

## Vision of the

### Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape:

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:

- 1: **Land Conservation & Restoration** - Conserve critical landscapes, restore degraded habitats including stream corridors, and promote best management practices
- 2: **Outdoor Recreation & Trail Connections** - Connect people to greenway and trail opportunities to promote healthy living, recreation, and the region's green assets
- 3: **Community Revitalization** – Support community revitalization through green infrastructure that enhances the quality of life
- 4: **Local Education & Outreach** – Promote understanding of our natural environment and its benefits to our communities

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### 2018 Lehigh Valley Greenways Action Plan

Note: D&L will administer an application round for 2018 Lehigh Valley Greenways mini grants 1/29 – 3/2/18. Mini grant requests often help advance our annual work plan.

#### Promote Awareness of Greenways Partnership – 15% increase in LVG website events

- Strengthen conservation landscape branding through creation of “Proud to be a Lehigh Valley Greenways partner” resources (tabletop sign, window clings, widget for partner websites).
- Create and distribute guidelines for use of the logo, an updated Lehigh Valley Greenways fact sheet and an action brochure to distribute to the public.
- Generate 15% increase (total 160+) in partner events posted on the online calendar.
- Create a short informational video about Lehigh Valley Greenways.
- Provide 4 articles for municipalities to use in newsletters and to promote on the website.
- The Partnership will support the Eastern PA Greenways & Trails Summit highlighting Lehigh Valley projects on October 1-2, 2018.

#### Land Protection – preserve 150 more natural acres and 1,500 more agricultural acres

- Promote municipal adoption of official maps through mini grant funding (goal = 2).
- Advocate for open space funding in both counties following actions outlined in each of the county Liveable Landscapes Plans.
- Expand existing preserves by adding 75 acres.
- Implement Lehigh River Watershed Plan property ranking by conserving 5 of the high ranking properties in the conservation landscape.
- Acquire Tekening Trails property in Lower Mount Bethel Township.
- Educate the public about importance of land conservation:
  - Present to the Hazard Mitigation group
  - Continue to utilize Return on Environment for data and public presentations
- Support conservancy partners with the Kittatinny Ridge project through landowner outreach, encouraging more municipal partnerships, and promoting importance of the ridge.

### **Environmental Restoration – restore 100 acres and 3 miles of stream during 2018-2019**

- Hold monthly meetings of Riparian Buffer Task Force to agree on the vision and messaging, improve coordination, increase funding and completed projects, track metrics, and hold a fall Lehigh Valley one-day buffer summit to share BMPs and success stories.
- Implement at least 12 of the 2018 priority buffer projects.
- Attend DCNR’s two-day buffer summit (2/28-3/1) and debrief on learnings that could be implemented with our LV initiative.
- With Wildlands Conservancy’s leadership, update the Lehigh Valley preliminary buffer assessment using the best available mapping to examine further lands owned by golf courses, school districts, and municipalities with MS4 requirements.
- Develop a collaborative strategy to implement CREP in the LV.
- Discuss with LVPC an evaluation of municipal land development regulations and practices regarding the protection of existing riparian buffers for 2019 (ex. no net loss of buffers).

### **Trails and Bicycle/Pedestrian Connections – open 2 new miles of trail and close 2 key gaps**

- Close Lehigh Valley Trail Gap #5A: D&L Trail Dry Run Pedestrian Bridge (0.1 mile), Gap #8 Karl Stirner Arts Trail to Palmer Township Bike Path, and a portion of Gap #2C Jordan Greenway (0.8 miles).
- Support the Lehigh Valley Bicycle Pedestrian Plan being created by LVPC.
- Complete branding and marketing plan for Lehigh Valley Trail Network and establish a coalition of regional partners to develop the network and start to implement the brand in 2018.
- Tasks for the regional trail coalition:
  - Review Lehigh Valley Trail Gaps Strategy Report and establish “prioritization pipeline” for tracking trail projects. Set framework for a mapping portal available to trail partners and start to prioritize new gaps.
  - Hold a debrief partner meeting to review feedback received from Norfolk Southern Railroad 12/2017 communication and develop a priority work plan for future railroad projects and communication.
  - Establish sign badges and standardization for Lehigh Valley Trail Network.
- Establish structure for a “point person” on Lehigh Valley trail projects for planning and potential funding.

### **Education & Engagement – involve a more inclusive audience in the outdoors and environmental education**

- Engage LV Center for Independent Living in the partnership.
- Build and utilize a funnel program for audience from Community Bike Works.
- Keep inclusion up front in Lehigh Valley Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan.
- Continue recruiting and training Color of Nature leaders to prepare them for conservation jobs.
- Continue to support the Master Watershed Steward program development, and look for opportunities to engage MWS volunteers in partner organizations and projects.
- Compile a list of organizations not currently involved in the partnership that are already engaging more inclusive audiences.
- Add a job and internship board to the Greenways website.
- The Partnership will help promote the Lehigh and Delaware Sojourns to get more students and their families experiencing the two rivers.