Natural Assets as Economic Generators

APA- PA 2015 Annual Conference

October, 2015
Asset Based Community Development

- Sustainable community-driven development.
- Mobilizes community to take action
- Not dependent on outside expertise
- Communities drive the development process by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognized assets
- Creates local economic opportunity.
Linking communities, tourism and conservation

• Economic recovery efforts in communities based on a growing interest in outdoor recreational activities.

• Capitalizing on existing assets of natural environment, navigable rivers, developed trails.
PA Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2014-2019)

- Identify issues, policies, investments related to outdoor recreation
- Over 10,000 residents provided input via surveys and meetings
- Action oriented plan

www.paoutdoorrecplan.com
PA SCORP Resident Survey Results: Outdoor Recreation Quality of Life Benefits

- More desirable place to live
- Opportunities for recreation based businesses
- Protects natural environment, historical & cultural heritage
PA SCORP Online Survey Results:

What places best reflect what you value about your community?

• Trails, natural areas, waterways (89%)

• Local parks & public spaces (75%)

• Surrounding countryside & farmland (75%)
PA SCORP Resident Survey Results

The Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent Participation in the Last Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking (Streets, Sidewalks, Trails)</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Historic Sites</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>Scenic Driving</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildlife Viewing</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Nature Centers</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Night Sky Viewing</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bird Watching</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawn Games (Horseshoes, Bocce)</td>
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</tbody>
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PA Resident Survey 2014
2014-2019 PA SCORP
PRIORITY AREAS

Health & Wellness
- Walkable/Bikeable Communities
- Alternative transportation
- Connections to outdoors

Local Parks & Recreation
- Diversity
- Popularity
- Funding
- Political Support
- Partnerships

Tourism & Economic Development
- Measuring Impact
- Coordination
- Communication
- Marketing
- Partnerships

Resource Management & Stewardship
- Prioritizing
- Hunting & Fishing
- Natural Gas
- Conservation & Protection
Program Focus

• Regional
• Recreational economy
• Visitor attraction strategy
• Business growth
• Community conserves resources
The Power of Small Business

- 39% of GNP
- 75% of new jobs in our economy
- 60-80% of net new jobs annually over the last decade
- On average entrepreneurs make at least 25% more than the general population.

» Experian, 2006
Land-based Trails are Good Business

- The Great Allegheny Passage (2008) Over $40 million in economic impact April – November
- $7.26 million in wages in trail-related businesses
- Dozens of businesses launched and expanded
Water Trails are Good Business

- University of Vermont, Northern Forest Canoe Trail study (2007)
- 90,000 visitors per year
- $12 million in total economic impacts
- 280 jobs created
- $215 spending per trip
- Non-locals spending average of $414-$498 per trip
- Paddler recreation & tourism impacts local economies
The First Steps

• Understand community culture and heritage
• Inventory existing community groups
• Find a community leader/organization-the catalyst (often a trail/river user)
• Attend community meetings or events
Next

• A community-wide meeting, engage business and government
• Provide information that demonstrates the value of the outdoor market
• Create Action Team of civic, municipal and business leaders
• Manage expectations
• Meet and communicate regularly
Conduct a Community-wide Needs Assessment

- Develop a work plan based on needs
- Prioritizes capital projects
- Directs planning and early implementation projects
- Involves and further engages community
Short term Projects:

- Signage
- Business Directory
- Amenities: Benches, bike racks, water, toilets
- Public Art
Plenty of outdoor seating
Use color and whimsy to attract
Open attractive public spaces
Longer Term Strategies: Business Attraction

Objectives:

• Market buildings and businesses that are available- sale or lease
• Reduce vacant and underutilized buildings
• Enhance business mix
• Engage real estate community
• Facilitate business expansions
Attract new businesses to fill service gaps and expand new businesses
Create inviting streets
PROPERTY FOR SALE

Open your business here!
For more information about this property, or other business opportunities along the Upper Monongahela River, visit www.rivertownspa.org or call 814-395-9139

Enjoying our trip!

Credit: Judy Olsen

RIVERTOWN PROGRAM

The River Towns program is a partnership of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, McCollom Development Strategies, and the Student Conservation Association.
Business Attraction Strategy

• Target business clusters
• Technical assistance team
• Centralized messaging
Join Us at the Holiday Party December 4th!

You are invited to the River Town Program meeting and holiday party on Wednesday, December 4th at the Fredericktown Fire Hall, 831 Crawford Road. A business meeting will be held from 5:30-6:15, followed by a year-end celebration with drinks, hors ... Continued
Implementing Partners

12 Heritage Areas

7 Conservation Landscapes
Implementing Partners

good for you. good for all.
Pennsylvania Parks & Recreation
SMAART: Sustainable Marketplace for Art, Artisans, Recreation and Trending businesses

- $10,000 D2 PA grant
- Workshops
- Web site
- SBA, SBDC, Borough
Case Studies: Point Marion

Project: Community Park, Trailhead, Trail, Water Access

Funding: DCNR, CFA Act 13, Tourism, County Funds
Case Study: Brownsville

Private Foundations
DCNR
County Agency
PHFA tax credits
Historic tax credits
Case Study: Race Street Pier (Philadelphia)

- Commercial
- Neighborhood Connections
- Residential