

Keys to Success Stories in Community Recreation Initiatives



Four Stories in North Central Pennsylvania:

East Lycoming Recreation Authority

Millville Park Commission

Montour County Recreation Authority

Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority

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**Developed from a Case Study Technical Report to the
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
and the
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, Inc.**

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“The right of children to play, to sing, and to dance; the right of youth to sport for sports’ sakes; the right of men and women to use leisure in the pursuit of happiness in their own way, are basic to our American heritage.”

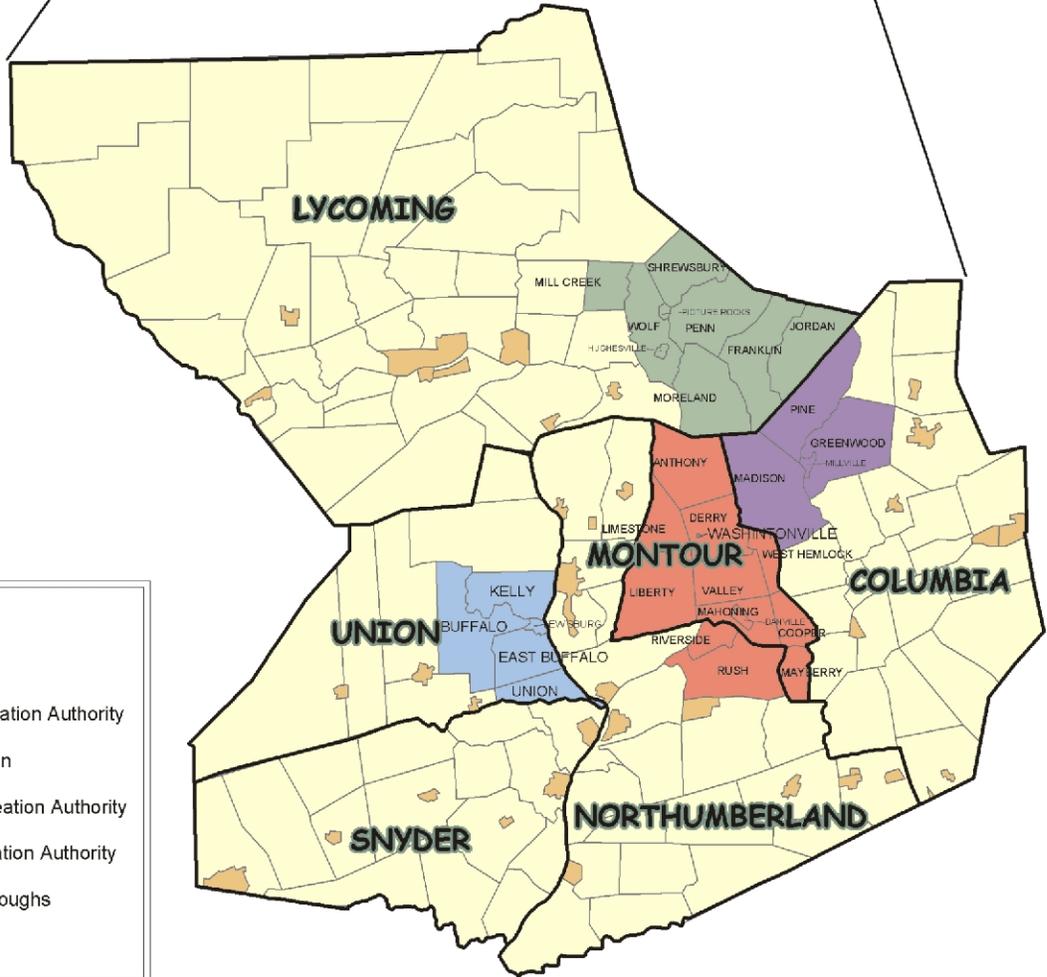
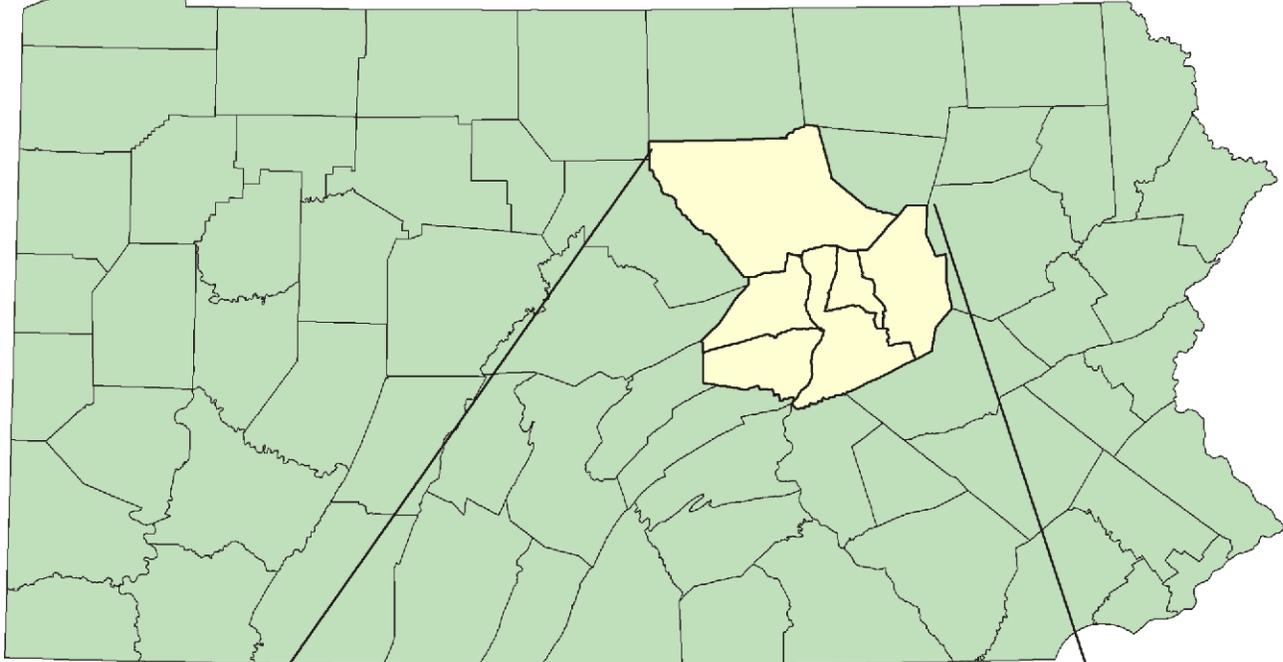
Harry S. Truman

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Location of Success Stories.....	2
Introduction.....	3
<i>Research for this Document.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>How the Study was Conducted.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>What is a Community Recreation Service Model.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The Communities & Their Service Models.....</i>	<i>5</i>
Community Profiles.....	7
<i>East Lycoming Recreation Authority.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Milville Park Commission.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Montour County Recreation Authority.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority.....</i>	<i>14</i>
Community Recreation in Rural Areas: Benefits and Keys to Success.....	16
<i>Reflections on the Benefits of Community Recreation.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Implementation Strategies.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Conclusion.....	23
Key Phrases.....	23
Appendix A - Community Profiles Chart.....	24
About the Funding Partners.....	26

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Location of Success Stories



Legend

-  County Lines
-  Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority
-  Millville Park Commission
-  Montour County Recreation Authority
-  East Lycoming Recreation Authority
-  Municipalities and Boroughs
-  Townships

INTRODUCTION

This document is a description of how four regional recreation providers have been able to offer services, obtain grant monies to enhance and develop recreation facilities, and, in some cases, hire professional staff to coordinate recreation-related activities. It reports on the benefits and the keys to success in providing community recreation services.

The idea of providing community recreation services in rural areas is not new. However, many civic leaders have not truly thought about how to provide recreation services for their own community and the potential economic, health and social benefits that such services can bring to their citizens. Even in municipalities where community recreation services are well established, the average citizen may know little about who actually owns and operates the recreation facilities and coordinates its recreation programs.

More and more, residents in rural areas are looking for access to community recreation services and places such as public parks and trails to enjoy these services. Therefore, it is important to increase the knowledge of how recreation services can be established, enhanced, and maintained in rural Pennsylvania communities. For some municipal officials, the thought of providing recreation services can be daunting. How do you purchase land and build a community park? What does a professional recreation director contribute to a community? What does it cost to deliver recreation services? These questions convey the important logistical and financial realities of providing recreation services and they strike at the heart of balancing costs and benefits.

This document was designed to report how civic leaders in rural communities in North Central Pennsylvania are successfully providing these services in their municipalities. The report is based on a recommendation from a Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) sponsored stakeholder meeting held in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania in 2000. The purpose of the stakeholder meeting was to determine the recreation and conservation needs of the North Central Region of Pennsylvania. At the meeting, input was gathered from community leaders, municipal officials, and representatives from non-profit organizations and recreation related constituents. Based on this information, it became clear that although rural communities in the North Central Region would

like to provide recreation to their citizens, they do not know how to go about it. Furthermore, they want examples of communities in their region which have been successfully doing so.

Research for this Document

Dr. Cheryl Baldwin and her assistant Dorothy L. Schmalz, from the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Recreation Management, Pennsylvania State University were hired by the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society to interview four rural communities in North Central Pennsylvania that were successfully providing recreation services. This study shows the evolution of those four regional recreation initiatives. The goals of the study were to describe how the recreation organizations were formed, who they represent from their community, and determine strategies that make them successful. This document also will explore why these rural communities are providing community recreation services and the benefits they provide to their citizens. At the time of the study, all four providers were in the process of enhancing and expanding some aspect of their recreation services.

Also addressed in this document, is a description of the programs and services the regional organizations provide to their communities as well as how they provide these services. In addition, this document describes how these organizations are supported. Special attention was given to describing the size of the population that the regional organization serves, their organizational structure, current and future services, and capital and/or operational budget. This information is described in Appendix A--Community Profiles Chart, page 24. Throughout the text there are key phrases identified which are terms related to DCNR's grant program. The definitions of the key phrases are located on page 23.

INTRODUCTION *continued*

Civic leaders were asked to tell their story and to reflect on why they give their time and money to community recreation. In almost all cases, these individuals believe in the value of recreation and see it as having a positive impact on the overall economic health and quality of life of their community. But, benefits come with associated costs, and community resources are often limited. Determining benefits and costs is a dynamic process, and in the case of community recreation it is also democratic in nature. The study was designed to capture these dynamics as they were being worked out in these four communities.

Finally, the last section of this report discusses the benefits of providing recreation services and facilities, keys to success in implementing recreation services, and challenges experienced by these recreation organizations. The experience of these communities is used to identify important managerial practices and to suggest ways others might replicate their success and anticipate challenges. Since interests, needs, and assets of an area drive community recreation, it is rare that any two communities will have the exact same organizational structure and programs. Therefore, one should use this document as a *guide* to forming a recreation organization which is tailored to the particular needs of the community it represents.



Easter egg hunt in Millville Community Park

How the Study was Conducted

The study was set up in a case study design format.¹ Interviews were conducted with key representatives from each recreation organization. In these interviews, the researchers gathered information on why the organization was formed and how services are currently supported and delivered.

¹ *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.) by Robert K. Yin.

As one volunteer civic leader stated...

“When people consider moving here they will consider the recreation facilities. Parks increase quality of life, so people will find this a pleasant place to raise families and start businesses.”

James Finkler, East Lycoming Recreation Authority

In addition, the lead contact person for each community was asked to provide supporting documents that illustrated their work. Finally, characteristics of the communities were reviewed through public documents such as newspapers, web sites, and demographic data.

The researchers' role in the case study design was to make an overall assessment of what happened, how it happened, and why it happened. Events and issues repeatedly raised were emphasized, and the researchers' professional judgment was used to emphasize critical issues and provide recommendations.

What is a Community Recreation Service Model?

The cases presented here represent a range of *service models*. The term service model is used to convey several key ideas. First, it represents that each community has a formal *organizational structure* that oversees some aspect of offering recreation services. Organizational structure refers to the legal and formal features of the entity or unit of government, including the governing board, agency by-laws, and the supervision of community recreation services. Each community determines the organizational structure that best meets its needs. Some municipalities form an inter-governmental authority with boroughs and townships as members. An authority is a semi-independent, incorporated, unit of government with its own legal standing. Others may choose to operate with an inter-governmental commission or board. Whatever the format, the organizational structure is the legal platform for how the recreation services and facilities are managed.

INTRODUCTION *continued*

There may be both a legal service jurisdiction as well as a more informal geographical sense of community. The term *community*, in this instance, implies an entity with a collaborative effort that may encompass one or several municipalities. At times this practical sense of community does not perfectly match township, borough, school district, or county lines. This means that, in some situations, the concept of a *service area* is difficult to define and in others it closely parallels the municipal units of government. An attempt was made to convey the working definition of community as the groups profiled use the term.

Finally, the term *service* refers to organized programs and/or development of facilities where the public can recreate. Some regional organizations described in this study offered services in the form of programming such as aerobics, soccer, and art lessons while others focused on developing recreation facilities such as trails, playgrounds and pools. In fact, in some cases, the regional organizations did both.

The Communities and their Service Model

For each service model, the researchers reviewed community demographics, analyzed program reports and other supporting documents. Researchers interviewed leaders directly and indirectly involved with the operation of the recreation services. These service models are shown on the map entitled “*Location of Success Stories*” (on page 2) and are also described in the Community Profiles Chart in Appendix A.

East Lycoming Recreation Authority (ELRA) is located in the eastern half of Lycoming County and consists of two boroughs and four townships. ELRA was created to oversee the development and operation of a regional park. In this profile an old farm field is converted into a 65-acre regional park complete with trails and an adjoining parking lot. The fund-raising carried out by the ELRA leadership is an excellent example of the concept of leveraging local funding sources with grant funding sources. No single entity was approached to fully fund any one aspect of the development. Rather, multiple sources of capital were generated resulting in a situation where a donor and municipal contributions were *leveraged* with other resources. It should also be noted that the ELRA membership is currently comprised of two boroughs and four townships while the service area identifies an additional three townships, which have not officially joined. The philosophy of the ELRA leadership is to respect their decision and give these townships time to decide the extent of their future involvement.

Millville Park Commission (MPC) is a standing committee of Millville Borough. It is comprised of 13 citizens representing the borough and three townships. MPC coordinates and oversees the playground, basketball and tennis courts, and picnic pavilions of Millville Community Park. For a small community, there is a broad array of recreation services provided at this site. (Other committees oversee the operations of the baseball field and swimming pool.)



Concert at Millville Borough Park

INTRODUCTION *continued*

Through thoughtful collaborations and generous volunteer efforts, the MPC has slowly but steadily improved the park, and today the community has an excellent park with many amenities. The MPC's most recent project is to rehabilitate the park's deteriorated tennis courts and replace outdated playground equipment. Anyone who thought that recreation services could not be provided in a small rural community need only look at Millville Community Park.

Montour County Recreation Authority (MCRA)

is an organization that was created in 1985 but had become inactive. MCRA was revived when it became apparent that recreation services were being provided throughout Montour County by several community groups and agencies without much coordination. The MCRA profile is a story of how one community responded to the unplanned growth of recreation services in a deliberate and strategic manner. Through a two-year planning process, facilitated by an advisory board and professional consultants, MCRA has produced a Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan that provides an inventory of the county's park and recreation resources. It also outlines strategies to create an efficient and cutting-edge service structure that will meet the needs of the county.

Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA)

is an inter-governmental authority made up of two townships and a borough in Union County. The profile describes LARA's growth that resulted from hiring a full-time professional recreation director. LARA is committed to a comprehensive vision that includes providing a variety of recreation programs, maximizing use of existing recreation facilities, and encouraging cooperation among other recreation and youth service agencies. One of the unique aspects of LARA is its community education courses and special bus tours and trips. In so doing, they are demonstrating how programming can provide opportunities for learning through recreation services. The leaders are also undertaking a large capital campaign to secure the necessary resources to renovate their swimming pool and developing a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan. (See Key Phrases page 23)

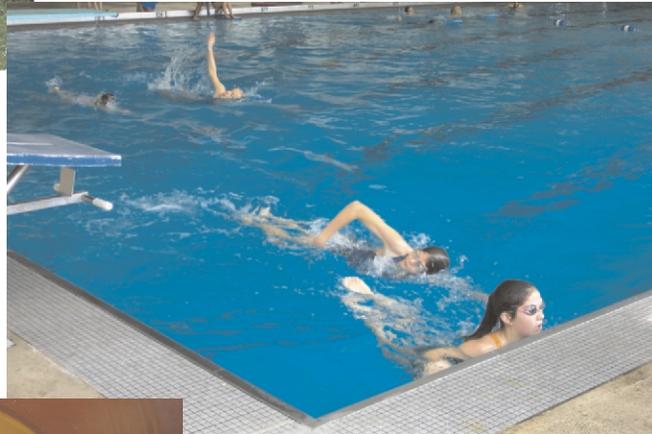


J. Manley Robbins Trail in Montour County



LARA Horseback Riding Program

COMMUNITY PROFILES



East Lycoming Recreation Authority (ELRA)

In 1996, citizens living in the eastern half of Lycoming County had the opportunity to accept a gift of 65 acres designated for a regional park. At the time Charlotte Weaver expressed her desire to donate the land for park development, the Parks, Education, and Recreation Committee (PERC) was working under the auspices of the East Lycoming School District. PERC researched the feasibility of accepting and managing a land donation and recommended forming a regional entity to represent the municipalities in the East Lycoming School District. This regional entity was needed to accept the donation, raise funds for the development, and manage the park. With the legal advice from a local solicitor, a new and separate inter-governmental agency was created in the form of the East Lycoming Recreation Authority (ELRA). Today, ELRA manages Lime Bluff Recreation Area and the school district has assumed responsibility for some of the recreation services that were previously provided through PERC.

ELRA's service area is comprised of the communities in the eastern half of Lycoming County

consistent with the boundaries of East Lycoming School District. Of the municipalities in the area, six are official authority members. The contributions of these members vary in dollar amount and in-kind services.

ELRA was formed largely to develop the Lime Bluff Recreation Area; therefore, it is difficult to illustrate an annual budget. Maintenance of the park is mostly done by Wolf Township and local volunteers. Wolf Township employees maintain the park's road system. Other community groups such as the Lion's Club, Rotary Club, Senior Citizen's Club, Boy and Girl Scout Troops, East Lycoming School District and individual volunteers perform other duties which include lawn mowing, gardening, trash clean-up, etc. At this time, ELRA does not offer organized public recreation programs such as youth day camps, aerobics, or craft classes. In the future, ELRA expects to utilize annual funding, either through monetary and/or in-kind contributions, from municipalities and community groups. ELRA plans to use this funding support for the park's future development and potentially to offer recreation programs.

Time Line

August 1996	Mrs. Charlotte Weaver expressed desire to donate land for park.
July 1997	Parks, Education & Recreation Committee (PERC) of the East Lycoming School District (ELSD) reconfigured to create East Lycoming Recreation Authority.
April 1998	Consultant hired to conduct needs assessment and to develop a Master Site Plan (See Key Phrases page 23).
June 1998	Consultant conducted public hearings on the park planning as part of the needs assessment.
Fall 1998	ELRA submitted DCNR grant application for Phase 1 and was selected for funding in Spring, 1999.
June 2000	Phase 1 site development started consisting of walking/biking trails and parking lot.
October 2000	Phase 1 of development completed, park opened and ELRA submitted a grant application to DCNR for Phase 2 projects.
March 2001	Fund-raising coordinated by volunteer committee in conjunction with ELRA.
April 2001	DCNR awarded Phase 2 funds.
October 2001	ELRA submitted DCNR grant application for Phase 3 plans (expanded paths, frisbee golf, picnic tables, and benches).
March 2002	Phase 2 site development started for athletic field, trail link, and pavilion.
May 2002	DCNR awarded Phase 3 grant.
November 2002	ELRA completed work on Phase 2.

East Lycoming Recreation Authority (ELRA) *continued*

Successes and Challenges

The volunteers of ELRA and those individuals in volunteer and paid positions in the associated municipalities have taken a citizen's generous donation and created an attractive regional outdoor park. Their strategy has been to take the process step-by-step. This has meant that a lot of “sweat equity” was, and continues to be, invested in fully researching what to do before embarking on each component of the development. Additionally, it has meant keeping a conservative spending pace and not moving ahead until the dollars were available.

One of the challenges of their approach, which is characterized by collaborative efforts and multiple stakeholder funding, is that the process is time intensive. Take for example the DCNR grant process ELRA has relied on. It takes well over a year to formulate the grant, submit it by the deadline, and receive a response. Thus, it has been seven years since Charlotte Weaver said to herself, *“Why wait, I’ll donate that land for a park today.”*

A positive outcome to this slower pace is that Mrs. Weaver's initial investment grew with dividends being paid by businesses, teachers and students, and citizens throughout the county. A positive relationship between ELRA and the school officials was solidified in two ways. First construction of the pavilion was a class project completed by students from the local high school. Secondly Mr. Lee Daye, a local real estate developer, donated a portion of land that will serve as a trail connection between the school and the park. ELRA has also been very successful at finding in-kind donations from community groups, local businesses, and municipalities.

The ELRA regional recreation entity also illustrates the role of civic leadership. The volunteer members of ELRA have stepped forward to advance the goal of making the park a reality. They organize and coordinate meetings, solicit donations, and identify community partners. On average, volunteers estimate they spend about five hours a week working on behalf of the park. However, there is much work yet to be done and as the park's facilities grow so will the use. Clearly, Lime Bluff Recreation Area is a resource that is community owned and operated.



Dedication Ceremony of the
Lime Bluff Recreation Area

Millville Park Commission (MPC)

Millville Borough is a small borough with a population of 991 located in Columbia County. At the heart of the borough is a large community park. Rich with amenities, the park serves the citizens of Millville Borough and Greenwood, Pine, and Madison townships. Walking from end to end the multiple-use features are evident. Basketball, tennis, picnicking, playground, little league baseball, and swimming in the community public pool are examples of the many activities available at this park.

The 13 members of the MPC oversee the section of the park comprised of tennis and basketball courts, picnic pavilions, small open fields, and a children's playground. In addition to this role, the Park Commission organizes park programs including scheduling picnic pavilion use, decorating the park for holiday celebrations, hosting six summer concerts, supporting a week-long carnival sponsored by the local volunteer firefighters association, and managing a volunteer-run day camp. Millville Borough pays the electricity bill for the park except when the firemen are conducting the carnival. The Borough staff handles grass cutting, snow and trash removal, and restroom maintenance.

Over the past few years the MPC has facilitated major facility developments at the park. One of the most recent and highly welcomed features was the purchase and installation of 18 Victorian streetlights around the perimeter of the park. The streetlights were paid for through donations. The response was so overwhelming, that some churches and home owners purchased and installed the same Victorian streetlights in other sections of the borough. The streetlights also hold banners, which the Park Commission uses seasonally to further enhance the aesthetic beauty of the hometown park.

In 2001, the MPC set a goal to renovate and replace the park's unsafe playground equipment. Millville applied to DCNR to help fund the renovation. This grant required matching funds. Civic groups, the school board and local businesses stepped forward with generous donations. In 2002, Millville received a \$40,000 DCNR Small Community grant which was combined with over \$20,000 in matching local funds to accomplish this goal. In the future, MPC hopes to renovate their tennis courts.

Time Line

1915	Area at the new community hall became a natural park.
1945	Tennis courts were paved and fencing added.
1965	Descendants of the original Seminary Corporation gave land to Millville Borough for recreational purposes. Millville Park Commission was formed.
1971	Community pool is built at park.
1992	Little League field received lights and fencing.
1995	Seven large old pine trees were removed and replaced with 11 new tree plantings funded by local family contributions.
1998	Memorial Gazebo added.
2000	Victorian lights added to the park.
Spring 2001	Professional design consultant hired to develop master site plan of park and make recommendations on playground renovations and or replacement.
Fall 2001	Millville applied for grant funding (\$40,000) to DCNR for playground rehabilitation.
Spring 2002	Millville awarded \$40,000 DCNR grant.

Millville Park Commission (MPC) *continued*

Successes and Challenges

Millville Community Park is an amazing asset for a small borough and three surrounding townships. The park is an important community landmark that keeps growing. As Sharon Kindt, MPC Chairperson noted, “Each year we try to take on a project and make a little improvement.” And as a result, the park activities grow a bit each year. The addition of a gazebo, park sign, and victorian lights are expressions of the community's investment in this park.

The MPC is comprised of volunteers who donate their time and skills. The chairperson, an individual with 30 years experience working with children and youth, runs the day-camp programming. The grant writer is a retired business executive. Another member manages the pavilion reservations, while others help with maintenance or in any other capacity needed. As the park grows, so does the volunteer commitment. When the MPC held a Saturday workday for spring clean up, volunteers were recruited solely by word of mouth. Collaboration is also evident in the programming and events at the park. The local schools participated in holiday tree decorating and the local high school band plays for one of the summer concerts.

When asked to reflect on the planned improvements, the general consensus was that the process was long. In particular, the process began with the development of a Master Site Plan (See Key Phrases page 23) of the park prior to writing and submitting the grant application. Then, once all money was raised, the renovation needed to be scheduled. Nonetheless, they were very pleased with the results of their fund-raising efforts that resulted in matching funds for the grant. There was also an overwhelming sense that the effort and wait were worthwhile.



Park sign with wheels from Grist Mill after the fire that destroyed one of the mills

Montour County Recreation Authority (MCRA)

In 1998, the Montour County Recreation Authority (MCRA) was essentially inactive. Initially MCRA was created to support the development of the Danville Area Community Center, but since that time the members were inactive. A series of events led the Montour County Commissioners to reconsider the role of the authority. The demographics of Montour County were steadily changing, and the number of small and independent community groups organizing specialized recreation services was growing and becoming increasingly fragmented. Also, civic leaders felt that the role of tourism as an important economic resource needed to be addressed.

As a governmental entity with a regional perspective, MCRA in collaboration with professional consultants embarked on a two-year assessment and planning process that was steeped in public involvement and input. This comprehensive inventory of Montour County land and facility assets was summarized in the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (See Key Phrases page 23) presented to the board of directors of the Recreation Authority and the County Commissioners. This document identified current assets and needs and outlined a countywide system for community parks and recreation based on national benchmark standards.

To briefly summarize, the major plan recommendations are: (a) creating a river recreation area, (b) establishing a countywide system of community parks connected by a system of greenways, (c) rehabilitating and expanding the Danville Area Community Center, and (d) enhancing the existing park, recreation and athletic facilities.

MCRA is now in the midst of organizing, coalition building, and fund-raising to realize the vision outlined in the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan. The plan calls for investing monetary resources in capital improvements as well as on-going community tax support for yearly operations. One proposal for tax support is the dedication of a portion of the hotel tax for parks and recreation. Additionally, the Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan calls for contributions from municipal partners, applying for state and federal grants, and fund-raising through individual and business contributions.

Time Line

1985	MCRA formed to serve as a vehicle for developing Danville Area Community Center.
October 1999	Montour County submitted a grant application to DCNR to develop a county comprehensive recreation and open space plan and appointed a 20-member advisory board.
September 2000- Spring 2001	Needs assessment conducted which was comprised of community leader interviews, public forums, outreach programs to municipalities, and comprehensive assessment of county land, facilities, and recreation services.
June 2001	Options identified for future parks, recreation and open space initiatives.
Fall 2001	Applied to DCNR and PennDOT for grant money for rail-trail development funding of J. Manley Robbins Trail.
Summer 2002	DCNR and PennDOT awarded MCRA \$137,000 for development of the J. Manley Robbins Trail.

Montour County Recreation Authority (MCRA) *continued*

Successes & Challenges

The development of a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (See Key Phrases page 23) was a necessary first step towards consideration of coordinated community recreation and park services at the county level. The planning process was an outgrowth of civic leaders responding to the events in the community. Working with professional consultants, the civic leaders made a purposeful decision to carry out the planning process in a manner where public input was emphasized. While not all municipalities in the county were in agreement about the need for future community recreation services, there was willingness to participate in the current inventory of services. The plan documents that government officials took time to recognize what exists prior to proposing growth and change.

The assessment of the entire county revealed a broad range of services and assets. For example, soccer is a popular activity for both girls and boys. In response to this, the local Youth Soccer Organization (YSO) is demanding more field time on existing fields and development of new playing fields. The Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan addresses the implication of this diversification as well as other current trends.

The planning process also served to document the events that civic leaders were trying to manage. For example, two major health service corporations are located within the county. They regularly recruit medical school students and other health care professionals to the area. As is the trend, these workers closely scrutinize the quality of schools and community amenities prior to accepting a job offer. Open space and recreation services are important parts of the overall mix of services that help civic leaders retain businesses and attract young professionals.

One of the challenges perceived by those interviewed was that the planning process was rather long. Additionally, after two years, a fair amount of work still needs to be done. The financial goals the authority has set for itself are ambitious but achievable. Whether MCRA can be the coordinating force for the county remains to be seen; clearly though an important foundation has been established.



“Kardio Kids” class at the Danville Area Community Center

Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA)

Lewisburg has many community recreation services and facilities, which make it a pleasant place to live. However, facilities and services were being managed by several different organizations that were competing with each other for the community's financial and volunteer service contributions. For the most part, two separate agencies, the Eastern Union County Recreation Association (EUCRA) and Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) provided many of the community recreation services in the Lewisburg area. One agency was needed to take a "regional" perspective and capitalize on the existing services, coordinate the community recreation activities, and manage its facilities.

In 1996, leaders in the community who had an interest in recreation and representatives from EUCRA and LARA applied and were granted funding to conduct a Peer-to-Peer Study (See Key Phrases page 23).

The findings of the Peer-to-Peer study indicated that both agencies provided valuable services to the community. However, this study found it would be more efficient if the organizations merged and were collectively supported by area municipalities and the school district. In 1999, Lewisburg Borough and East Buffalo Township created a new LARA. Kelly Township joined in August 2000.

With the award of a DCNR Circuit Rider Grant, (See Key Phrases page 23) LARA was able to hire a full-time professional recreation director to supervise agency resources and move toward developing a sustainable comprehensive recreation program to meet the needs of people of all ages in the community. Since hiring the full-time executive director, LARA has provided a diverse community-based recreation program. In the summer of 2001, LARA kicked off an ambitious fund-raising campaign to make badly needed improvements to the Lewisburg Community Pool.

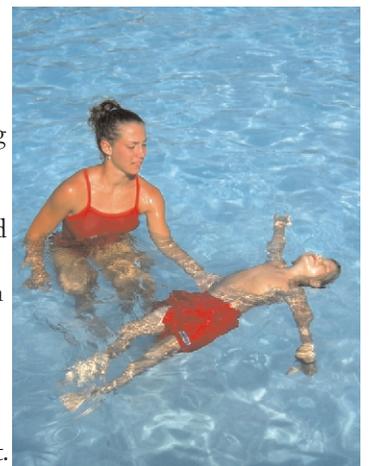
Successes & Challenges

The general consensus of those interviewed was that the reformulation of LARA with a paid professional director has resulted in more professional operations for existing services and an abundant amount of new services, primarily in the form of community education classes and sport leagues. In addition, the Lewisburg Community Pool, with a weakening structural and mechanical facility, will be upgraded to a safe operational level. For winter programming, an outdoor ice skating rink was renovated and reopened. The new programming and facility improvements were well recognized and appreciated by the community.

Celebrating the success of LARA's new recreation programs, facilities, and coordination abilities is important, however, they still face a revenue generation challenge. The existing group of municipal partners is not as large as was originally proposed in the Peer-to-Peer Study (See Key Phrases page 23) and DCNR's grant to help fund the director's salary declines over a four-year period. In the first year of the circuit rider grant program, DCNR funds 100 percent of the salary and then DCNR decreases its funding support 25 percent each year for three years. The members of the inter-municipal agreement are expected to make up the difference along with other sources of private and program fee-based funding sources. A funding plan was approved by the partners to increase their level of municipal support from \$2.25 per capita to \$4.50 in 2003 and \$5.20 in 2004. The municipal partners, LARA and the executive director are making a diligent effort to meet these fiscal challenges through creative leadership, determination and hard work.

The community education programming is cost-effective, but there has been slow growth in inter-governmental agreements for facility use, which allows for expanded programming. The presence of other recreation entities in Lewisburg, and the unique character of the community that includes a private nonprofit liberal arts college, make market assessment for further revenue generation a challenge. This is not an uncommon problem and is one of several justifications for having a professional director.

There are many strong visions of how programming could be expanded and improved, and sorting through these will be like any other business start-up, a mix of successes and failures. The public budgeting process makes cash infusions difficult and the contributions from the municipalities in the past year are small but important signs of commitment.



LARA's leadership should be commended for the attention being paid to cost analysis while they go through this start-up phase. This fiscal astuteness is in line with today's best management practices.

Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) *continued*

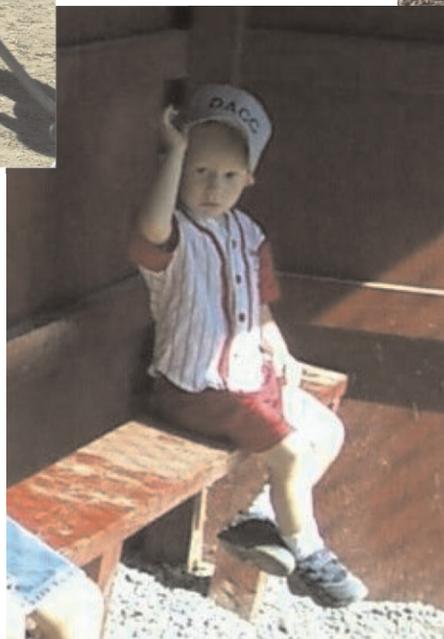
The pool is in desperate need of renovation. It is LARA's goal to undertake a \$1 million community pool and bathhouse renovation project with significant funding coming from private fund-raising efforts. The initial fund-raising efforts for the pool have been successful. The scheduling of a public hearing to present the renovation plan and cost is an indication the LARA leadership is committed to building community support.

In an effort to build community support for a coordinated recreation system, the LARA leadership continues to reach out to key community stakeholder groups. As those interviewed indicated, LARA is a work in progress. LARA is leading the way in inter-governmental cooperation, improving recreation facilities, and expanding community recreation program services.

Time Line:

December 1996	Peer-to-peer grant submitted to DCNR.
1997	Peer-to-peer study assessed potential for supporting a full-time recreation director.
July 1997	EUCRA merged with LARA.
October 1999	LARA submitted circuit rider grant to DCNR.
December 1999	Lewisburg Borough and East Buffalo Township adopted an inter-municipal agreement which lead to the official merging of EUCRA and LARA. LARA by-laws were amended to reflect new agreement provisions.
February 2000	Circuit rider grant funded and search for full-time director began.
May 2000	LARA hired an executive director and redefined its mission.
August 2000	Kelly Township joined LARA.
September 2000	LARA fall programs began which marked the beginning of year-round programming.
October 2000	LARA applied for grant funding (\$175,000) to DCNR for improvements to the community pool.
March 2001	LARA held public forum to discuss community wants and needs
April 2001	LARA extended invitation to Union Township and Lewisburg Area School District to join LARA. DCNR awarded LARA \$175,000 pool rehabilitation grant
August 2001	Pool fund-raising began.
October 2001	LARA submitted grant proposal to DCNR to complete a Regional Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan (See Key Phrases page 23). Lewisburg Borough and East Buffalo Township each contributed \$5,000 toward the match monies of grant project.
November 2001	Outdoor ice rink renovations began. Lewisburg Borough contributed \$2000 seed money; East Buffalo and Kelly townships followed and each contributed \$2000.
January 2002	Ice rink opened to great response.
June 2002	DCNR awarded LARA a \$20,000 Regional Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan Planning Grant (See Key Phrases page 23).

COMMUNITY RECREATION IN RURAL AREAS: Benefits and Keys to Success



Reflections on the Benefits of Community Recreation

A Sense of Community and Volunteer Support:

- Across each of the communities, one of the strongest and most consistent themes from the interviews was that the civic leaders involved or supporting recreation valued the sense of community that recreation created. The best evidence for this was the number of hours volunteers were willing to contribute and the monetary from average citizens, small businesses and corporations.

Belief in the Benefits of Recreation and Need to Give Back to their Community:

- Interestingly, some of the most active and skilled volunteer leaders were not individuals who would directly benefit from the services, but those who saw important meaning in what recreation provides to their community. Thus, an important leadership component came from individuals who had lived in an area for 25-50 years.
- At a public hearing for the LARA pool development, the sentiment was one of wanting to give back to the community. This was also true in East Lycoming Recreation Authority, Millville Park Commission, and Montour County Recreation Authority.

Spirit of Heritage and Need to Preserve and Continue Services for the Next Generation:

- There was a spirit of heritage and those who had benefitted from services in the past now wanted to see recreation and open space for the next generation. This suggests that one indirect benefit of community recreation is that it helps foster civic participation. The youth enjoying the fields, pools and trails today are civic leaders of tomorrow.

When describing the kinds of folks that regularly use the trails at Lime Bluff Recreation Area, Kurt Hausammann warmly smiled when he said,

“Some of our most regular users are groups of retired adults who walk several times a week.”



Volunteers putting in playground

Community Pride and Citizen Response:

- Whether civic leadership was carried out by volunteers, elected officials, or paid government employees, it reflected a sense of citizenship and community attachment uniquely generated through working on projects that involve the development of public parks, trails and recreation facilities.
- Especially compelling was the sense of pride from those who volunteered their time to provide recreation opportunities.
- Part of what served to fuel the pride that builds community was the citizen response to recreation events and opportunities. In Millville, the suggestion to accept donations at the summer concert series came from those attending the event. They enjoyed it so much they wanted to make a contribution.

Reflections on the Benefits of Community Recreation *continued*

Communities Who Invest in Parks Invest in the Overall Health of their Citizens:

- When the public sees children, youth and families enjoying recreation it reflects a healthy community. Research also supports the important role neighborhood recreation facilities and services play in the overall mental and physical well being of citizens.
- Several of the community leaders noted the positive role their parks played in providing citizens a safe place to exercise with their families.

Economic Benefits to Local Businesses and Catalyst for Tourism:

- On another level there are real economic issues associated with recreation services. Some of these recreation initiatives were associated with stimulating a sense of forward thinking that preserves the assets of a community. This is entrepreneurial thinking.
- Special events organized in communities benefit local businesses by providing spectators and spending opportunities for large groups of people to travel downtown or to other population centers to spend money on food, gear and over night accommodations, souvenirs, and accommodations.
- Such thinking often leads to unique public and private partnerships. Again, once individuals are aware of the investment, there is often a very strong response by citizens and civic leaders to help expand their recreation services.

One civic leader described the recreation entity as an “instrument” that...

“gets businesses and people to come in [to the area]. People look at real estate values, business and employment opportunities, school districts and available recreation that will help families develop and grow.”

James Finkler, East Lycoming Recreation Authority



Tourists such as Ken and Joyce Kieffer from New Cumberland, Pennsylvania have been returning to the Pine Creek Gorge area every fall since 1975 to hike, bike and explore the outdoors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Keys to Success

The communities highlighted in this study were able to successfully offer recreation services and facilities and also expand and enhance them. This is accomplished through the collective investment of community resources including tax dollars, donations and volunteer work. A key component of their success was their ability to successfully leverage local funding to receive state grant funding. Discussed below are the successful strategies these communities used to accomplish this. These strategies are practices that leaders in any community could adopt and tailor to the unique character of their region.

1. Regional Perspective and Intergovernmental Cooperation

To limit duplication of services and competition for community resources (both volunteers and funding) collective support from area municipalities and the local school district is essential. Elected officials working with each other and with leaders of non-public agencies produce results as seen in the four profiled organizations. In three of the profiles, East Lycoming Recreation Authority, Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority, and Montour County Recreation Authority, elected officials determined that the legal formation of an intergovernmental agency or authority was the best vehicle to work collectively. This organizational structure serves legal and functional purposes and also enables them to be an eligible applicant for grant funding from DCNR. Furthermore, it fosters a spirit of cooperation which must exist to efficiently provide recreation services. After all, most parks do not have gates or security personnel who conduct residency checks on park users. Parks are regional assets anybody can use.

In the minds of some civic leaders, inter-municipal cooperation may be viewed as one of the largest hurdles to overcome. It requires trust and time. However, cooperative agreements are also tied to one of the most pressing concerns facing local governments today--which is cost efficiency. It is cost prohibitive to build more than one local swimming pool in rural areas or for small municipalities to each build their own complex of soccer fields. Case in point was the rural communities in the East Lycoming Recreation Authority who, by themselves, are too small to build and maintain a 65-acre park.

“Be sure to build consensus, not just five percent of the community, not one half dozen movers and shakers, but a majority.”

Vincent DeCerchio, East Buffalo Township Supervisor

However, collectively these rural communities have successfully leveraged grant dollars with local matching funds to build Lime Bluff Recreation Area--a tremendous community asset that provides a safe place to walk, ride a bike, picnic, and play baseball or soccer.

Furthermore, when existing facilities such as school gymnasiums, pools and athletic fields can also be used for recreation services during non-school hours, the tax-paying citizen saves the cost of duplicating facilities elsewhere in the community and maximizes an existing *public investment*. After all, school buildings are built from public tax dollars, therefore, everyone in the community should have access to them.

In many situations building additional facilities is not needed. Rather, it requires coordinating the use of existing school athletic fields, classrooms and gymnasiums on evenings, weekends and during the summer months.



Diving practice at Lewisburg Borough Pool

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES *continued*

The challenge and commitment to building trust was evident in the interviews with many of those in leadership roles. There were also stories of past “turf wars” and rocky beginnings. To a certain extent these negative responses can be anticipated particularly when there is no shared vision and commitment to the need for recreation services.

Unfortunately, some collaborating community leaders or school officials feel burdened by the small extra effort cooperation requires. While there is no single strategy on how to deal with this situation, a number of successes were conveyed by those interviewed for this case study. First, the use of professional consultants can help mediate between groups and build support. Second, having skilled volunteers in the leadership positions of recreation agencies was also essential. These volunteers take a professional approach to coalition building and seem to know when to slow the process down or move ahead and let people “come on board” later. Finally, it appeared it was a better strategy to start small and build success than to start services on a larger scale. This is because, in most cases, starting on a large scale leaves little time for relationship building which is needed to sustain partnerships.

2. Community Needs Assessment: Citizen Input and Building Awareness

Recreation development cannot be haphazard and requires more than a few good ideas. It takes strategic planning and consensus building. Recreation initiatives need to be owned by the community and no project succeeds without a healthy amount of public input. A community needs assessment (DCNR's Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan, See Key Phrases page 23) and or site plan for park facilities was key to the success of all four communities profiled in this study. In many cases, the community decides to hire a professional planner or consultant to guide them through the process. A professionally conducted community needs assessment ensures that civic leaders are provided with an inventory of their community's existing recreation resources and a systematic survey of citizen opinions. At the completion of the needs assessment, the community receives a summary of recreation preferences and needs specific to their community. They are also given an action plan which provides priorities and a strategy with which to proceed.

“It requires a lot of involvement from volunteer leaders. It's very time consuming and a lot of work. When you look back on the whole picture though, and see how much it is appreciated, and how much people like it, that's where you get the drive to keep going.”

Sharon Kindt, Chairperson, Millville Park Commission

While there were excellent examples of this type of public input in all of the communities profiled, it was evident that it was easy to lose sight of the importance of this work. Ongoing public input might best be characterized as public relations. Public input doesn't stop with one citizen survey. It is an on-going process that needs to be nurtured and considered even after the park is fully developed. Parks and recreation programs are for people to use and enjoy for years, but require tax support. Some residents who do not take advantage of these services may have a negative reaction and question the use of tax dollars to support them. It is often hard for volunteers who continue to donate their time to hear such criticism. Providing the community with accurate information, promoting success stories, getting articles printed in the newspaper, and continuing to partner with community groups is important to long-term success. Successful inter-municipal organizations and boards never lose sight of the need to involve the public in the business of building strong recreation and park services.

3. Effective Civic Leaders and “Everyday Volunteers”

While technical and professional expertise is necessary for recreation developments to become a reality, the vital role of civic volunteer leaders cannot be overlooked. The communities presented here illustrate that when average citizens step forward and contribute to a worthwhile project, the whole community benefits. Some examples of this include the all-volunteer organizations of Millville Park Commission and East Lycoming Recreation Authority who are coordinating development projects in their parks. This work entails writing the grant applications, fund-raising for matching dollars, working with consultants and managing the grant paper work.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES *continued*

However, one must remember political ties and agendas of the civic leaders and monitor whether they are in line with the overall mission of the recreation organization. Recreation boards, commissions and authorities should have representation from not only recreation related special interest groups such as the Little League but also from local businesses, senior citizen organizations, school district board or parent teacher groups. Organizations highlighted in this document all have representation from a variety of key civic leaders in their community.

4. Soliciting Dollar Support and Leveraging Resources

The recreation organizations profiled in this study solicited dollar support and leveraged resources from multiple sources to serve the recreation and conservation needs of their communities. Their abilities to solicit dollar support and leverage resources enabled them to build new facilities and/or enhance existing facilities, sponsor special events, hire consultants to facilitate consensus building to determine and prioritize local recreation needs and streamline duplicated services. Families, civic groups, small business owners, foundations, and corporations all have made an investment in community recreation. Resource contributions, whether dollars, in-kind services, or human resources, are pooled so that each contributing stakeholder and the taxpayers get more for each dollar spent.

For example, PPL Corporation, a local foundation, and various civic clubs supported East Lycoming Recreation Authority's (ELRA) development of Lime Bluff Recreation Area. ELRA's Lime Bluff Recreation Area project has many partners who donated in-kind services or materials as well as financial contributions from supporting municipalities. ELRA used these contributions to leverage DCNR grant funds. These include but are not limited to: PPL Corporation donated fill material for the park; donation of parkland from Mrs. Weaver and the local school district donation of the railroad right-of-way for a trail in the park. It was easier to convince Wolf Township supervisors to provide mowing services after such support was generated.

Millville Park Commission (MPC) was able to successfully obtain \$10,000 from Millville School District and \$10,000 from local fund-raising efforts. MPC negotiated for PPL Corporation to install their Victorian streetlights in the Millville Community Park.

With initial financial support from the Montour County Commissioners to match DCNR's grant money, the Montour County Recreation Authority was able to hire a consultant to develop a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan. The planning process resulted in the cohesion of civic leaders interested in carrying out the recommendations of this plan. One of the highest priority recommendations of their plan was the development of the J. Manley Robbins Trail. MCRA used \$23,000 of DCNR money to match \$114,000 of PennDOT's TEA-21 enhancement funding to develop this trail. Additionally, Merck Pharmaceuticals and PPL Corporation also contributed financially to the trail project.

Finally, the municipal partners of Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority contributed towards the funding of the shared services of their professional recreation director through DCNR's Circuit Rider Program, as well as, towards the 50 percent match requirements for their Recreation, Park and Open Space planning grant (See Key Phrases page 23). The ability of LARA to garner monetary support from the municipalities in their service region has been key to the success of their ability to obtain grant money and, in so doing, offer recreation services to their community.

Therefore, all of the four recreation organizations studied in this document (ELRA, MPC, MCRA, and LARA) are successful in meeting the recreation and conservation needs of their communities. They take advantage of community resources in their multi-municipal service region to obtain monetary and/or in-kind support to leverage grant funding.

"Well, this area has been my home for about 50 years. I had the land to donate. I wanted to conserve some of it and I wanted to do something for the community."

Charolette Weaver, Land Donation for Lime Bluff Recreation Area,
Managed by East Lycoming Recreation Authority.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES *continued*

5. Combining Free (Tax Supported) and Fee-based Recreation Programs to Support Recreation Programs and Facilities

Generally, successful recreation organizations need to use a mix of free (tax-supported) and fee-based recreation programs and facilities to sustain a well-rounded community recreation program. While some civic leaders and citizens prefer that municipal services be funded using a strict interpretation of the “those who most directly benefit should pay” strategy, such a one-sided approach has limitations. Conversely, fiscal reality dictates that some priorities must be set because the funding base is not a limitless reservoir of money. A solid mix of both free (tax supported) and fee-based recreation services is needed for a quality, accessible, well-rounded, and financially viable community recreation program.

Tax supported funds are typically used toward those *free (tax supported)* recreation programs and facilities which benefit the community as a whole. These services are free to the public with no user-fee charged. Walking paths, parks, playgrounds, open fields, and free tennis courts, picnic areas, and streams for fishing are assets that citizens can enjoy on their own without a user fee charge. These areas are defined as much by their use as the opportunities and experiences they provide. Grandparents can take their grandchildren to the playground, youth can play frisbee in the open field, working adults can jog from home or work, the community may gather together for parades and festivals, and natural areas and scenic views provide citizens with a sense of place and attachment. These community recreation amenities are benefits that can be experienced and appreciated by everyone.

In contrast, *fee-based recreation programs* refer to services where participants pay a fee to participate in the program. Tennis lessons, classes for aerobics, yoga, adult community education (e.g., gardening or tying fishing flies), and adult sport leagues are good examples. Another example is paying a membership fee at a public community pool. Fee-based programs are services where it is expected that users pay their fair share of the cost and pay a fee to participate.

However, it should be noted that all programs do incur costs and are paid for either through municipal funding sources, private sources or a combination of both. The extent the general public has to pay to participate or not is dependent on many factors. Typically free programs (tax-supported) and facilities are not structured activities, do not involve the hiring of additional professional staff and have low maintenance costs. Fee-based programs are typically organized activities often led by a professional staff person. LARA is a multi-municipal organization that has pooled its resources and hired a recreation and park professional. One of the professional's roles is to provide a comprehensive set of fee-based programs. When promoting the idea of a regional inter-municipal organization or board to local municipalities, one must instill the benefits of recreation and parks services as not a luxury but as a necessity for the community. Ultimately, the amount of capital investment a community is willing to provide to support recreation programs and facilities will determine the capacity of the inter-municipal organization to successfully provide and or enhance recreation programs and services.

6. Managing the Budget

The growth of recreation services happens best when it occurs in concert with realistic fiscal goals. The community projects profiled in this booklet came about because the leadership took measured steps to stay within their means. As those involved with these developments indicated, it was a slow process, however it resulted in sound fiscal management.

If there was one area that was not adequately addressed in these recreation developments, it was forecasting operational and maintenance expenses. While all communities advanced a sound democratic approach to planning for development, few addressed or forecasted operational costs or maintenance expenses at the same time they planned for capital improvements. It may be that the development work was viewed as so important that only the immediate construction costs were addressed. In some cases, it may even be unrealistic to expect volunteer leaders to do much more than the work that is described in each profile. Nonetheless, sustainability and addressing long-term maintenance are important issues that should be addressed long before a facility's opening ceremony.

CONCLUSIONS

The recreation organizations reviewed in this study reflect best practices. Perhaps foremost on the list of criteria was a well-planned strategic vision accompanied with a clear understanding of existing services and a partnership with the leaders of those organizations. Recreation is considered an investment, an asset that the municipalities “owned.” As the benefits illustrate, recreation pays future dividends in multiple ways. The individuals involved with these recreation developments have learned some important lessons. First, there was a fair amount of support for community recreation and many were pleased with their fund-raising endeavors. Second, collaboration is hard but necessary work. And finally, the partnership approach and seeking multiple sources of funding extends the amount of time it takes to bring a good idea to fruition.

Under the fiscal constraint of municipal government it is often easy to focus on the short-term most essential services. “Heal thy communities, however, manage *today* with an eye on the *future*.” This means taking stock of a community's investments (e.g., tax base, open space, economic diversity, quality schools, civic participation), monitoring future trends and demographics, and strategically allocating resources to those community services that support “a good quality of life.”

KEY PHRASES

Master Site Plan: A site specific-project that includes research, public input and an analysis process that leads to a size, type and location plan for the full development or redevelopment of a park or other recreational-use site. The plan should meet all current standards, and provide for the identified recreation priorities of the community to the maximum extent possible.

Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan: Under DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Grant Program, it is a municipal, county or regional-based plan that identifies the methods, resources, organizational capacity and capital investment needed to accomplish both the short-term and long-term recreation, parks, and open space goals of the community. The planning process includes substantial citizen involvement, inventory of existing conditions and facilities, analysis of issues and community needs and specific recommendations that set forth actions, priorities, and cost.

Peer-to-Peer study: Under DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Grant Program, this grant program provides funds to hire a peer (recreation and parks professional) to assist municipalities and other local groups to improve their park, recreation and conservation services through a collaborative

process. The peer hired works closely with community leaders to facilitate the forming of an new inter-municipal agency or determine how to improve the management of a pool or community center, or provide park and recreation board training and development.

Circuit Rider: Under DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Grant Program, this grant program provides funds for regional organizations to hire a professional full-time recreation and park director to initiate new programs and services for municipalities and organizations that individually do not have the financial resources to hire a professional staff person. The intended result of such a hiring is to meet their recreation and park, trail and/or conservation needs. To be eligible for circuit rider funding, two or more municipalities must cooperate in a new inter-municipal governmental effort by adopting an inter-municipal agreement following procedures outlined in Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Law. A peer-to-peer study is required in most situations before approving an application for circuit rider funding.

Appendix A COMMUNITY PROFILES CHART

	East Lycoming Recreational Authority (ELRA)	Millville Park Commission (MPC)
Service Area and Population	Boroughs: Hughesville (<i>pop.</i> 2220), Picture Rocks (<i>pop.</i> 693) Townships: Franklin (<i>pop.</i> 915), Jordan (<i>pop.</i> 878), Mill Creek (<i>pop.</i> 572), Penn (<i>pop.</i> 900), Shrewsbury (<i>pop.</i> 433), and Wolf (<i>pop.</i> 2707) East Lycoming School District	Borough: Millville Borough (<i>pop.</i> 991) Townships: Greenwood (<i>pop.</i> 1932), Madison (<i>pop.</i> 1590) and Pine (<i>pop.</i> 1092) Millville Area School District
Participating Members (provide cash or in-kind contributions)	Boroughs: Hughesville and Picture Rocks Townships: Jordan, Mill Creek, Picture Rocks, Shrewsbury, and Wolf	Borough: Millville Borough Townships: Greenwood, Madison, and Pine
Governance Structure and Annual Contribution	Inter-governmental authority: 2 representatives from Hughesville Borough (\$2000) 2 representatives from Picture Rocks Borough (\$500) 2 representatives from Wolf Township (\$8000 + in-kind services) 1 representative from Jordan Township 1 representative from Mill Creek Township 1 representative from Shrewsbury Township 1 school district representative serves as an ex-officio member	13 Member volunteer committee appointed by Borough Council Representatives from: Millville Borough (\$1,000), and Townships of Greenwood, Madison, and Pine
Park Development and Operations	ELRA owns the Lime Bluff Recreation Area and is responsible for development, operations, and maintenance. Volunteers maintain the park with assistance from Wolf Township's public works staff (municipality where the park is located). The East Lycoming School District leased ELRA a right-of-way to link school athletic fields to the park	Millville Borough owns and maintains the 7-acre Millville Borough Park. The Commission oversees and supports renovation efforts for the tennis and basketball courts, picnic pavilion, small open fields, and children's playground and is responsible for park programs. The Commission developed a park master site plan with assistance from consultants to identify needed improvements and raised local funds to install 18 Victorian streetlights around the park.
Current Services/Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 acre park with walking/biking trails, multi-use athletic field, pavilion, and parking lot Wolf Township Secretary handles scheduling of pavilion use Holds walking and biking fund raising events ELRA board approves all scheduling of special events 	The Commission schedules pavilion use and organize these park programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 summer concerts at the park gazebo Christmas in the park: One day celebration with music, food and community tree decorating Summer Children's camps held for one week from 8:30-11:30 am (sports/tennis/general camps) Supports the area volunteer fire companies via Millville Carnival that is held at the park
Future Projects	Developing the first 9 holes of disc golf course, increasing parking lot size, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, benches along the trails. (Restrooms under consideration.)	Major renovation of tennis courts
Funding Strategies	<p>Phase 1: \$301,000: Trails, access drive, and parking area: \$11,000 local funds (PERC); \$145,000 value of land donation; \$145,000 DCNR grant</p> <p>Phase 2: \$90,080: Athletic field, trail link to school, pavilion: \$15,000 value of trail link donations; \$32,000 PPL in-kind donation; \$1,080 High School Tech Class labor to build pavilion in-kind construction; \$42,000 DCNR Grant</p> <p>Phase 3: \$180,000: more trails, Frisbee golf, picnic tables, horseshoe pit: \$50,000 local fund raising \$40,000 Williamsport Lycoming Foundation; \$15,000 PPL in-kind donation; \$75,000 DCNR grant</p>	<p>Phase 1: \$70,000: Total replacement of playground Equipment--to be completed in May of 2003 \$30,000 local funds (including school district \$40,000 DCNR grant</p> <p>Phase 2: \$60,000: Complete overhaul of tennis courts including subsurface drainage, new black top surface with green acrylic overlay, replacement of nets and perimeter fencing to \$20,000 local funds; \$40,000 DCNR grant</p>
Yearly Operating Budget	Park is still under development and a firm operating budget number was not available. Fund raising has supported park development, \$10,500 has been committed annually from member municipalities for park maintenance and in-kind services are provided by Wolf Township and community groups.	Millville Borough allocates \$1,000 per year and mows, plows snow and cleans restrooms. Some monies are generated from contributions by Civic Clubs and pavilion rental fees. MPC is responsible for all out of pocket cost, the largest of which is the electric bill. Overall annual operating cost averages \$2,000.
Contact Information	Kurt Hausammann, Jr. Chair, ELRA Wolf Township Building 695 Rte. 405 Hwy. Hughesville, PA 17737 Phone: 570-584-2672 Fax: 570-584-3640 email: khausammann@lyco.org	Murray Holdren, Secretary Millville Borough 136 Morehead Avenue P.O. Box 30 Millville, PA 17846 Borough Office: 570-458-5709 Sharon Kindt, Chair, Millville Park Commission 570-458-5082

Montour County Recreation Authority (MCRA)		Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA)																																					
Service Area and Population	All municipalities in Montour County (2 boroughs and 9 townships) for a total county population of 21,286. Also includes the Danville Area School District and the Warrior Run School District in Northumberland County. <i>*Note:</i> Riverside Borough and Rush Township are located in Northumberland County but are included in MCRA.	Boroughs: East Buffalo (<i>pop.</i> 5730), Lewisburg (<i>pop.</i> 5620) Townships: Buffalo (<i>pop.</i> 3207), Kelly (<i>pop.</i> 4502), Union (<i>pop.</i> 1427) School District: Lewisburg Area School District																																					
Participating Members (provide cash or in-kind contributions)	Board membership includes representatives from: Danville Borough; Mahoning Township; Merck Pharmaceuticals; PPL Corporation; Danville School District; Geisinger Medical Center; Danville Area Community Center; Friends of the J. Manley Robbins Trail; and Pine Barn Inn.	Lewisburg Borough, East Buffalo Township, Kelly Township																																					
Governance Structure and Annual Contribution	The Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space plan recommends: a 20-member board appointed by the Montour County Commissioners. Governance structure & municipal and county funding support were being negotiated. Danville Borough contributes \$1,600, Mahoning Township contributes \$4,000 and the County contributes \$10,000. Valley Township and Danville Area School District provide in-kind service.	Inter-governmental authority: each member has four representatives, one elected official and three community members, all serve for five years. East Buffalo Township (\$12,180), Lewisburg Borough (\$12,434), Kelly Township (\$7,308) Lewisburg Area School District provides indoor usage of gymnasium and classrooms for various programs.																																					
Park Development and Operations	Comprehensive Plan recommends partnerships between the county, municipalities, non-profit groups, and businesses to maintain and operate County owned J. Manley Robbins Trail and Hess fields.	Municipal parks are owned and operated by respective municipalities. LARA maintains and operates the Lewisburg area pool and ice rink. LARA is coordinating the grant administration and fundraising for the pool renovation project and the Comprehensive Regional Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan.																																					
Current Services/Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Montour County Comprehensive Recreation Park and Open Space Plan • Coordination of the various recreation organizations • Management of present grant projects including trail construction, peer study, and future circuit rider • Serving as a clearinghouse and sounding board for countywide recreation and park issues • Maintaining the J. Manley Robbins Trail and Hess Soccer Fields 	LARA operates the pool in the summer and ice rink in the winter. LARA provides a variety of recreation/community education programs including: gymnastics, tae kwon do, children's crafts, swimming lessons, basic boating and watercraft safety, bus trips and tours, ballroom dancing, horseback riding lessons, dog obedience, computer training, US sailing, scrap book making, adult basketball, tennis and volleyball; yoga, and Lacrosse. Also coordinates the indoor usage schedules of various youth & adults programs in Lewisburg Area School District facilities.																																					
Future Projects	Complete the J. Manley Robbins Bike Trail. Finalize the inter-governmental governance structure through the peer study and apply for DCNR funding to hire a full-time recreation and park professional to manage county/local recreation facilities and services. When funding is in place, hire the full-time recreation professional.	Completing the pool renovation project and comprehensive planning effort will take several years. These are top agency priorities.																																					
Funding Strategies	<p>\$30,000—Develop a Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan: \$15,000 Montour County; \$15,000-DCNR grant</p> <p>\$137,000—Begin development of J. Manley Robbins Trail: \$114,000 Penn DOT TEA-21 enhancement grant; \$23,000 DCNR grant</p> <p>\$8,250—Peer study to determine financial intergovernmental structure and staffing support for projects under development: \$750 Montour County; \$7,500 DCNR grant</p>	<p>\$8,250—1996 peer study to restructure existing authority into LARA: \$750 Participating municipalities, county and school district \$7,500 DCNR grant</p> <p>\$35,000—DCNR 1st year circuit rider grant with funding over 4 years at sliding scale</p> <p>\$1,000,000—Pool renovation project: \$175,000 local fund raising efforts; \$175,000 DCNR grant</p> <p>\$40,000—Comprehensive regional park, recreation and open space plan with community center feasibility study: \$20,000 from member municipalities; \$20,000 DCNR grant</p>																																					
Yearly Operating Budget	As a reorganized authority, MCRA doesn't yet have a firm annual operating budget. MCRA is focused on fundraising and managing operations at Hess Fields. MCRA receives annual support of \$1,600 from Danville Borough and \$10,000 from Montour County. Negotiations are underway to determine how best to fund proposed projects, and which municipalities want to formally participate and municipal contribution level. Plan recommends contributions from the County Tourism Tax, local municipalities, local businesses, Geisinger Hospital, Merck Pharmaceuticals, PPL Corporation as well as local fund raising efforts.	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Revenue</th> <th colspan="2">Expense</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>East Buffalo Twp.</td> <td>\$12,180</td> <td>Administrative</td> <td>\$79,286</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lewisburg Boro.</td> <td>\$12,434</td> <td>Community Pool</td> <td>\$62,090</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kelly Twp.</td> <td>\$ 7,308</td> <td><u>Recreation Program</u></td> <td><u>\$36,109</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>DCNR Circuit Rider Grant</td> <td>\$33,740</td> <td>Total</td> <td>\$177,485</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>\$22,681</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community Pool Fees</td> <td>\$50,446</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Program Fees</u></td> <td><u>\$41,567</u></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>\$180,356</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Revenue		Expense		East Buffalo Twp.	\$12,180	Administrative	\$79,286	Lewisburg Boro.	\$12,434	Community Pool	\$62,090	Kelly Twp.	\$ 7,308	<u>Recreation Program</u>	<u>\$36,109</u>	DCNR Circuit Rider Grant	\$33,740	Total	\$177,485	Other	\$22,681			Community Pool Fees	\$50,446			<u>Program Fees</u>	<u>\$41,567</u>			Total	\$180,356		
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Contact Information	Robert Andrews, MCRA chair Grove Presbyterian Church 332 Bloom Road Danville, PA 17821 (570) 275-1965 Email: revrjandrews@aol.com	Greg Weitzel, Executive Director P.O. Box 532 Lewisburg, PA 17837 Phone: 570-524-4774 Fax: 570-524-9559 Website: www.goLARA.org Email: gaw@goLARA.org																																					

About the Funding Partners

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) is the principal state organization promoting recreation and park training, networking and leadership opportunities for those working and volunteering in the field. Members include professionals who manage municipal recreation and park systems and state parks, citizen members of recreation and parks boards, and therapeutic recreation professionals working in health care settings.

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation provides grants and technical assistance to support conservation, recreation and open space projects across Pennsylvania. The bureau serves as a leader in establishing community conservation partnerships for advancing the greening of Pennsylvania, protecting the Commonwealth's natural and heritage resources, and providing recreational opportunities for all Pennsylvanians and visitors to enjoy.





SUCCESS

“To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived; this is to have succeeded.”

Attributed

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

1803-1882

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Edward G. Rendell, Governor
Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Michael DiBerardinis, Secretary
Bureau of Recreation & Conservation

