

**Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Secretary's Greenways Program Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes- June 2, 2004
14th Floor Conference Room
Rachel Carson State Office Building
Harrisburg, PA**

Attendees: Linda Boxx, Ken Edmonds, Bill Mineo, Jerry Walls, Brian Auman Pat Tomes, Tim Poole, Dave Lange, Kurt Zwinkl, Jane Sheffield, Jenny Brown, Chuck Flink, Scott Wails, Debbie Patz, Bob Griffith, Andy Pitz, Clare Billett, Anna Breinich, Jack Paulik, Stanley Brown, Matt Beaver, James Domen, Dan Accurti, Brian Sanders, Meredith Hill, Larry Williamson, Diane Kripas, Vanyla Tierney and Dick Sprenkle.

Update on Governor's Environmental Bond Initiative: Dick Sprenkle, Deputy Secretary for Conservation and Engineering Services, updated the Committee on HB 2621 and 2010, the two bills introduced related to the proposed initiative. He indicated that if something is to be approved it will be at a reduced level of funding with less focus on DCNR needs for open space and parks, etc. and more in environmental issues like acid mine drainage. Dick encouraged the Committee members to contact legislative leadership on the Appropriations and Environmental Resources Committee to make their interest and support known for the bills.

Anyone interested in getting on a DCNR mail distribution list to receive updates on the bond issue initiative should give their names and email addresses to Meredith.

Mainline Canal Master Plan: Jane Sheffield, Director of the Allegheny Ridge Corporation and Chuck Flink from Greenways, Inc. presented an overview of the recently completed Strategic Action Plan for the 320-mile Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway. The Plan addressed four key points- heritage, environment, economics, and recreation. The plan identified the tremendous tourism opportunity that exists along the greenway corridor and empowers communities to use the greenway for an economic return on investment. The 520-mile corridor is divided into 5 clusters and 11 hubs and the study area includes a two-mile zone on either side of an identified primary corridor. The Plan is tailored to address the different characteristics and opportunities that exist in each of these separate geographic areas.

The most difficult issue addressed by the Plan deals with governance- what kind of organization needs to be put in place to manage the Plan's implementation? The Plan identifies several options in this regard. Another issue addressed by

the Plan is marketing and promotion. The major issue is how to begin marketing when you need to have more amenities on the ground in communities along the corridor before beginning a marketing blitz. The Plan identified funding as an important but not primary obstacle of implementation. There is a lesson in the experience of the Katy Trail in Missouri- they made a 6-8 million dollar investment in the greenway and recouped it all in the first year.

The Plan is available on CD from Jane Sheffield and downloadable from both the Mainline Canals web site as well as the PA Greenways web site www.pagreenways.org.

Adopt-A-Greenway Program: Debbie Patz from PA Cleanways, Inc. presented information on a new program administered through a grant from DCNR. The program was developed to support a recommendation in the Statewide Greenways Plan to form a volunteer network to promote and beautify greenways. To date, PA Cleanways have involved 20,000 volunteers in their cleanup efforts with 61 tons of trash and debris removed from greenway areas at five specific sites across the state. They are also working with interested volunteer groups to officially adopt greenways to provide long-term stewardship for greenway corridors. PA Cleanways would be interested in any recommendations from Committee members regarding the program and specific greenway areas they think should be targeted for cleanup and/or adoption. Check out www.pacleanways.org for more information on the program.

County Greenway Planning: Diane Kripas, with DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, provided a general overview and update on the County Greenway and Open Space Network Planning Program that began in fall of 2001. At present, about thirty counties are actively engaged in this planning that was identified in the Statewide Greenway Plan and a key implementation strategy.

Scott Swails with the Berks County Planning Commission provided an overview of Berks County's recent greenway planning process that grew out of a recommendation from their 1994 County Open Space & Recreation Plan. One of the highlights of their approach involves using the "Smart Conservation" ecological modeling and decision making tool developed by Natural Lands Trust. This helped Berks inventory, analyze and prioritize greenway hubs and corridors to produce an overall countywide cohesive greenway network. The County hopes to use the greenway plan update to guide a successful inter-municipal comprehensive planning effort currently underway across the county. For more information on the Berks program, contact Swails@countyofberks.com

Smart Conservation: Andy Pitz with the Natural Lands Trust (NLT) introduced Clare Billet to discuss NLT's "Smart Conservation" tool. Smart Conservation is a

critical conservation planning tool for regional assessments. The tool was originally developed for use in southeastern PA where conservation and planning organizations were struggling to preserve open space that was fast disappearing due to development pressure. They basically used this tool to help create a green infrastructure map for a five county region. Since then, the use of the tool has been expanded to cover all the counties in the entire Piedmont Ecoregion.

Policy-makers and conservation practitioners can use this tool to make educated decisions about how to prioritize between conservation projects, thereby focusing conservation dollars for the maximum impact. A variety of criteria evaluate a site's ecological assets, conservation potential and development threat. These science-based criteria reflect the input of the region's best aquatic specialists, botanists, community planners, conservationists, herpetologists, ornithologists and mammologists.

To get more details on how the tool works you can go to the Smart Conservation website at <http://www.smartconservation.org/scmAdminUserLogin.asp> or contact Clare Billet at 610-353-5587.

Adjournment

At 3:15 the full meeting adjourned. Committee members then reconvened for work in either the Economic Benefits or Conservation Greenways Subcommittees.