities, serving as regional facilities. This informal regional approach to parks and recreation places excessive financial and personnel burden on these core providers.

### Opportunities

The existing parks, school sites, and other public lands present opportunities to expand the offering of recreation facilities to County residents. Additional parkland has been identified as a need, and opportunities exist to expand the parkland holdings through partnerships with school districts and collaborative efforts between municipalities and public agencies. The rivers and historic and cultural resources of the Counties present interesting portals into the Counties past and opportunities to create destination parks that draw visitors to the area while meeting residents' recreation needs.

Juniata and Mifflin Counties have yet to witness the extensive development that has affected many other areas of the Commonwealth. This position provides opportunity for parkland acquisition and exploration of partnerships that will promote broad recreation benefits to the citizens of the Counties.

## Parks and Recreation Lands of Juniata and Mifflin Counties

**Table 5-14  
Typical Park Classification System**

Type/Size/ Service Radius	Definition	Benefits	Appropriate Amenities	Maintenance Level
<b>Mini Park</b> <i>0-5 acres</i> <i>¼-mile service radius</i>	Smallest park type, addresses limited recreation need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides close-to-home recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Playground</li> <li>▪ Benches, seating area</li> </ul>	High level of maintenance associated with well developed park and playground and reasonably high visitation
<b>Neighborhood Park</b> <i>5-15 acres</i> <i>minimum</i> <i>½-mile service radius</i>	Focus of neighborhood; in walking/biking distance of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides access to basic recreation opportunities</li> <li>▪ Contributes to neighborhood identity</li> <li>▪ Establishes sense of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Play areas</li> <li>▪ Ball fields</li> <li>▪ Game Courts</li> <li>▪ Picnic/Seating</li> <li>▪ Pathways</li> <li>▪ Community gardens</li> </ul>	High level of maintenance associated with well-developed park and reasonably high visitation.
<b>Community Park</b> <i>25-50 acres,</i> <i>preferably</i> <i>50-80 acres</i> <i>2-mile service radius</i>	Large park for active & passive recreation; serves residents municipality-wide. Accommodates large groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Variety of recreation opportunities for all ages and interests</li> <li>▪ Space for organized, large scale, high participation events</li> <li>▪ Family destination</li> <li>▪ Fitness and wellness opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Play areas</li> <li>▪ Organized sports facilities</li> <li>▪ Pavilions</li> <li>▪ Permanent restrooms</li> <li>▪ Lighting</li> <li>▪ Amphitheaters</li> <li>▪ Pools, Rinks</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> </ul>	Moderate level of maintenance associated with moderate level of development, budget restrictions, inability to perform higher levels of maintenance. Potential for park “friends” or adopt-a-park partners.
<b>School/Community Park</b> <i>Variable</i>	Parkland adjoining a school used for both recreation and education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Combines two public entities for expanded year round recreation.</li> <li>▪ Maximizes public resources</li> <li>▪ Expands recreation opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth-oriented game courts and ball fields</li> <li>▪ Play areas</li> <li>▪ Seating</li> <li>▪ Pathways</li> <li>▪ Lighting</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> </ul>	Moderate level of maintenance associated with moderate level of development, budget restrictions. Potential for cooperative agreement with school.
<b>Sports Complex</b> <i>30+ acres;</i> <i>preferably</i> <i>50-80 acres</i>	Consolidates sports fields and related facilities in a centralized location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economy of scale</li> <li>▪ Improved management</li> <li>▪ Municipal showcase</li> <li>▪ Attracts visitors who stimulate local economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ball fields</li> <li>▪ Lighting</li> <li>▪ Spectator areas</li> <li>▪ Restrooms, Concessions</li> <li>▪ Landscaping</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> </ul>	State of the art maintenance applied to high quality facilities. Associated with high visitation; revenue generating facilities, tourism.
<b>Special Use Facility</b> <i>Variable</i>	Facility for a single purpose use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides special focus recreation opportunities</li> <li>▪ Contributes to community identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Depends on purpose</li> </ul>	High level of maintenance associated with well-developed park and reasonably high visitation.
<b>Greenways and Trails</b> <i>Variable</i>	Tie park areas and community together to form a contiguous park environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Connects community</li> <li>▪ Reduces auto dependency</li> <li>▪ Improves air quality</li> <li>▪ Contributes most desired recreation facility for people throughout their lifetime</li> <li>▪ Attracts visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pathways – multipurpose</li> <li>▪ Trailheads</li> <li>▪ Support facilities</li> <li>▪ Signage</li> </ul>	Lowest level of maintenance. Focus on trailheads and trail safety.
<b>Natural Resource Area/ Preserve</b>	Natural areas for the protection and management of natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protects resources</li> <li>▪ Provides wildlife habitat</li> <li>▪ Offers opportunities for environmental education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trails</li> <li>▪ Signage</li> <li>▪ Support facilities</li> </ul>	Lower level of maintenance.



