

## VIII. MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

### A. Implementation Projects

The recommended projects are provided in Tables VIII-1 through VIII-12: Management Options to Restore, Enhance & Protect the Lower West Branch Corridor. The number of recommended implementation projects for each resource category are as follows:

- Conservation & Natural Resources (40)
- Economic Development (20)
- Education (16)
- Flooding & Floodplain Management (14)
- Historic Preservation (26)
- Planning & Zoning (28)
- Sports & Recreation (44)
- Viewscapes (10)
- Water Quality (31)
- Water Safety (21)
- Water Resource Use (12)

As could be expected, the Sports & Recreation, Conservation & Natural Resources, Water Quality and Historic Preservation resource categories were of most concern to citizens, municipalities and stakeholders in the study corridor and offered the most opportunities for implementation projects. This reflects the general population's appreciation of the historical and cultural heritage of the study corridor's past and their current treasure of natural resources that provide many opportunities for conservation, recreation, and tourism. Of course all of the resource categories are important to the Lower West Branch Susquehanna River Conservation Plan and many of the recommended implementation projects are related to or compliment each other. As such, a list of early implementation projects has been identified and provided in subsection C below. Please note prioritization of projects will not impact future funding of DCNR grants. We will consider any project listed in the management options regardless of their priority.

As seen in Tables VIII-1 through VIII-12, for each Management Option within a resource category there is at least one, or in many cases, several specific implementation projects. The lead partners are also listed in this table. Specific funding sources for financing the projects and achieving the recommended goals are also provided. In some cases, implementation projects may require an act of legislation, planning, rezoning, and updating ordinances while others require implementing better education, tourism or business ideas. The latter require more of a community effort towards reaching the same common goals rather than funding. Buy in and support from citizens, municipalities and stakeholders is crucial to implementing any of the projects or concepts in the River Conservation Plan. Section IX discusses the Greenway

Element, which is one of the larger implementation projects in the Lower West Branch Susquehanna River Conservation Plan. The recommended actions and strategies for implementing the proposed projects are described in greater detail in Subsections B and C below.

INSERT TABLE VIII-1 to VIII-12 (27 PAGES)





















































## **B. Recommended Action Steps**

Once the Plan has been publicly endorsed and approved by the State Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), the Steering Committee should move forward with a handful of priority projects that are guaranteed “success stories” – projects that are popular with the community and funding agencies involved. Demonstrating early results will build credibility for the Conservation Plan and for the stakeholder organizations that have dedicated time and resources to the effort. Other recommended actions are as follows:

### **1. Develop an Outreach Program**

Because an overwhelming majority of land within the study Corridor is under private ownership, the Steering Committee has little *direct* control over plan implementation. In light of this reality, the Steering Committee will need to develop outreach programs that speak to the benefits of individual stewardship. To ensure that conservation initiatives remain a priority at the local level, municipal and county governments should be encouraged to adopt the River Conservation Plan as an amendment to their comprehensive plans. Promotional materials highlighting the economic, environmental, and social benefits of river conservation should be distributed to businesses in the watershed, particularly those that depend upon water for their livelihood.

### **2. Prepare an Annual Work Plan**

Many municipalities utilize Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) to prioritize public improvements that require multi-year budgetary commitments. Because CIPs reflect community priorities, they provide a mechanism for comprehensive plan implementation. They typically have a long-term time horizon (5-6 years) and are regularly updated to reflect emerging needs and fiscal constraints. The first year of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is referred to as the capital budget and is closely coordinated with a municipality’s annual operating budget. Although project priorities may change from year to year, capital improvement programming provides a *formalized* process for decision-making. It avoids a piecemeal approach to community planning that can serve as a model for the River Conservation Plan. It is recommended that the Implementation Committee develop an Annual Work Plan and establish benchmarks to monitor progress.

### **3. Formalize Committee Structure**

To ensure that the issues do not languish on the planning room floor, the Steering Committee needs to establish a framework that supports ongoing public involvement. A permanent committee structure can heighten the River Conservation Plan’s visibility within the Corridor. Funding organizations look favorably upon projects that incorporate stakeholder participation and that demonstrate an ability to leverage local funding and in-kind resources. Instead of competing for limited grant dollars to undertake piecemeal projects, partner organizations can undertake larger-scale projects that deliver visible results in the Corridor.

#### **4. Hire a Greenway Coordinator**

The first year of project implementation will be a critical time period for the Steering Committee and any newly established committees. To maintain active stakeholder involvement, the Steering Committee must demonstrate that the River Conservation Plan is an action-oriented document that delivers on-the-ground results. To achieve this objective, the Steering Committee must have the time and resources available to focus upon project implementation. Yet, like many non-profit organizations, the Conservancy and the Steering Committee must manage their responsibilities with limited staff and administrative support. Dedicating a staff person to this effort is a luxury many non-profit organizations cannot afford. For this reason, it is recommended that the Conservancy and the Steering Committee seek grant assistance and/or foundational support for a Greenway Coordinator. The Greenway Coordinator would have extensive experience working with river conservation/greenway projects and would be responsible for advancing a handful of early implementation projects.

#### **5. Affiliate the Program with a Local University or College**

Because grant funding tends to be project specific and limited in nature, it will be important for the Steering Committee to identify a dedicated funding source that can sustain the Greenway Coordinator position over the long-term. The Steering Committee is encouraged to work with local universities and colleges that can provide office space, staff support, salary, and benefits for the Greenway Coordinator position. This position could be jointly funded by the Conservancy, the Steering Committee and the academic institution to minimize the financial burden placed upon any one agency. This partnership can deliver multiple benefits:

- Reliable Funding  
Most grant programs require applicants to demonstrate how their grant will leverage local resources to sustain the activity in subsequent years. The Steering Committee will need to demonstrate how it intends to maintain the Greenway Coordinator position over the long-term. A university or college partnership can help achieve that goal
- Educational Opportunities  
By affiliating the River Conservation program with a local college or university, the Steering Committee gains access to a network of professionals and students that might benefit from outdoor classroom opportunities, demonstration projects, and internship opportunities.
- Network of Resources  
By affiliating with an academic institution, the Steering Committee may be able to step beyond the funding opportunities currently available. This partnership could provide particularly beneficial for advancing some of the research-oriented projects, such as invasive species management, wildlife studies, and water quality monitoring.

**6. Sponsor a Corridor Summit**

Upon finalization of the Annual Work Plan, the Implementation Committee should organize a regional conference. Sponsored by various partner agencies, this conference provides an opportunity to raise public awareness and recognize progress. Use this opportunity to acknowledge businesses, communities, and organizations that have demonstrated good stewardship of river resources. Invite keynote speakers to talk about issues that the organization will be focusing upon in the coming year. This ‘annual review’ keeps the project in the public eye.

**7. Consider Establishing a Dedicated Funding Pool**

As the Saginaw Case Study demonstrates, a funding pool can enable contributors – large and small – to leverage their resources while supporting projects that meet their strategic objectives. In addition to the region’s Community Foundations, there are several private foundations and companies – both regional and national in scope – that support conservation projects (See Table 1-3 of the Technical Document). Businesses with NPDES-permitted facilities, Superfund/CERCLA sites, or businesses that are listed on the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) should be considered for inclusion in a targeted membership/fundraising campaign.

**C. Early Implementation Strategy**

The Lower West Branch River Conservation Plan provides a strategic framework for promoting sustainable development within the Corridor. Because the plan was developed with broad-based public input, State and Federal agencies may utilize the document when evaluating requests for funding. The Steering Committee selected these early implementation projects (presented in Table VIII-13) after careful consideration of the following: (1) **Public Support** as documented via stakeholder interviews, municipal questionnaires, and public meetings; (2) **Commitment of Lead Partners**; (3) **Funding Availability**; (4) **Political Support**; and (5) **Project Readiness**. Additional supporting information on the River Conservation Plan’s early implementation strategy can be found in Section 1 of the Technical Document.

**INSERT TABLE VIII-13 Early Implementation Strategy**























