

WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE PLAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS?

Achieving the vision established in this plan requires a collaborative management structure based on partnerships. The Beaver County Planning Commission (BCPC), under the direction of the County Commissioners, would be responsible for all policy-making and decision-making regarding the execution of the Greenways and Trails Plan recommendations.

An important component of the management structure is the development of a public / private partnership to maximize opportunities. A non-profit organization can assist with property acquisition, property ownership, fund-raising, and volunteer management and coordination. Without a public / private partnership, it will be difficult for the County to succeed in implementing the recommendations contained in this plan.

At the time of this writing, the recently formed Beaver County Conservation Foundation has been informally approached to determine their level of interest in fulfilling the non-profit role in a public / private partnership.

Preliminary discussions indicate the Foundation is interested in further exploring this partnership with Beaver County.

To succeed, Beaver County must lead, educate, foster, and support the County's municipalities in establishing a network of Greenways and Trails in Beaver County. In order to do so effectively, it requires the County have expertise in Greenways and Trails implementation. We recommend the County authorize the County Planning Commission, to create a Greenways and Trails Coordinator position, or to secure such professional services as required to implement the recommendations of this plan.

Lawrence County is also nearing the completion of their County Greenways and Trails Plan. Their needs are similar to Beaver County's needs. The two Counties have formally agreed to create a shared Greenways and Trails Coordinator position. On September 13, 2007, an agreement was executed by Beaver and Lawrence Counties to create this position and apply for funding from PA DCNR and PA DCED, to assist in funding this position. The appendices of the plan contain a copy of the executed agreement and the shared Greenways and Trails Coordinator position job description.

Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan Connecting Beaver County's People and Natural Assets through Greenways and Trails



Executive Summary

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GOALS OF THE BEAVER COUNTY GREENWAYS AND TRAILS PLAN

The public participation process produced goals and objectives for the Beaver County Greenways and Trails Plan. Preserving and enhancing Beaver County's character and enhancing the quality of life in the County is the primary goal, supported by these specific objectives:

- Establish conservation corridors that preserve and link high-priority habitats, sensitive environmental features, rural landscapes, and protected open space;
- Build an interconnected network of diverse recreational trails connecting population centers to State and County parks, State gamelands, and other significant recreational areas/amenities that promote active life styles and provide alternate means of transportation between the County's major destinations; and
- Ensure that greenways and trails development works hand in hand with other economic development initiatives in Beaver County to foster growth, attract new businesses, and bring and retain young people by providing a high quality of life.

WHAT IS A GREENWAY?

Greenways are corridors of open space. These corridors may be defined in two basic ways, all of which are embraced by this greenways plan:

- Greenways can be primarily *recreational*: places where people can actively experience the outdoors, like hiking, biking, and water trails (sometimes called "blueways").
- Greenways can be for *conservation*: protecting sensitive natural resources that provide benefits to the community, the economy, and the environment.

WHY A GREENWAYS AND TRAIL PLAN FOR BEAVER COUNTY?

Beaver County's Comprehensive Plan, "Horizons, Planning for the 21st Century" set goals to:

- *Promote the creation of open space and preserve natural area in the County*
- *Develop waterfronts and waterfront districts for recreational purposes*
- *Develop a system of trails throughout Beaver County*

The goals were based on the support of the County's residents that was identified in a County-wide survey conducted during the comprehensive planning process. Over 70% of respondents want more access to unstructured recreation opportunities, and support development of waterways and waterfronts for recreational uses. Over 80% of respondents indicated development of walking and bike trails should be a priority as it is a means to enhance the quality of life for the County's residents.

Finally, the County's recently completed Recreation and Park Plan established the following goal that led to the preparation of this plan:

"Identify, protect, and develop a county-wide system of greenways, trails, and natural open spaces now and most crucially in the wake of new development pressures, in collaboration with local governments and private land trusts."

The preparation of this greenways and trails plan responds to well-documented needs and wishes of Beaver County residents and implements the goals and objectives of previous planning efforts.



3. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator facilitates development of formalized intergovernmental agreement between participating parties that defines responsibilities and expectations of participants.
4. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator assists responsible parties in applying for grants and securing funding for required improvements.
5. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator assists responsible parties in overcoming issues that may arise during the implementation process.
6. Responsible parties formalize trail by implementing required improvements in accordance with the project phasing plan.

The following steps are recommended to advance the implementation of the Raccoon Creek Greenway Trail:

1. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator develops committee of stakeholders to advance project. Stakeholders should include those associated with entire corridor, not just the demonstration segment, including: Raccoon Creek State Park manager, municipal officials, local advocates, municipal law enforcement, property owners, non-profit agency partner, Beaver County Conservation District, etc.
2. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator facilitates meetings with stakeholders to refine concept plan, identify improvement requirements and costs, identify on-going maintenance requirements and costs, develop preliminary management structure for trail, identify PennDOT requirements within PennDOT right-of-ways, identify project phasing, etc.
3. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator facilitates development of formalized intergovernmental agreement, and / or partnership agreement with non-profit agency, between participating parties that define responsibilities and expectations of participants.
3. Local stakeholder contacts property owners in demonstration corridor to discuss potential issues and concerns of property owners, discuss interest in providing easement, and reviewing draft easement agreement language.
4. Responsible party meets with property owners to finalize and secure written easement agreement.

5. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator assists responsible parties in overcoming issues that may arise during the implementation process.
6. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator assists responsible parties in applying for grants and securing funding for required improvements.
7. Responsible parties formalize trail by implementing required improvements in accordance with project phasing plan.

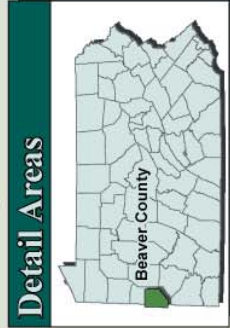
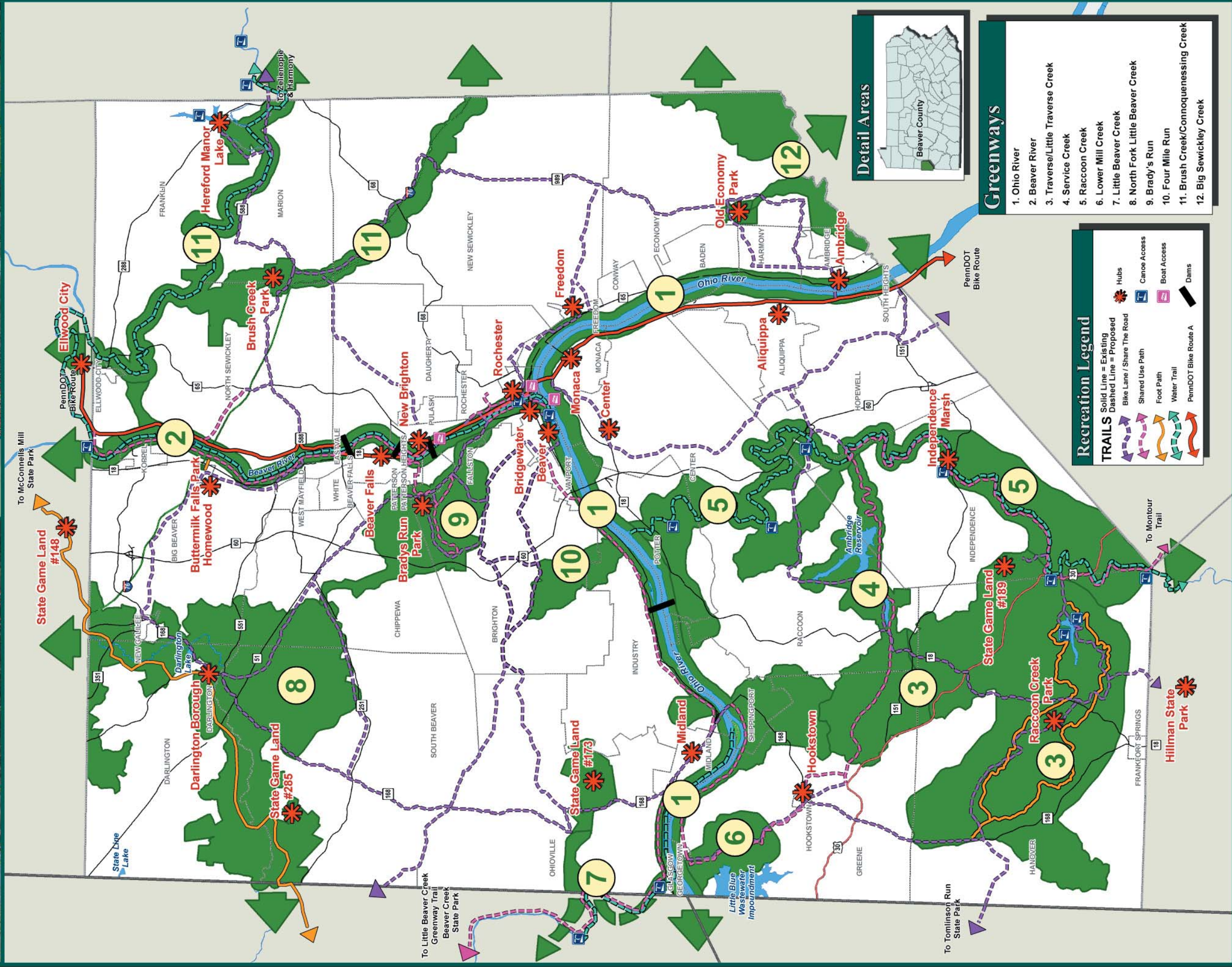
HOW WILL THE GREENWAY PLAN BE USED?

The Plan provides Beaver County and its municipalities with a flexible framework for decision-making on issues related to the conservation of its natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources and trail development in Beaver County. It contains specific implementation strategies; to address issues pertinent to conserving resources; for the benefit the community, the economy, and the environment; as well as for current and future generations of Beaver County residents.

By adopting this Plan and following through with the implementation strategies identified, Beaver County will be meeting the needs of County residents, as identified in the County Comprehensive Plan, the County's Recreation and Parks Plan, and this Greenways and Trails Plan.

The implementation strategies recommended within the plan include that the County take the lead in working with local municipalities to understand the value of implementing a county-wide system of greenways and trails. The strategies also recommend that the County provide support to local municipalities; to implement tools to conserve the specific corridors; and for the County to provide support to the municipalities, to carry forth the development of a network of conservation and recreation greenway corridors in the County.

The Plan lays the groundwork for the continued success of greenways and trails conservation and development, as well as to enhance the quality of life for residents and the business community in Beaver County.



- ### Greenways
1. Ohio River
 2. Beaver River
 3. Traverse/Little Traverse Creek
 4. Service Creek
 5. Raccoon Creek
 6. Lower Mill Creek
 7. Little Beaver Creek
 8. North Fork Little Beaver Creek
 9. Brady's Run
 10. Four Mile Run
 11. Brush Creek/Connoquenessing Creek
 12. Big Sewickley Creek

Recreation Legend

TRAILS
 Solid Line = Existing
 Dashed Line = Proposed

- Bike Lane / Share The Road
- Shared Use Path
- Foot Path
- Water Trail
- PennDOT Bike Route A

Other Features:
 Hubs (Red star icon)
 Canoe Access (Blue boat icon)
 Boat Access (Blue boat icon)
 Dams (Black dam icon)

LEGEND

- County Boundary
- Municipality
- Lake/Reservoir
- River/Stream
- PennDOT Roads
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Route

BEAVER COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
Beaver County Courthouse
409 Third Street
Beaver, PA 15009
Phone: (724) 226-9298
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Map Sources:
 Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC)
 PASDA (Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access)
 Beaver County
 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Projection: State Plane - NAD 1983
 Pennsylvania South, Feet

Proposed Greenways & Trails Network

Beaver County
Greenways & Trails



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Recreation Greenway Corridor	Priority
Confluence Connector	1
Raccoon Creek Greenway Trail	1
Raccoon Creek Water Trail	1
Beaver River Rail Trail	1
Beaver Falls to Bradys Run Trail	2
Bradys Run Park Loop Trail	2
Beaver River Water Trail	2
Rochester to Beaver Falls Connector Trail	3
Little Beaver Creek / Ohio River Water Trail	3
Rochester Riverfront Park Spur	3
Little Beaver Creek / Ohio River Water Trail	3
North Country Trail	3

Utilizing the established criteria, the following demonstration trail segments were selected to be further advanced in this study with the preparation of a concept plan:

- **Confluence Connector** (shared use path linking Beaver, Bridgewater, & Rochester): Chosen because it connects several major generators / destinations and municipalities including Rochester Borough, Bridgewater Borough, Beaver Borough, and the Beaver County YMCA, located in Rochester Township. It was also chosen because it will promote economic development in the County's riverfront communities.



- **Raccoon Creek Greenway Trail**, from the Beaver County Conservation District Environmental Center to Independence Township Community Park: Chosen because of its regional nature, provides opportunities to protect the Raccoon Creek Conservation Greenway corridor, complements and helps to conserve the proposed Raccoon Creek / Traverse Creek and Little Traverse Creek Conservation greenways, will ultimately connect Raccoon Creek State Park with the Montour Trail, is adjacent to the Raccoon Creek Water Trail, and has land owner support for the demonstration segment between the Beaver County Conservation District's environmental center and the existing Independence Township Community Park.



Concept Plans and detailed descriptions of the proposed Confluence Connector and Raccoon Creek Greenway Trail can be found in Chapter V of the plan.

Implementation Of Demonstration Projects

The following steps are recommended to advance the implementation of the Confluence Connector:

1. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator develops committee of stakeholders to advance project including: municipal officials, local advocates, and PennDOT representative(s).
2. County Greenway and Trails Coordinator facilitates meetings with stakeholders to refine concept plan, identify improvement requirements and costs, identify on-going maintenance requirements and costs, develop preliminary management structure for trail, identify PennDOT requirements within PennDOT right-of-ways, identify project phasing, etc.

WHERE ARE GREENWAYS RECOMMENDED IN BEAVER COUNTY?

CONSERVATION GREENWAYS: Primarily function to preserve sensitive environmental features and habitats, like wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, high quality streams, and high value habitats identified by the Beaver County Natural Heritage Inventory and the Natural Infrastructure Project. Conservation corridors are linear tracts of essentially undeveloped open space that integrate many of the natural resources inventoried. While some low-impact activity is acceptable in these corridors, intense development is not recommended. For example, hiking or wildlife viewing would be compatible uses, but mountain biking use would be discouraged in conservation greenways.

The project study committee, with the help of Pashek Associates, prioritized the County's natural resources and located areas of open space that logically connect them. This resulted in twelve proposed conservation greenways in Beaver County. The following table identifies each proposed corridor and their corresponding priority for implementation.

Conservation Corridor Priorities

Based on the analysis of exceptional and high value resources contained in each proposed conservation greenway, Pashek Associates recommends the County focus their efforts and resources on conserving the proposed:

- Brush / Connoquenessing Creek corridors
- North Fork Little Beaver River corridor
- Traverse, Little Traverse, and Raccoon Creek corridors



Conservation Greenway Corridor	Priority
Brush/Connoquenessing Creeks	1
North Fork Little Beaver	1
Traverse/Little Traverse Creeks	1
Raccoon Creek	1
Ohio River	2
Service Creek	2
Brady's Run	2
Big Sewickley Creek	2
Beaver River	3
Lower Mill Creek	3
Little Beaver Creek	3
Four Mile Run	3

RECREATION AND TRANSPORTATION GREENWAYS: Connect population centers (Hubs) and points of interest in Beaver County. They bring people into contact with the outdoors and engender an appreciation of the natural world. These trails also provide alternative, environmentally-friendly transportation options for commuters and visitors. The plan proposes four types of recreation and transportation corridors: 1) shared use paths; 2) on-road bike lanes or share-the-road opportunities; 3) foot paths / pedestrian-only connections; and 4) water trails or blueways.

The inventory, analysis, and public participation process lead Pashek Associates to recommend the County facilitate the implementation of eleven shared-use paths, twenty-one share-the-road bicycle routes / bike lanes, four hiking / pedestrian trails, and four water trails.

Recreation Greenway Priorities

The following criteria was utilized to establish priorities and select two demonstration trail segments:

- The proposed trail's ability to create momentum for future expansion of the system and ability to demonstrate a quick success
- The proposed trail segment is destination-oriented
- The proposed trail is regional in nature
- Serves multiple modes of transportation