



REC & CON-VERSATION NEWSLETTER

Conservation Landscape Initiative Update

Work on the Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI) is focused on three goals for 2009-2010:

1. **Telling the Story** - We are working to develop a more sophisticated public engagement strategy. Ted Eubanks with Fermata, Inc. has been working with DCNR most recently in the Pocono's and South Mountain CLI's to pursue new communication tools.
2. **Evaluation of the Work** - program evaluation of all CLI's is being completed by OMG, Inc. with an extended look at the PA Wilds and the Lehigh Valley Greenways.
3. **Expanding the Practice** - this piece has three components: expanding the approach within DCNR, advancing our work with sister agencies and deepening the work with partner organizations to help advance the work in each landscape.



Highlights of collaborative projects that leverage funding in each of the CLIs are:

Laurel Highlands:

- As part of the Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for Ohiopyle Borough and State Park, two implementation grants have been secured:
 - \$1.3 million from "Green Reserve" from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for Ohiopyle Green Infrastructure project to install pervious pavement, rain barrels and other features to manage stormwater.
 - \$1,920,000 from PennDOT's Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative Program to improve the Route 381 corridor through the Borough and the State Park.
- Final draft of a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for all the Laurel Ridge state parks, Forbes State Forest, and partner sites is complete.

Lehigh Valley Greenways:

- City of Bethlehem will receive \$1,640,000 through PennDOT's Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative Program to complete components of the South Bethlehem Greenway.
- \$40,000 in federal funding for the Lehigh County Nature Preserve Nature Center for green roof and associated items.
- The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has completed a package of four natural resource ordinances and is now training elected officials on use of these ordinances.

Lower Susquehanna:

- Work continues on securing control of vital riverfront lands along the Lower Susquehanna. The CLI team is working with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on possible agreements with dam owners. In addition, the Department of Community and Economic Development is providing funding for a new farmers market in Columbia and a Turkey Hill ice cream tasting facility is also being developed.
- Columbia Borough is renovating their Riverfront Park and developing new boat docks, canoe and kayak launch areas, and pedestrian walkways.
- Manor Township in Lancaster County is acquiring 6 miles of the low-grade rail road corridor adjacent to the Susquehanna River.

Pocono's Forests & Waters

- Since the inception of this CLI more than 20,000 acres have been protected in this landscape.
- Recently acquired the Blue Ridge Lehigh Tract; an addition to the Lackawanna State Forest District that will add over 2.5 miles of Lehigh River frontage for public access. A new "woodnet" program is being piloted by Delaware Highlands Conservancy. The concept is similar to local community supported agriculture programs, but for wood products.

Schuylkill Highlands:

- The Request For Proposal for the Compatible Economic Development Study from Valley Forge National Park to Reading and communities around French Creek State Park has recently gone out for advertisement. This study is funded by DCNR and DCED and will focus on business development opportunities in these Schuylkill River trail towns and park gateway towns.
- Two major sites are being acquired that will add to the lands of French Creek State Park totaling more than 200 acres. This will provide links from the state park to adjacent trails.

South Mountain:

- The White Rocks Project would secure over 1,000 acres of land in Cumberland County adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. This project has been designed by the key Congressional committee for federal funding in the proposed 2010 federal budget.
- Sales Agreement for Greene Township, Franklin County park expansion signed. The new park land will be used for environmental education outdoor classrooms.
- Planning is underway for a South Mountain Summit to be held in the spring to bring partners, local government and citizens together to focus on the assets of this region.

PA Wilds:

- Lycoming County received \$427,000 from the PennDOT's PCTI program to extend the Pine Creek trail through the Borough of Jersey Shore and provide a linkage to the Susquehanna Riverfront.
- Check out the new website launched by the PA Wilds www.pawildsresources.org