

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape

Fast Facts



Counties

Lehigh and Northampton

Sub-Landscapes

- The **Two Rivers Area** features the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers and Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center.
- The **Lehigh Valley Highlands** are focused on balancing development in South and Lehigh Mountain region.
- The **Martins Jacoby Watershed** contains a wetland habitat at the Minsi Lake Preserve and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.
- The Trexler Nature Preserve is located within the **Jordan Creek Greenway**.
- Pennsylvania's longest contiguous forested ridge, the **Kittatinny Ridge** (Blue Mountain), located to the north, is an important birding area and home to the Lehigh Gap Nature Center.
- These five special places are connected by the **D&L Trail** as it follows the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers on rail-trail and canal towpath.

What is a Conservation Landscape?

The Conservation Landscape is a place-based strategy for natural resource stewardship and advocacy in key landscapes across our state where there are strong natural assets and local readiness and support for land conservation, locally-driven planning, and community economic revitalization efforts.

Vision

Lehigh Valley communities are linked to greenways, trails, and outdoor experiences resulting in stronger local economies and improved public health, green infrastructure and natural resources.

Goals and Implementation

Land Conservation & Restoration – to conserve critical landscapes, restore buffered stream corridors, and promote best management practices

Outdoor Recreation & Trail Connections – to connect people to greenway and trail opportunities to promote healthy living, recreation, and the region's green assets

Community Revitalization – to support community revitalization through green infrastructure that enhances the quality of life and economic impacts

Local Education & Outreach – to promote the understanding of our natural environment and its benefits to our communities

Region

The counties of Lehigh and Northampton together comprise 726 square miles, a region referred to as the Lehigh Valley. It is bounded on the north by the Kittatinny Ridge, locally known as the Blue Mountain, on the east by the Delaware River, and on the south by South Mountain. To the west, the



low, rolling hills rise to form a divide between lands drained by the Lehigh and Schuylkill Rivers.

The Lehigh Valley's population is expected to increase nearly 18 percent from 2020 to 2040 to 813,187 people, putting its natural resources at greater risk. Lehigh Valley Planning Commission www.lvpc.org

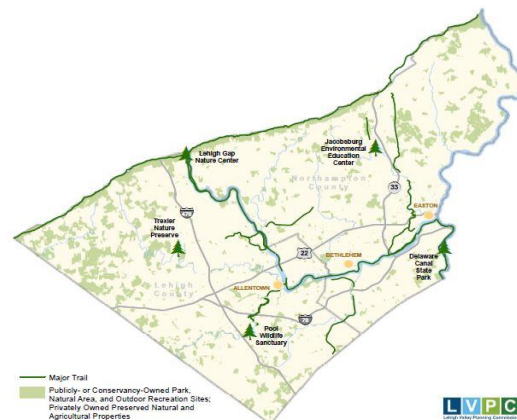
Residents have been outspoken in their desire to maintain and improve their quality of life. They recognize the value of their surrounding land, cultural assets and recreational outlets of land, water, and trails.

Land. Over 92% respondents favor preservation of farmland, rivers, creeks, and streams as high environmental protection

Water. Rivers, creeks, streams, and lakes rank #1 to preserve natural resources

Trails. Trails for hiking, biking, etc. rank #1 for most needed park and recreation facility

www.lvpc.org/pdf/landusepublicopinionsurvey2010.pdf



Implementation

Areas of strategic implementation include:

- Preserving unprotected natural areas, watersheds, farmland, and woodlands
- Restoring riparian buffers along streams and rivers
- Creating greenways and trails to connect people to outdoor recreation experiences to promote healthy living, community economic benefit, and the region's green assets
- Revitalizing cities through green infrastructure that enhances the quality of life
- Promoting the understanding of our natural environment and its benefits

Accomplishments

From 2004 - 2020, the Lehigh Valley Greenways partnership accomplishments include:



Conservation Practices

- Over 4,731 acres of land conserved since 2004
- In 2018, 18.5 acres of land and four miles of riparian buffer restored
- In 2018, 707 trees, 465 shrubs, and 500 native wildflower plugs planted
- A Riparian Buffer Task Force is created to coordinate and track regional projects
- Sober's Run was approved for Exceptional Value Status
- Constructed wetlands and riparian buffers help reduce and manage stormwater



Trails and Outdoor Connections

- 59.3 miles of new trail completed since 2004
- Announced THE LINK, Lehigh Valley's multi-use trail network
- LVPC documented 42 trails totaling 333 miles open in Lehigh Valley (2013)
- Trail counters installed on three regional trails to measure trail use
- Two regional health partnership programs attract over 5,000 people to trails and outdoor recreation
- 2018 Bi-annual Eastern PA Greenways & Trails Summit was held at ArtsQuest in Bethlehem for 163 attendees



Educational Opportunities

- In 2018, 5,244 students and over 58,000 participants for education programs
- 4 LEED certified green environmental education center buildings open
- 4 model environmental regulations developed
- 65 trained Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Stewards volunteered 3,212 hours in 2018 to help educate the public and build capacity of watershed organizations



Partnership

The Lehigh Valley Greenways partnership includes nearly 25 state, regional, and local organizations collaborating to advance this vision across the Lehigh Valley:

- **State Agencies** - PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (*State Lead Agency*), PA Department of Environmental Protection, PA Fish & Boat Commission
- **Counties, Cities, and Regional Agencies** - Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Northampton County, Lehigh County, Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, Conservation Districts, Discover Lehigh Valley, Penn State Extension
- **Non-Profit Organizations** – Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (*Local Lead Organization*), Wildlands Conservancy, Heritage Conservancy, Natural Lands Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Martins Jacoby Watershed Association, Lehigh Gap Nature Center, Bushkill Stream Conservancy, Appalachian Mountain Club, PA Audubon, Community Bike Works, Nurture Nature Center, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley and more

"We installed demonstration meadows and we've learned from our municipal park's crews and they've learned from us about how to make a more sustainable landscape work on the ground."

Kate Brandes, Bushkill Stream Conservancy

"The Conservation Landscape has made a big difference here. It has brought funding and focus to a region that has a lot of potential and enabled us to develop that potential in a far shorter time period than we would be able to do otherwise"

Jan Creedon, Former Director of General Services, Lehigh County

More Information

For more information on the Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape:

www.LVgreenways.org

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