

Musconetcong Watershed Association

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New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

Federation of member clubs and individuals involved in the planning and maintenance of the Highlands Trail.

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ROUTE 57
CORRIDOR PLAN

Greenways and trail systems provide numerous benefits to the region. In addition to supporting the goal of scenic preservation, they enhance the quality of life for local residents, help attract heritage and nature-based tourism, and create a backbone for alternative transportation systems. The creation of greenways is also a useful strategy for combating sprawl, by confining future development to defined towns or villages bordered by a greenway.

From the perspective of transportation access, it is important that greenways connect with places where people want to go, such as neighborhoods, schools, parks, business centers, shopping areas, and transit stops. Greenways also provide an excellent opportunity for embedded community and neighborhood parks.

Greenways

are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes and often follow natural land or water features.

Trails

are paths used for walking, bicycling, horseback riding or other forms of recreation or transportation. Some greenways include trails, and some do not.

This framework of using a regional greenway with local connections to adjacent communities is an integral part of planning efforts of another New Jersey canal trail along the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

PROPOSED GREENWAYS/TRAILS

There are several proposals for regional greenways and trails in the vicinity of Route 57 corridor that could help to advance the goals of the Corridor Plan. Potential alignments for these facilities should be kept in mind as local master plans are updated and as development proposals are considered. The potential for creating smaller-scale local greenways linking to these regional facilities should also be explored. In this way, over time a network of trails would be formed, allowing for more local travel by bicycle and enhanced recreational

opportunities. Once established, it is important that effective provisions be put in place for maintaining trails and greenways over time.

Morris Canal Greenway

The Greenway's purpose is to preserve the remains of the Morris Canal and its associated natural environment, to interpret canal sites to the public, and to offer recreational opportunities. The proposed greenway will extend across Warren County with the canal as a link to recreational, cultural, and historic areas including state parks and trails and public open space. The greenway will extend between Phillipsburg and Waterloo Village.

Highlands Trail

When completed, the Highlands Trail will extend over 150 miles from the Hudson River in New York to the Delaware River in Phillipsburg, connecting major scenic attractions. The proposed Warren County section of the Highlands route will head south from Jenny Jump Mountain to Merrill Creek Environmental Preserve, Scotts Mountain and then to the Delaware River in Phillipsburg.

Warren Trail

Tracts of donated abandoned rail line will be converted for recreational hiking purposes. The proposed Warren Trail, to begin north of Hackettstown, will converge with the final stretch of the Highlands Trail near the Pequest Fish and Wildlife Area and continue south to the Delaware River in Phillipsburg.

POTENTIAL GREENWAY/TRAIL SITES

Musconetcong River Trail

The Musconetcong Watershed Association hopes to create an eventual Musconetcong Greenbelt. A number of sites along the Musconetcong River and Route 57 Corridor Study Area have been identified for acquisition and/or conservation easements. Passage of the Musconetcong Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, currently in Congressional review, will help encourage recreational use of the Musconetcong River and surrounding areas and help to preserve farmland and open space within the river corridor. The existing Musconetcong Gorge trail,

designed for hiking, runs along the slope of Musconetcong Mountain and runs west above the Musconetcong River.

Bread Lock Park

Future Morris Canal Park site lies between New Village and Stewartsville on Route 57. The Warren County Historic Learning Center is also on this site. This is the only location where the Morris Canal crossed Route 57.

Saxton Falls

A Morris Canal towpath trail travels north of Hackettstown between Saxton Falls and Waterloo Village. This site is also an intersection for the proposed routes of the Highlands and Warren trails.



A Morris Canal towpath overlooks Saxon Falls at former Guard Lock 5 West. This is a popular site for fly fishing.

Merrill Creek Reservoir Environmental Preserve

The proposed Warren and Highlands trails will run through Merrill Creek Preserve area. The Morris Canal Committee hopes to create an additional connector trail linking the Morris Canal to the Preserve.

Phillipsburg

Phillipsburg was once served by five railroads and is the western terminus of the Morris Canal. A linked system of trails from converted rail lines along the river is a possibility.

FUNDING RESOURCES

Funding for greenways and trails can be obtained through a variety of transportation, open space, and parks programs, as well as through brownfield, community

development and arts programs. Communities across the country have also raised private funds for development and maintenance of their greenways through various fundraising campaigns.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program

Supports the acquisition of land for open space and recreation throughout the state.
<http://nj.gov/dep/greenacres>

Division of Parks and Forestry

Historic Preservation Certified Local Government Grants

New Jersey Department of Transportation Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs

This division has extensive experience guiding municipalities through the procedures necessary to implement bike and pedestrian related improvements. The website offers a National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse technical brief on finding matching funds for trail projects. It can be downloaded from <http://policy.rutgers.edu/njbikeped/docslib/tbmatchingfunds.pdf>

Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program

Funds are granted to communities whose pedestrian and bicycle plans foster more livable communities, preserve environmental/cultural resources, and promote alternative modes of transportation.

Division of Local Aid and Economic Development

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/localaid/>



Visitors at the Historic Learning Center at Bread Lock Park hike along the canal right-of-way.

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs NJ Smart Growth Planning Grants

Trail & Greenway Funding Guide

The funding sources listed, provided by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, can be used to fund various phases of acquisition, planning, design and development. The database is organized by federal, state, and private funding sources.

<http://www.enhancements.org/trailfunding.htm>

Pedestrian and Bicycling Information Center

A non-governmental resource of funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pp/funding/index.htm>

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Garden State Greenways, a partnership of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and other organizations, has developed an interactive mapping tool allowing for coordination among trail planning efforts.

<http://www.gardenstategreenways.org/index.htm>

“Trails for the Twenty-First Century: Planning, Design, and Management Manual for Multi-Use Trails” Charles A. Flink, Kristine Olka, Robert M. Searns, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Island Press 2001.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC)

RTC is a non-profit organization working to create a nationwide network of public trails from abandoned or unused rail corridors. RTC catalyzes action at the local level by providing information, technical assistance, and training for local trail builders.

Web: <http://www.railtrails.org>

Email: greenways@railtrails.org

Ph: 1-877-476-9297

Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse

An online resource for trail builders and advocates.

<http://trailsandgreenways.org>

National Park Service

The website includes helpful tools and publications, including information on economic impacts of greenways

and greenway ecology.

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/helpfultools/htpublications.html>

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In this conceptual plan, a new town center along Route 57 is bordered by a river greenway with a connector trail leading to a town park.