

Master Site Development Plan

for the Riverside Parks on the West Bank of the Susquehanna



City of Wilkes-Barre
Municipality of Kingston

January, 2026

West Side Parks Master Plan

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



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Jim Brozena, Project Manager

Steering Committee:

Jim Gillespie, Jewish Community Alliance of NEPA

Laura Holbrook, Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority

Charlie McCormick, City of Wilkes-Barre

Christine Dettore, PA Department of Conservation of Natural Resources

Sondra Riviello, Municipality of Kingston

Jeff Colella, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority

Advisory Committee:

Jim Gillespie, Jewish Community Alliance of NEPA

Vince Cotrone, Wilkes-Barre Riverfront Parks Committee

Joyce Morrash Zaykowski, City of Wilkes Barre

Larry Newman, Diamond City Partnership

Sondra Riviello, Municipality of Kingston

Jeffrey A. Stratford, Audobon Society

Chris Ostrowski, Suskie Bassmasters

Kevin Czekalski, Skateboard/BMX Representative

John Levitsky, Luzerne County Conservation District

Rachael Stark, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

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River Park. WILKES-BARRE, Pa.

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INTRODUCTION



MASTER PLAN CONTEXT

Promise of the Riverside Parks

The Riverfront Parks exist in a human-altered environment along the Susquehanna, a river that has flooded for millennia. Indigenous peoples understood these cycles and shifted their lives and settlements with the rhythms of the weather and season.

European settlers, while knowing about these forces, approached the natural world from a cultural perspective of “control” over nature rather than working with it. Settlements built in areas of historic flooding suffered, and eventually levees were built to make the community safer. Today, the Kirby Park Natural Area, Riverbend Park, and, to some extent, Nesbitt Park are unique urban riparian zones; partially “natural” but heavily human-influenced. While Nesbitt is maintained as a more traditional park, the other two “natural” areas are in a state of degradation with declining ecological value.

Still, community members value these areas for many aspects of the natural environment that they retain as well as their proximity to the river and urban core. These urban riparian areas recall what the natural environment was like and help connect us to area history of the land and legacy of humans’ interaction with the river.

The Western world’s historic approach to interactions with nature can be difficult to articulate. Botanist, Native American, and author Robin Wall Kimmerer perhaps says it best in her book “Planting Sweetgrass” where she writes:

“Look at the legacy of poor Eve’s exile from Eden: the land shows the bruises of an abusive relationship. It’s not just land that is broken, but more importantly, our relationship to land.we can’t meaningfully proceed with healing, with restoration, without “re-story-ation.” In other words, our relationship with land cannot heal until we hear its stories. But who will tell them?”



A postcard featuring Kirby and Nesbitt Parks before the raising of the levee.



A postcard from the turn of the 20th century featuring what is today Riverfront Commons in Wilkes-Barre.



Another view of Riverfront Commons (and the parkland across the Susquehanna which today is Riverbend Park).



Kataroquen
Haudenosaunee
Pence Council and Medicine Village
1745
Birthplace of Matriarchal
Democracy

A poster gifted to the project committee at the first public meeting from Gere Reisinger, celebrating the Indigenous name and importance of the lands which make up the parks on the western banks of the Susquehanna.

“In the Western tradition, there is a recognized hierarchy of being, with, of course, the human being on top – the pinnacle of evolution, the darling of Creation – and the plants at the bottom. But in Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as “the younger brothers of Creation.” We say humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn – we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. They’ve been on the earth far longer than we have been and have had time to figure things out.”

Of course, our relationship with nature has been changing for many decades. Since the publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in the early 1970’s, our collective approach to the environment has been altered, and we have adopted methodologies that are at least a little closer to the methods used by indigenous peoples.

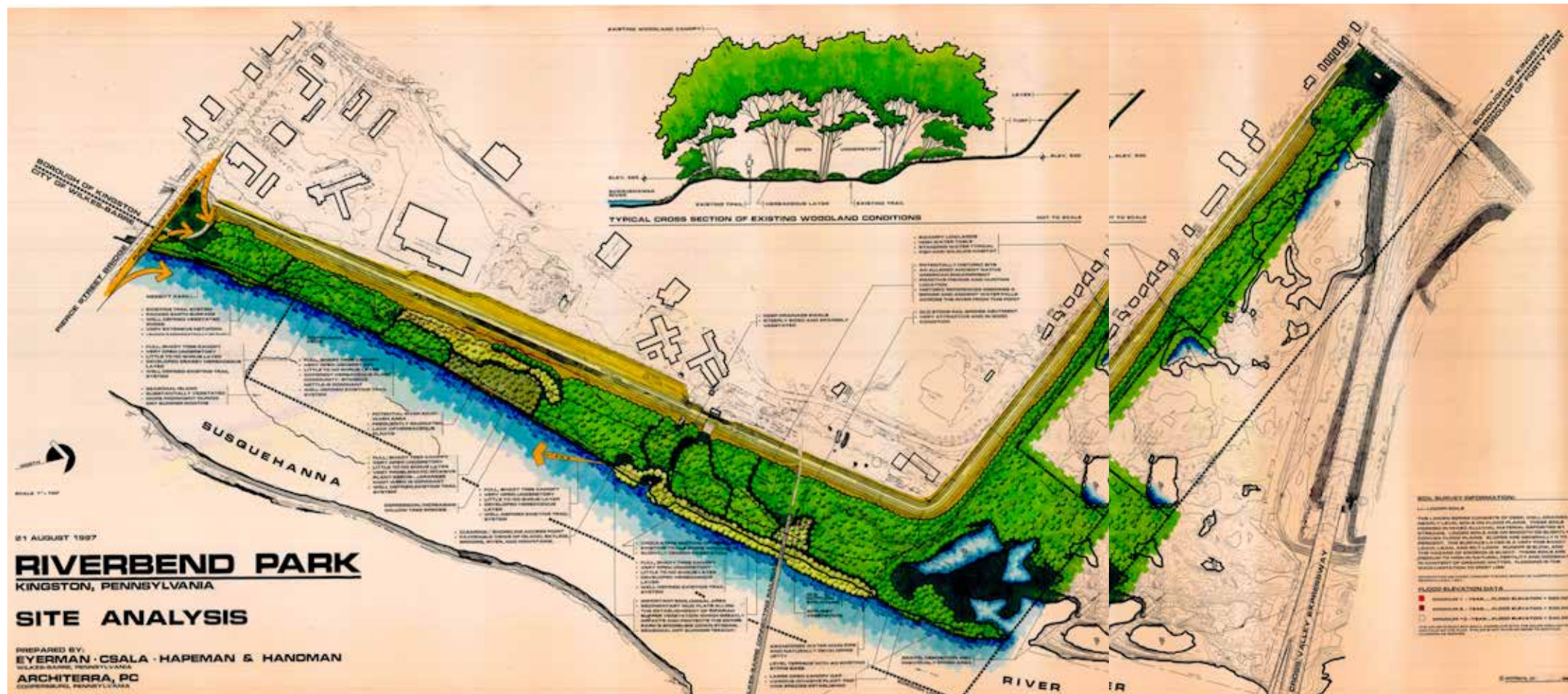
Reconnecting the residents of the greater Wilkes-Barre region to these parks in meaningful ways will help to create new advocates who will ensure a continuing legacy, appreciation, and enjoyment of their riverfront heritage.

Regardless of what improvements are made to the Riverside Parks on the West Bank of the Susquehanna over the next 20 years, it will be good stewardship and maintenance that will continue to be keys to success.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

This Master Plan builds on previous Master Plans for the Riverfront Parks, which were developed in 1995 (RBA Group), 1997 (ECHH/Architerra), and 2005 (Sasaki). These previous plans laid out the challenges inherent in managing and designing for floodplain park lands and all plans suggest that investment in infrastructure for human engagement with nature in the floodplain should be minimal and focused on flood- and ice-resistant elements. All three plans also considered the issues related to management of native ecosystems in these parks, especially the threat of invasive plants out-competing and displacing native ones.

This 2025 Master Plan builds on the park and levee improvements completed since the 2005 master plan and revisits some of the previous plans' recommendations with a renewed focus on environmental and cultural stewardship.



PURPOSE OF STUDY

The Jewish Community Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania commissioned this *Master Site Development Plan for the Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna* on behalf of the City of Wilkes-Barre and the Municipality of Kingston. The plan is intended to provide a framework for the next 15+ years of management, protection of natural resources, possible land acquisitions, the provision of additional recreational opportunities, providing greater accessibility, outlining actions to achieve the project goals, estimating costs for improvements, and recommending priorities.

This Master Plan is the result of a collaboration between the public, a project steering committee, an advisory committee, City of Wilkes-Barre and the Municipality of Kingston staff, project consultants, and multiple organizations that are involved with management of and programming in the parks. This document summarizes the planning process and provides a vision for the future of the Riverside Parks.

The Plan is funded by the Federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Act. The grant which funded this Master Plan also funded a stand-alone construction project in Kirby Park to improve the existing pond. Goals for that project were to discourage Canada geese, improve water quality, stabilize the pond edge, improve accessibility, and enhance the surrounding landscape. That project was completed in late 2025.

MISSION STATEMENT

Based on an analysis of the park and the input received during the planning process from hundreds of participants, a new mission statement for the 2025 *Master Plan for the Riverside Parks* is recommended:

The West Side Parks Master Plan will ensure that proposed recreational improvements are designed to meet the needs of the community - as appropriate to these lands - while also planning for superior maintenance and stewardship. The Master Plan should recognize the contributions of modern and pre-Columbian peoples on these lands, since the parks are important locations in the heritage and culture of the Wyoming Valley.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the master plan is to create a working document that will guide decision-making in order to provide a better experience for the park visitor. This document will guide future capital improvement projects and stewardship planning and be a valuable tool when applying for grants and funding to make those projects a reality.

To support this goal, plan recommendations are organized into five major themes to formulate a clear strategy for park services into the future.

1. Land Stewardship
2. Organization & Policy
3. Maintenance & Management
4. Environmental Education & Programming
5. General Site Improvements

Pond at Kirby Park

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

This Master Plan is an initial step towards Park improvements. It presents a consensus on desirable facilities and features for the Riverside Parks on the West Bank of the Susquehanna River. The Master Plan provides achievable goals and recommendations, probable costs of development, strategies for phasing improvements, and positions the City, Municipality, County, and local non-profits for agency funding. The master plan is a flexible guidance document; a blueprint that can adapt to the future needs of the Parks and community.

After the master plan is completed, likely funding sources linked to specific projects should be identified. Once funding is obtained, detailed design and engineering can begin. Construction documents will be prepared and publicly bid, and a contract awarded for construction. A master plan is typically implemented through a series of phases, dependent upon funding, over a period of years. In the case of the Riverfront Parks, several phases spanning the next 5 to 15 years are a realistic period for improvements.



PROJECT TEAM

The project team for the Master Plan included a Steering Committee and Advisory Committee of professionals and stakeholders who provided input and, in some cases, represented their respective organizations. Additionally, the public provided input at four public meetings held at the Friedman Jewish Community Center over a period of 10 months.

Jim Brozena, of Brozena Consulting Services, LLC and former Executive Director for the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority, led the effort as Project Manager. He worked on behalf of the Jewish Community Association of Northeastern PA, the entity which received and managed the Federal American Rescue Plan of 2021 Act (ARPA) Grant that funded this project. He also helped to organize and coordinate with the committees during the master planning process.

The following consultants performed the analysis and master planning process for the Riverfront Parks:

Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)

is a planning and design firm based in Norristown, Pennsylvania with expertise in parks, trails, greenways, and recreational facilities. SC served as prime consultant and was responsible for overall park design, public participation, and coordination with the committees and Project Team.

Princeton Hydro (PH)

is a science driven consulting, design, water resources and environmental firm. PH was responsible for the Site Ecological Assessment and ecological/habitat recommendations.

Gibson-Thomas Engineering (GTE)

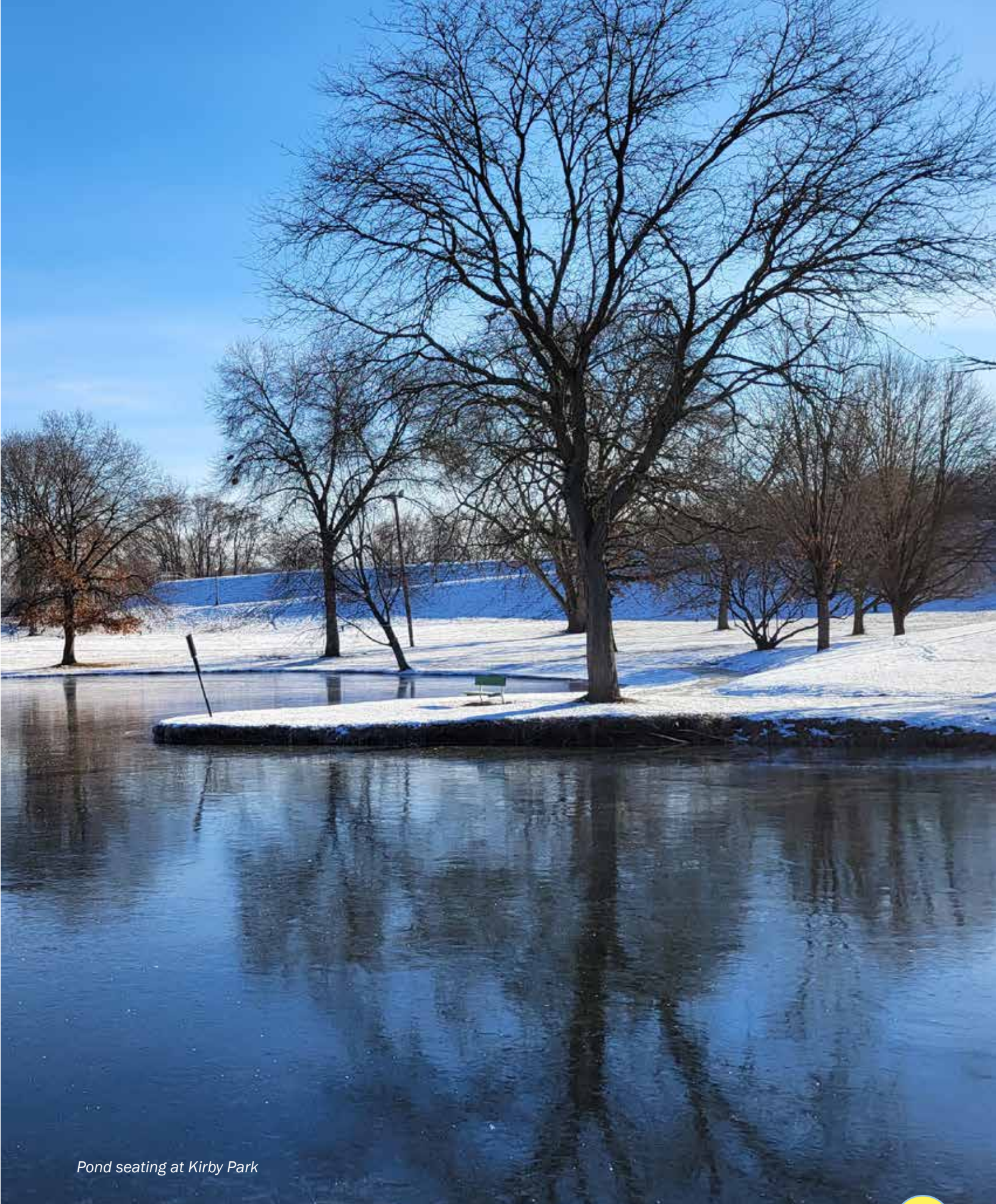
is an engineering firm with expertise in municipal projects, from floodplain management to traffic planning - and coordination with PennDOT. GTE was responsible for surveying and preparing base mapping data, and provided valuable input to the team on flood-related issues.

Pond and amphitheater at Kirby Park

PROJECT SCHEDULE

A project schedule was developed which included a timeline for public participation as well as production of a Master Plan and Report.

		Kirby Park/ Riverfront Parks Master Plan	Jan 3, 2025 SC
DATE	TIME	MEETING	LOCATION
1/9/25	10:30 AM	Kick off / committee meeting #1	JCC
2/3/25	11:00 AM	Committee meeting #2 - review progress	virtual
2/10/25	6:00 PM	PUBLIC MEETING #1 - Programming	JCC and virtual
3/3/25	11:00 AM	Committee MTG #3- review Public mtg	virtual
4/1/25	11:00 AM	Committee Mtg #4 - concepts preview	virtual
5/5/25	11:00 AM	Committee Mtg #5 - concepts preview	virtual
5/7/25	6:00 PM	PUBLIC MEETING #2 - Initial Concepts	JCC and virtual
5/19/25	11:00 AM	Committee Mtg #6 - review progress	virtual
6/30/25	11:00 AM	Committee Mtg #7 - pre draft review	virtual
7/30/25	6:00PM	PUBLIC MEETING #3 - Draft Plan	JCC and virtual
9/15/25	11:00 AM	Committee Mtg #8 - plan comments	virtual
10/15/25	6:00 PM	PUBLIC MEETING #4 - Final Plan	JCC and virtual



Pond seating at Kirby Park

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is the fundamental basis of any master plan and helps to ensure the success of the project. A master plan for a system as large as the Riverfront Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna can only be realized through the involvement of individuals and organizations who are familiar with the parks. Their participation informs the need for this plan and illustrates the support for implementation of Master Plan recommendations.

The consultants worked with the steering and advisory committees to tailor the public participation process to the project. The 10-month process provided the team with access to citizens’ observations, needs, and ideas for the Parks as well as critical feedback on concepts and plans. The public participation for this plan included:

- 8 Advisory / Steering Committee meetings
- 4 Public meetings
- 11 Key Agency interviews (KAIs)
- An Online public opinion survey, which received over 264 responses.
- 5 Site visits, during which natural and recreational assets were inventoried and members of the general public were engaged in conversation about their uses of the parks

Meetings Summaries

Project meetings were held between January and October of 2025. All Public meetings were held in a hybrid online / in-person format and were recorded via written notes that were shared publicly. Full notes for the Committee and Public meetings can be found in the appendix of this report. A chronological summary of all public and committee meetings follows.

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 1 – 01/09/2025

Simone Collins (SC) presented to the committees information about the planning process, which included the project scope and schedule. SC then proceeded with initial existing data information on the Parks and a photographic tour of some areas in the Park. The presentation ended with a brainstorming process in which the Committees helped identify goals, facts, concepts, and partners for the Parks. SC provided a summary of the next steps for the project.

Public Meeting 1 – 02/10/2025

SC presented the scope and goals of this project to the public and invited their thoughts, ideas, concepts, and concerns about the Riverfront Parks.

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 3 – 03/03/2025

SC reviewed public survey results to date, recapped input from the first public meeting, and discussed Kirby Park improvements progress. Key person interviews were scheduled

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 4 – 04/01/2025

SC presented initial concepts for park improvements, an initial planting plan for the Kirby Park Pond Improvements, invited members to join the project team on their upcoming in-person site visit with their ecology team, and promoted the next public meeting.

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 5 – 05/05/2025

SC presented more initial concepts for park improvements, including new recreation facilities and trails, as well as finalized Kirby Park Pond Improvement designs based on committee feedback from the last meeting.

Public Meeting 2 – 05/07/2025

SC presented initial concepts - based on input from the first public meeting, the steering and advisory committees, and Key Agency Interviews - to the public for review and comment. The status of the Kirby Park Pond Improvements project was also presented to alert the public to this upcoming project.

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 6 – 05/19/2025

SC reviewed updated public survey data, initial ecological assessment data, initial concepts presented at the second public meeting, and feedback received at that meeting. A brief update was also provided on the Kirby Park Pond Improvements project.

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 7 – 06/30/2025

SC presented the draft Ecological Report for the Parks, shared refined concepts based on feedback received from the second public meeting and ecological survey, and discussed the timeline for completion of the Master Plan and construction of the Kirby Park Pond Improvements.

Public Meeting 3 – 07/30/2025

SC presented the Draft Master Plan, including ecological report, refined concepts, and photo simulations, to the public for review and comment. This meeting marked the start of a 60-day public comment period on the Plan.

Advisory / Steering Committee Meeting 8 – 09/15/2025

SC presented the revised Master Plan to the committees. Feedback was requested for any modifications to the Plan before it is completed and presented to the Public as finalized.

Public Meeting 4 – 10/15/2025

SC presented the final Master Plan to the public.

Key Agency Interviews (KAIs)

Key Agency Interviews (KAIs) were held between June of 2025 and August of 2025. A total of 11 KAIs were conducted, which included:

- 01.15.25 – Wilkes-Barre Mayor George Brown
- 02.05.25 – Local Indigenous Historian, Gerald Reisinger
- 03.05.25 – Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority
- 03.05.25 – North Branch Land Trust
- 03.11.25 – Local Colleges (Wilkes University, Kings College, Penn State)
- 03.11.25 – Wilkes-Barre Fire and Police
- 03.13.25 – Kingston Fire, Police, Recreation, Public Works, and Administration
- 03.18.25 – Riverside Parks Committee
- 05.22.25 – Suskie Bassmasters
- 06.06.25 – Fort Washington State Park Disc Golfers
- 06.26.25 – PennDOT Region 4

All interviews were held in an online virtual format. The summarized meeting notes for each interview can be found in the appendix of this report.

Public Online Survey

The web based public opinion survey was open from February 10, 2025, to July 15, 2025. A total of 264 participants answered the 29-question survey. A summary of results from the survey can be found in Chapter 3 Activities and Facilities Analysis and the full survey results are included in the report appendix.



Boat launch at Nesbitt Park

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The project team made several visits to the site to gather information between January and June 2025. Field data was supplemented with information gathered from Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, previous planning documents, and data drawn from meetings and key person interviews.

The ecological assessment methodology is included in the Ecological Assessment Report found in the Appendix. Methodology included secondary data collection; rapid ecological assessment; ecological assessment points; random opportunistic sampling; and scat and track analysis surveys to collect information on site for plants, birds, herpetofauna, and mammals.

The ecological assessment team reviewed prior project resources, including the Riverside Parks Stewardship Plan completed in 2022 by the Riverfront Parks Committee. Additionally, the team referred to E-Bird and iNaturalist data records for the site; these tools are open to the public and can be used to engage park users in collecting and sharing park data, as well as for professional data collection.



The consultant team conducting ecological reconnaissance at Riverbend Park

A scenic view of a river with a bridge on the left and a building in the background. The river is flowing, and the water is a mix of blue and green. The bridge is a steel truss bridge with concrete piers. In the background, there is a large building with a blue roof. The sky is clear and blue. Bare tree branches are visible in the foreground and on the right side.

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INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

The pond at Kirby Park



SITE DESCRIPTION

The Riverfront Parks are comprised of four individual parks (Kirby Park, Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park) on a collection of parcels of land owned individually by the City of Wilkes-Barre, the Municipality of Kingston, the Luzerne County Flood Authority, PennDOT, and Norfolk Southern Railroad. In addition, one large parcel in Riverbend Park is privately owned by the Sgarlat Family. Combined, the parks contain approximately 300 acres of manicured and naturalistic public spaces. The variety of landscapes includes playing fields, mown lawn, playgrounds, managed and unmanaged floodplain woodlands, wetlands, ponds, and the Susquehanna River itself. A key feature of the Parks is a ~30-foot-tall earthen levee, which runs through all four Parks and protects the City and Municipality from flood waters.

The parks offer a variety of year-round, outdoor activities and programs for people to choose from, including fishing, boating, birding, tennis, disc golf, softball and baseball, picnicking, nearly 5 miles of trails for walking, cycling, and hiking, as well as two children’s playgrounds, a football field, and a cinder track. Winter enthusiasts can bird watch, walk, cross-country ski, or sled. The park also offers summer concerts and family-oriented environmental education programs throughout the year. Park hours are sunrise to sunset.

The Parks do not have a website or social media presence to collectively promote themselves or the activities which take place within them. Instead, each organization which hosts events within the parks (sport leagues, boaters, City of Wilkes-Barre, etc.) promote their activities directly to their members (tournaments, concerts, etc.).

The Riverfront Parks Committee of Wilkes-Barre, which manages, programs, and promotes the River Commons (on the east side of the Susquehanna), Nesbitt Park, and Kirby Park Natural Area, has an infrequently-updated website, <https://riverfrontparks.org>, which disseminates information to the public regarding the history of the parks, current partnerships for maintenance, and volunteer opportunities for maintenance. The committee also has a Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/RiverCommon>, which provides updates about upcoming events and park cleanup opportunities.

The parks have an active base of regular users, including local residents, softball leagues, the Suskie Bassmasters boat fishing league, disc golfers, bird watchers, regional walkers and joggers, cyclists, schools, summer camps participants, and ecological enthusiasts.



SITE ORIENTATION AND PLACE NAMES

Since the Riverside Parks on the West Bank of the Susquehanna are comprised of four discreet parks with unique characteristics, clarity and cohesion of place can be a point of confusion for even long-time park visitors. One recommendation of the Master Plan is for the City and Municipality to clearly identify and brand the entire collection of parks as a cohesive whole while maintaining the unique feel and identity of each of the four parks (Kirby Park, Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park)

as well as the River Commons across the Susquehanna.

This identity-making will provide many benefits including: simpler messaging for promotion, encouraging user exploration of all four parks, setting a tone for each area's activities, improving first responder emergency access and response, and the development of a strategic wayfinding system for the park. The master plan design team agrees with the steering committee that the inclusive name for all

five Parks remains "The Riverfront Parks".

Being the most recently named, and without any official trails, signage, or organized activities, Riverbend Park is the park which has the least name recognition and sense of identity. The other three parks are relatively well understood by the public in both location and identity, as well as the types of activities for which each park is best suited.

HISTORY

From the West Bank Riverfront Economic Viability Study, 2006:

“The Iroquois confederation, known to its members as the Haudenosaunee, was perhaps the most innovative and egalitarian system of self-government of its time. Hiawatha persuaded five nations—the Seneca, Cayuga, Onandaga, Oneida, and Mohawk—to form a political and military alliance; the Tuscarora joined later. At its peak the Iroquois confederation controlled an area stretching from the Appalachians to Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain, but the Susquehanna River served as its one-time southern gateway and Onandaga became its traditional capital.

“The Haudenosaunee operated under the Gayanashagowa, the Great Law of Peace, which established the confederation’s Great Council: fifty royaneh, each a male religious and political leader representing one of the female-led clans of the alliance’s nations. The Great Law defined both the authority of the Great Council and the limits to its power, particularly regarding the affairs of individual nations. The system carefully avoided concentrating power in the hands of any single person or nation, instead concerning itself primarily with the relationships between the six nations. Even so, on matters of particular import, the royaneh were obliged to take the issue back to their clans for decision.

“So striking was this model of democracy that some historians argue that the Great Law of Peace directly inspired the U.S. Constitution, even though most confederacy members (all but the Tuscarora and the Oneida) sided with the British during the Revolutionary War. And even though the Constitution as enacted in 1787—with its emphasis on majority rule rather than consensus, its denial of rights to women and its toleration of slavery—makes it less progressive than the Great Law in many ways, the foundation of this country and its rules of law reflect what the Colonists understood about Indian notions of liberty.

“The Indian practice of freedom—and the decision-making system codified in the Great Law and safeguarded by the Haudenosaunee—allowed individuals to enjoy a degree of autonomy that was both inspiring and frightening to Colonists with class-bound European societies as their frame of reference. While some found it profoundly attractive, others deemed the democratic, informal and forthright Indian culture to be alarming, even savage. Since the two groups intermingled readily during the first two hundred years of European settlement the founding fathers like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson had plenty of opportunity to incorporate Indian ideals about freedom into their thinking.

“Accepting the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on our own Constitution leads to the acknowledgement that these

ideals of freedom and democracy, in turn, exerted a profound and transformative effect on the rest of the world. The indigenous democracies of North America—which enjoyed Alexis deToqueville’s regard for their ability to live in peace and without rulers—ultimately became fodder for intellectuals in Europe (and, eventually, worldwide) to envision new types of political systems based on liberty, rather than the stricture and structure of a monarchy. The Iroquois Confederacy’s influence on democracy is only one facet of this progression: ousting monarchs, eliminating class hierarchies and weaving social safety nets became cornerstones of Marxist thought and reverberated throughout 19th and 20th century labor movements.

“Understanding the contribution of the Haudenosaunee to ideals Americans hold dear—democracy, freedom of self-expression and the right of the individual to question authority—adds another layer to the already complex history between Native Americans and the dominant culture in the US. As a country, the United States defines its national character in opposition to, in celebration of, and in denial of Indians and their ideals. We romanticize conquering new frontiers, and profess to respect the Indians we decimated along the way. We mythologize a Natty Bumpo ideal that blends the best of both worlds. We are uneasy about how to portray the contributions of Native Americans like Squanto or Sacagawea who kept early settlers and explorers out of trouble.

“Native cultures and our relationship to them should not be consigned to some long-ago chapter of history. All of it—the ugly and the inspiring—is relevant to our past, certainly, but also our present and future; it is a lens through which we can understand social, environmental, economic, and political clashes, along with our ongoing cultural wars about “family values,” poverty, the role of government, and the rights of minorities, gays and others. As Felix Cohen wrote,

“Like the miner’s canary, the Indian marks the shift from fresh air to poison gas in our political atmosphere; and our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities, marks the rise and fall of our democratic faith.”

“The Haudenosaunee’s importance to modern ways of thinking about the compact between individuals and community can be a bridge that spans past and present and leads to increased pride of place for Pennsylvanians. As the site of Haudenosaunee gatherings, the Susquehanna River banks should be celebrated as a place of great historic significance to all Americans, whether one’s family tree features indigenous or immigrant roots: a gathering place where the practice of democracy—and the ideals that ultimately became almost spiritual—first took root.

“For Luzerne Valley residents, interpreting the Haudenosaunee as the forerunner to modern debates will also resonate with

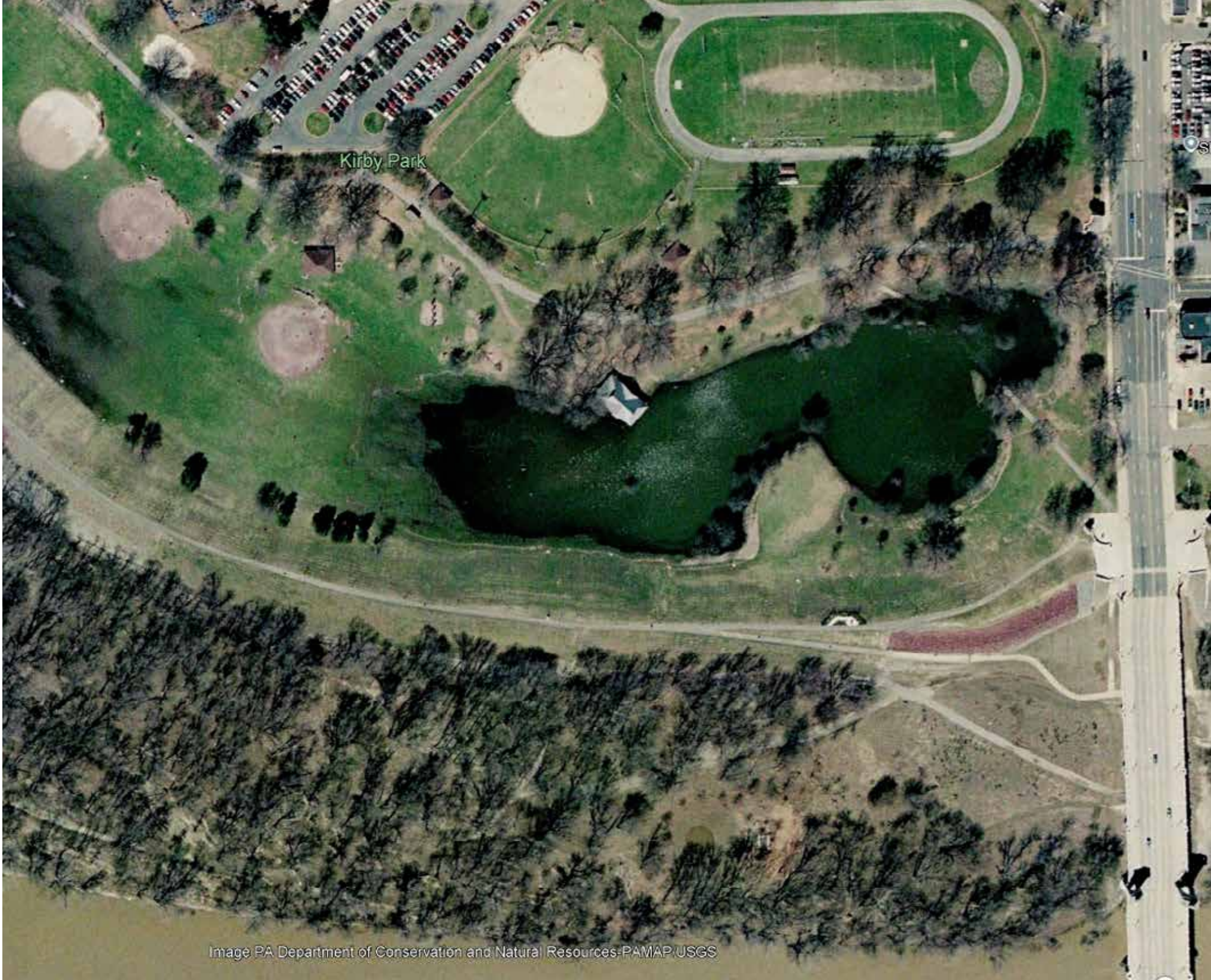
the region’s coal heritage, labor history and efforts to shape the landscape and build a community. Treating this story with the respect it deserves is ultimately part of greater Wilkes-Barre’s stewardship obligation, which encompasses not only the Susquehanna River, but its legacy.”

From the Kirby Park Natural Area Riparian Trail Guide, 1999:

“When anthracite turned Wilkes-Barre into a bustling, sprawling metropolis, people needed space to relax and play. The Wilkes-Barre Park Commission, established in 1906, encouraged citizens to donate land for parks and playgrounds. In May 1907, Abram Nesbitt, a civic minded self-made millionaire who amassed his fortune in the coal, railroad and streetcar industries, acquired 10 riverfront acres called “Rutter’s Grove” from the Erie Railroad Company, which he then donated to the City of Wilkes-Barre. Two months later, the L.D. Shoemaker Estate added 8 1/2 acres to the parcel. Together, they became Riverside Park, renamed Nesbitt Park in 1922. Today, this natural and historic greenway extends between the Veteran’s Memorial and Market Street Bridges.

“In 1921, Fred Morgan Kirby, the five-and-ten-cent store magnate and the park’s namesake, donated over 70 acres of riverfront land on the west bank and hired the Olmsted Brothers firm, the preeminent landscape architects, to design a people’s park. Work on the park began in July 1921 before the plan was completed, and F.M. Kirby Park was officially dedicated on June 4, 1924. Though smaller than many parks designed by the Olmsteds, Kirby Park resembled an English landscape containing clusters of flowering shrubs and ornamental trees; winding footpaths and a driveway with parallel bridle path; tennis courts and an athletic field with race track; a reflecting pool and caretaker’s cottage; and a bandstand and gazebo with views of the river. In 1932, the city added a zoo, featuring a monkey house, bear pits and animal cages. Several of these remnant structures can be seen in today’s Kirby Natural Area.

“Following the devastating flood of 1936, the US Army Corps of Engineers built a 15-mile-long levee system along the Susquehanna River. This levee system divided Kirby Park in two, allowing nature to reclaim the floodplain side. Meadows gave way to a forest of tall canopy trees through a process called *ecological succession*. Over the past 60 years, periodic flooding has shaped the soils and plant and animal communities of this area. With each flood, (sometimes an annual spring event), new soils and leaf litter are deposited, creating a rich growing medium for species adapted to this unique environment.”



Aerial view of Kirby Park and the Kirby Park Natural Area during a flooding event

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Riverfront Parks are located just across the River from downtown Wilkes-Barre, the county seat of Luzerne County, PA. Wilkes-Barre is located approximately 100 miles north-northwest of Philadelphia and 100 miles west-northwest of New York City. It is surrounded by a mix of suburban, industrial, and rural landscapes.

Major State routes that run adjacent to the parks include the North Cross Valley Expressway (SR 309) and Wyoming Avenue (SR 11). Access to regional corridors such as Interstate 81 (I-81) and the northeast extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-476) provides convenient regional access to other communities such as Scranton (15 mi), Hazelton (20 mi), Allentown (60 mi), and Harrisburg (100 mi).

The Riverfront Parks collectively lie within the City of Wilkes-Barre, Kingston Borough, and Forty Fort Borough with several large parcels in the parks owned by the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority (LCFPA), the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Norfolk Southern Railroad, and one private landowner (the Sgarlat Family).

Wilkes-Barre Parks and Recreation System

Wilkes-Barre's park system includes 22 parks, totaling approximately 300 acres, plus additional playgrounds and athletic fields. Wilkes-Barre's Parks and Recreation Department is a division of the Department of Public Works. Kirby Park, Kirby Park Natural Area, and half of the land under the Market Street Bridge are located on land owned by Wilkes-Barre, excluding the levee and levee trail that cuts through Kirby Park.



A view of the West Side Parks.

Kingston Parks and Recreation System

Kingston's park system includes 10 parks, totaling approximately 45 acres. Riverbend Park, while located within Kingston, is not owned or managed by the Borough. The majority of the property that makes up Riverbend Park is owned by the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority, with some other parcels owned by PennDOT, Norfolk Southern Railroad, and one large parcel privately owned by the Sgarlat family. Kingston parks are managed by their Department of Public Works and the Parks & Recreation Director. No formal Parks and Recreation Department exists.

Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority Levee System

The levee system protecting Wilkes-Barre and Kingston Borough is owned and managed by the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority (LCFPA). This levee separates the inhabited parts of Kingston from Riverbend Park and Nesbitt Park - and bisects Kirby Park from Kirby Park Natural Area. As part of a 2003 levee-raising project a paved maintenance road, which doubles as a multipurpose trail, was added along the top of the levee system. Known as the Susquehanna River Levee Trail, a 3.5-mile segment of it connects the Riverfront Parks on the west side of the Susquehanna River. The Authority maintains the paved trail as part of routine levee maintenance. The LCFPA has strict requirements to keep the levee mown - and free of shrubs and trees - to protect the integrity of the levee. In addition, no trees are allowed to be planted within 15' of the toe of the levee for the same reason. The Authority has a legal mandate to spend their funds only on flood protection activities and are not allowed to spend funds on recreational facilities.

Relevant Planning Documents

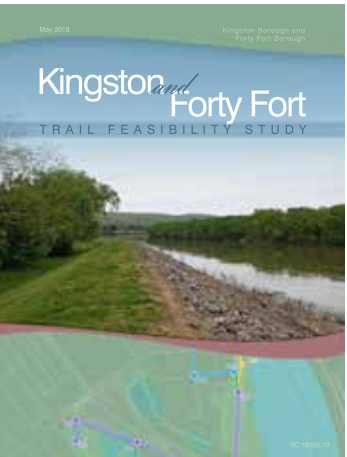
Kirby Natural Area Management Plan, 2021

By Vince Cotrone. The document is a management plan for the Kirby Park Natural Area, a 65-acre riparian forest in Wilkes-Barre, PA. The plan aims to maintain the area’s natural, forested setting, enhance its ecological value, and improve public access while addressing safety concerns and invasive species. Specific actions are outlined for trail work (opening trails, clearing obstacles, improving surfaces), park cleanup (debris removal, encampment monitoring), and invasive species control (Japanese Knotweed treatment).



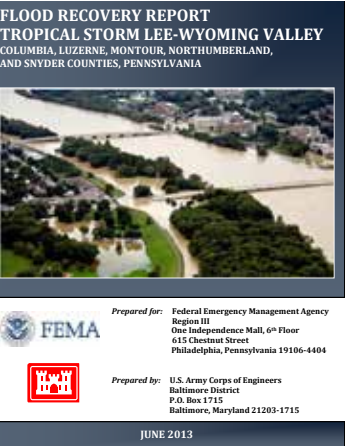
Kingston and Forty Fort Trail Feasibility Study, 2018

By Simone Collins Landscape Architecture. The study focuses on determining the feasibility of creating a 1.25-mile pedestrian-bike trail connection between existing segments of the Luzerne County levee access road, and closing a gap between Kingston and Forty Fort Boroughs. Objectives include identifying a safe, accessible alignment, gathering public input, protecting sensitive environmental areas, respecting the privacy of landowners, maintaining maintenance access, preparing cost estimates, and identifying stakeholders.



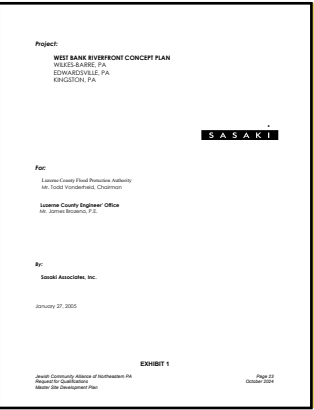
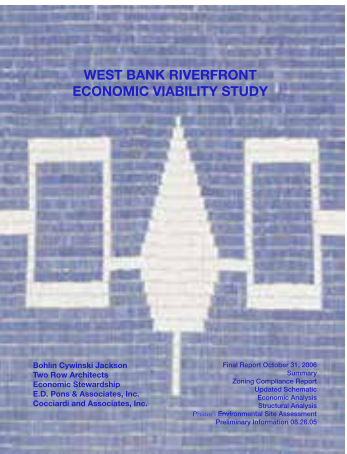
Flood Recovery Report: Tropical Storm Lee – Wyoming Valley, 2013

For FEMA by US Army Corps of Engineers. This report focuses on the flood recovery efforts following the 2011 Tropical Storm Lee in the Wyoming Valley region of Pennsylvania, specifically addressing the impact on Columbia, Luzerne, Montour, Northumberland, and Snyder Counties. The primary objectives were to update an existing hydraulic model (2003 HEC Model) of the Susquehanna River, incorporating new data from the storm and revised flow estimates, and to provide data for future mitigation and flood risk management.



West Bank Riverfront Economic Viability Study, 2006

By Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. This feasibility study focuses on the economic viability of developing a Wilkes-Barre Indian Cultural Center above Nesbitt Park on property owned by the Reilly family. The site is desirable due to its location near downtown Wilkes-Barre, access to the levee trail system and parks, and views of the river and mountains. The cultural center, if built alone, would require significant subsidies; the plan recommends combining multiple commercial and cultural uses on the site to subsidize the cultural center’s construction and operation.



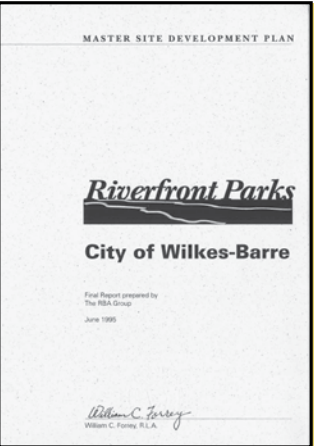
West Bank Riverfront Concept Plan, 2005

By Sasaki. The plan updates the previous Development Plan from 1995, incorporating recent levee upgrades by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). The plan focuses on recreational and educational uses, emphasizing minimal architectural structures due to flood risks, except for a significant multi-purpose Nature Center in Kirby Park. Proposed improvements include pond restoration, a Nature Center, boat launch upgrades, picnic areas, pathway enhancements, and overlook improvements.



Riverbend Park Master Plan, 1997

By Eyerman Csala Hapeman & Handman in partnership with Architerra, PC. A proposed park in Kingston would stretch trails from Nesbitt Park, just under the Veterans Memorial bridge, to Rutter Avenue on land between the dike and river. Stairs would be built into the dike for easy access.



Riverfront Park Master Site Development Plan, 1995

By RBA Group. Prepared for the City of Wilkes-Barre, this plan sought to balance the need of the Luzerne County Flood Authority to raise the levee and the public’s desires for use of and sense of safety within the parks on both sides of the levee. Key suggestions include adding lighting under the Market St bridge, new identity and directional signage, and encouraging use of the parks by greater numbers of people at all times of the day and year.



Susquehanna and Kirby Riverfront Parks Restoration Plan, 1994

By the Wyoming Valley Friends of Olmsted/Kirby Parks. The primary objective of this plan is to revitalize the parks, integrating them with the modern needs of the community while respecting the original landscape design of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Sons. The plan aims to balance historical preservation with modern community needs through specific proposals for the restoration of the original Olmsted design, natural area development, children’s area creation, overflow channel construction, and economic development opportunities.

F.M. Kirby Park Plans, 1922-24

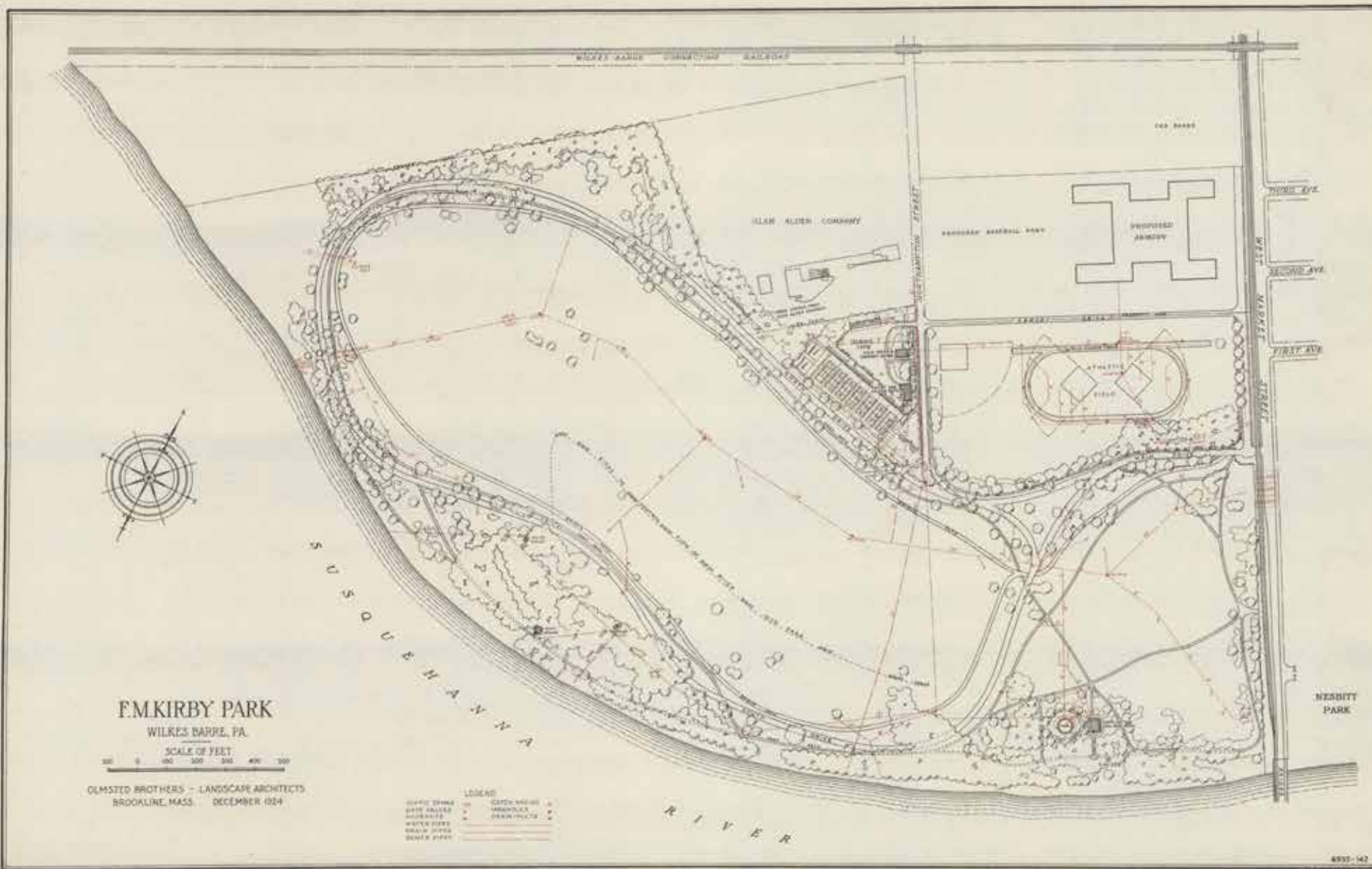
By Olmstead Brothers Landscape Architects. The following description comes from The Cultural Landscape Foundation:

“As early as 1903, Warren Manning had proposed parks for the industrial city of Wilkes-Barre, having planned a system of parks for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania’s capitol, farther south along the river. A donation of considerable acreage on the west side of the Susquehanna River, followed by a significant monetary gift from businessman Frank Kirby, prompted the city to contact Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., of Olmsted Brothers in April 1921 to design a 106-acre park named for the donor. As development occurred, an additional donation from Kirby allowed the city to acquire another 100 acres and expand the park from Market Street to the Wilkes-Barre Railroad Connecting Bridge.

“From the outset, frequent flooding was a major concern for the site. A 1920 engineering study had recommended a levee that would bisect the site and consume the available funds, but Olmsted, Jr., was determined to first develop the uninterrupted “pleasant rural and sylvan scenery” of a successful country park, while studying alternative locations for a levee—preferably at the river’s edge or along inland railroad tracks.

“The F. M. Kirby Park board agreed to defer the levee, allowing Olmsted Brothers to create a great undulating meadow offering long vistas, surrounded by lush trees, including a WWI memorial grove. The meadow was designed to retain, then disperse, stormwater with a runoff drain. A bandstand, picnic grove, and playgrounds were tucked into the woodlands while paved drives and pedestrian and bridle paths ringed the meadow. Opportunities for active recreation were located along the northern edge, closest to Market Street transportation. Intended regrading and planting of the steep riverbanks were interrupted by a spring flood in 1924, just before the official park opening, and again in 1936 with more devastating damage. When the levee was finally built, it separated and protected the inner park, now reduced to fifty-two acres, from its riverside acreage.

“Kirby Park remains a popular destination. The expansive meadow is now interrupted by four ball fields, a parking lot, tennis courts, a stadium, and several other sports facilities, while a large irregular pond occupies the southeast corner.”



A design concept for Kirby Park by the Olmstead Brothers, featuring a drainage system and ridge in the middle to attempt to keep minor floodwaters out of the Park. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

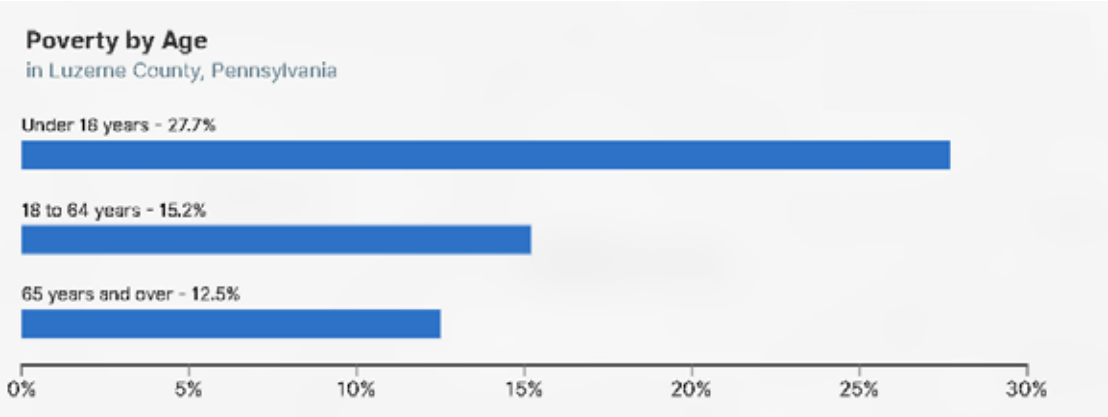
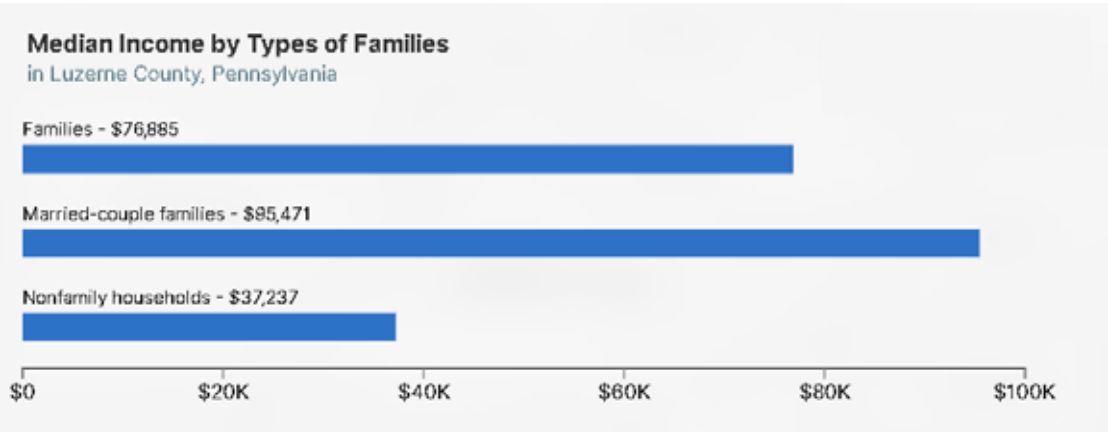
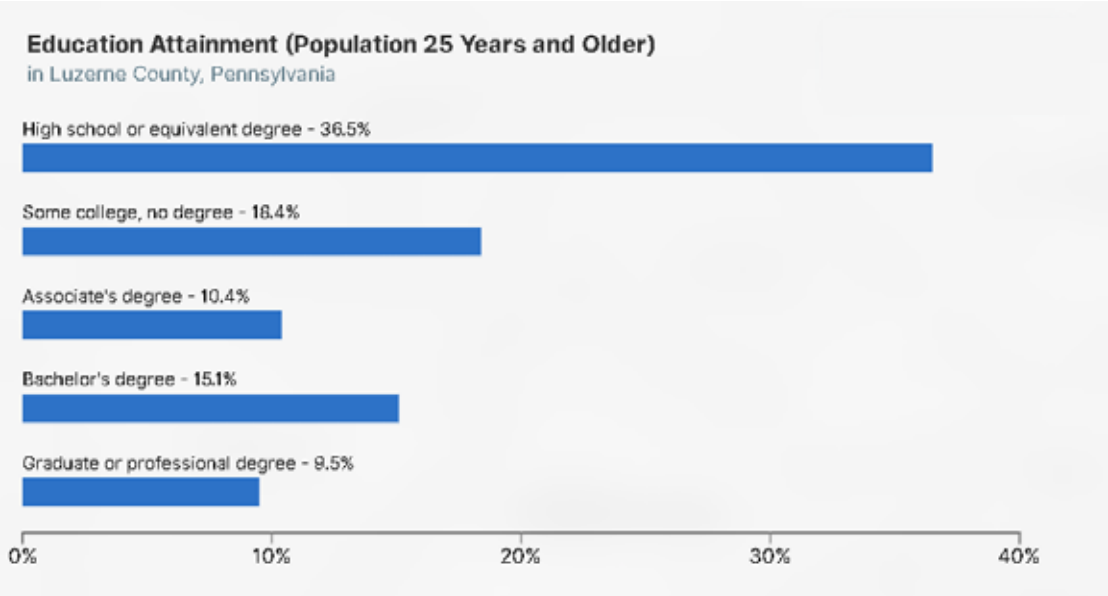
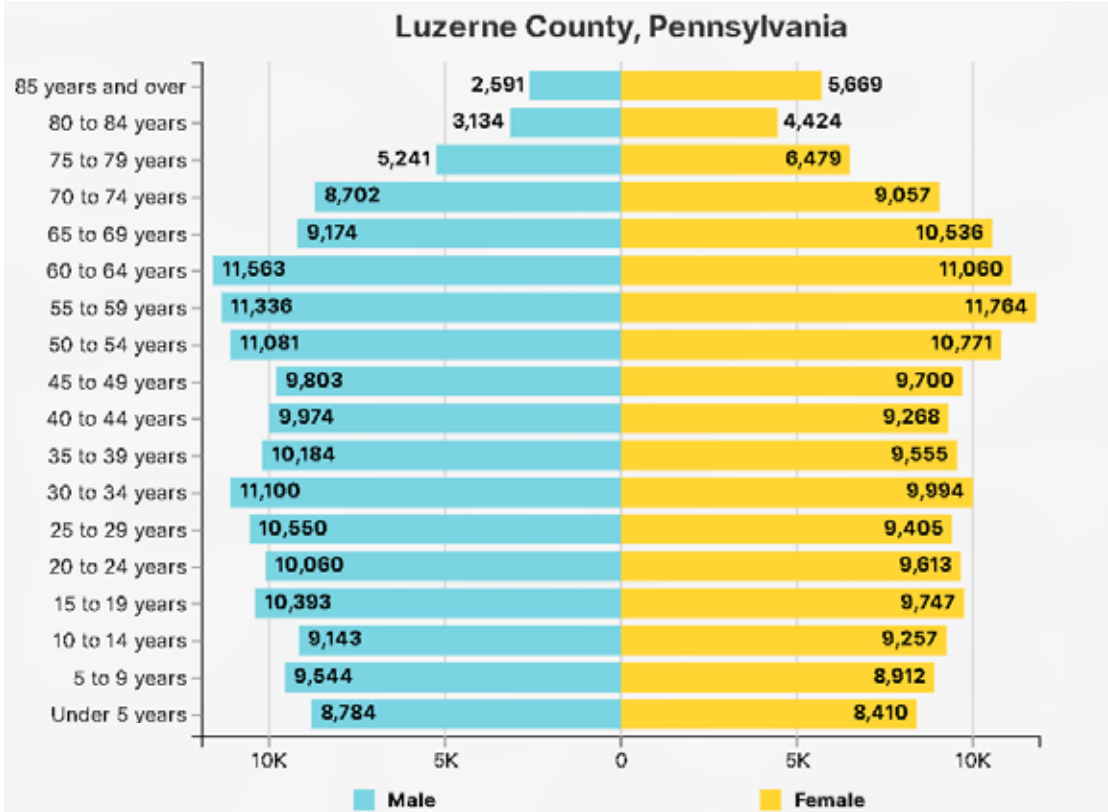
DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau Luzerne County had an estimated population of 325,594 residents in 2020. The collective Parks' size, ecology, history, and amenities draw visitors from across the region, but the parks are indispensable to residents of the City of Wilkes-Barre and Kingston Borough, providing them with immediate access to woodlands, large lawns, and recreational facilities within walking distance. To better plan for the future of the parks, it is important to understand the context and community within which they exist.

- Total Population: 325,594 residents with an average age of 42.
- Age Cohorts: 20% of residents are children under 18 yo., and 20% of residents are over 65 yo., identical to state averages
- Regions Ethnicity: 79% of population identifies as white and over 14% identifies as Hispanic or Latino, the two largest racial groups in the County

- Median Income: Over 56% of residents were employed as of 2023 with an average annual household income just over \$60,000.
- Home ownership: 68%
- 150,693 housing units in County
- Educational Attainment: nearly 25% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher
- Business: over 7,000 employer establishments
- Health: Nearly 18 % of population is disabled, slightly higher than state average. Nearly 10% of residents have an ambulatory difficulty.

Data from: U.S. Census Bureau (2020). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Luzerne County, PA <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/79500US4203112-montgomery-county-eastern-upper-puma-pa/>



LAND USE AND ZONING

The lands surrounding the West Side Parks are predominantly medium-density single family residential, commercial, and institutional uses.

The majority of Riverbend Park and a small sliver of Nesbitt Park lie within Kingston Borough. The park parcels in this jurisdiction are zoned FP-1 Flood Plain. This includes a large privately-owned parcel in the middle of Riverbend Park.

Parcels adjoining the northern section of Riverbend Park are zoned R-1 One Family Residential, R-2 Two Family Residential, and R-3 Apartment Residential. Parcels along the southern half of Riverbend Park are zoned C-2 Community Commercial with a small segment around the Veterns Memorial Bridge zoned C-3 General Commercial.

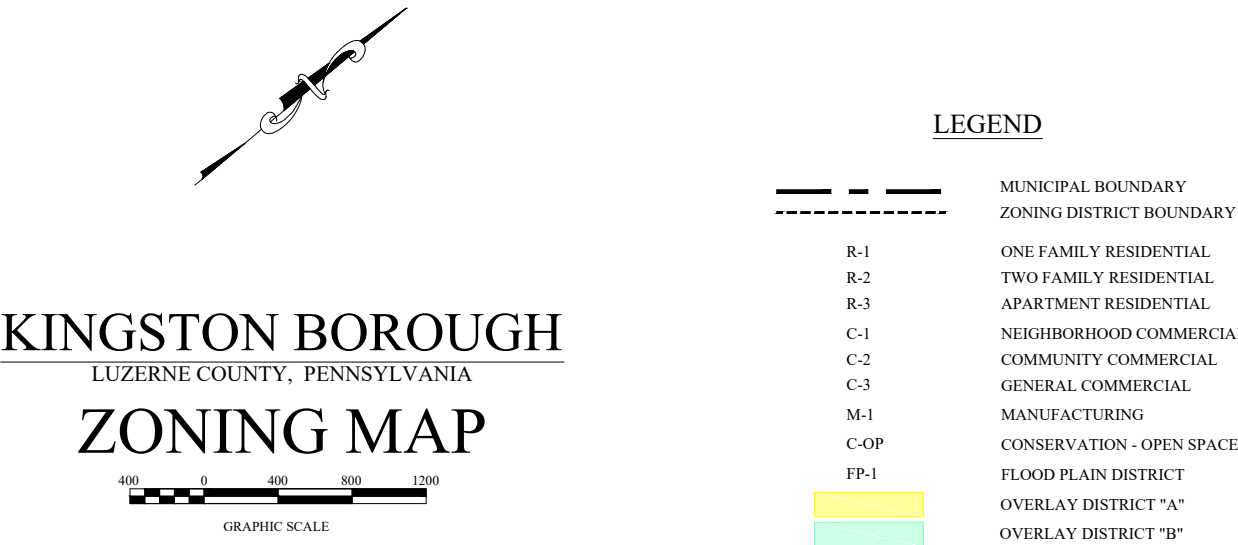
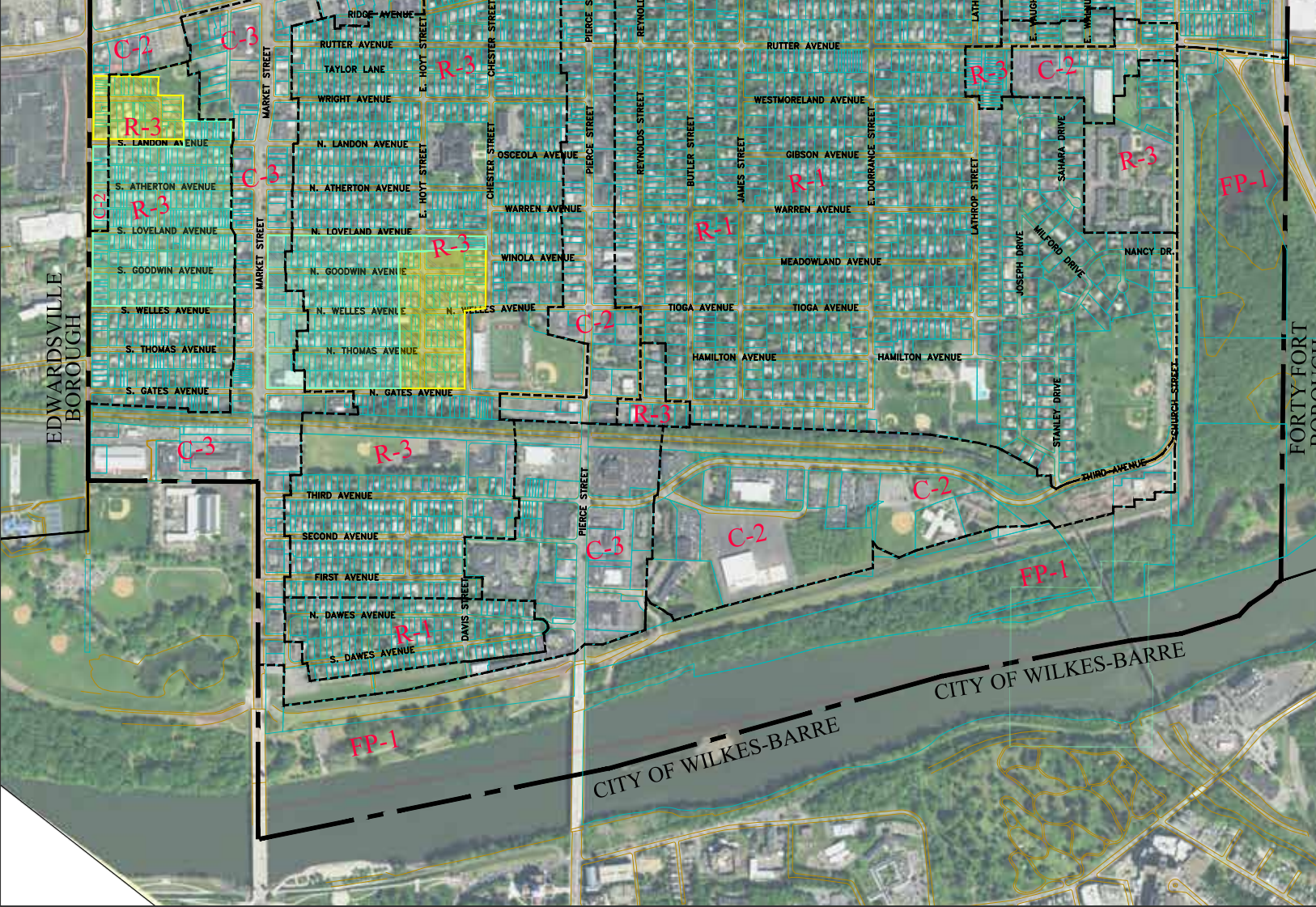
The parcels adjacent to Nesbitt Park and along Market Street are also zoned C-3 General Commercial, though that parcel is extremely narrow and just beyond it are parcels zoned R-1 One Family Residential.

Kirby Park and its Natural Area are located on land owned by the City of Wilkes-Barre. These parks are zoned OSP Open Space and Parks.

The parcels located northwest of the Kingston Armory (which itself is technically located within Kirby Park) are located in Kingston Borough. That land is zoned C-3 General Commercial.

The land just south of that, southwest of the Kirby Park parking lot and tennis courts, is located in Edwardsville. That land is zoned I-1 Industrial District. The parcel located around the Norfolk Southern train tracks at the western edge of Kirby Park Natural Area is also in Edwardsville and zoned C Commercial District.

Adjacent to that Norfolk Southern parcel, and within the Edwardsville Commercial District, are two additional parcels of land owned by the City of Wilkes-Barre, separated from one another by a narrow parcel. This introduces the possibility of expanding the Kirby Park Natural Area further downstream, if easements can be secured with both Norfolk Southern (to travel under their railway bridge) and the owner of the narrow parcel dividing the two parcels owned by the City of Wilkes-Barre.



PLAYGROUND SAFETY AUDIT

The City of Wilkes-Barre routinely conducts safety audits for the playgrounds located in Kirby Park.

The older playground dates back to the early 2000’s and are a result of the 1995 master plan. New playgrounds, along with an ADA accessible restroom building, were added in 2023.

Accessible playground at Kirby Park



CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FEATURES

A review of Resource/Structures was conducted on the Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) online database. The review identified the Market Street Bridge, the entryway plaza into Kirby Park, and a historical marker along Market Street as the only two historical elements located in any of the Parks. No elements from the former uses of land within Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, or Riverbend Park were identified. Of note for local history buffs, the remnants of foundations from the former zoo, reflecting pool, caretakers cottage, and potential Indigenous American archaeological sites do not appear in the PHMC database.



Decorative gateway on the Market Street Bridge

UTILITIES

There is no developed utility infrastructure in Riverbend Park. There are existing stormwater discharge pipes from PA Rt 309 into the largest Riverbend Park pond, located at the northwest corner of the Park. Similarly, there is a stormwater discharge gate located midway along the narrow stretch of Riverbend Park between Nesbitt Park and the PA Rt 309 bridge, which is used after heavy flood events to drain the area behind the levee. A pump station is located in a small building located adjacent to the Market Street Bridge in Nesbitt Park. The area does have access to underground electrical service running along the trail at the crest of the levee, which powers the pedestrian lights. There is no public water or wastewater treatment in this region of the park.

Nesbitt Park contains individually solar-powered lighting along the access road which leads to the Boat Launch parking lot. These were installed by Suskie Bassmasters around 2018 and the batteries within them are nearing their expected end of life. As with Riverbend Park, underground electrical service can be found along the levee trail at the crest of the levee, powering the pedestrian lighting there.

The Market Street Bridge has drainage infrastructure which dumps stormwater from the roadway above onto the ground beneath the bridge arches. The roadway on top of the bridge has both vehicular and pedestrian lighting fixtures, fed by electrical service under the bridge decking.

Kirby Park Natural Area has no utilities. However, as in Riverbend Park, there is a stormwater discharge gate located midway along the levee, which is used after heavy flood events to drain the area behind the levee.

Kirby Park, protected from the Susquehanna River by the levee, is the most utility-rich section of the Riverfront Parks. Underground electrical service runs throughout the developed portion of the park, along with freshwater and sewer services. These services are densely clustered along the multi-use trail which connects the main elements of the Park, running from south to north.



CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

Vehicular

Two state routes run through and along the park providing for regional access to the park. Both Market Street (SR 663) and Peirce Street (Veteran's Memorial Bridge) run southeast-northwest and connect the Parks to Wilkes-Barre across the River. The North Cross Valley Expressway (SR 309) runs east west along the northern edge of the park.

There are also two roadways located within the Parks – Kirby Park Road, which provides access to the main parking lot in Kirby Park, and an unnamed driveway which leads over the levee just north of Nesbitt Park to allow access to the Boat Launch parking lot located at the far southern end of Nesbitt Park. This driveway runs along the bank of the Susquehanna River through Nesbitt Park. Access to the driveway is from 1st Avenue, just north of Pierce Street, and is not well marked or easily found, especially given that 1st Avenue does not connect across Pierce Street, but breaks and begins again south of Davis St, a small, residential street, which itself is a relatively short, dead-end street.

There are a series of access points throughout the Park that are maintained for maintenance or emergency access, however they are not intended for use as vehicular public access.

The entrance road at Nesbitt Park featuring solar lighting installed by the Suskie Bassmasters.

Regional Trail Access

The 12-mile Luzerne County Levee Trail is a regional trail system with disjointed segments that run along the crest of the levee. One 3.5-mile segment of the Trail runs through the Riverfront Parks from Edwardsville north to Forty Fort. This trail segment is paved with asphalt and has pedestrian lighting along its length. Access to the levee trail from ground level is via a series of gently sloped ADA-compliant ramps, which run up and down both faces of the levee at somewhat regular intervals.

The nearby 5.6 mile Back Mountain Trail doesn't directly connect to the Riverfront Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna, but has a trailhead located nearby in Forty Fort, just east of SR 309 and Courtdale Ave approximately one mile from the northern end of the Luzerne County Levee Trail at Riverbend Park.

Pedestrian and Bike Trails

The Riverfront Parks offer a simple trail network open to a variety of trail users. Width and surfaces of trails vary throughout the park responding to the conditions in that portion of the park. Trails and sidewalks in the manicured sections of the Parks are paved and vary from 5-8 feet wide. The level asphalt trail atop the levee is 9 feet wide. The limited existing trails through the 'natural areas' are mostly unpaved and vary in width from 3-12 feet, though some remaining segments of asphalt trails from the original Olmstead design can be found in Kirby Park Natural Area.

In general, paved trails in the manicured sections of the Parks are maintained in good condition with few major issues and are ADA accessible. Paved trails along the levee are also maintained in good condition, though the section crossing the railroad tracks at the western edge of Kirby Park is unusually steep due to the required levee height. That makes this crossing non-ADA-compliant, though ADA access is available to the levee trail south of Kirby Park by taking a street-level route around this barrier.

In the 'natural areas' trail conditions vary greatly along their length. These trails would benefit from improvements to their surfaces, such as re-grading or filling ruts with gravel; this would improve trail user experience. Paving at least one trail through the Kirby Park Natural Area would open access to this Park for users requiring ADA accessibility. This would also facilitate regular maintenance and stewardship. All existing and new trails should be blazed and keyed to an official trail map for the Parks. Care must be taken to not raise the elevations of trails in the natural areas since this area is a floodplain.

Unmarked / Unmapped Trails

Throughout the Parks' 'natural areas' there are unofficial trail networks that are not currently depicted on park mapping. These include cultural fishing trails near the riverbanks and a braid of hiking and biking trails throughout Riverbend Park. Due to the demonstrated desire for access to Riverbend Park these informal trails represent, formalizing these trails with signage and limited grading/clearing would improve user experience in these areas. Paved ADA-compliant trails through Riverbend Park would be a challenge to implement and maintain. Accordingly, footpaths are likely the most realistic option.

Additional unmapped trails exist in the Kirby Park Natural Area. Formalizing or realigning these trails and blazing them would improve user experience in these areas.

Existing Signage and Wayfinding

Park signage and wayfinding has evolved over the decades of park development. Regional vehicular wayfinding directing users to the park is minimal. Driveways into Kirby and Nesbitt Park parking areas are technically signed, but challenging or impossible to see for many drivers. Existing educational and directional signage within the Parks were mostly installed along the levee trail as part of the levee-raising project, completed in 2009. These signs are made of fiberglass and many are heavily faded and hard to read.

Identity signage at the entrance to Kirby Park is low to the ground and slightly angled towards drivers approaching the entrance from the Market Street Bridge to the east. The sign is set far back from the roadway and does not become visible through tree trunks and oncoming traffic until drivers are almost past the entrance, making it challenging for drivers to plan to move into the multi-turn lane to enter the Park.

The one sign directing drivers to Nesbitt Park (via First Ave) is located on East Pierce St and faces only traffic arriving from Veterans' Memorial Bridge to the east. This sign is a typical brown metal 'cultural destination' PennDOT roadway sign and easy to miss. There is no signage visible to drivers approaching the entrance on Pierce St from the west.

The main pedestrian and bike trails depicted on the Park trail map in Kirby Park Natural Area are not blazed in accordance with their respective trail colors. Almost none of the trailheads have trail route or informational signage; signage could be created for an inviting user experience.

NATURAL ELEMENTS

Elevation & Views

The Riverfront Parks lie in the Wyoming Valley, which runs generally north-south. The Valley is a crescent-shaped depression which is part of the ridge-and-valley section of the Appalachian Mountains. The greater Wilkes-Barre region lies approximately 550’ above sea level.

The Parks are fully located within the floodplain of the Susquehanna River, though Kirby Park is protected from flooding by the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority levee. This levee, between 5-25’ in height above ground level (and up to 40’ above mean water level), is the main topographic feature of the Parks, providing views over the Parks and their surrounding urban neighborhoods.

The banks of the Susquehanna River are highly eroded and throughout the Parks vary in height from 0-15’ above mean water level. Where riverbanks are low to the River, opportunities exist to provide access to the River for visitors.

A view across the pond towards the pavilion at Kirby Park



Slopes

Being located in the floodplain, there are very few natural slopes in the Riverfront Parks. Where steep slopes do exist, they are mostly found along the riverbanks - which can be nearly vertical - and within the gravel pits at the southern-most and northern-most ends of the Park system.

Steep human-made slopes exist in the form of the levee which protects Kingston and Kirby Park from floodwaters. The levee has a slope of approximately 30% (3:1).

Geology

The Riverfront Parks, as with all of Wilkes-Barre and Kingston, are located upon the Llewellyn Formation: a bedrock formed of mostly sandstone, siltstone, shale, conglomerate, and coal. Plant fossils are common. This formation contains most of the minable coal beds in Pennsylvania’s anthracite fields. This bedrock was formed around 300 million years ago as sediment deposits over dense forests, trapping the organic material which eventually turned to

Tables — Representative Slope — Summary By Map Unit				
Summary by Map Unit — Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (PA079)				
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating (percent)	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Bf	Basher soils	2.0	37.2	6.7%
CF	Cut and fill land	35.0	7.3	1.3%
GP	Gravel pits	20.0	83.2	15.0%
Hs	Holly silt loam	2.0	13.0	2.3%
Ln	Linden soils	2.0	171.8	30.9%
Ps	Pope soils	2.0	109.2	19.6%
Uf	Urban land, rarely flooded		8.7	1.6%
W	Water		125.0	22.5%
Totals for Area of Interest			555.5	100.0%
Description — Representative Slope				
Slope gradient is the difference in elevation between two points, expressed as a percentage of the distance between those points.				
The slope gradient is actually recorded as three separate values in the database. A low value and a high value indicate the range of this attribute for the soil component. A "representative" value indicates the expected value of this attribute for the component. For this soil property, only the representative value is used.				
Rating Options — Representative Slope				
Units of Measure: percent				
Aggregation Method: Dominant Component				
Component Percent Cutoff: None Specified				
Tie-break Rule: Higher				
Interpret Nulls as Zero: No				



The land that makes up the Parks is mainly flat (green). Historic gravel pits provide the only areas of slight slope (yellow).

coal.

Soils

The majority of the Riverfront Parks on the river side of the levee consist of Linden soils. These soils are common in floodplains and consist mostly of silt loam and very gravelly sand. Linden soils in the Parks are generally over 6.5’ deep to bedrock. Sizable sections of the extreme northern and southern ends of these parks are Gravel pits, which are formed of an even mix of shale and gravel made from

broken bedrock. Gravel pits are usually only 1-2” deep to bedrock.

Kirby Park, on the land side of the levee, mostly consists of Pope soils, which are similar in makeup to Linden soils except they are generally more sandy and less silty. These soils are also over 6.5’ deep to bedrock.

A full Soil Resource Report for the Parks from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is included in the



Depth to Bedrock Map. The majority of parkland is made from thousands of years of silt deposits (blue), with bedrock exposed in the historic gravel mining pits (red).

Tables — Depth to Bedrock — Summary By Map Unit				
Summary by Map Unit — Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (PA079)				
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating (centimeters)	Acres in A01	Percent of A01
Bf	Basher soils	>200	37.2	6.7%
CF	Cut and fill land	>200	7.3	1.3%
GP	Gravel pits	2	83.2	15.0%
Ho	Holly silt loam	>200	13.0	2.3%
Ln	Linden soils	>200	171.8	30.9%
Ps	Pope soils	>200	109.2	19.6%
UF	Urban land, rarely flooded	>200	8.7	1.6%
W	Water	>200	125.0	22.5%
Totals for Area of Interest			555.5	100.0%

Description — Depth to Bedrock	
The term bedrock in soil survey refers to a continuous root and water restrictive layer of rock that occurs within the soil profile.	
There are many types of restrictions that can occur within the soil profile but this theme only includes the three restrictions that use the term bedrock. These are:	
1) Lithic Bedrock 2) Paralithic Bedrock 3) Densic Bedrock	
Lithic bedrock and paralithic bedrock are comprised of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks, which are coherent and consolidated into rock through pressure, heat, cementation, or fusion. Lithic bedrock represents the hardest type of bedrock, with a hardness of strongly coherent to indurated. Paralithic bedrock has a hardness of extremely weakly coherent to moderately coherent. It can occur as a thin layer of weathered bedrock above harder lithic bedrock. Paralithic bedrock can also be much thicker, extending well below the soil profile.	
Densic bedrock represents a unique kind of bedrock recognized within the soil survey. It is non-coherent and consolidated, dense root restrictive material, formed by pressure, heat, and dewatering of earth materials or sediments. Densic bedrock differs from densic materials, which formed under the compaction of glaciers, mudflows and or human-caused compaction.	
If more than one type of bedrock is described for an individual soil type, the depth to the shallowest one is given. If no bedrock is described in a map unit, it is represented by the "greater than 200" depth class.	
Depth to bedrock is actually recorded as three separate values in the database. A low value and a high value indicate the range of this attribute for the soil component. A "representative" value indicates the expected value of this attribute for the component. For this soil property, only the representative value is used.	

Rating Options — Depth to Bedrock	
Units of Measure: centimeters	
Aggregation Method: Dominant Component	
Component Percent Cutoff: None Specified	
Tie-break Rule: Lower	
Interpret Nulls as Zero: No	

Hydrology

Because the soils in the floodplain are regularly replenished during flooding events, they are relatively deep, as is the depth to groundwater in them - at over six and a half feet. Only in the gravel pits, where bedrock is near the surface, is the depth to groundwater much lower, at around one inch.

Due to the construction of the levee cutting off natural water flow, no natural waterways exist on the parklands. The Susquehanna River runs adjacent to the parklands and the only waterways on the parklands are the drainage swales which run through the natural areas from the levee to the river. Similarly, the pond in Kirby Park is human-made and maintained through the constant

pumping of groundwater to keep its level relatively consistent.

The entirety of Kirby Park on the landward side of the levee acts as a collection bowl for stormwater runoff from the surrounding community during heavy storm events. Water which collects in the Park can then be evacuated through the levee (when river conditions allow) via the use of a pump, which has resulted in the scoured drainage swale in the Kirby Park Natural Area over the levee. Another collection point for stormwater on the landward side of the levee is near the Kingston Recreation



Hydrologic Soils Map. Linden soils cover the majority of the riverward portion of the site and have a high infiltration rate/low runoff potential. Pope soils cover most of the landward side and have a moderate infiltration rate.

Tables — Hydrologic Soil Group — Summary By Map Unit				
Summary by Map Unit — Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (PA079)				
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AUI	Percent of AUI
Bf	Basher soils	C	37.2	6.7%
Cf	Cut and fill land		7.3	1.3%
Gp	Gravel pits		83.2	15.0%
Ho	Holly silt loam	B/D	13.0	2.3%
Ln	Linden soils	A	171.8	30.9%
Ps	Pope soils	B	109.2	19.6%
Uf	Urban land, rarely flooded		0.7	1.6%
W	Water		125.0	22.5%
Totals for Area of Interest			555.5	100.0%

Description — Hydrologic Soil Group	
Hydrologic soil groups are based on estimates of runoff potential. Soils are assigned to one of four groups according to the rate of water infiltration when the soils are not protected by vegetation, are thoroughly wet, and receive precipitation from long-duration storms.	
The soils in the United States are assigned to four groups (A, B, C, and D) and three dual classes (A/D, B/D, and C/D). The groups are defined as follows:	
Group A. Soils having a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist mainly of deep, well drained to excessively drained sands or gravelly sands. These soils have a high rate of water transmission.	
Group B. Soils having a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of moderately deep or deep, moderately well drained or well drained soils that have moderately fine texture to moderately coarse texture. These soils have a moderate rate of water transmission.	
Group C. Soils having a slow infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of soils having a layer that impedes the downward movement of water or soils of moderately fine texture or fine texture. These soils have a slow rate of water transmission.	
Group D. Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of clays that have a high shrink-swell potential, soils that have a high water table, soils that have a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission.	
If a soil is assigned to a dual hydrologic group (A/D, B/D, or C/D), the first letter is for drained areas and the second is for undrained areas. Only the soils that in their natural condition are in group D are assigned to dual classes.	

Rating Options — Hydrologic Soil Group	
Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition	
Component Percent Cutoff: None Specified	
Tie-break Rule: Higher	

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Ecological assessments of the river-facing sections of Kirby Park, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park were conducted by ecologists and biologists from Princeton Hydro over three days in spring of 2025. This assessment includes botanical inventories, avian surveys, and monitoring of amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.

This assessment provides a scientifically grounded framework for restoring ecological integrity while balancing recreational use and safety in the Wilkes-Barre Riverfront Parks. It emphasizes prioritized invasive species control, native habitat restoration, and community engagement as pillars for a sustainable master plan.

The following is a summary of the Assessment and recommendations. The entire Assessment can be found in the Appendix (Ch 6) of this report.

- Japanese knotweed is the primary invasive threat, especially in Kirby Park Natural Area, requiring focused, phased control.
 - Native floodplain forest canopy still intact, but understory and wetland health compromised by invasives and human impacts.
 - Ecological restoration must be paired with social programming (e.g., addressing tent cities in Kirby Park Natural Area) to enhance safety and usability.
- Adaptive management and monitoring are essential, including soil testing in wetlands and trial plots for effective restoration methods.
 - Low-impact public activities in the “natural areas”, such as disc golf and walking trails, present dual opportunities for recreation and invasive management via regular site maintenance.
 - A sustained funding commitment over at least 15 years is critical to achieve meaningful ecological recovery and public benefit.



Biotic Results

Plants

- Total vascular plants identified: 73 species
- Native species: 53
- Invasive species: 20, with Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) being the most abundant invasive across sites.

Canopy is dominated by native trees, mainly:

- Silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) – most dominant
- Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)
- River birch (*Betula nigra*)
- Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*)



Left: Ecological units for the Riverfront Parks as described in the Ecological Assessment.
Top Right: A common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) observed within Riverbend Park.
Bottom Right: An immature Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) observed in Kirby Park.

Rare native spring ephemerals (bloodroot, yellow trout lily, spring beauty) persist beneath invasive thickets.

Supplementary data from a May 2025 bioblitz and iNaturalist confirmed additional plant diversity, with no unique species beyond initial findings.

Animals

Avian species observed: 74 species during spring surveys

- 53 are confirmed or probable breeders on-site.
- eBird data indicate 173 species year-round.

Other fauna observed:

- Amphibians (7 species), including American toad and northern spring peeper
- Reptiles (5 species), including common snapping turtle and northern ringneck snake
- Mammals (11 species), including white-footed mouse, eastern chipmunk, raccoon, and white-tailed deer

Secondary data from iNaturalist and eBird supplemented species records, confirming robust biodiversity.

Implementation

A baseline budget of \$25,000 per year for 15 years is recommended to cover priority invasive species control, native seed sowing, winter woody brushing, and native plantings across the parks. This budget supports approximately 6 acres of knotweed treatment and 10 acres of woody invasive control annually. Cost estimate assume work by licensed ecological restoration professionals and reflect 2025 rates without escalation.

Restoration projects (savanna restoration, meadows, emergent marsh planting) related to previously deferred maintenance are often eligible for external grant funding.

FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Forest Stewardship Plan provides a strategic framework to preserve, restore, and enhance the native forest ecosystems of Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park within an urban context.

All three parks face challenges from limited tree regeneration, largely due to over-browsing by herbivores (white-tailed deer, eastern cottontail) and competition from invasive plant species. Ecological benefits of enhancing these forested riparian zones include soil stability, water filtration, temperature regulation, wildlife habitat, and flood mitigation. Balancing ecological function with urban recreational use is critical.

The primary goal of this Plan is to support the development of multiple generations of native trees to ensure forest resiliency amid aging canopies and environmental pressures.

Through coordinated short- and long-term actions (including invasive species control, seedling protection, species diversification, and health monitoring) this Plan aim to sustain the ecological functions and cultural significance of these parks for future generations while balancing human use. This Plan is a supplement to the Ecological Assessment.



A northern ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus edwardsii*) observed within Riverbend Park



A box elder seedling at Riverbend Park

OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The Riverfront Parks, at nearly 300 acres, is a large area of land to manage for public benefit. The costs in time, labor, and materials would be exceedingly high if all of the parkland was maintained at the same level as Kirby Park. But given that approximately 2/3 of the parkland is riparian floodplain forest, different management techniques are required for its maintenance when compared to Kirby Park.

Kirby Park Natural Area has been a focus of motivated local volunteers and groups for over 30 years, attempting to manage the invasive plants and keep trails clear of debris. They have had limited success, based on their limited resources. This Park and Riverbend Park both will never be cleared of the invasive shrub layer without ongoing, professional restoration and maintenance by trained professionals. Volunteers alone are not enough to manage 200+ acres of forested parkland, and certainly not without a centralized management infrastrucutre and long-term, detailed plan. That is what this Master Plan attempts to initiate.

For the Parks as a whole, better use of existing spaces could support more people using more parts of the parks at more times of the day and year. These improvements would increase the value of the parks as they increase visitors' sense of safety. Improvements would require a range of investments, some small and some large. These can be tackled over time as funds for individual comonents become available.

These opportunities are explored in Chapter 5.

PA DCNR Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Agreement

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has funded previous projects in Kirby Park and Kirby Park Natural Area through their Land and Water Conservation Fund. Along with this funding, an agreement was signed by Wilkes-Barre limiting the types of development and activities that can take place on these lands in perpetuity. All proposed improvements and changes in land use for both of these parks must be shared with DCNR for their review and approval before any improvements or changes are made.

A copy of this agreement is included in the Appendix (Chapter 6).

3

ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES ANALYSIS





COMMUNITY NEEDS

A variety of potential activities and facilities were explored in the preliminary stages of the master plan process. Due to the size of the park and the imposing levee structure, many of the community's needs focused on access to and through the parks as well as management of the park's 'natural areas' on the river side of the levee.

The first public meeting had a robust attendance with diverse park users and partners. Dominant themes that emerged included:

- The desire for more park users at all times of the day to increase a sense of safety in the 'natural areas'
- The need to organize and empower volunteers to participate in meaningful maintenance and stewardship work in the park (manage invasive plants, trail maintenance, etc.)
- Remove invasive plants and install native species and support native ecosystems
- More opportunities for activities within the parks - for both casual participation and formal organized clubs
- The need for better signage within the park (directional, educational) and dissemination of information about park activities, programs, and events (digital and physical marketing).
- The possibility of creating a centrally located multi-functional community center featuring natural, indigenous, and industrial history exhibitions; boat rentals; event rental facilities; a cafe and restrooms; an education center for local schools and universities to run programs out of; and more parking to support more Park visitors

These themes were repeated throughout subsequent public meetings, and in many of the key person interviews and focus group meetings.

Ideas for activities in the park were solicited from the public via public meetings, online surveys, and key agency interviews. Activity and facility recommendations for the West Side Parks were considered through the lens of supporting a balance between environmental stewardship and public access / recreation needs in this urban core.

Concrete pillars at Kirby Park entrance

Public Consensus

The Public and Steering Committee meetings as well as the Key Agency interviews generated a general consensus that included the following objectives:

- Preserve and enhance park resources.
- Celebrate the site’s heritage and history.
- Enhance volunteer organization, recruitment, and engagement.
- Consolidate park information that includes: facilities, partners, programs, and mapping into a single website formatted for both phone and desktop use.
- Establish a visitor’s center / nature education center / event rental venue.
- Eradicate invasive plants / reintroduce native plants.
- Enhance trail access into and through the Parks.
- New park facilities that complement existing infrastructure.
- New activities that are supported in under-utilized park areas to increase usage at all times of the day.
- Encourage exploration of the full 300 acres that the Parks have to offer.



Participants share ideas at Public Meeting #1



Ideas generated at Public Meeting #1

Public Opinion Survey

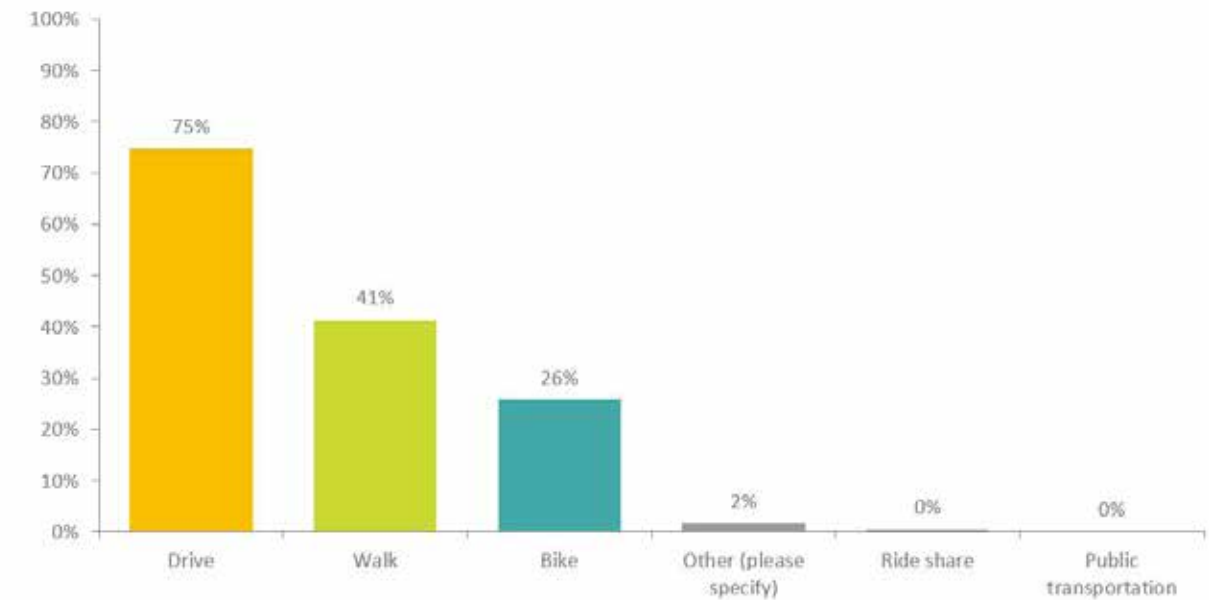
A 32-question online public opinion survey was available from February 10, 2025 until July 16, 2025. The survey received a total of 264 responses. Responses were compiled and analyzed. The complete survey can be found in the appendix of this report.

A few opinion survey responses included:

- 78% of survey respondents were from Wilkes-Barre and Kingston, with 68% living less than two miles from the parks.
- The average respondent age was 47 years and the average number of years they have lived in the area is 16.5 years.
- Most respondents are active users of the Riverfront Parks, with 97% regularly or occasionally visiting at least one of the Parks.
- Park visitors most often visit the Parks via automobile (75%), though many also sometimes walk (41%) or bike (26%) .
- The vast majority of visitors use the Parks for walking, enjoying views, or attending events.
- Most respondents think most people do not know the difference between Kirby Park, Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Parks. A third of respondents had not heard of or visited Riverbend Park.
- The primary reason people do not visit some of the Parks is safety concerns (60%).
- When asked what would make people feel safer in the Parks, the majority (59%) responded “more people in the Parks at more times of the day.”
- When asked what new or improved facilities respondents would like to see in the Parks, the most popular selection was “more / better trails and pathways” (64%), followed closely by “signage” (58%) and “better sight lines through brush (54%). The most popular write-in answer was “more disc golf” (20%).
- Respondents felt that, in general, park facilities and trails are well maintained.
- The largest concern respondents had about potential improvements to the Parks was the cost and implementation of ongoing maintenance.
- What most excited respondents about proposed improvements to the Parks was having more structured and unstructured activities in the parks.

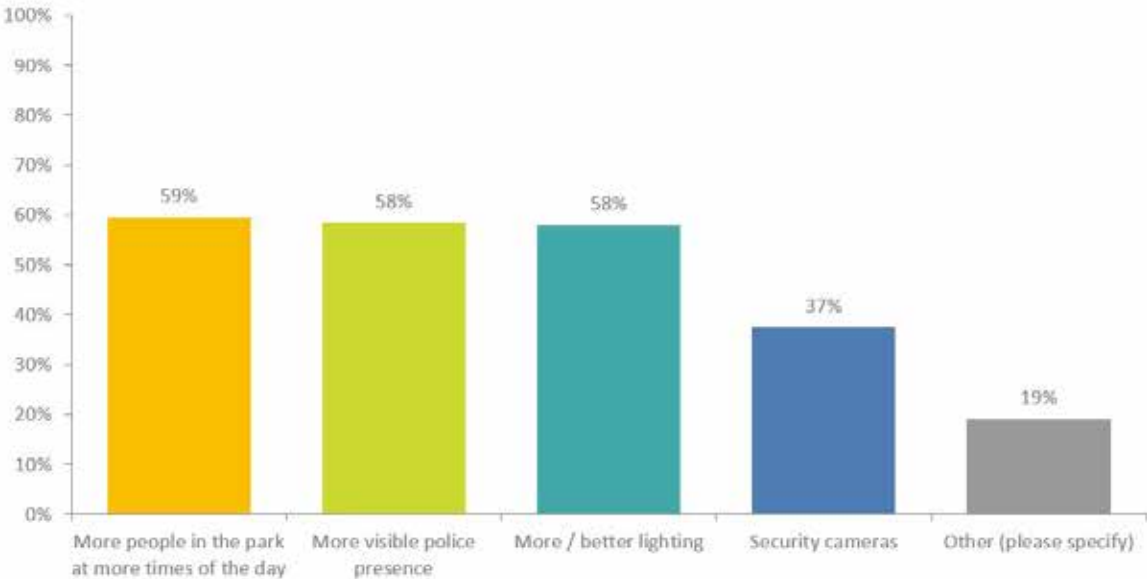
Q8: How do you generally get to the West Side parks? (check all that apply)

Answered: 237 Skipped: 27



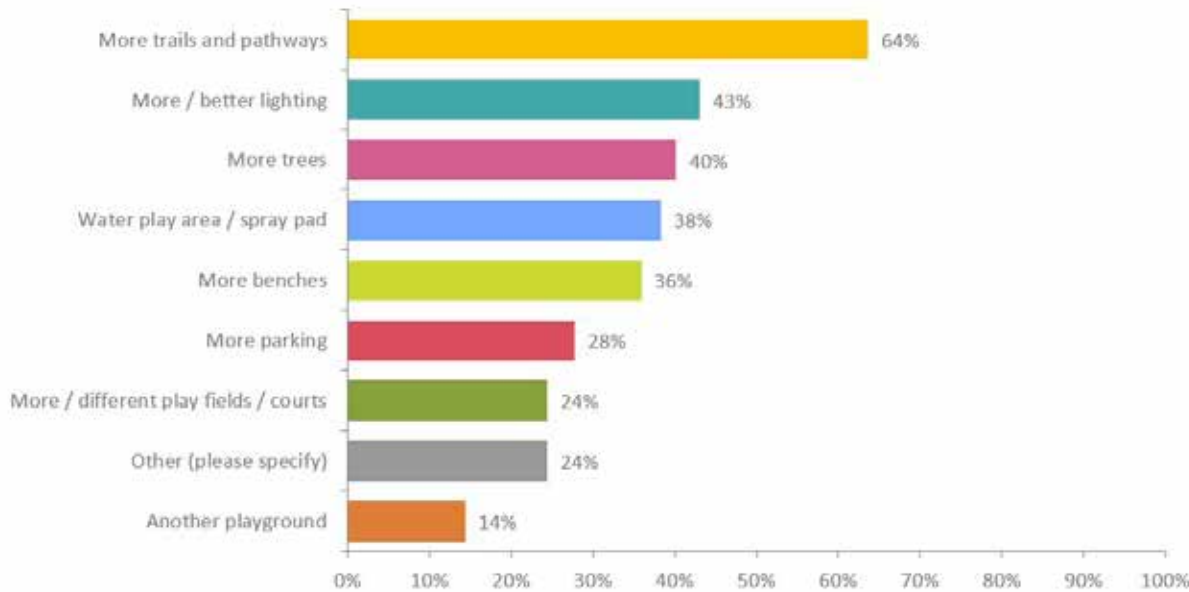
Q20: If you feel somewhat unsafe or very unsafe at any of the parks, what would make you feel safer? (check all that apply)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 69



Q23: What new or improved facilities would you like to see in KIRBY Park? (check all that apply)

Answered: 209 Skipped: 55



DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Master Plan considers a number of generally accepted, and in some cases, legislated design standards. While some of these standards cannot be fully articulated until detailed designs for the park are completed, they are listed here as a reference for design of improvements in the Riverfront Parks.

Universal Design Standards (Accessibility)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design serve as a baseline accommodation standard for building accessibility in the United States. These are standards mandated by Federal statute. Public recreation improvements must be designed following the most recent edition of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities. The most recent version of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities can be found at: <http://www.ada.gov>. These standards will play a key role in the design of new facilities at the Parks to assure that universal access is achieved, and the facilities function for users of all abilities. Many of the existing park facilities were developed prior to the current ADA standards.

Additional guidelines have been developed to provide guidance for outdoor recreation facilities including trails. A goal for the Parks is to develop a trail system that is as inclusive as possible given the extensive elevation changes up and down the levee. The following chart summarizes the various design criteria for accessible trails. The full guidelines can be found at: <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/#trails>.

There are additional standards which exceed ADA. Universal Design (UD) is defined as *“the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design”* (Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University). Universal design is meant to be adaptable to various building types, learning environments, and communities. UD is driven by seven core principles:

Equitable Use. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. For example, a website that is designed to be accessible to everyone, including people who are blind and use screen reader technology, employs this principle.

Flexibility in Use. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. An example is a museum that allows visitors to choose to read or listen to the description of the contents of a display case.

Simple and Intuitive. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Science lab equipment with clear and intuitive control buttons is an application of this principle.

Perceptible Information. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities. An example of this principle is captioned television programming projected in a noisy sports bar.

Tolerance for Error. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. An example of a product applying this principle is software applications that provide guidance when the user makes an inappropriate selection.

Low Physical Effort. The design can be used efficiently, comfortably and with minimum fatigue. Doors that open automatically for people with a wide variety of physical characteristics demonstrate the application of this principle.

Size and Space for Approach and Use. Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of the user’s body size, posture, or mobility. A flexible work area designed for use by employees who are left- or right-handed and have a variety of other physical characteristics and abilities is an example of applying this principle.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design serve as a base line standard for building accessibility in the United States. These are standards mandated by Federal statute. Public recreation improvements must be designed following the most recent edition of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities. The most recent version of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities can be found at: <http://www.ada.gov>.

Trail Design Standards

Trails and trail use will continue to be a major facility and activities at the Riverfront Parks. The proper stewardship and development of the Park trail network will be key to the long-term health and resiliency of the trails. The following trail standards and best design practices should be implemented throughout the Park. The following best practices were gathered from the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

The ‘Half’ Rule

A trail’s grade should not exceed half the grade of the side slope that the trail is traversing. If the trail grade exceeds half the slope grade, it is considered a ‘fall-line trail’. Water — following the path of least resistance —will travel along a fall line trail eroding the trail bed rather than flowing across it. For a trail corridor with a side slope of 20%, the trail’s tread should not exceed 10%. The half rule is important in areas of gentle slopes, where erosion can still occur. For example, a trail traveling through an area with side slopes of 6%, should have a grade of less than 3% to avoid a fall-line condition. Flat areas should be avoided, as trails built in these areas are more likely to collect and hold water.

For the non-ADA accessible trails, mostly in the Kirby Park Natural Areas and Riverbend Park, the following trail standards for non-accessible trails should be considered.

Ten Percent Average Guideline

A 10% average grade is the most sustainable. Trails may, at points, be above and below 10%; however, the trail’s average grade should be kept at a sustainable grade of 10% or less. Short sections can exceed 10% if the ‘half rule’ is still used (15% trail grades can be used for short sections if the side slope is greater than 30%).



The track at Kirby Park

Surface Water Control

Running water erodes surfaces and can degrade trails over time. It is important to divert surface water and reduce instances of standing water, which often results in a soft, boggy tread.

Building trails into the side slope, maintaining sustainable grades, frequent grade reversals, and out sloped tread are important trail design elements that allow water to sheet across the trail rather than pool on its surface.

Outslope. As the trail contours across a hillside, the downhill, or outer edge of the trail's tread should be slightly lower than hillside, or inside edge, by 5%. Outslopes encourage water to sheet across the trail rather than travel down the trail's center. Outslopes can be difficult to maintain in loose soils. Constant impact from users tends to compact the center of the trail and push soils to the sides. In such situations, frequent grade reversals are essential to drain water from the trail.

Grade Dips. (also known as grade reversals, terrain dips, or Coweeta dips) are designed to keep water moving across the trail. Trails that implement grade reversals and outsloped tread will encourage water to continue sheeting across the trail — not along it. These trail design features require minimal maintenance and are unobtrusive to trail users if constructed with smooth grade transitions.

Grade reversals utilize natural contours of topography in the terrain — the grade of the trail is reversed for 10 to 15 feet, then “rolled” back over to resume the descent. This change in grade allows water to exit the trail tread at the low point of the grade reversal. Grade reversals should be placed often, every 20 to 50 feet. A trail that lies ‘lightly’ on the land will take advantage of natural dips and draws for grade reversals. Consideration of the area receiving the trail runoff should be given to ensure that the area is sufficiently vegetated or armored to protect it from erosion.

Tools To Improving Drainage on Existing Trails

Knicks. Standing water in flat areas on existing trails causes several kinds of tread damage. Users avoiding puddles will widen the trail and standing water can weaken trail backslopes. The knick is an effective outsloped drain. A knick is a shaved down semicircle 10 feet long that is outsloped about 15 percent in the center. Knicks are smooth and subtle and should be unnoticeable to users. To be effective, the trail tread must have lower ground next to it, so the water has a place to drain.

Rolling Grade Dips. A rolling grade dip is used on steeper sections of trail. It works well to drain water off the lower edge of contour trails. A rolling grade dip is a knick with a long ramp of about 15 feet. Water running down the trail cannot climb over the short rise and will run off the outsloped tread at the bottom of the knick. This structure is a low maintenance trail tool. Rolling grade dips should not be placed at the top of a grade and should be considered at frequent intervals to reduce stormwater volume and velocity. Mid-slope is the ideal rolling grade dip location, and more rolling grade dips are needed on steeper trails. Use caution when constructing near water sources as diverted sediment may flow to them.

Waterbars. While knicks and rolling grade dips are preferred tools for trail grading, waterbars can be an acceptable trail stormwater control measure. Water moving down a trail turns when it reaches a waterbar and is diverted to the lower edge of the trail. Waterbars slow water down and deposit sediment at the water bar eventually nullify the feature. Waterbars are more successful on grades of less than 5%. On steeper grades (15 to 20 %), waterbars are prone to clogging if they are at less than a 45-degree angle to the trail. Waterbars are mostly useless for grades steeper than 20%. Wood and rock waterbars can present potential tripping hazards and should be placed with caution.

Relocating Problem Sections of Trail

In some cases, it may be necessary to relocate a trail that cannot be made sustainable through improvements. The following considerations should be given when planning a trail relocation:

- Locate the new section of trail on a sideslope.
- Keep the trail grade less than half of the grade of the hillside slope.
- Build with a full bench cut to create a solid and durable tread.
- Construct plenty of grade reversals.
- Out slope the tread.
- Compact the entire trail tread.
- Make sure the new section that connects to the old trail has nice, smooth transitions—no abrupt turns.

Trail Difficulty

Difficulty of trails is defined by the National Trail Difficulty Rating System and is identified by DCNR (Department of Conservation & Natural Resources) as the preferred guidelines. Trail difficulty is broken into three categories: Easy/Easiest, More Difficult, and Most Difficult.

Easy

These trails are typically wide with generous shoulders and most of the trail remains under 5% slope with the maximum slope of 15% for up to 200 ft. The pathway is smooth and has few obstacles. These trails can usually serve as ADA accessible routes if they have ADA compliant surfaces.

More Difficult

These trails are usually within the 2-foot to 4-foot-wide range with smaller shoulders and are under 10% slope with the max slope of 25% up to 300 ft. The pathway may have occasional obstacles such as tree roots and smaller rocks.

Most Difficult

These trails are the hardest to traverse with slopes that can range from 15% up to 30% slope for up to 500 ft. There can be obstacles, steps, and unstable side surfaces. The trails are typically only 1-2' wide and are navigated by experienced users.

The levee trail and most trails in the floodplain Parks are rated 'Easy' difficulty due to the flat nature of these lands. The main exception to this are the ramps which lead over the levees. While these trails are generally at 5-8%, they are long and do not contain flat rest zones, earning them a rating of 'More Difficult'. Notifying trail users as to the difficulty of trail that they can expect will be key to ensuring that the trail system is accessible.

Trail Wayfinding

In addition to the physical trail design, wayfinding is a key component to accessible trail system design. Riverfront Park entry and trailhead signage should note Park rules, hours of operations, emergency contact numbers, and other relevant information.

Wayfinding mapping should include trail blazes for wayfinding with the inclusion of "you are here" trail signs so that users can provide their location in an emergency. Park names should be signed to aid in orientation. Signage should be professionally planned and designed.

Trail signage / blaze markers should provide trail wayfinding and educate users to trail use and etiquette. Trail markers can incorporate trail names, intended user groups, difficulty, Emergency Response Location Code (ERL) and QR Scan Codes to provide additional Park info such as maps and interpretive content. Materials for these signs can range from natural materials to plastics or metal, or a combination of both. QR code signs located on the river side of the levee should be caved into granite or concrete to withstand flooding and ice flows. Trail markings for the Riverfront Parks should be consistent to avoid any confusion from users.

Clear temporary signage should be developed to note areas where trails have been closed or are under a restoration process. Educational signage informing the public to stay on blazed trails will be important in the early implementation of a trail realignment to establish a long-term sustainable trail system.



Existing wayfinding signage at pedestrian entrance

Playground Standards

Any new playgrounds, including the proposed nature-based playground just on the other side of the levee from Nesbitt Park, should conform to nationally accepted standards for safety.

Playground and pavilion at Kirby Park



American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) Standards

ASTM International, founded as the American Society for Testing and Materials, is a nonprofit organization that develops and publishes approximately 12,000 technical standards, covering the procedures for testing and classification of materials of every sort. ASTM standards are used for the basis of assuring construction materials and methods are sources and installed properly. Where applicable the development of Park infrastructure should comply with ASTM standards. Examples of such work include the placement of asphalt and concrete walkways.

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

CPSC administers and enforces several federal laws. These laws authorize the agency to protect the public against unreasonable risks of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products. As such, the CPSC sets standards for safety on playgrounds. The development of playgrounds in the park should comply with all relevant CPSC codes.

Summary of Relevant City and Borough Ordinances

The following is a review of existing City and Borough zoning ordinances as they relate to the Riverfront Parks. The focus of the ordinance review is on resource protection to determine if there are opportunities to work with surrounding communities to strengthen environmental protections. Any improvements within the park will need to conform to the respective municipality zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO).

Based on a review of these ordinances the design team has not identified any potential park improvements that would not be permitted under the current zoning.

City of Wilkes-Barre Zoning Ordinance

The City's 2013 Zoning Ordinance includes the following regulations related to the Open Spaces, Stormwater, Floodplains, and Steep Slopes which are found in the Riverfront Parks:

General Purpose and Open Space

- Section 103: Establishes the ordinance's purpose, which includes the reservation of natural, scenic, and historic values in the environment, along with the preservation of forests, wetlands, aquifers, and floodplains.
- Section 104: Encourages the creation of open space and recreational areas in locations such as riparian zones, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains to maintain the natural watershed and drainage systems for public welfare.

Flood Plain Management

- Article 11: Focuses on Flood Plain Management and includes:
 - Statutory authorization and intent.
 - Applicability and abrogation of previous regulations.
 - Designation of a Floodplain Administrator and their responsibilities.
 - Permit requirements and application procedures.
 - Technical provisions for elevation and floodproofing.
 - Special requirements for subdivisions, manufactured homes, and recreational vehicles.
 - Prohibited uses within the floodplain and activities requiring special permits.

Design and Construction Standards

- Section 1125: Outlines design and construction standards for various utilities and structures, including drainage facilities and anchoring systems.
- Sections 1127-1135: Detail special requirements for subdivisions, manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, and existing structures in floodplain areas, including application review procedures and variances.

Open Space and Park Zone

- Section 404: Defines the Open Space and Park Zone (OSP), aimed at preserving and promoting green spaces throughout the city. This section emphasizes the importance of public parks and open spaces to meet the recreational needs of residents.

These ordinances collectively aim to enhance environmental quality, manage flood risks, and ensure that open spaces and parks are effectively integrated into urban planning.

Municipality of Kingston Zoning Ordinance

The Borough’s 2023 Zoning Ordinance includes the following regulations related to the Open Spaces, Stormwater, Floodplains, and Steep Slopes which are found in the Riverfront Parks:

1. Community Development Objectives (Section 103)

- Focus: Land use and environmental preservation.
- Objectives:
 - Maintain existing density development patterns.
 - Encourage aesthetic considerations in construction.
 - Promote orderly growth while maximizing the preservation of open space and natural resources.
 - Encourage recreational areas in riparian zones, along creeks, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains.
 - Protect watersheds and headwater streams.
 - Implement stormwater Best Management Practices.
 - Minimize negative impacts from automobile off-street parking.

2. Floodplain Management Ordinance (Section 322)

- Regulation: Any improvements to structures or land in flood-prone areas must comply with FEMA regulations and local ordinances governing development in these areas.

3. Riparian Buffer (Section 323)

- Requirement: A minimum setback of 25 feet from any watercourse or wetlands for development, unless a greater distance is mandated by state or federal agencies.

4. Classes of Zoning Districts (Section 404)

- Districts Mentioned:
 - FP-1 Floodplain District: An overlay district specifically for floodplain management.
 - C-OP Conservation - Open Space District: Designated for conservation and open space uses.

5. Use Table (Section 502)

- Details: Outlines permitted, conditional, and special exception uses within different zoning districts, including the C-OP and FP-1 districts, influencing allowable activities in these areas.

6. Recreational Facilities (Section 801.36)

- Regulations: Covers outdoor recreational facilities, including:
 - Setback distances.
 - Buffer area requirements.
 - Access drive specifications.
 - Stormwater drainage requirements.

7. Drainage and Surfacing of Off-Street Parking Areas (Section 1012)

- Requirement: Proper drainage and surfacing methods for off-street parking areas to manage stormwater effectively.

These ordinances collectively aim to ensure sustainable development practices while preserving open spaces and managing environmental concerns related to floodplains and steep slopes.

Luzerne County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)

This SALDO includes ordinances related to land use, including:

Flood Control. This section regulates subdivisions and land developments located within or adjacent to areas subject to flooding from a One Hundred (100) Year Flood with the following goals:

- Promote public health, welfare, and safety
- Ensure safe building sites with adequate access
- Protect individuals from unsuitable land sure due to flood hazards



Construction Permits

Erosion & Sedimentation Control

The City of Wilkes-Barre and Municipality of Kingston both have Stormwater Management codes conforming with Pa. Code 102.4(b). As such Erosion and Sedimentation Controls Plans are required by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for projects that create more than 5,000 square feet of earth disturbance. Luzerne County Conservation District (LCCD) is delegated by the DEP to conduct certain activities for the Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control (ESPC) program and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program for stormwater discharges from construction activities in Luzerne County. Plans are typically reviewed at the municipal level with final approval by LCCD.

Also, DEP Rules and Regulations state that a municipality or county which issues building or other permits shall notify the DEP or LCCD within 5 days of receipt of an application for a permit involving an earth disturbance activity consisting of 1 acre or more. With the exception of local stormwater approvals and authorizations, a municipality or county may not issue a building or other permit or approval until an NPDES or E&S permit, if necessary, has been obtained from LCCD or DEP.

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit

A federal permit that is administered at the state level, the overall goal of the NPDES permit is to improve water quality. Projects that disturb over one (1) acre of land require an NPDES permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities.

The permit plans are divided into two (2) parts. The Erosion & Sedimentation Pollution Control plans (ESPC) are to be implemented by the contractor throughout construction activities until the site is stabilized by permanent plant growth. The Post Construction Stormwater Control Plans (PCSC) are to be constructed during the project and maintained by the site owner for the life of the project.

DEP Chapter 105 Water Obstruction & Encroachment General Permits

In addition to NPDES permit, DEP may require additional permits for work in and around water resources:

- Work within natural drainageways subject to permit by DEP under 25 Pennsylvania Code Chapter 105 Water Obstruction & Encroachment General Permit
- Any stormwater management facility that would be located in or adjacent to surface waters of the commonwealth, including wetlands, subject to permit by DEP under 25 Pennsylvania Code Chapter 105 Water Obstruction & Encroachment General Permit.
- Culverts, bridges, storm sewers, or any other facilities which must pass or convey flows from the tributary area and any facility which may constitute a dam subject to permit by DEP under 25 Pennsylvania Code Chapter 105 Water Obstruction & Encroachment General Permit.
- Any stormwater management facility that would be located on a state highway right-of-way or require access from a state highway shall be subject to approval by PennDOT

Department of Environmental Protection Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)

The Pennsylvania Handbook of Best Management Practices for Developing Areas, developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), offers numerous solutions for handling on-site stormwater. Where feasible, BMPs should focus on vegetated/ surface solutions to create opportunities that combine planting improvements with stormwater management and for education. BMPs that might be implemented in the Parks include:

- Protect/utilize natural stormwater flow direction;
- Habitat restoration;
- Soil amendments;
- Native tree and shrub planting;
- Rain gardens;

- Bio-swales;
- Constructed Wetlands;
- Detention/infiltration facilities; and
- The use of porous surfaces in the parking areas or trails.

These facilities require site-specific soil tests to determine site suitability and the infiltration rates of the existing soils. Incorporation of these BMPs into park development will have a direct positive impact on preserving and enhancing water quality. The opportunity for education exists through the placement of interpretive signage to educate park visitors about watershed water quality and how BMPs can positively impact all sites as well as opportunities to integrate these techniques on their own properties.



A landscaped rain garden

Image Source:<https://www.hamiltonswcd.org/raingardens.html>

Protection & Enhancement of Environmentally Sensitive Areas

An Ecological Assessment for the Riverfront Parks was prepared by the team’s biologists and ecologists. The report organizes the Parks into management units based on the types of habitat, vegetation, and ecological resources. Each management unit identifies existing conditions and wildlife value, then presents recommended management strategies. Recommendation strategies include the removal of invasive species, restoration/enhancement of habitats, and continued stewardship. Please refer to the Appendix (Chapter 6) for the full Ecological Recommendations report.



Skunk cabbage blooming in the Kirby Park Natural Area

“Green” Material Practices

Choices of site materials have the potential to affect the health of a site ecosystem as well as the larger environment. Every material has a life cycle cost, including raw materials and natural resources, product manufactured, and delivery for use. Closer consideration of the sustainability of a materials life cycle can have far reaching benefits. Sustainable material practices include (SITES, 2014):

- Re-use of existing site materials
- Purchase of local and sustainably produced plants and materials
- Consideration of the full life cycle of materials. Consider the end life of a product. Can it be deconstructed and re-used?
- Work toward zero net waste in demolition, construction, and management

Native Plant Material & Invasive Plant Removal

The use of native plants supports the vision of enhancing the natural ecosystems in the Riverfront Parks. Native plant materials can create an attractive landscape that will help minimize long-term maintenance costs. Native plants are generally resistant to most pests and diseases. Once established, they require little or no irrigation or fertilizers. In addition to the above benefits, native plants provide food and habitat for indigenous fauna. The plan for the park should include habitat enhancing plantings indicative and healthy Eastern Pennsylvania wetlands, meadows, stream corridors, and shrubland and mature forest.

Edge communities, such as open fields to forest, and trail corridors often are vectors for the establishment of invasive plant materials. Disturbed lands often allow invasive plant materials to establish on a site. A program for monitoring and controlling invasive plant species within the Parks should be undertaken. For a collection of parks of this size, this is a task that should be approached with clear goals, methods, and resources in place to see success.

The Ecological Assessment lays out the blue print for native habitat establishment and invasive management. Some of the key recommendations should be viewed as capital improvements that will require bidding to private contractors. However, the successful implementation will require a combination of staff education, City and Borough manpower, and coordination with private contractors and volunteer groups. As clear plan of action is developed and park staff are provided with required resources; some tasks such as planting of native species are ideally suited for volunteers, including recreation league, school, church, and/or scout groups.

DESIGN ELEMENTS AND FACILITIES STANDARDS

Site Access and Parking

The vision for the master plan is to improve access throughout the entire 300 acres of the park. Formal parking is currently located only at the southern and northern ends of the Parks. In all cases, parking areas should be designed to create safe spaces for vehicles and pedestrians and should be developed to conserve and respect the surrounding land and water resources.

The master plan identifies both areas of new parking and areas of improvements to existing parking. For new parking areas, the following criteria were utilized to determine location:

- Proposed or existing park facilities in need of additional access
- Prior land disturbance
- Existing vehicular access
- Area of proposed restoration where parking could be accommodated in the restoration plans.

When developing concepts for new or expanded parking areas, the following criteria were considered:

- Proper stormwater runoff management
- Adequate tree cover in and around parking.
- Defined pedestrian circulation in and around parking
- Provision for ADA parking and access to site features.
- A sense of arrival at a premier park system.

Reconfiguration of existing parking (particularly in the case of older parking infrastructure) is rarely done without the loss of parking spaces. In addressing

parking numbers, the SC team listened closely to the public and organizations which use the parks for events to understand needs of both day-to-day park activities, as well as larger community event demands. The plan sought to add additional parking whenever possible without imposing on surrounding businesses and residents.

For high use larger parking areas, asphalt pavement is recommended. This will provide a low maintenance surface with dust and mud control. Exploration of porous and permeable pavements options should be considered during design and engineering as they may prove effective methods for stormwater infiltration and management.

For low-use parking areas, such as trailhead parking, gravel parking is an appropriate option. However, ADA access may demand a more stable paved surface, at least for some of the parking area.

Internal primary public access driveways should be a width minimum of 20 feet. The asphalt paving profile should accommodate medium to heavy traffic loads. Secondary driveways for maintenance/emergency access and lesser traveled driveways should have a minimum lane of 9-feet wide, with a total road width minimum of 18-feet.

Parking areas should conform to current stall and width layouts as required by local ordinances at the time of development. For planning purposes, a generous standard of 10 x 20-foot parking stalls with a 24-foot-wide aisle was used. The asphalt paving profile should accommodate medium to heavy traffic loads.

Walkways and Trails

The Master Plan should create meaningful user experiences for people of all abilities. Pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle / mountain bike trail use is a major way to create these varied experiences. The plan recommends the creation of and improvements to a variety of trails and walkways. Generally accepted design standards are listed below for reference for later design and implementation of these facilities.

Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails should be 8 to 12 feet in width to serve a variety of users. Depending on the terrain and intensity of use, the surface can be earthen, stone dust, gravel, or asphalt. Stone dust is recommended when developing an accessible trail to maintain a level stable surface. Asphalt surface should be used in high use areas where slopes exceed 3 percent to provide a level and stable trail while minimizing maintenance. Gravel and earthen surface conditions are appropriate along lower use segments of a trail and can still conform to standards for accessible trails, but require more maintenance to address rutting and erosion. Trail shoulders should be 2-feet wide, level, clear of vertical obstructions and maintained as mown lawn/vegetation or stone dust areas.

ADA-Compliant Asphalt Walkways & Trails

ADA-compliant asphalt walkways and trails should be 5 to 8 foot wide to serve as the primary paths through high-use Park areas. The material provides a level and stable walkway while minimizing maintenance in areas where slopes exceed 3 percent. Trail shoulders should be 2-feet in width, level, and maintained as mown lawn/vegetation, or stone dust. In higher traffic areas, such as parking areas and when connecting to multi-purpose trails, trails should be 8-feet wide. Secondary walkways can vary in width from 5 to 8 feet in width. For minor walkways connecting main walkways to facilities, 5-foot widths are recommended to conform with required minimum ADA passing widths. Along main walkways, benches are recommended in regular intervals to allow users to stop and rest.

New trail or sidewalk gradients should be generally under 5%. However, accessible trails can be graded at 8% or less for a distance not to exceed two-hundred (200) feet, and then a landing must occur. Some walkways connecting facilities within the park will not be universally accessible for wheelchairs and will exceed an accessible slope; however, the inclusion of steps with handrails should be considered in areas where walkway slope exceeds 10%.

ADA Compliant Stone Dust Walkways & Trails

Compacted stone dust walkways and trails should be 5 to 8 feet in width and are appropriate in level areas to provide ADA-compliant walkways and trails. The stone dust trails should only be developed in areas where slopes are under 3-percent. In high use areas, trail widths of 8-feet with 2-foot shoulders are recommended. This width will accommodate user groups such as dog walkers and families with strollers and bicycles.

Earthen Surface Hiking Trails

Compacted earthen surfaces are primarily used for hiking trails and are often used to navigate in environmentally sensitive areas. Hiking trails do not usually meet ADA requirements. Due to locations often being in heavily wooded areas, the final alignment of a hiking trail is often adjusted in the field. When selecting final trail alignments, modifications should be made to preserve trees, work with hydrology patterns, minimize impacts to slopes and limit erosion. The design standards regarding best construction practices, ADA trail guidelines, and trail difficulty standards should be referenced to ensure the alignment is sustainable and meets the requirements for the intended users groups. Earthen hiking trails will be most prevalent in Riverbend Park and Kirby Park natural areas.

Stream / Sensitive Areas Crossings

Trail crossings of drainage ditches will be required in a couple places throughout the Parks. These crossing should meet accessibility standards based on the trail rating that delivers users to the crossing. For difficult single-track trails, a steppingstone crossing or rustic low flow grade crossing may be appropriate. Along more accessible trails, crossings should conform to universal access standards. Boardwalks are proposed to allow park users to safely cross these water features. Boardwalks should have a minimum clear deck of 5-foot-wide. In areas where the deck is more than 32-inches above grade, full railings that are 42-inches high should be included. Wood, recycled plastic timber, and ADA-compliant metal grating are appropriate boardwalk materials. Some of these sensitive area crossings may be needed in Riverbend Park and in Kirby Park Natural Area; in some instances, crossings of these features may require a state PA DEP permit.

Levee outflow channel in Riverbend Park



Park & Wayfinding Signage

Updating of park signage should be addressed in a comprehensive method. Design Standards and wayfinding signage should be standardized and branded so that park users can easily identify wayfinding signs while navigating to the Parks. Items to consider when updating wayfinding signage includes:

- How should the different Parks within the larger system be conveyed?
- Demarcating Park gateways
- New Park wayfinding signage that compliments existing signage

These questions require more exploration in the next phase of design. All 300 acres of Riverfront Parks are interconnected, even though they contain five separate Parks, lie in three jurisdictions, and are comprised of parcels owned by a variety of parties.

The Riverfront Parks should be recognized not just as a collection of individual parks but as a regional environmental asset that is critical to the quality of life of future generations of residents. The historic and cultural influences of the River environment and its peoples should also be noted in interpretive and cultural signage.

Locations have been recommended for improved Vehicular and Pedestrian Gateways to create a clear sequence of arrival to the Park system. These include vehicular access at Kirby Park, Nesbitt Park, and at the northwest edge of this stretch of the Luzerne County Levee Trail. Formalized Pedestrian Gateways are recommended at Kirby Park (two), between Kirby Park and Nesbitt Park (one), at Nesbitt Park (three), and into Riverbend Park from the Levee Trail (three). Gateways could incorporate signage and planting. Gateway signage should reflect the region and history of the Park.

A strategic approach should be taken to updating park signs at parking and vehicular access points. Signage should be oriented to be easily viewed by approaching vehicles from all directions. Directional signage to individual parks should be strategically placed at key road intersections.

Standards for trailhead kiosks should be developed. Kiosks should include modern park maps, park rules, hours of operation, emergency contact numbers, and other relevant information. A dedicated area should be reserved for posting of seasonal programs, and community group information. Park rules should be structured to reflect inviting message that encourages proper use of the Park and a respect for the Park’s natural and recreational resources. Kiosk mapping should include a park-wide map including regional trail connections and the inclusion of “you are here” demarcation. An additional larger map should depict the specific Park the user is entering, clearly locating recreational facilities, trail corridors, and road and amenity names.

Along trail corridors trail blazing should be standardized. Trail Markers should be used to convey important trail information such as park region, trail name and color, a coded Emergency response location, trail difficulty, trail users, and map QR code to allow for smart phone reference.

When the need arises to address unintended uses along Park trails, the use of temporary signage, such as a yard placards, to educate people on specific rules and proper use should be utilized. Once the issue is corrected signs can be removed. Posting of permanent “No” park signage should be limited and address only extreme problems.



Existing Wayfinding along the Levee Trail in Riverbend Park

Recreational Structures

ADA Kayak Launch / Rowing Dock

An ADA kayak/canoe launch, rowing dock, and accessible fishing pier is recommended to increase access to the park's water resources. Pre-manufactured options exist and materials range from aluminum, wood, and plastic. In order to prevent damage to the dock from ice flows, it is recommended that the dock be removed from the River for the winter season and stored on land protected by the levee.

If rowing is reintroduced in the Riverfront Parks, a seasonal dock adjacent to the Market Street Bridge can facilitate this activity. Safe boat storage would occur in the proposed community center.

ADA Fishing Pier

An ADA fishing pier can be a level platform area located along a shoreline or a pier extended out into the waterline. Locations should be determined to provide access to a variety of fishing options. The riverbank just north of the boat launch in Nesbitt Park may be a good location for this. Railings should surround the edge and be a minimum height of 42-inches, with key locations set at a height of 32-inches to accommodate fishing from a wheelchair. These areas should be spaced around the pier to accommodate a variety of fishing opportunities. Often, a wider railing ledge near the wheelchair access points can be provided for setting and accessing tackle boxes. Benches should be located on or near the fishing structure to provide resting areas. When required, a ramp or boardwalk approaching the facility should be 5-feet-wide. The fishing pier offers opportunities for interpretation of water quality issues and pond wildlife observation as well as fishing for all ages and abilities.

Buildings

Community Center

A Community Center is envisioned for the park to serve as a visitor orientation space; a display space for natural, Indigenous, and cultural history; and a flexible program space for environmental education, nature studies, rowing, community programs, and private rentals. A conceptual layout for a sustainable building (~10,000 sf) that can support the park needs was developed. Program elements include:

- Educational Display Area
- Meeting / Multipurpose Room
- Small kitchen area
- Restrooms with both interior and exterior access.
- Office space
- Storage and Support space
- Boathouse / Rowing
- Observation overlook

The building should incorporate green building features such as solar panels, low-flush toilets, use of local materials, and have strong indoor-outdoor spatial relationships for its interior spaces.

Restrooms

Restrooms already exist in Kirby Park. New

restroom facilities should be located on the protected side of the levee, perhaps in the proposed Community Center. These facilities should be available to the public whether the Community Center is open or closed.

Where public restrooms already exist in buildings adjacent to the levee trail, such as in the Kingston Rec. Center and JCC, they should be noted on the park maps. Care should be taken to differentiate these publicly-accessible restrooms from restrooms provided by and located within the parks.

Pavilions

Pavilions can provide a place for people to gather while simultaneously functioning as a small event space. These should be placed around Nesbitt Park to support unscheduled picnicking as well as rentals for events. The design of a new pavilion(s) should be economical and durable while offering a quality of design that helps to reinforce a cohesive park identity. Size in pavilions may range from small scale, 16-foot x 24-foot, that accommodate a few tables or benches or a place to rest out of the direct sun. Medium to Larger scale pavilions can range from 24-foot x 44-foot to 30-foot x 64-foot and can accommodate educational programs and/or rentals for large group picnicking. Pavilions should be made of heavy gauge metal tubing to resist damage from flooding. Picnic tables should be durable, easily cleaned, and accommodate wheelchairs. For flood-resistance, they should be mounted to concrete footers or the concrete floor of the pavilion. Utility service should be provided for all pavilions and include electricity (or solar power) and water for a hose bib to facilitate cleaning.

Recreational Facilities

Nature-based Playgrounds

Playgrounds nurture knowledge, discovery, and curiosity through play. A successful playground helps children to build fitness, confidence, imagination, and social bonds. Due to the park's regional draw, its' playgrounds should incorporate durable elements to provide play opportunities for children ranging from ages 2-12. Several successful and well-maintained playgrounds already exist within Kirby Park. There is opportunity for a new nature-based playground to be located adjacent to Nesbitt Park on land protected by the levee. The woodland between the Jewish Community Center and the Kingston Recreation Center is an ideal location for such a playground.

Popular trends in playgrounds today include both inclusive design principles and nature-based play. Nature-based playgrounds use natural features such as boulders, landforms, tree trunks, and other natural elements in combination with manufactured equipment to create unique play environments that challenge children to use their imaginations and athletic skills in play.

Inclusive play provides meaningful play opportunities for children of all abilities. An inclusive play environment acknowledges that the need for play does not distinguish between children who are typically developing and children with disabilities. Inclusive play designs consider not only physical disability requiring an accessible playground, but it also includes developmental disabilities such as autism; children with sight or hearing impairment and children with intellectual

disabilities such as down syndrome. Design considerations include the needs of the child along with their siblings, parents, grandparents, friends and other caregivers.

Developing a theme for a playground can help to reinforce a sense of place, create a memorable experience or a play destination. Theming can be done through development of one key custom play piece; the thoughtful selection of secondary play equipment and site furnishing; and design of play surfacing and planting areas. Often themes can be developed to reflect the history of the place, or reflect the natural features of the surrounding areas.



Tennis courts at Kirby Park

Bocce Courts

Bocce is a popular outdoor game that originated in Italy, played with balls on a long rectangular court made of grass or sand. The objective is to throw your bocce balls closer to a smaller target ball than your opponent. It is a game of skill, strategy, and precision, often enjoyed in a social setting. Bocce is particularly popular with older players, as it is a sport that does not require extreme strength or speed. Bocce can be played in singles (1 vs. 1), doubles (2 vs. 2), or teams (4 vs. 4).

Standard bocce courts are 91 feet long by 13 feet wide, though courts can range in size from 40-91 feet long to 10-13 feet wide. The court surface should be flat and can be made of various materials including grass, clay, or synthetic turf. A smooth surface is essential for the balls to roll accurately. Four bocce courts, with appropriate clear space around them, would fit under an archway of Market Street Bridge.

Pickleball Courts

Pickleball is a paddleball sport with elements of tennis, table tennis, and badminton, and is played with two or four players. This game has increased in popularity in recent years, especially with seniors, who are often underserved when it comes to public recreational facilities. Removable pickleball nets can be used to allow for court areas to accommodate additional games.

Pickleball courts are rectangles 20 feet wide by 44 feet long, inclusive of 2-inch-wide lines. A total playing area 30 feet wide and 60 feet long is the minimum size that is recommended. A preferred 10-foot surrounding margin measures 40 feet by 64 feet. The net length should be at least 21 feet 9 inches extending from one post to the other. (USA Pickleball Association) When over laid on the tennis courts, an 8-foot safety area should be maintained in the back of courts to conform to the 60' minimum court playing area length.

Due to the recent popularity of the sport, courts often serve groups of players that cycle through playing and watching. Nearby benches should be incorporated into the design of these courts to provide seating for waiting players and spectators.

Court Soccer (Futsal)

Court Soccer is a fast-paced, miniaturized version of regular soccer played on a hard surface which can accommodate younger players, people with some mobility issues, and quick pickup games. Futsal is an excellent training ground for soccer players to develop their skills. A match can be played with as few as three players or accommodate as many as 10. Matches consist of two 20-minute halves with one halftime break.

Formal futsal leagues are growing in popularity in the United States and a local league could be supported with the creation of a futsal court. Futsal courts are rectangular, 82-138 feet long by 52-82 feet wide with painted lines and one net goal at each far end. The smallest regulation court could fit under an archway of the Market Street Bridge.

Mini Skate Park

Skateboarding and inline skating are solo sports that emphasize balance, agility, and creativity, allowing participants to perform tricks and maneuvers in various environments. They are popular activities, especially among tweens and teens, and require extensive practice in order to master even the most basic moves.

Full size skate parks are usually around 12,000 square feet in size. Mini skate parks usually start around 3,000 square feet in size. Skate parks consist of a hard, flat surface, such as concrete, along with features such as ramps, rails, and boxes on which to practice skills and tricks. These features are usually made of concrete and stainless steel. Mini skate parks serve as community hubs for skaters, promoting physical activity, creativity, and social interaction among participants. There is room for a mini skate park of approximately 6,000 square feet under an archway of the Market Street Bridge.

Basketball

This fast-paced sport, played between two teams of five players each, is one of the most popular sports worldwide. The objective is to score points by shooting a ball through the opponent’s hoop, which is elevated 10 feet above the ground. Basketball is a popular pickup game among small groups of friends of all ages, who do not need enough players for a tournament game in order to enjoy one of the many variations of play.

An official basketball court is rectangular and measures 94 feet long by 50 feet wide, but undersized courts are just as popular with people seeking pickup games – all that’s needed is a hoop and a patch of smooth, hard surface - such as macadam or concrete - on which to dribble the ball. A slightly undersized basketball court of 76 feet long by 50 feet wide would fit under one bay of the Veterans’ Memorial Bridge.

Site Amenities

Site Furnishings

Site furnishings provide additional amenities and create a sense of uniformity in the park landscape. These improvements include benches, trash receptacles, signage, bike racks, picnic tables, and drinking fountains. These amenities should be chosen to be durable, cohesive with the design and materials in the park, and meet ADA standards. Furnishings located on the river side of the levee should be flood-resistant, anchored deeply into the ground, and/or made of heavy, solid materials such as granite blocks or heavy-gauge steel tubing.

Along walkways, benches should be placed periodically. At least half of all benches and picnic tables in the park should be ADA-accessible with direct access from a paved area and an adjacent paved area to accommodate a wheelchair. Trash receptacles should be strategically placed at trailheads and high use areas such as the court areas, playgrounds, and pavilions. Placement of trash receptacles should consider easy access for maintenance personnel.

Habitat Boxes

Man-made faunal habitats in the form of wildlife boxes are proposed to encourage habitats for bats, native birds, and native bees. Wildlife boxes can be potential projects for local boy scouts, girl scouts, and volunteer groups. These habitat boxes should be installed away from trails and activity zones to provide a sense of safety to the animals which use them and to discourage human interference.

4

RECOMMENDATIONS



Susquehanna River

MARKET ST BRIDGE

OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

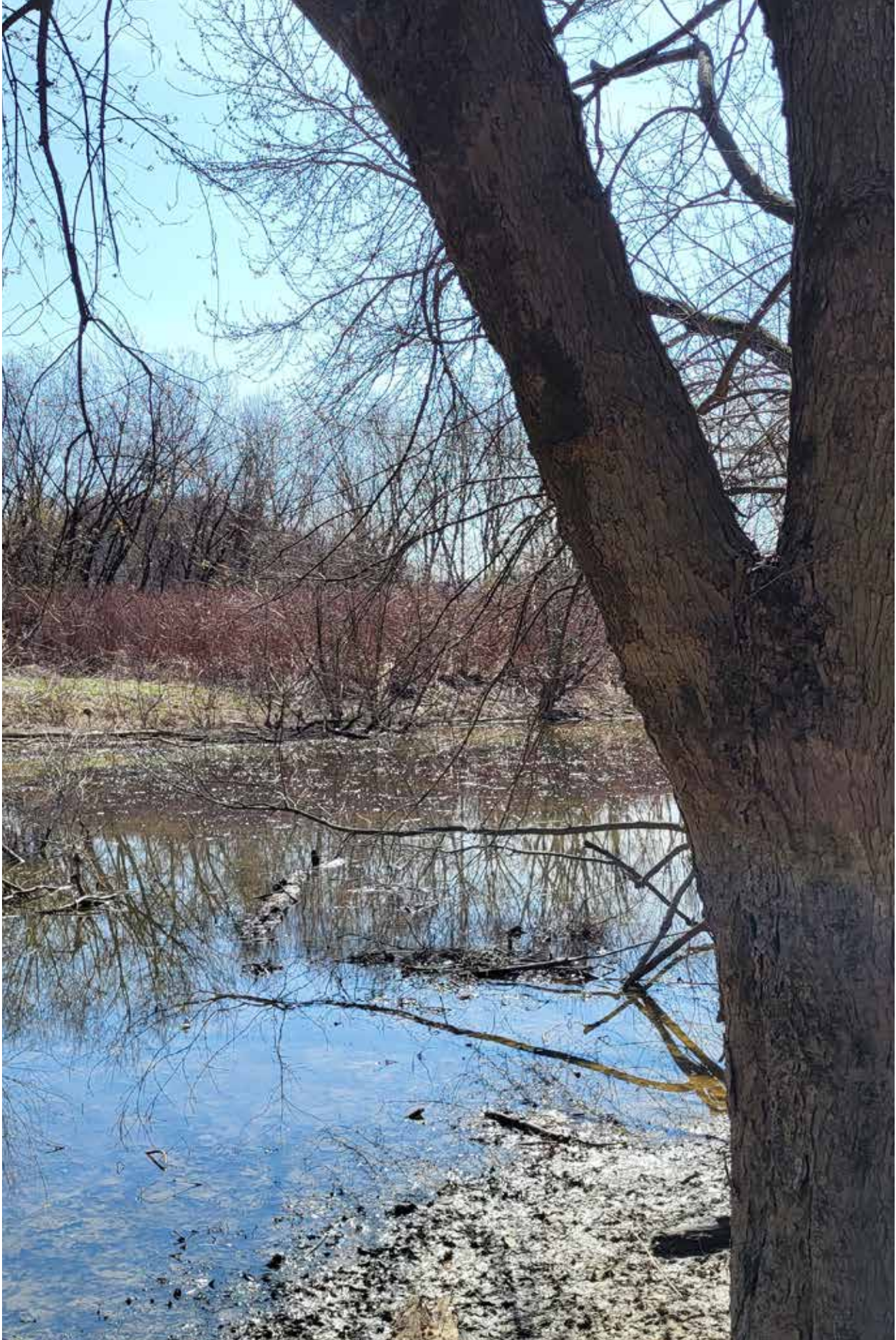
Guiding Park Objectives and Recommendations were developed to support the following five areas of focus: Land Stewardship, Organization & Policy, Maintenance & Management, Environmental Education & Programming, and Site Improvements. As park implementation projects are undertaken, each of these five areas of focus should be considered to ensure improvements reinforce the master plan goals.

Land Stewardship

Land stewardship can be defined as *caring for a piece of land while taking into consideration its ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions*. All of these elements were discussed during the planning process and are important to the master plan for the Parks.

Stewardship Objectives are as follows:

1. Recognition that the protection and enhancement of the Parks’ natural resources is key to all other open space benefits and recreational opportunities in the Riverfront Parks while also recognizing the Parks’ location in a dense urban core with a unique ability to provide access to nature for nearby residents and visitors.
2. Plan and fund stewardship activities in the same manner as capital improvements (and not as maintenance) over at least a fifteen (15) year cycle based on a specific strategy of long-term stewardship.
3. Identify and foster stewardship partnerships with agencies, businesses, non-profits, municipal governments, and volunteers.



Organization & Policy

The Riverside Parks, being located across five jurisdictions with multiple property owners, is complicated to manage in its entirety. Consequently, a focused vision of the organizational structure and of policies is necessary to ensure the successful implementation of recommendations.

Organization & Policy objectives are as follows:

1. Reconfigure the ‘Riverside Parks Committee’ Nonprofit Organization to Promote and Coordinate Management of All Five Riverside Parks (Kirby, Kirby Natural, Nesbitt, Riverbend, and River Commons on the east side of the Susquehanna)
 - This organization will be tasked with helping to carry out implementation of the Plan.
 - Advocate for municipal funding to support a full-time administrator / volunteer coordinator position to maintain momentum on Plan goals. This could be a hired position or through a vendor / consultant.
2. Develop and Maintain a Long-Term Vision for the Riverside Parks
 - Conduct an annual review of the Riverside Parks Master Plan. Critically analyze accomplishments and actions needed to continue to move the plan toward full implementation.
3. Engage Volunteers and assist local governments with more closely coordinating park management with adjacent communities to create greater community “ownership” of the Riverside Parks
 - Establish a framework for identifying, organizing, and using volunteers for stewardship and other tasks.
 - Work with a new paid Volunteer Coordinator position to identify, organize, and mobilize park volunteers who will assist in park stewardship, maintenance, and environmental education.
4. Improve information dissemination about the Riverside Parks and activities within them to the public, partner organizations, first responders, and others towards improved safety, cooperation, and participation in all aspects of park operations and activities.
 - Create an improved web site and more easily accessible information to better convey information about the Parks
 - Clarify in-park wayfinding, and provide real time data on park programming, events, site conditions. Include an in-park locational data / system to assist first responders.
 - Advocate for the design and installation of improved park wayfinding signage.
 - Install QR-code educational signage that links to informational pages on the Parks’ website about upcoming events and the natural, cultural, & industrial history of the Parks.

Kirby Park Natural Area

Maintenance & Management

Given that the four Riverside Parks (five, including River Commons) are located on lands under the jurisdiction of five separate governments (Wilkes-Barre, Kingston, Forty-Fort, Edwardsville, and Luzerne County), management of the Parks is complicated. Without a single, coordinating entity, management of these Parks as a whole will not be possible. The 501(c)3 nonprofit Riverside Parks Committee of Wilkes-Barre should grow beyond its current mandate, which currently focuses only on the three Wilkes-Barre-owned Riverside Parks (Kirby Natural, Nesbitt, and River Commons), but that would require a new multi-government agreement / memorandum of understanding.

We suggest the organization shift from a “worker bee” structure, in which members take on all maintenance and improvement projects themselves, to a “capital improvements strategist and lobbyist” structure focused on assisting with raising funds, fostering cooperation among jurisdictions, and coordinating maintenance and improvements. Further, in order to clarify the nonprofit’s independence from the governing structure of the City of Wilkes-Barre, its name should be removed from the City’s website as an official City “Board & Authority” and relisted elsewhere as a ‘partner organization’. We suggest the other four jurisdictions also list the non-profit as an official partner.

This newly reorganized nonprofit should include representation from the governing jurisdictions of Wilkes-Barre, Kingston, Forty Fort, Edwardsville, and Luzerne County; property owners including the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority,

Norfolk Southern Railroad, and the Sgarlat family; individuals representing the various users of the Parks, including the Suskie Bassmasters, Northeastern Pennsylvania Disc Golfers Club, Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society, Wilkes University, Kings College, and any new clubs or associations that form as a result of new amenities added to the Parks, such as pickleball and rowing; as well as motivated individuals who are personally invested in the success of the Parks.

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, this organization has the ability to fundraise and offer tax exemptions to donors as well as to apply for grants to improve and maintain the Parks as a whole, across jurisdictional boundaries, in cooperation and coordination with each local government property owner.

Empowering the nonprofit to assist with management of all five Parks is critical to ensuring the efficient and cost-effective stewardship of resources and successful coordination of management efforts. This multilateral coordination will also improve the ability to successfully apply for and win grants from agencies such as the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources (PA DCNR), which often prioritize grants for cooperating municipalities.

This report should act as a guiding document for local governments and the newly reorganized nonprofit group and be continually revised and updated to reflect new or changed priorities, while maintaining respect for the public’s wishes as identified in this report in addition to any committee-identified priorities.

Maintenance & Management objectives are as follows:

1. Manage for Tomorrow

 - Focus day-to-day efforts to meet both immediate maintenance demands of existing facilities and visitor demands while also addressing the longer-term stewardship work.
2. Identify and Implement Sustainable Practices for a Changing Climate

 - Adapt maintenance practices to address the demands of more intense storm events and increasing temperature fluctuations in an overall warming climate.
 - Stay current with new challenges in habitat and vegetation management precipitated by a rapidly changing climate.
3. Coordinate first responder management

 - Meet annually with county and local first responders, state police, and PA Fish & Boat Commission staff to review emergency response procedures, plans, and concerns.
4. Continuing education for city and municipality public staff; Riverside Parks Committee staff and volunteers

 - Support administrative and volunteer staff in continuing education classes and seminars focused on land stewardship and sustainable maintenance practices.



Kirby Park in autumn 2025: pavilion with new stone steps and stonedust “beach”, framed by new plantings and mulch around the pond.

Environmental Education & Programming

The public input process revealed a powerful desire by the entire park community to enhance current environmental education efforts being conducted at the Park.

Environmental Education & Programming objectives are as follows:

1. Create Future Park Stewards Through Environmental Education
 - Expand on the current outreach of the Riverside Parks Committee, Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and other organizations' educational programs with a goal to create more citizen advocacy for the Riverside Parks.
2. Nurture a Park Identity that is Focused on both the Environment and Healthful Activities.
 - Seek to create an "identity" for the Riverside Parks that is centered on a balance of environmental resources and healthful activities.
 - Develop branding that distinguishes the individual parks within the system while presenting them as a cohesive collection of parks.
3. Partner with educational institutions and non-profits.
 - Expand local school district involvement. Seek to expand and possibly fund curriculum content that uses the Riverside Parks as a living laboratory for students.
 - Engage area universities for park research projects.
 - Enable educators to share and access park data and resources for curriculum planning.
4. Cultural and Historical Education and Interpretation
 - Provide resources to support educational studies on the natural, Indigenous, industrial, and cultural histories of the Parks and surrounding area.



Opportunities for environmental education are highly desired by the community.

Site Improvements

Site improvements will allow the public to better engage with the Park's resources for recreation, education, health-nurturing activities, community building, and spiritual renewal.

Site Improvement objectives are as follows:

1. Trail connections & circulation enhancements
 - Improve existing trails and expand ADA accessibility throughout Kirby Park Natural Area and Nesbitt Park. Create an ADA accessible loop in both parks.
 - Develop new non-ADA trails through Kirby Natural Area and Riverbend Park
 - Improve trail wayfinding; including trail markings, signage, and maps.
 - Clarify vehicular access to the Parks and separate motor vehicle / pedestrian traffic in Nesbitt Park
2. Promote Expanded Park Use
 - Build on existing recreational improvements while strategically creating new recreation improvements to distribute visitors throughout the Park at all times of the day and year.
3. Facilitate The Visitor Experience.
 - Plan for a Community Center / Nature Center / Boat House as a Park gateway for visitor orientation, education, programming, events, private rentals, and staff offices. Seek corporate and/or philanthropic sponsorship. Create an endowment for continued Community Center maintenance, operations, and programing. Seek out partners for rowing and kayak activities and teams.



Photosimulation of the proposed Community Center Building

MASTER PLAN

The current park infrastructure is extensive. A park of this size offers many challenges in administration and management. With this in mind, the master plan takes a conservative approach to proposing new site facilities. Facilities recommendations are made to support and achieve the following objectives:

- 1. Increase Usage Throughout the Parks at All Times of the Day and Year Toward Enhanced Safety
- 2. Improve Universal Access
- 3. Create Improved Trail Connections and Access
- 4. Supplement / Improve Existing Facilities where needed.
- 5. Provide Educational Opportunities

The plan also recommends the development of some larger facilities such as a cultural/community/boathouse center. This recommendation has been reflected in the Park’s master plans at least since the 1995 Riverside Parks Master Site Development Plan by The RBA Group. The development of this facility is in keeping with the above objectives and continues to be a long-term implementation recommendation. Additional planning for such a facility should continue in the form of talks with the Reilly property owner and a feasibility study to further refine the building program, size, operational parameters, and to develop a funding strategy.

Of note is that several of the proposed improvements in this report can serve a dual purpose - both improving the Parks ecological health as well as counting towards the municipalities’ Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) requirements. These requirements aim to decrease stormwater and sediment runoff during heavy rains and to increase infiltration through the ground to help recharge underground aquifers. New trees and floodplain meadows both help to support these efforts.

Recommendations have been made for each Park within the larger system. All detailed ecological restoration recommendations can be found in the Ecological Assessment included in the Appendix.

Kirby Park and the Kirby Park Natural Area



Kirby Park
Vision

The vision for Kirby Park is to maintain and enhance its position as the ‘Central Park’ of the Wilkes-Barre metropolitan area. This will be done by activating currently underused portions of the Park, restoring degraded facilities such as the track and field, while maintaining the grand scale and features that make this Park a premiere destination for daily recreation and large regional events. The stewardship plan for the area includes the installation of new trees to prepare for the decline of existing mature trees as well to expand the canopy to provide more shade during hot weather.

KEY

Existing Walkway

Existing Trail

Proposed Walkway/Trail

Proposed/Improved Crosswalk

#

Existing Parking (# Spaces)

#

Proposed Parking (# Spaces)

A

Future Connection to
Edwardsville Natural Area

B

Trail Improvements @ RR X-ing

C

Pump Track

D

18-hole Disc Golf Course
(Relocated)

E

Native Plants Garden @ the
Reflecting Pool

F

Medicinal Plants Garden @ the
Caretaker's House Foundation

G

Resurfaced Tennis Courts

H

Sports Fields Improvements

I

Shade Tree Plantings

J

Splash Pad

K

Track & Field Improvements

L

Lookout Improvements (Planting
Bed and Ornamental Tree
Plantings)

M

Recreational Access under Market
St. Bridge (Bocce, Bike
Parking/Repair Plaza, Pickleball,
Futsal, Skate Spot, Boat Dock)

N

Entry Plaza Improvements

O

Market St. Improvements
(Narrowed Lanes, Planted
Center Island, Street Trees)

P

Market St. Bridge Improvements
(Narrowed Lanes, Painted
Center Island, Lit Arches)

Q

1st & 2nd Ave. Improvements
(Wayfinding Signage, Street
Trees)

R

New Community Center

S

Expanded Boat Launch, Parking
(Cars & Boats), & ADA Fishing
Pier



Expanded parking will accommodate more visitors during peak visitation times.

Kirby Park

Increase Parking

A significant number of new parking spaces could be added to the Park without impacting any actively programmed land by expanding the exiting lot around the maintenance yard. This would provide up to 48 new parking spaces, increasing available parking in this main lot by 28%.

Improve Universal Access

Kirby Park has recently upgraded the area around its pond with ADA-accessible walkways, lighting, native perennial plantings, and seating as well as adding new accessible play facilities and restrooms near its existing playgrounds. These connect with a robust network of existing accessible pathways. Beyond physical accessibility, heat is also a factor which can negatively impact visitors - especially young and elderly people. Increased shade coverage is also an

accessibility feature, allowing more people to safely spend time outdoors during hot weather.

Add New Signage

For vehicular traffic arriving to Kirby Park from Market Street, new large, clear signage should be installed which directs drivers arriving from both directions to Kirby Park Road. It would also be beneficial to direct drivers to the vehicular entrance to Nesbitt Park (via 2nd Ave) on this same signage.

Within Kirby Park, a large map of the facilities and features within the Park should be installed near both the pedestrian entrance at the parking lot, by the existing green poles, and near the pedestrian entryway at the Market Street Bridge as a way to orient new visitors. These maps should also show the remainder of the Riverside Parks and highlight parking locations as well as pedestrian access points and trails.

Additional educational signage opportunities exist within the Park to highlight the natural, cultural, and agricultural history of the site. These should be designed in consultation with the Wilkes-Barre Parks and Recreation Department and the Riverside Parks Committee.



Add New Amenities

The sitting platform on the levee overlooking the Kirby Park pond would benefit from the removal of the overgrown juniper shrubs, restoring views over the Park and preventing this space from becoming a hidden “blind-spot.” To provide shade in hot weather and to provide respite for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists along the levee trail, small, light-canopy trees should be installed. Single-trunk specimens such as Grey Birch (*Betula populifolia*), Allegheny Serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*), Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), Washington Hawthorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*), and/or Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) would be appropriate. Lower branches should be trimmed to maintain clear views and access under the trees.

To activate the pedestrian entrance to the Park from the parking lot, the existing green concrete pillars could be painted bright, cheerful colors. Select pillars could be painted with words such as “WELCOME” to let visitors know they’ve arrived at the right place.

A section of the pillars near the new restroom building would make a wonderful spray pad for children and their caretakers to cool off in hot weather. Plumbing for fresh water and drainage could be tied into the existing pipes serving the restroom. Playful spray heads could be attached to the tops of the pillars in a variety of spray patterns to increase visual delight and play value. A concrete pad with drainage would need to be installed under the spray zone to provide a slip-resistant surface, prevent muddy conditions, and manage drainage. An alternate option to the splash pad would be a misting station in the same location, which provides a fine, cooling mist that evaporates before it can wet the ground. A misting area would also eliminate the need for filtering systems that a spray pool area will require.

Over 150 new trees should be planted throughout the Park to prepare for the decline of existing trees and to provide more shade for Park visitors. Trees could be planted around all existing playing fields as well as radiating from the existing Pavilion, while leaving a clear area between the Pavilion and the seating mounds built into the levee for easy viewing of concerts. Trees should also be planted sporadically throughout existing stands of mature trees so that they are there long enough to grow to a size that will quickly replace the canopy of older trees which eventually die.

Trees could be planted all at once or in stages, as funding is secured. Trees should be protected from deer herbivory with individual metal mesh cages staked into the ground until the tree canopies are tall enough to be above the reach of deer. When new or old trees die, they should be cut down and replacement trees should be planted in 5-year intervals in order to diversify the age and mix of trees in the Park. This will help prevent the trees from all aging out at the same time in 50-100 years. Trees must be planted at least 15’ from the toe of the levee to prevent impacting the levee’s structural integrity.



The overgrown sitting platform (atop the levee, behind the Juniper shrubs) as seen from the Martz Pavilion in Kirby Park

Restore Degraded Facilities

The pedestrian entrance to the Park on Market Street, across from Dawes Ave, should be made more inviting and distinct from the driveway at Kirby Park Road by replacing the existing macadam with pavers. Bright paver colors such as terra cotta, brick, or granite would help differentiate the entrance from the roadway, discouraging cars from entering. The three permanent bollards blocking vehicular access at the entrance pillars should be painted a lighter color, such as light grey or tan, so that they are easily visible to drivers. The mismatched temporary flexi-post bollards along the roadway should be removed. Care should be taken that the pavers are installed level with adjoining sidewalks for ADA accessibility.

Kirby Park hosts multiple sports leagues and contains numerous playing fields, courts, and a combined football field and track. The three baseball fields appear to be in good condition, are regularly maintained, and used heavily. Similarly, the bank of ten tennis courts are in fair condition, with ongoing maintenance visible, though some users would like to see the entire collection of courts resurfaced. We consider this a secondary priority, given the costs involved. But if grant or partner funding is available for such a project, we encourage it to move forward.

The football field and track are both in poor condition, and the track is undersized for modern competition uses. The track should be expanded to six lanes and surfaced with a pervious all-weather material while the football field should be surfaced with artificial turf. These materials require the least amount of ongoing maintenance and both offer a good lifespan for their cost. These facilities could then be rented out to local schools and sports leagues as a source of revenue and to encourage greater use of the Park.

Fencing around the track and field is in fair condition, but could have years of life left if repaired. Alternately, the fencing could be replaced as part of the renovation of the track and field. If replacing, we recommend a 4-6’ tall open vertical fencing made of black powder-coated steel. If repairing, posts supporting the fence which are bent should be bent back into a vertical position or reset in the ground before sanding the top rails and posts to remove existing rust. The entire fence should then be sprayed with at least two coats of a premium outdoor black enamel paint to minimize irregularities in its appearance and maximize remaining lifespan.



Existing tennis courts (view from the top of the levee)

Improve Emergency Responder Access

Emergency response to and through Kirby Park, including access over the levee to Kirby Park Natural Area, is currently provided through the maintenance yard adjacent to the Kirby Park parking lot. This involves unlocking and re-locking two separate gates in sequence, one into the maintenance yard from the parking lot and one out of the maintenance yard into the park. This slows response times and poses logistical issues.

To improve emergency vehicle access into and through Kirby Park, the existing concrete block barricades limiting vehicular access to the walkway entrance from the parking lot (located near the southern-most baseball field) should be removed and replaced with a single fold-down (or knock down) bollard. This bollard would be locked in the upright position at most times and unlocked by emergency services to allow the bollard to lay flat, allowing them to drive over it. This will simplify entry into the park for emergency vehicles and speed up response times.



Current condition: Market St. Bridge entrance.



Concept rendering: Traffic calming implementations, ADA compliant crosswalk, painted lane, buffer island, tree plantings.



Current condition: Undersized cinder track in poor condition.

Concept rendering: 6 lane competition grade track with graded artificial turf football field.



Current condition: Green concrete pillars.

Concept renderings: Painted pillars, welcome sign.



Current condition: Green concrete pillars.

Concept renderings: Painted pillars, splash pad (left); Painted pillars, misting station, game plaza (right).



Kirby Park Natural Area

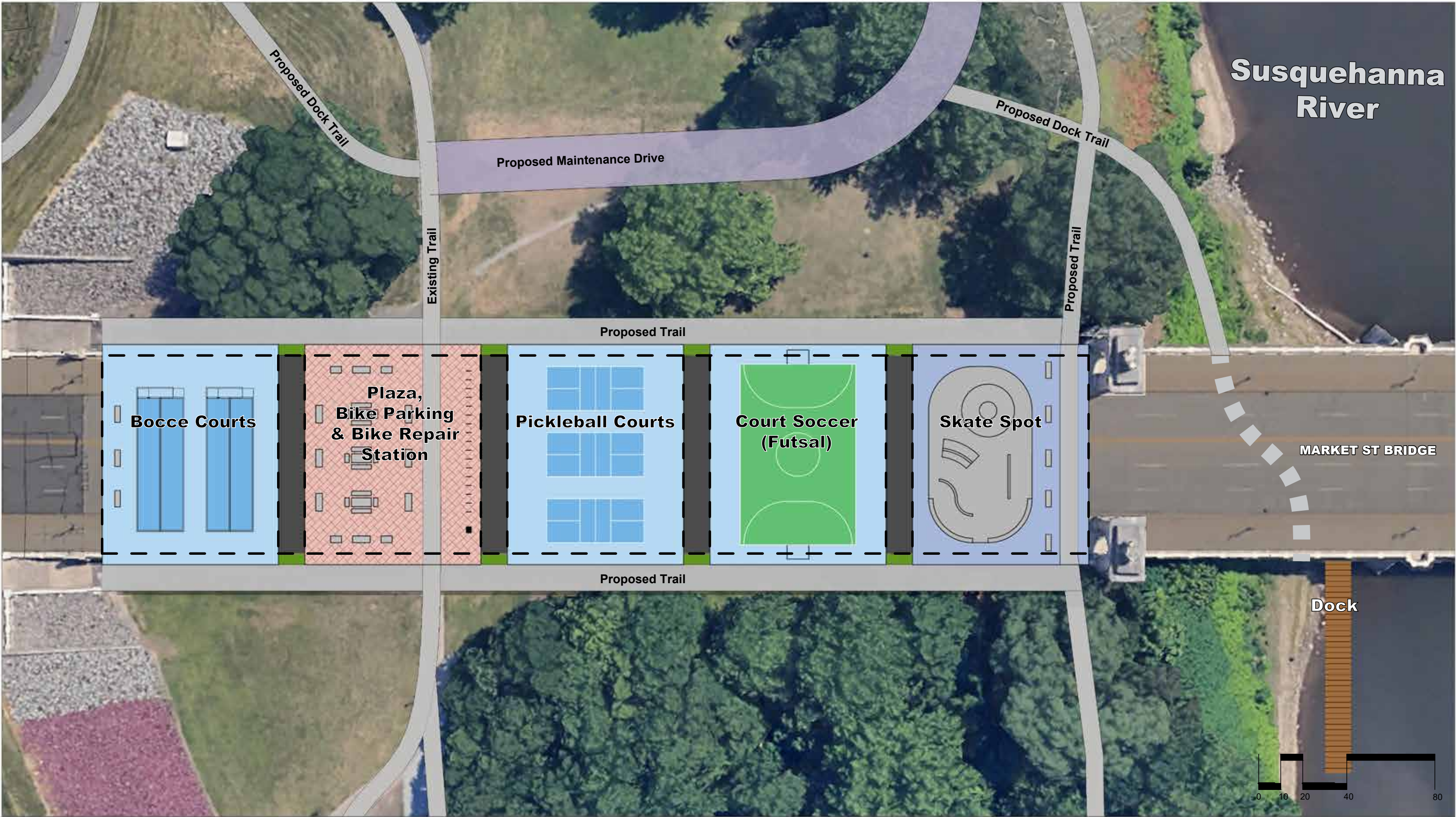
Vision

In the tradition of Olmstead’s ‘Rambles’ through New York’s Central Park, the vision for Kirby Park Natural Area is to support and improve the existing native ecosystem while increasing the number of people using this urban park at all times of the day and year - increasing visitors’ contact with nature and sense of safety. This can be accomplished by providing new, low-impact activities throughout and adjacent to the Natural Area, in addition to clearing dense brush near pathways to improve sightlines. Additional pedestrian connections into and through the Natural Area would make visiting it easier while also easing visitors concerns by helping them feel less constrained and allowing them more opportunities to leave the Natural Area if they ever feel unsafe.

Improve Connections

Completing the existing partial stairways over the levee flap gate (located on the levee between the baseball fields and cricket field) would provide an additional, more direct route for visitors to access the Natural Area from the Kirby Park parking lot. While a staircase is, by definition, not ADA-accessible, there are already two ADA-accessible routes into the Natural Area via paved ramps.

Formalizing existing and new trails through the Natural Area would also provide visitors with clear routes to explore this palustrine woodland, whether via a simple perimeter trail or a meandering weave. The perimeter trail should be paved and ADA-Accessible, building on the remaining macadam from the original Olmstead design. Smaller inner routes could be simple earthen trails and not ADA-accessible. All trails should be blazed in colors that correspond to a new system-wide trails map. Solid granite block or concrete benches, which will resist damage from flooding and ice flows, should be provided at regular intervals along these trails to allow trail users to rest and soak up nature.



Add New Activities in the Kirby Park Natural Area

A sense of safety can be encouraged among visitors to the Natural Area by increasing the number of eyes and ears in and adjacent to this riparian woodland. This can be accomplished by adding new activities that fit with the environment and encourage people to spend more time in and around this Area.

Disc Golf is an activity that is often incorporated into woodlands for this purpose. Disc golf can be played either solo or as a group and is considered a low-impact activity not only because it is physically undemanding and played at a slow pace but because few (if any) trees need to be removed or trimmed in order to create these courses. Courses in woodlands are often woven around trees and existing natural features as this provides for more complex and interesting play. Disc golf fairways are in essence

simply wide trails, and a disc golf course can double as a meandering walking trail for those not interested in playing the sport, allowing walkers to explore the ecosystem in closer, more expansive detail. Obstacle trees in the direct flight path of a fairway, with a high likelihood of being hit by discs, can be protected against bark and cambium damage by gently wrapping their trunks with large bamboo matting or bundles of branches.

The broken canopy in the southern 2/3rds of the Natural Area provides a great opportunity for designing disc golf fairways simply by clearing invasive shrubs and installing tee pads and goal baskets, along with some signage directing golfers to the next tee. Fairways and the trails that connect them should be blazed to direct golfers through the course in the correct order. This infrastructure is minimal and

would not cost much to replace if damaged or destroyed by floods or ice flows. A full game of disc golf usually takes between 1-3 hours to play, meaning golfers will spend a considerable amount of time providing the security service of their presence each time they play a round. The community of disc golfers will also be invested in maintaining the course, providing a new source of motivated volunteers to aid in stewardship of the Natural Area.

In order to test the viability of a disc golf course in the Kirby Park Natural Area, nine (9) holes could be installed for a limited time, perhaps for 10 years. If this activity is found to succeed in balancing ecological stewardship with bringing more people into the Park at all times of the day, the course could then be expanded to 18 holes. The course and its impacts/success should be

reassessed every five (5) years, with any needed modifications to the course or its operation (in order to balance ecological preservation with increased use) made at those times.

A pump track for BMX biking is proposed for the southwest corner of Kirby Park Natural Area. This area has hilly topography - due to existing pits from past gravel mining - which lends itself to this type of activity with only minimal regrading and resurfacing needed. Bicycles are allowed to use the levee trail, providing easy access to this site from neighborhoods throughout the region. Locating this track at the opposite end of the Natural Area from the Skate Park under the Market Street Bridge will create strong draws at both ends of the Park, adding eyes and ears to these formerly desolate zones.



Disc golf can be incorporated into woodlands to encourage visitors to spend time in this natural environment.



An example of a bicycle pump track that is built into the surrounding landscape.

Add New Activities Adjacent to the Park

The archways under the Market Street Bridge provide another opportunity to bring people to the edge of the Natural Area, providing additional eyes and ears to this section of the park while giving people reasons to return to the parks regularly, developing the habit of park visitation - which is essential to the long-term popularity and sustainability of park systems. Five activities are proposed under the five archways accessible on the west banks:

- Bocce
- A Protected Plaza and Bike Repair Station
- Pickleball
- Court Soccer (Futsal)
- A Skate Plaza

These activities could take place during intensely sunny or rainy weather, being protected from both elements by the bridge above. This protection increases the times of day and year that these facilities could be utilized, increasing the number of visitors to this section of the park system. General lighting is suggested under all five archways to increase the times of day that activities can take place in these spaces and to increase a sense of security among visitors. Lighting could be programmed to automatically turn off two hours after sunset to limit use times.

Bocce is often played on teams and tournaments can bring larger numbers to the courts. It is considered the third most played sport in the world and matches last 30-45 minutes each. Multiple matches are played as part of a tournament. Bocce is especially popular with older players as it is a low-impact, skills-based, social activity. Four bocce courts would easily fit under the first archway closest to the stairs down from the Market Street Bridge, with plenty of space for seating and paved walkways around the courts.

A new seating plaza under the second archway of the Market Street Bridge would align with an existing paved trail connecting Nesbitt Park and Kirby Park Natural Area under the Bridge. This trail is used by both pedestrians and bicyclists and a new plaza would provide respite from both hot or rainy weather as well as providing a place for cyclists to lock up or repair their bikes, protected from the elements. Seating and tables made from granite blocks or concrete would resist flood damage while paving stones and lighting would brighten up the space and prevent mud puddles. This could become a gathering place for people waiting to meet up with friends in the parks or for others to join them in activities under the other archways. Perhaps one or two cornhole games/goals could be incorporated here.

Three pickleball courts would fit under the third archway under the Bridge. Sliding net curtains hung from the bridge above could provide protection against runaway balls when games are being played. The net could then be slid open and secured to the bridge pillars when games are not in play to prevent damage to the net during flooding events.

Court soccer, also known as futsal, is a miniature and fast-paced version of the most popular sport in the world. A court under the fourth archway is possible not only because of the square footage available, but also because of the extra height of the archway as compared to archways closer to the bridge abutment. Similar to the pickleball court, a sliding net could be used to contain the soccer ball from errant kicks.

A mini skate park under the fifth archway brings youth and energy under the Market Street Bridge. The opportunity to engage local graffiti artists to create colorful murals would make this a destination not only

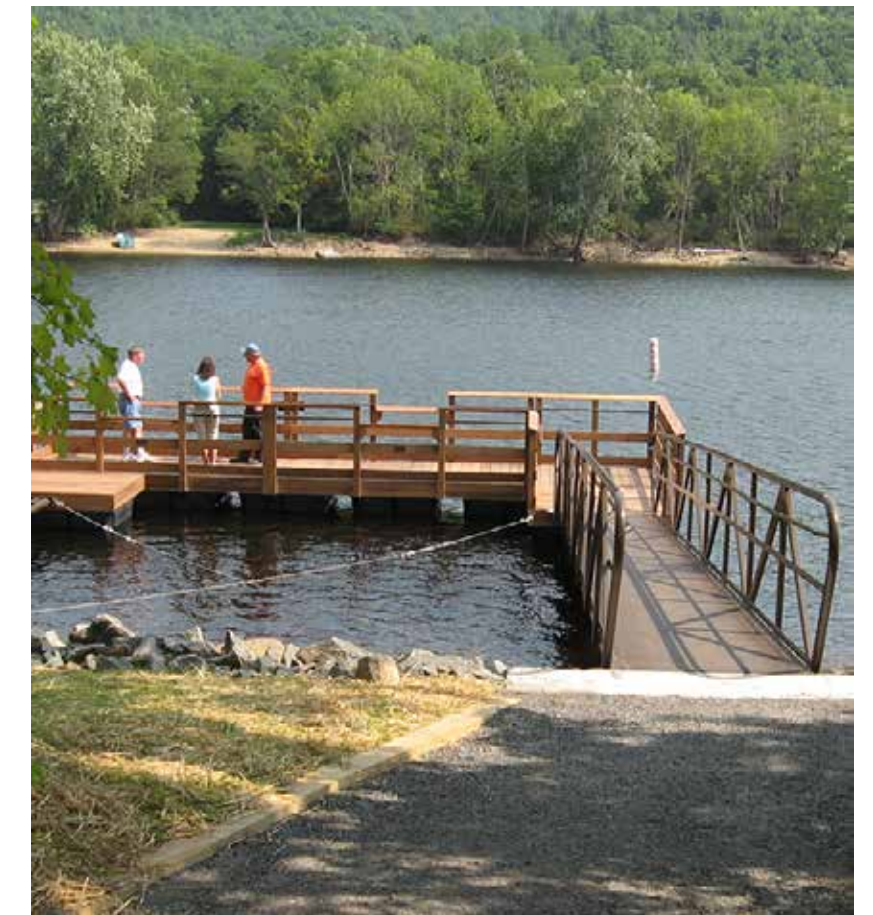


Top: Bocce courts



Bottom left: Skatepark

Bottom right: ADA-accessible dock



for skaters but for aficionados of public art. A new pathway along the River side of this archway would create another formal pathway connecting the Natural Area with Nesbitt Park.

A long floating dock downstream of the sixth archway would support kayaking and rowing activities on the Susquehanna. By separating the launch point for unpowered watercraft from the motorized boats using the concrete boat launch, additional safety is provided for all boaters. Additionally, the natural rubble beach under this archway protects human-powered watercraft from the strong currents of the main river channel (at least during normal flows) when launching and landing. This dock should be removed from the river for the winter season and stored safely out of reach of floodwaters and ice flows.



Current condition: Unused open space under Market St. Bridge.

Concept rendering: Four bocce courts and seating under the first archway, closest to the the existing staircase up to Market St.



Current condition: Unused open space under Market St. Bridge.

Concept rendering: Pedestrian plaza, lighting, granite slab seating, picnic areas, bicycle racks, bicycle repair station.





Current condition: Unused open space under Market St. bridge.

Concept rendering: Three pickleball courts with lighting.



Current condition: Unused open space under Market St. bridge.

Concept rendering: Mini soccer (Futsal) court with lighting. Hanging net from bridge to keep balls in.





Current condition: Unused open space under Market St. bridge.

Concept rendering: Skate spot with lighting, granite slab seating, protected walkway for pedestrians.



Current condition: First bridge bay over water. Includes natural protection from strong currents.

Concept rendering: Boat launch dock for non-motorized boats, paved path.



Provide Educational Opportunities

From feedback received at both public and several committee meetings, there is strong community support for additional educational opportunities within the parks, especially in Kirby Park Natural Area. This location’s fascinating mix of natural, indigenous, industrial, and cultural history provide many opportunities for learning. But because of its location in a major floodplain, investment in traditional education signage in the Natural Area would be economically challenging due to likely frequent damage from floods and ice flows.

Instead of traditional education signage, we suggest QR Codes etched into the new granite block or concrete benches along the pathway system, each of which could describe the historical context of the site nearby. This information could be hosted on the Riverside Parks Committee website and be updated seasonally, annually, or whenever new aspects of the site’s histories are discovered. QR codes should be deeply etched into the concrete or

granite benches and infilled with a high-contrast, UV-stable epoxy resin - either black or white depending on the color of the bench material, to make scanning the codes more successful.

Educators around the region already use the Natural Area as a palustrine ecosystem teaching resource and research plot and we propose those uses continue. In addition, two new native plant gardens could be incorporated into the Natural Area which would be educational both for visitors as well as for volunteer garden tenders. We suggest these gardens be contained within the former reflecting pool and grounds-keeper’s cottage ruins in order to keep them manageable sizes with identifiable boundaries. One garden could feature decorative and flowering native plants and the other traditional Indigenous medicinal plants. Again, QR codes could provide links to educational information about these gardens, their design, the plants within them, and opportunities to volunteer for their maintenance.



Current condition: Historic remnants of reflection pool.

Concept rendering: Native plant garden, circular tree planting.





Nesbitt Park

Vision

Nesbitt Park is the most manicured of the three parks on the river side of the levee on the western banks, being comprised of mown lawn and mature shade trees. The Park also contains boating and fishing amenities, such as a weighing and filleting station, a parking lot, and a double-wide concrete boat launch ramp. These amenities will be retained and improved. This park will be positioned as a premiere picnicking and lawn sport destination with its wide-open lawns, picturesque shade trees, and views of (and across) the Susquehanna River. In addition, this Park will include more native perennial plants to provide habitat for native animals, to stabilize soils and improve the infiltration of stormwater, as well as to provide beauty for visitors.

The Park also currently contains a 9-hole disc golf course which is popular with novice and younger players. With some modifications to its layout, this open course could remain while allowing for other uses of this park and the creation of native floodplain meadows, picnicking spots, and opportunities for other lawn sports such as croquet, badminton, and cornhole. This 9-hole “beginner” course would be a good compliment to the proposed 9-hole “advanced” course in Kirby Park Natural Area.

In addition, because of an opportunity presented by a large property for sale above the Nesbitt Park levee, this Park has the opportunity to become the ‘back yard’ of a new Community and Cultural Center which would serve as a welcome center to the Riverside Parks; an ecological, Indigenous, industrial, and cultural history museum; a boathouse for storage of rowing boats and rental of kayaks; a café and restroom facility for park visitors; and an event rental facility - along with up to 200 new parking spaces.

Nesbitt Park is located between the Market St Bridge and Veterans Memorial Bridge



Current condition: View from levee facing south towards Market St.

Concept rendering: New community center including: Haudenosaunee Native American History Museum, nature center, boat rental facility, event rental facility, restaurant, cafe, restrooms.



Improve Parking

Once visitors in motor vehicles find their way over the levee and into the Park, they currently need to drive the entire length of the Park to find the lone parking lot. This lot has been designed primarily to support boating activities at the adjacent boat launch ramp and fills up (and overflows) when twice-weekly fishing events and tournaments take place. In order to address the overflow during fishing events, the parking lot should be nearly doubled in size to accommodate twice as many boats and support vehicles as it currently can.

Two additional parking lots would make sense to add closer to the driveway’s entrance over the levee. One lot would consist of head-in parking directly off the driveway on the north side of the Veterans’ Memorial Bridge. This would provide 22 new parking spaces and act as the southern trailhead for people visiting the adjacent Riverbend Park.

A second paved lot just south of the Veterans’ Memorial Bridge would provide 56 new parking spaces for people looking to picnic or otherwise make use of Nesbitt Park for purposes other than boating. This lot would formalize parking on land that is currently being unofficially used for parking, damaging the existing lawn. These two new lots would also reduce potential conflict between vehicles and boats near the boat launch ramp and provide quicker access to the Park once visitors drive over the levee. To prevent motorists from parking in green/lawn areas, the generous use of large boulders will control parking behaviors and withstand most flood and ice flows.

A lighted basketball court is proposed under the Veterans Memorial Bridge. This will create activity during many hours of the day, enhancing park visitor safety.

Up to 200 new parking spaces would also be added on the land just over the levee from Nesbitt Park as part of the new Community Center development.

Improve the Boat Launch

The existing concrete boat launch ramp is in fair condition and both boaters and emergency services would like a wider launch to allow easier access into the River. The former kayak launch should be removed and the boat launch expanded north until it is wide enough to accommodate three to four boats launching at the same time. This may require some excavation of the river bank to the north as well as the relocation of the existing fillet and weighing station.

Create Trail Connections

Existing trails in the park consist of the multi-use path on the top of the levee and some sidewalks leading from the Market Street Bridge to the levee trail spur that passes under the Bridge. New paved trails through the Park should provide ADA-accessible routes that allow for meandering, access to picnic and lawn sport facilities, and separation from vehicular traffic. Where trails cross the driveway, high-visibility pedestrian-crossing signage, crosswalk paint, and speed cushions should be installed to alert drivers to the possibility of crossing pedestrians and slow the vehicles down.

A new paved - but non-ADA-accessible - trail (due to the steepness of the slope) connecting the new Community Center to the proposed dock under the Market Street Bridge will allow people carrying kayaks or rowing boats to easily access each location from the other.

Extending the existing staircase that leads to the levee trail from Davis Street down the riverside face of the levee will provide additional, direct access to this Park for residents of the adjoining neighborhood, as well as for visitors parking in the new lot beside the Community Center.

Increase Passive Recreation Opportunities

Once the disc golf is relocated out of Nesbitt Park, additional picnic and lawn sport facilities can be added without risk of conflict with flying discs. Additional grills and ADA-accessible picnic tables should be located throughout the site. These should be made of robust materials and anchored to the ground using solid footings to reduce the likelihood of damage from flooding and ice flows. Even if they are damaged, these are relatively low-cost furnishings to repair or replace. ADA-accessible pathways should be created from trails to these tables. A limited number of steel-post open-air pavilions should also be considered. Open areas of mown lawn should be adjacent to these picnic areas for visitors to set up lawn games to play while picnicking.

Create Floodplain Meadows

Given its large size, at least half of Nesbitt Park’s mown lawn could be rather easily converted into floodplain meadows without limiting existing and potential uses of this Park. Meadows would consist of native floodplain grasses, sedges, and flowers and provide both beauty and habitat for native insects and small animals. These large swaths of meadow would visually break up the large, flat expanse of the Park and provide opportunities for exploration and discovery. Edges of the meadow plots should be staked with orange fiberglass marker poles so that maintenance crews can easily discern mowing boundaries both during the growing season and after major flood events. Once established, meadow management is as simple as mowing the meadows once in the very early spring. This could cut mowing maintenance costs and labor for this Park nearly in half.

Install New Signage

New directional signage should be provided to direct vehicles entering the Park, including new full-sized Stop signs and painted stop bars where the driveway crosses the levee trail. Shrubs located here should be trimmed to ensure clear sight lines. Provide signs directing drivers to the available parking lots based on their intended destination within the Park: ‘Riverbend Park Trailhead’, ‘Nesbitt Park’, and ‘Boat Launch’. These signs should be made of heavy-gauge metal and, when possible, mounted generally parallel to the flow of the River to reduce the likelihood of damage from floods and ice flows.

As with the other parks on the river side of the levee, educational signage in this floodplain park should be created using QR codes etched into granite or concrete blocks to reduce the likelihood of damage from flooding and ice flows. Trails should be blazed to coordinate with a new system-wide trails map.



Current condition: Unused open space under Memorial bridge.

Concept rendering: Basketball court with lighting and boulder border to keep motor vehicles on driveways and in parking areas.



Riverbend Park

Vision

The newest of the Riverside Parks, Riverbend Park will remain - and be promoted as - a naturalized floodplain woodland which is home to native trees, perennials, and spring ephemerals. This Park will support passive activities such as walking, leaf peeping, and bird watching. New trails through this park will be earthen and not ADA-accessible, due to the nature of the soft, silted soils and frequent deposition of new silt during flood events. Active uses will be discouraged to help maintain the ecological integrity of this site, but a new playground just on the landward side of the levee will offer nature-based play for children of all ages.

Support the Native Ecosystem

While facing some pressure from invasive plants, the ecosystem of this woodland is surprisingly intact. But as with all floodplain ecosystems, new invasive plants and seeds are deposited with each flood. This deposition appears to be mostly limited to the northeast quadrant of the park, so invasive removal and native plantings should be focused on this region. Both formal Public Works and informal volunteer efforts will be required to effectively manage the ecosystem of this Park, with major invasive controls and seeding managed by Public Works and native plantings taken on by invested volunteers. Native planting would include a mix of plugs of native aquatic plants to stabilize the edges of the existing ponds as well as a diverse mix of native tree whips to fill in breaks in the canopy, protected by wire mesh cages.

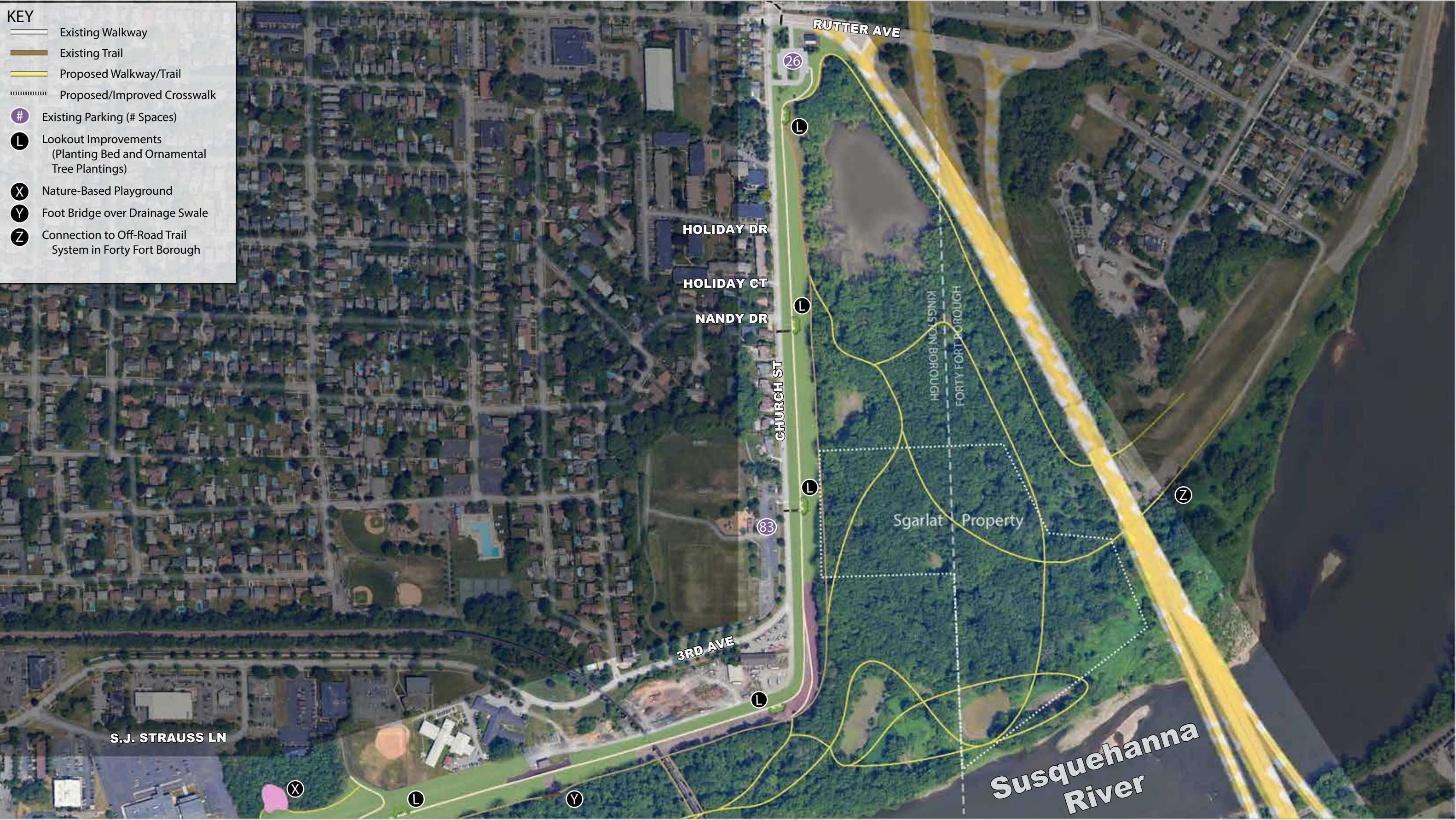
Management and restoration efforts should follow the recommendations found in the Ecological Report in the Appendix of this document.

Riverbend Park



KEY

- Existing Walkway
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Walkway/Trail
- Proposed/Improved Crosswalk
- Existing Parking (# Spaces)
- Lookout Improvements (Planting Bed and Ornamental Tree Plantings)
- Nature-Based Playground
- Foot Bridge over Drainage Swale
- Connection to Off-Road Trail System in Forty Fort Borough



Provide Opportunities for Play

Providing opportunities for play in nature can provoke a lifelong appreciation for natural spaces and lifeforms. Nature-based play is a methodology for providing creative challenges for children to craft their own experiences, both physically and mentally, within natural settings using natural elements. Instead of the prescribed play activities found on traditional playgrounds, nature-based playgrounds provide a physical framework for children to take control of their environment by moving, building, and crafting, their own structures and toys from materials found in nature.

Often skeletal structures such as teepees, wattle walls, woven tunnels, logs, and dry stone 'riverbeds' provide the framework upon which children can create their own play structures by manipulating branches, sticks, pine cones, seed pods, and leaves while engaging their own imaginations as they run, crawl, jump, and otherwise challenge their bodies physically.

The woodland between the Kingston Recreation Center and the Friedman JCC would be an ideal location for the creation of a nature-based playground, providing easy access for visitors of both institutions - as well as for visitors of Riverbend park just over the levee. This land is owned by the JCC.



Current condition: Unmanaged riparian ecosystem.

Concept rendering: Trail around pond, pond restoration.



Create Trail Connections

Nearly thirty years after its naming, no official trails pass through Riverbend Park. This is largely due to a lack of perceived ‘ownership’ of the site because the Park is made up of parcels owned by different organizations – and a large parcel within the Park is privately owned. Coordination between parcel owners, and an easement on or purchase of the private parcel, should be pursued to make this Park fully, and legally, accessible to the public. Funding exists for the creation of new parks in Pennsylvania, and once parcel owners are coordinated in this goal, funding should also be pursued for the creation of trails in Riverbend Park.

These new trails should meander through this riparian woodland with a special focus around the existing ponds. This trail system should also connect to existing trails in Forty Fort that currently end just before crossing under the Rt 309 bridge. Trails in this section will be earthen and not ADA-accessible, though due to their flat nature (being located on the relatively flat lands of the floodplain) they will be relatively easy to navigate for most able-bodied users.

As with Kirby Park Natural Area, some flood-resistant benches, made from materials such as granite or concrete block, should be installed at intervals along the trails. There should especially be a few benches overlooking the ponds in the Park to allow people to enjoy watching the birds, reptiles, and amphibians which frequent these natural features.

Develop New Signage

As the newest of the four Riverside Parks, Riverbend Park needs the most help with its identity. Even though it was named in the 1990s, very few members of the public know the Park by name. The Park should be included on all Riverfront Park system promotional initiatives, including on the Parks website and social media postings. New identity signage for this Park should be installed at the access points atop the levee leading into it, as well as by the new parking located at the southern trailhead at the northern end of Nesbitt Park. These signs should also include the system-wide trails and amenity map so that the public can understand Riverbend Park’s place within the parks system and the trails and natural features found within this Park. These features include the many permanent and ephemeral ponds dotted around this Park in addition to the new trails.

Within the Park, trails should be blazed to align with their colors and names on a new system-wide trail map. Educational signage should, again, consist of QR codes etched into granite or concrete blocks to resist flood damage.



5

IMPLEMENTATION

PROBABLE COSTS OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Cost estimates were prepared for all proposed improvements in the West Side Parks Master Plan. Unit costs are based on the consultant team’s experience, recently completed PennDOT District 4 projects, data industry standards, and estimates used for other similar park and greenway projects.

See a summary of the cost estimate on the facing page. The full cost estimate is available in the appendix of this report.



Probable Costs of Development		
Kirby Park		
Total Proposed Site Improvements	\$	5,891,570
Mobilization(3%), E&S(2%), Stormwater Allowances(2%)	\$	4,463,300
Construction Contingency (10%)	\$	312,440
Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	446,330
Kirby Park Natural Area		
Total Proposed Site Improvements	\$	1,380,350
Mobilization(3%), E&S(2%), Stormwater Allowances(2%)	\$	1,045,700
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Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	104,570
Market Street		
Total Proposed Site Improvements	\$	1,079,640
Mobilization(3%), E&S(2%), Stormwater Allowances(2%)	\$	817,900
Construction Contingency (10%)	\$	57,260
Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	81,790
2nd Ave Greenway		
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Construction Contingency (10%)	\$	596,430
Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	852,020
Total Estimated Project Costs		
	\$	22,272,200

Left: Improvements related to this project have already been undertaken in Kirby Park. These include a new stone dust “beach” and stone steps from the Martz Pavilion down to the pond, new ADA-accessible benches and pedestrian lights around the pond, and two large fountains which will provide color and light while helping to improve water quality. In addition, over 17,000 new native flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees planted around the pond will provide year-round beauty, discourage geese from fouling the water and walkways, stabilize the banks of the pond, improve water quality, and provide food and shelter for local birds and insects.

PHASED CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Foster Partner Relationships

Local, County, regional, and state partners can help Wilkes-Barre and Kingston advance the recommendations of the West Side Parks Master Plan. The following partners can be important advocates who can assist the City and Municipality as it pursues grant funding for specific projects.

Ideally, regular communication among all partners will help to advance the recommendations made in this master plan. The City and Municipality should expand and foster existing partnerships and create new partnerships to advance the vision of this plan.



The Martz Pavilion in Kirby Park

Local / County / Regional partners:

- Riverfront Parks Committee
- City of Wilkes-Barre
- Municipality of Kingston
- Forty Fort Borough
- Edwardsville Borough
- Luzerne County
- Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority
- Luzerne County Recreational Facilities Advisory Board
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)
- North Branch Land Trust
- Delta Waterfowl
- Ducks Unlimited
- Penn State Extension Master Gardeners
- Academic Institutions: Wilkes University, Kings College, Wilkes-Barre Area School District
- Suskie Bassmasters
- Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

State / Federal partners:

- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Pennsylvania State Game Commission (SCG)
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
- Pennsylvania Infrastructure Reinvestment Authority (PennVEST)
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)
- Nation Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF)

Partner Coordination

Wilkes-Barre and Kingston should organize an annual round table meeting to gather all partners. This meeting can include federal, state, regional, and local partners that have an interest or role in the West Side Parks. This meeting can:

- Identify important data gaps.
- Identify which organizations are working on what initiatives.
- Share data, information and research among partners.
- Identify and discuss potential funding opportunities for the West Side Parks.
- Coordinate resources for upcoming projects and initiatives.

FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a summary of grants, programs, funds, and other potential partnerships/sources that can assist with the funding of Green Lane Park improvements. Various sources can be pursued during improvement phases, based on availability of funds and the annual goals of partner agencies, as well as County priorities for each year.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)

Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)

The Community Recreation and Conservation Program through the DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) provides funding to municipalities and authorized nonprofit organizations for recreation, park, trail, and conservation projects. These include planning for feasibility studies, trail studies, conservation plans, master site development plans, and comprehensive recreation park and open space and greenway plans. In addition to planning efforts, the program provides funding for land acquisition for active or passive parks, trails and conservation purposes, and construction and rehabilitation of parks, trails, and recreation facilities. Most of these projects require a 50% match, which can include a combination of cash and/or non-cash values. Grant applications for the C2P2 program are accepted annually—usually in early April.

More information can be found at: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/grantpolicies/index.html>

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program, established in 1965, is a federal source of funding distributed to all states by the U.S. Department of the Interior’s National Park Service.

The program provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. DCNR administers the LWCF Program for Pennsylvania. Current grant amounts from LWCF range from \$.5M to \$1M+.

More info at: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/grantpolicies/index.html>

Wild Resource Conservation Program

Each year, these funds support the survey, research, management, and conservation of wild resources through DCNR’s Wild Resource Conservation Program (WRCP).

WRCP identifies research and conservation needs on the Commonwealth’s native flora and non-game wildlife. The program provides grants and facilitates the flow of information between researchers, conservationists, and educators.

More info at: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/conservation/wildlife-biodiversity/wild-resources-conservation-program>

DCNR Forest Buffer Program

The Riparian Forest Buffer Program through PA DCNR provides funding for organizations implementing a variety of forest buffers including conventional riparian forest buffers and multi-functional buffers. Pennsylvania has a goal of planting 95,000 acres of riparian buffers by 2025 to improve state waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. There is no match required to be eligible for this grant. Grant applications are usually accepted from October to late December.

DCNR has provided funding to County Conservation Offices. Grants awards are made by the local conservation office for the planting of multi-functional buffers.

More information is available on the PA DCNR website: <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/Water/RiparianBuffers/Pages/default.aspx>

Peer Rider (possible for recommended volunteer coordinator position)

Susquehanna Greenway Mini-Grants

The Susquehanna Greenway Mini-Grant round aims to support the advancement of regional outdoor recreation, conservation, and trail projects and programs within the Susquehanna Greenway. Eligible applicants include public entities (such as a county, municipality, or municipal agency) or 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations eligible to apply for DCNR-supported funding and registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charities (BCO). Applicants may request up to \$10,000, and proposals must include a 1:1 match (cash or in-kind). The Susquehanna Greenway Mini-Grant Program is financed by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. As such, mini-grants may not be used as match for other DCNR-funded projects, nor may DCNR funding be used to match this mini-grant. Proposed activities must fit within one of the four eligible categories. The eligible project categories include Outreach & Education; Wayfinding & Signage; Parks, Land & Water Trails, and Active Transportation; and Temporary Placemaking.

For more information, visit: <https://susquehannagreenway.org/apply-to-the-mini-grant-program/>



Right: Market Street Bridge looking toward downtown Wilkes-Barre

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP)

The Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP) provides funding for: public park and recreation area projects, greenway and trail projects, and river or creek conservation projects. The program requires a 15% local cash match of the total project cost and DCED share must not exceed \$250,000. Applications are typically due in late May.

More information can be found at: <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/greenways-trails-and-recreation-program-gtrp/>

Local Share Account (LSA) - Statewide

The PA Race Horse Development and Gaming Act (Act 2004-71), as amended, provides for the distribution of gaming revenues through the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) to support projects in the public interest and that improve the quality of life of citizens in the community within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Eligible projects must be owned and maintained by an eligible applicant or a nonprofit organization. Grant amounts will vary based on the specific project requirements.

More information can be found at: <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/local-share-account-lsa-statewide/>

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Growing Greener Watershed Protection Program

Funded through the state Growing Greener Environment Stewardship Funds, applications should be targeted toward clean-up of non-point source pollution. The grant will fund local watershed-based conservation projects with the average award totaling \$150,000 and requires a 15% match from a non-DEP fund source. Applications are typically due in January.

More information on this program can be found at the DEP website: <http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/GrantsLoansRebates/Growing-Greener/Pages/default.aspx>

DEP Non-Point Source Implementation Programs Grant

Provides funding assistance for projects aimed at implementing Pennsylvania's Non-point Source Management Program. Targeted projects include control of urban runoff, and natural channel design/stream bank stabilization projects. The grant will fund local projects with the average award being \$200,000. Applications are typically due in July.

More information on this program can be found at the DEP website: <http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/NonpointSource/Pages/default.aspx>

PennVEST (Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority)

PennVEST offers both grants and low interest loans for projects that help to manage stormwater and improve water quality. Several recommendations for Minsi Lake greenway corridor may attract PennVEST funds, since they include stormwater BMPs.

More information can be found at: <https://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/Funding-Programs/Pages/default.aspx>

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

The PENNVEST Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) provides affordable financing for wastewater and certain other projects throughout Pennsylvania for the construction, improvement, extension, expansion, repair or rehabilitation of wastewater collection, treatment or disposal facilities, storm water management, nonpoint source pollution controls including but not limited to agricultural best management practices and watershed and estuary management.

The program offers low interest loans with flexible terms and principal forgiveness funds where applicable and available.

PENNVEST performs similarly to a bank for the CWSRF program in Pennsylvania and manages the financial aspects of the fund, while the Department of Environmental Protection is the technical arm for the program. The seed money for the CWSRF has been distributed to states annually under Congressional authorization pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1987. The funds and the program are administered nationally by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

More info at: <https://www.pennvest.pa.gov/Information/Funding-Programs/Pages/Clean-Water-State-Revolving-Fund.aspx>

An old concrete wall in the Kirby Park Natural Area



Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC)

State Wildlife Grants Program (SWG)

Created in 2000 by Congress, SWG has enabled the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and Pennsylvania Game Commission to direct conservation efforts toward species in decline or vulnerable to decline, with the goal of preventing endangered species listings. State Wildlife Grant funding to Pennsylvania has ranged from \$1.5 to \$2.5 million per year, shared equally between the Fish & Boat Commission and Game Commission.

The State Wildlife Grants program (SWG) is the nation's core program for preventing species from becoming endangered. This program provides needed funds to states to develop and implement conservation actions identified in their State Wildlife Action Plan. These funds benefit wildlife and their habitat, including species not hunted or fished.

Since 2001, the Pennsylvania Fish & Commission has supported more than 60 fish, amphibian, reptile, and freshwater invertebrate conservation projects through State Wildlife Grant funding, including research, species surveys, habitat improvement, & other efforts.

More info at <https://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/StateWildlifeGrantProgram/Pages/default.aspx>

U.S. Forest Service

National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council

The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) is a Congressionally designated advisory council to the Secretary of Agriculture on urban forestry and related issues. The 1990 Farm Bill created NUCFAC to bring together the wide variety of voices raised about a common concern: the present health and future preservation of America's urban forests. NUCFAC was founded to synthesize the full spectrum of views into a consistent vision, as a foundation for practical policy on urban forestry and related natural resources.

NUCFAC evaluates innovative grant proposals that help implement the Ten-Year Action Plan and recommends them for funding to the Secretary of Agriculture.

More info at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf/nucfac>

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

NFWF supports conservation efforts in all 50 states and U.S. territories. More than 18,600 projects have been supported since founding – are rigorously evaluated and awarded to some of the nation's largest environmental organizations. Financial commitments since the organization's founding total \$6.1 billion.

Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund

Working in partnership with government agencies and private corporations, the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund awards \$40 million to \$60 million per year through four competitive grant programs—the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program, the Small Watershed Grants Program, the Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) Grants Program, and the Pennsylvania Most Effective Basins Grants Program (for agriculture).

Chesapeake Bay Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership, is soliciting pre-proposals through the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Grants program to improve water quality and reduce nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. Major funding for the INSR Grants program is provided by EPA, with other important contributions from Altria Group, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the U.S. Forest Service.

Pre-proposals for this program are due February 12, 2026, with full proposals due in May 2026 for those invited to proceed. NFWF anticipates awarding grant agreements of up to five years and up to \$2 million each.

More info at: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund/innovative-nutrient-and-sediment-reduction-grants-0>

Small Watershed Grants Program

The Small Watershed Grants Program supports efforts to achieve water quality improvement, restoration, and protection of key Chesapeake Bay species and their habitats, and the fostering of an engaged and diverse citizen and stakeholder presence that will build upon and sustain measurable natural resource improvements.

The Small Watershed Grants Program priorities are:

- Managing Agricultural and Urban Runoff
- Improving Water Quality and Stream Health Through Riparian Restoration and Conservation
- Enhancing and Protecting Freshwater Habitat for Eastern Brook Trout
- Enhancing and Protecting Tidal and Estuarine Habitat
- Enhancing Nature-Based Resilience for Human Communities
- Building Capacity for Landscape-Scale Watershed and Habitat Planning, Design, and Implementation

The ability and extent to which NFWF is able to make awards is contingent upon receipt of funds from federal agencies and/or other funding partners. Final funding decisions will be made based on the applications received and the level and timing of funding received by NFWF. Interested applicants must register in order to participate. Proposals for 2026 are due April 2.

More info at: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-small-watershed-grants>

Chesapeake WILD

The Chesapeake WILD Program supports efforts to conserve, steward, and enhance fish and wildlife habitats and related conservation values in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Chesapeake WILD Grants Program has three distinct tracks:

- Implementation: Grants of \$75,000-\$500,000 for projects that result in direct on-the-ground conservation, stewardship, and enhancements of fish and wildlife habitats and related conservation values in the Bay watershed.
- Collaborative Conservation: Grants up to \$200,000 for projects that support existing multi-

party partnerships and/or networks of partners collaborating and coordinating to implement conservation actions that measurably contribute to WILD Program priorities.

- Planning and Technical Assistance: Grants up to \$75,000 for projects that enhance the capacity of local and regional partners to implement future on the ground actions consistent with the priorities above, through community-based assessment planning, design, and other technical assistance-oriented activities.

To date, the Chesapeake WILD Grant Program has awarded 66 projects totaling \$19.7 million in grant awards, leveraged by \$28.6 million in local matching funds, for a total conservation impact of \$48.3 million. Grant applications are generally due in May.

More info at: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-wild>

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program

The Five Star Program, first launched in 1998, seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources for future generations by providing modest financial assistance to a variety of local partnerships for wetland, forest, riparian and coastal habitat restoration, stormwater management, outreach and stewardship.

Its goal is to meet the conservation needs of important species and habitats, providing measurable and meaningful conservation and educational outcomes. The program requires the establishment and/or enhancement of diverse partnerships and an education/outreach component that will help shape and sustain behavior to achieve conservation goals.

To date, the Foundation has funded more than 1,000 projects in 50 states, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands through this program. More than \$30.6 million in grants has leveraged more than \$96.1 million in other funds or donated services.

More info at: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/five-star-program>

Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is a North American ‘forest certification standard’ non-profit organization. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative is the world’s largest single forest certification standard by area and is headquartered in Ottawa, Ontario Canada and Washington D.C. USA.

SFI works with the forest sector, brand owners, conservation groups, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, governments and universities. SFI standards and on-product labels help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions.

Conservation Grants Program

The SFI Conservation Grants Program fosters partnerships between organizations interested in improving forest management in the United States and Canada, and responsible procurement globally. Projects address topics of current importance such as improving wildlife habitat management and conservation of biodiversity, avoiding controversial sources of fiber such as those resulting from illegal logging.

Since 2010, SFI has awarded 66 grants totaling more than \$4.4 million to foster research and pilot efforts to better inform future decisions about our forests. When leveraged with project partner contributions, total investment exceeds \$11 million.

The grant program builds on the fact that SFI is the only forest certification standard in North America that requires participants to support and engage in research activities to improve forest health, productivity and sustainable management of forest resources, and the environmental benefits and performance of forest products. Since 1995, SFI program participants have invested more than \$1.6 billion in forest research activities. <https://forests.org/conservationgrants/>

Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)

From small municipal governments and organizations to large corporations, SRBC works to assist a wide variety of entities achieve their water resources goals. With more than \$20 million awarded since its founding in 2021, SRBC grants offer a valuable service to further the agency’s mission to enhance public welfare through comprehensive planning, water supply allocation, and management of the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin.

Stream and Watershed Enhancement Grant Program

Although this grant is currently closed as of 2025, SRBC has maintained a Stream & Watershed Enhancement Grant Program to support local organizations dedicated to the health and wellness of our Basin’s waterways. The Grant program has provided funding for community-based environmental and water resources projects or events that improve, restore or protect our local watersheds. In its first two years, the Commission awarded more than \$300,000 to 68 projects. Awards average \$5,000.

SRBC hopes to re-open the grant in 2026.

More info at: <https://www.srbcc.gov/our-work/grants/stream-watershed-enhancement-grant.html>

Legislative Funding

State and federal elected officials can sometimes include items into legislation for worthy projects in their districts. A conversation between county and municipal officials and legislators is the way to begin this process. This type of funding should be targeted toward capital improvement projects.

Private Foundations

There may be regional corporations and foundations that support public works such as park development. Competition for these funds is usually brisk, but opportunities should be researched. Funding is often given to non-profit organizations. Foundations and institutions represent another potential source of funding for education-related site improvements and programming. Grants are available to support student field trips, provide teacher training in science, and provide other educational opportunities. Education tied to research can increase the pool of potential funds. The science community and research institutions are the logical starting points for solicitation foundation funds.

5

IMPLEMENTATION



Appendix
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1
Cost Estimate

Probable Costs of Development		
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Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	852,020
Total Estimated Project Costs		
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Kirby Park			
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Mobilization (3%)	\$	133,900	
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)	\$	89,270	
Stormwater BMPs (2%)	\$	89,270	
Construction Contingency (10%)	\$	446,330	
Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	669,500	
Total Estimated Project Costs	\$	5,891,570	

Item Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation			\$ 2,500
1 Overlook Bed Prep - incl. removing juniper shrubs	1 EA	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500
Pavements & Walls			\$ 4,278,000
1 Asphalt Pavement (new) - parking lot - 18,000 SF	2,000 SY	\$ 60.00	\$ 120,000
2 Curbs (new) - parking lot	460 LF	\$ 35.00	\$ 16,100
3 Parking Lot Striping (full)	5,817 LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 11,633
4 Trail improvements at railroad crossing	1 LS	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000
5 Resurface tennis courts (cost per court is \$125,382)	62,691 SF	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,253,820
6 6-Lane Track	1 LS	\$ 1,250,000.00	\$ 1,250,000
7 Athletic Field - Artificial Turf	1 LS	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 1,400,000
8 Stormwater Detention Area Under Field	1 LS	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000
9 Unit Pavers - entry plaza	2,085 SF	\$ 40.00	\$ 83,400
10 Entry plaza at bridge	1,000 SF	\$ 40.00	\$ 40,000
11 4'-Wide Concrete Stairs - over levee (163x4x3 /27)	73 CY	\$ 400.00	\$ 29,200
Site Furnishings			\$ 60,000
1 Misting Plaza	1 LS	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000
2 Map + Orientation Signage	6 EA	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000
3 Painting columns	1 LS	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000
4 Vehicular Bollards	2 EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 8,000
Plantings			\$ 122,800
1 Shade Trees (2.5-3.5" caliper)	188 EA	\$ 600.00	\$ 112,800
2 Ornamental Trees (6-8') - overlooks (1)	5 EA	\$ 450.00	\$ 2,250
3 4'-Tall Wire Mesh Tree Cages	193 EA	\$ 40.00	\$ 7,720

Kirby Park Natural Area			
Total Proposed Site Improvements	\$	1,045,700	
Mobilization (3%)	\$	31,380	
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)	\$	20,920	
Stormwater BMPs (2%)	\$	20,920	
Construction Contingency (10%)	\$	104,570	
Design & Engineering (15%)	\$	156,860	
Total Estimated Project Costs	\$	1,380,350	

Item Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation			\$ 28,000
1 30'-Wide Disc Golf Fairways- Spray & Clear (6 Acres)	1 LS	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000
2 Reflecting Pool Excavation	1 LS	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000
Pavements & Walls			\$ 933,800
1 8'-Wide Earthen Pump Track- Grading 2000 LF	1 LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000
2 Amphibian Ramps - old reflecting pool	1 LS	\$ 500.00	\$ 500
3 12'-Wide Concrete Sidewalk-	3,492 SF	\$ 20.00	\$ 69,840
4 Unit Pavers - under bridge	8,000 SF	\$ 25.00	\$ 200,000
5 Sport Court Paint Lines - under bridge	1,555 LF	\$ 3.00	\$ 4,665
6 Sport Court Paving - under bridge (cost per court is \$29,629)	3,556 SY	\$ 50.00	\$ 177,778
7 4'-Wide Concrete Stairs - over levee- 74LF	30 CY	\$ 400.00	\$ 12,000
8 5'-wide Earthen Trails	11,095 LF	\$ 4.00	\$ 44,381
9 8'-Wide Asphalt ADA Trail- (9328.3612LF * 8w)/9	8,292 SY	\$ 50.00	\$ 414,594
Site Furnishings			\$ 44,000
1 8'x12' Disc Golf Tee Pads - incl. installation	18 EA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 18,000
2 Disc Golf Course Map + Rules Signage	4 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,000
3 Disc Golf Goals - incl. installation	18 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 9,000
4 Disc Golf Tee Signage	18 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 9,000
5 Bicycle Racks	2 EA	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 3,000
6 Bicycle Repair Station	1 EA	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000
7 Concrete Benches - bridge plazas	24 EA	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 84,000
8 Concrete Tables - bridge plazas	3 EA	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 13,500
9 Floating Dock	1 EA	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000
10 Court Soccer (Futsal) Net	1 LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000
11 Lighting Fixtures - under bridge. 4- Each Bay (6) + Service	24 EA	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 108,000
12 Pickel Ball court net	1 LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000
13 8'-Wide Boardwalk w/ Railing (50'x8') (over drainage swale)	400 SF	\$ 150.00	\$ 60,000
14 6' Granite Slab Benches	26 EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 104,000
15 Educational QR Codes on Granite Blocks	12 EA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 12,000
16 Skate Park Furnishings (ramps, rails, etc.)	1 LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000
Plantings			\$ 39,900
1 Native Flowering Plants	1 LS	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500
2 Native Medicinal Plant Seed Mix	1,410 SF	\$ 2.00	\$ 2,820
3 4'-Tall Wire Mesh Tree Cages	200 EA	\$ 20.00	\$ 4,000
4 Bare Root Shade Trees (bare root)	200 EA	\$ 40.00	\$ 8,000
5 Knotweed Control + Restoration Seed Mix & Mowing	6 AC	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 15,000
6 Restoration Shrubs (#3)	500 EA	\$ 15.00	\$ 7,500

NOTE: Restoration costs shown are for first year only. Plan calls for 15 years of restoration.

Market Street			
Total Proposed Site Improvements		\$	817,900
Mobilization (3%)		\$	24,540
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)		\$	16,360
Stormwater BMPs (2%)		\$	16,360
Construction Contingency (10%)		\$	81,790
Design & Engineering (15%)		\$	122,690
Total Estimated Project Costs		\$	1,079,640

Item Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation			\$ 187,900
1 Traffic Island Demo- Pavement	20,187 SF	\$ 5.00	\$ 100,935
2 Soil for Traffic Islands-15' Wide x 2' Deep xL Length/27	2,173 CY	\$ 40.00	\$ 86,900
Pavements & Walls			\$ 314,900
1 Painted Crosswalks	6 EA	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000
2 Traffic Island Curbs	3,491 LF	\$ 45.00	\$ 157,106
3 Tree Pits	79 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 39,500
4 Painted Lane On Bridge- 1177.0089, 15'	17,655 SF	\$ 5.00	\$ 88,275
Site Furnishings			\$ 79,000
1 Vehicular Directional Signage - to Kirby + Nesbitt	6 EA	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 9,000
2 Rapid Flashing Beacons	2 EA	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 70,000
Plantings			\$ 236,100
1 Shade Trees (2-3" caliper)- 30' oc	132 EA	\$ 600.00	\$ 79,200
2 Soil for Traffic Islands-15' Wide x 2' Deep xL Length	2,037 CY	\$ 50.00	\$ 101,834
3 Lawn Seeding - Traffic Islands	27,500 SF	\$ 2.00	\$ 55,000

2nd Ave Greenway			
Total Proposed Site Improvements		\$	158,800
Mobilization (3%)		\$	4,770
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)		\$	3,180
Stormwater BMPs (2%)		\$	3,180
Construction Contingency (10%)		\$	15,880
Design & Engineering (15%)		\$	23,820
Total Estimated Project Costs		\$	209,630

Item Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation			\$ 44,000
1 Tree Pit Demo	88 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 44,000
Pavements & Walls			\$ 44,000
1 Tree Pits	88 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 44,000
Site Furnishings			\$ 18,000
3 Vehicular Directional Signage - to Kirby + Nesbitt	12 EA	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 18,000
Plantings			\$ 52,800
4 Shade Trees (2-3" caliper)	88 EA	\$ 600.00	\$ 52,800

Riverbend Park			
Total Proposed Site Improvements		\$	414,000
Mobilization (3%)		\$	12,420
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)		\$	8,280
Stormwater BMPs (2%)		\$	8,280
Construction Contingency (10%)		\$	41,400
Design & Engineering (15%)		\$	62,100
Total Estimated Project Costs		\$	546,480

Item Description		Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation				\$ 12,000
1	Overlook Bed Prep - incl. removing juniper shrubs	6 LS	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 12,000
Pavements & Walls				\$ 223,600
1	Rapid Flashing Beacon	2 EA	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 70,000
2	8'-Wide Boardwalk w/ Railings (over drainage swale)	640 SF	\$ 150.00	\$ 96,000
3	Clearing for 5'-wide Earthen Trails	28,791 LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 57,582
Site Furnishings				\$ 101,000
1	6' Granite Slab Benches	16 EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 64,000
2	Educational QR Codes on Granite Blocks	12 EA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 12,000
3	Map + Orientation Signage	5 EA	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000
Plantings				\$ 77,400
1	Ornamental Trees (6-8') - overlooks (6)	28 EA	\$ 450.00	\$ 12,600
2	4'-Tall Wire Mesh Tree Cages	78 LS	\$ 20.00	\$ 1,560
3	Aquatic Plant Plugs - for pond edges	2,500 EA	\$ 5.60	\$ 14,000
4	Knotweed Control (annual)	6 AC	\$ 534.00	\$ 3,204
5	Native Riparian Seeding	6 AC	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 15,000
6	Shade Trees (whips) - to fill canopy gaps. w/ Wire Cages	50 EA	\$ 500.00	\$ 25,000
7	Winter Woody Brush Mowing (annual)	10 AC	\$ 600.00	\$ 6,000

NOTE: Restoration costs shown are for first year only. Plan calls for 15 years of restoration.

Nesbitt Park			
Total Proposed Site Improvements		\$	1,452,900
Mobilization (3%)		\$	43,590
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)		\$	29,060
Stormwater BMPs (2%)		\$	29,060
Construction Contingency (10%)		\$	145,290
Design & Engineering (15%)		\$	217,940
Total Estimated Project Costs		\$	1,917,840

Item Description		Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation- Park				\$ 5,000
1	Misc/ Site Prep	LS	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000
Pavements & Walls				\$ 1,241,000
1	12'-Wide Concrete Sidewalks - along Market St Bridge	3,324 SF	\$ 20.00	\$ 66,480
2	Widen Concrete Boat Ramp- 5,000 SF	5,000 SF	\$ 40.00	\$ 200,000
2	ADA-Accessible Fishing Pier	1 LS	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000
3	Basketball Court Paving - asphalt 6,874 SF	764 SY	\$ 50.00	\$ 38,200
4	Basketball Court Striping	704 LF	\$ 4.00	\$ 2,815
5	Basketball Court Lighting (incl. installation)	6 EA	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 12,000
6	At-Grade Crosswalks (paint) - across driveway	84 LS	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 210,000
7	12'-Wide Access Road	652 SY	\$ 60.00	\$ 39,120
8	4'-Wide Concrete Stairs - over levee	30 CY	\$ 400.00	\$ 12,000
9	8'-Wide Asphalt Trails	1,445 SY	\$ 50.00	FALSE
10	Boulders - vehicular barriers. 8' oc. 2400LF	300 EA	\$ 50.00	\$ 15,000
11a	Flush Concrete Curbs - around parking lots	2,562 LF	\$ 35.00	\$ 89,683
11b	Parking Lot Paving - Boat Launch 47,282 SF	5,234 SY	\$ 60.00	\$ 314,040
11c	Parking Lot Paving - Veterans Memorial Bridge 26,948 S	2,995 SY	\$ 60.00	\$ 179,700
12	Parking Lot Paving - Riverbend Trailhead 4,668 SF	519 SY	\$ 60.00	\$ 31,140
13	Parking Lot Striping	2,880 LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 5,759
Site Furnishings				\$ 140,100
1	8' Benches - overlooks (3)	9 EA	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 22,500
2	6' Granite Slab Benches	8 EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 32,000
3	Concrete Picnic Tables (ADA accessible)	16 EA	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 38,400
4	Mounted Grills	16 EA	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 32,000
5	Pedestrian Crossing Signs - at each crosswalk	10 EA	\$ 250.00	\$ 2,500
6	Speed Cushions - in front of each crosswalk	8 EA	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 12,000
7	Stop Signs - at vehicular crossing atop levee	2 EA	\$ 350.00	\$ 700
8	Vehicular Bollards	2 EA	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 8,000
9	Nature Based Playground	1 LS	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000
10	Educational QR Codes on Granite Blocks	12 EA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 12,000
11	Map + Orientation Signage	4 EA	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000
12	Steep Grade Signs - at boathouse pathway	4 EA	\$ 250.00	\$ 1,000
Plantings				\$ 66,800
1	Ornamental Trees (6-8') - overlooks (3)	15 EA	\$ 450.00	\$ 6,750
2	4'-Tall Wire Mesh Tree Cages	31 EA	\$ 20.00	\$ 620
3	Bare Root Trees + Shrubs - along riverbank	140 EA	\$ 40.00	\$ 5,600

Item Description		Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
4	Invasives Control - along riverbank (annual)	5 AC	\$ 1,840.00	\$ 9,200
5	Riparian Meadow Seeding	5 AC	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 12,500
6	Riverbank Seeding	5 AC	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 12,500
7	Shade Trees (2.5-3.5" caliper)	16 EA	\$ 600.00	\$ 9,600
8	Shrubs - to stabilize river bank	500 EA	\$ 20.00	\$ 10,000

Cultural / Community Center	
Total Proposed Site Improvements	\$ 8,520,200
Mobilization (3%)	\$ 255,610
Erosion and Sedimentation Control (2%)	\$ 170,410
Stormwater BMPs (2%)	\$ 170,410
Construction Contingency (10%)	\$ 852,020
Design & Engineering (15%)	\$ 1,278,030
Total Estimated Project Costs	\$11,246,680

Item Description		Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Total Item Amount
Demolition & Site Preparation- Park				\$ 10,000
1	Misc/ Site Prep- 185157.8862 SF	1 LS	\$10,000.00	\$ 10,000
Structures				\$ 7,576,600
1	Community Center - w/ museum, café, boat rental, etc	13,000 SF	\$ 450.00	\$ 5,850,000
Pavements & Walls				\$ 866,200
1	Flush Concrete Curbs - around parking lots	5,044 LF	\$ 35.00	\$ 176,540
2	Parking Lot Paving -A=102572.5701	11,397 SY	\$ 60.00	\$ 683,817
3	Parking Lot Striping	2,900 LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 5,800
Site Furnishings				\$ 5,000
1	Map + Orientation Signage	1 EA	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000
2	Vehicular Gates	2 EA	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000
Plantings				\$ 62,400
1	Shade Trees (2.5-3.5" caliper)	104 EA	\$ 600.00	\$ 62,400

2

Ecological Assessment



WEST SIDE PARKS MASTER PLAN

WILKES-BARRE & KINGSTON, LUZERNE COUNTY, PA

KIRBY, NESBIT, AND RIVERBEND PARK NATURAL AREAS

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND MASTER PLAN

JULY 2025

PREPARED FOR:

SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
119 E LAFAYETTE ST
NORRISTOWN, PA 19401

PREPARED BY:

PRINCETON HYDRO, LLC
35 CLARK STREET
P.O. BOX 3689
TRENTON, NJ 08629

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APPENDICES

Appendix I	Ecological Units Map
Appendix II	Plant Species List
Appendix III	Avian Species List

PRIMARY AUTHOR
Mike McGraw, CSE, QAWB, ACE

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR(S)
Eric Zawatski, AWB
Michael Rehman, CERP, PWS



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Princeton Hydro conducted an ecological assessment of three adjacent parks (Kirby, Nesbitt, and Riverbend) within the City of Wilkes Barre and the Borough of Kingston, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (the Site) to understand existing conditions and develop recommendations to be incorporated into the overall master plan for the Wilkes-Barre Riverfront Parks Project. The assessment was conducted outside of the levee only (within the river's side of the flood protection levees). Information was organized into Ecological Management Units for spatial prioritization (see **Appendix I**). Two ecologists expended a total of 64 field hours over the dates of April 2nd and 3rd and May 31st, 2025, and documented spring migratory and early breeding birds, a subset of calling amphibians, a botanical inventory, and time constrained searches for herpetofauna and mammals.

Recommendations were prioritized based on ecological relevance, human-derived values, overall cost, and ability to be funded by grants. Please see the prioritization ranking for each recommendation in the table found in Section 4.0. Total acreage of the assessment was approximately 207 acres (85 acres in Kirby, 17 acres in Nesbitt, and 105 acres in Riverbend).

2.0 BIOTIC RESULTS

2.1 PLANTS

A total of seventy-three vascular plant species were observed during our assessment (see **Appendix II**), of which fifty-three were native and twenty were invasive. The most abundant plant species sitewide was Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*, "knotweed"). Other overabundant invasive plants on-Site included common wormwood/mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), Japanese hops (*Humulus japonicus*), and Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). Conversely, canopy tree species consisted of primarily native species, with silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) being the most dominant canopy tree species. Additional canopy species include red maple (*Acer rubrum*), river birch (*Betula nigra*), and black walnut (*Juglans nigra*). In addition, small colonies of native and rare spring ephemerals, such as bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), yellow trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*), and spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) were found beneath invasive tangles.

In addition to our original data collection, Princeton Hydro has reviewed pre-existing secondary data such as iNaturalist data for the sites. A bioblitz was conducted specific to the Kirby Park Natural Area on May 30-31, 2025 and can be found [here](#). A total of 672 plant observations were made (vascular and non-vascular) of which 234 are "research grade". These include many repeated species/duplicates but reflect the diversity of the site beyond our original data collection. An additional 20 species are documented in iNaturalist within Riverbend Park, but none are unique from the Kirby Park Natural Area Bioblitz list.

2.2 ANIMALS

A total of seventy-four avian species were observed on-Site during field surveys. See **Appendix III** for a complete avian species list as well as which specific survey dates each species was observed.



Photo 1. An immature Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) observed in Nesbitt Park.

Fifty-three of the avian species encountered were confirmed as breeding on-Site or are probable breeders within the Site. The remaining species primarily consisted of passage migrants.

In addition to the avian species observed on-Site, a total of 7 *Anura* (frogs), 11 *Mammalian*, and 5 *Reptilia* species were observed on-Site. See **Table 1** for a complete list of these species along with notes on their occurrence.

Similar to the plants, we reviewed existing secondary data in the form of eBird and iNaturalist for the study area. A total of 173 bird species have been documented spanning all seasons (our assessment was just in spring migration and early breeding season). Data from eBird can be found [here](#). iNaturalist data for non-avian vertebrate fauna can be gleaned from the Kirby Park Bioblitz link provided in the Plants section as well. A total of 27 observations were made including 12 "research grade" observations total 0 reptiles, 0 amphibians, and 6 mammals.

Table 1. Anurans, Reptiles, and Mammals Observed During Ecological Assessment at Kirby, Nesbitt, and Riverbend Parks.

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Anurans			
	American toad	<i>Anaxyrus americanus</i>	Abundant in Kirby/Riverbend
	Northern spring peeper	<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>	Riverbend only
	Northern gray treefrog	<i>Hyla versicolor</i>	Riverbend and Kirby
	Wood frog	<i>Lithobates sylvatica</i>	Kirby only
	Pickerel frog	<i>Lithobates palustris</i>	Riverbend only
	Green frog	<i>Lithobates clamitans</i>	Abundant in Kirby/Riverbend
	American bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbeiana</i>	Riverbend Pond

Reptiles			
	Common snapping turtle	<i>Chelydra serpentina</i>	Nesting female at Riverbend
	Eastern painted turtle	<i>Chrysemys picta picta</i>	Ponds in Kirby and Riverbend
	Red-eared slider	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>	On river in Riverbend
	Northern ringneck snake	<i>Diadophis punctatus edwardsii</i>	In woody debris in Riverbend
	Eastern garter snake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>	Found in Kirby
Mammals			
	White-footed mouse	<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i>	Under cover in all three parks
	Eastern chipmunk	<i>Tamias striatus</i>	Common in all three parks
	Gray squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Common in all three parks
	Eastern Fox squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger</i>	Kirby only
	Striped skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	Den at Kirby
	Woodchuck	<i>Marmota monax</i>	Common in all three parks
	Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	In tree at Kirby
	Virginia opossum	<i>Didelphis virginianus</i>	Common in all three parks
	American beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	Riverbend only
	Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Common in all three parks
	White-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	Common in all three parks



Photo 2. A common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) observed within Riverbend Park.



Photo 3. A northern ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus edwardsii*) observed within Riverbend Park.

3.0 PARK SPECIFIC RESULTS

3.1 KIRBY NATURAL AREA

Kirby Natural Area possessed a mix of native trees, shrubs, wildflowers/forbs, and graminoids but was dominated by extremely dense stands of knotweed. In addition, twelve other harmful invasive plants are established in the park. Despite their presence, the park still supported over forty breeding bird species and retains the canopy structure of a floodplain forest. The park has very little formal activities apart from running, dog walking, and bird watching/nature observation. In addition, its proximity to Wilkes-Barre and Kingston, along with its remoteness and density of invasive knotweed, has resulted in numerous tent cities being established here by unhoused people. In addition to the tent cities, there is rampant trash and human litter throughout the park, which are both unsightly and create potential hazards to human health (needles, sharp objects, etc.).

Ecological restoration, coupled with the integration of a programmatic strategy, would increase biodiversity, safety, and usership of Kirby Natural Area.

3.1.1 K-1 – KIRBY NATURAL AREA RUINS

- This is a high priority area for controlling knotweed. The southeastern area has remnant spring beauty, trout lily, and bloodroot. This area should be managed for invasives to retain these high-quality spring ephemeral plants.



- Clear vegetation, trash, and debris from around the famed muscledwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*) tree. This tree is located approximately 30 meters northwest of the reflecting pool.
- Modify vegetation and ensure ingress/egress by amphibians from the circular pool.
- Continue to clean up trash throughout the Site.

3.1.2 K-2 – KIRBY NATURAL AREA CORE

- This large management unit has canopy breaks where savanna restoration is recommended. There are also multiple building remnants that warrant removal.
- Create a dedicated savanna restoration zone in K-2. Following knotweed control, a native riparian seed mix and plant clusters of native trees and shrubs with deer protection.
 - **TREES** – Prioritize shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), elms (*Ulmus* spp.), black willow (*Salix nigra*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), and birches (*Betula* spp.). Additionally, include any food or medicinal plants recommended by the Haudenosaunee.
 - Avoid American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) trees due to their susceptibility to novel diseases and pests (e.g. emerald ash borer and American beech nematode)
 - **SHRUBS** – Prioritize northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), arrowwood viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*), as well as any food or medicinal plants that the Haudenosaunee recommend.

3.1.3 K-3 – KIRBY NATURAL AREA SHORELINE

- Protect the natural shoreline and its beaches as they support native mussels, fish, aquatic plants, and insects.

3.1.4 K-4 – KIRBY NATURAL AREA WETLANDS

- Given the large amount of trash within the wetlands, prescribed testing of the soil and open water for contaminants of potential concern (COPECs) is recommended prior to implementing the following ecological recommendations. This sort of assessment can range from 50-350 dollars per sample depending on the level of chemical and physical analysis requested.
- The open water wetland in K-4 exhibits a paucity of perennial plant establishment.
 - If this is not contaminated, establish a shrub-scrub wetland comprised of native desirable shrubs, including buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), common ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), and white meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*).
 - Additionally, include obligate wetland or facultative wetland food or medicinal plant species recommended by the Haudenosaunee.
- There are significant areas of unnatural topography. Consider a regrading effort to naturalize the pond margins and use the excess soil to address the knotweed monocultures via burying both the aboveground biomass and seedbank.



3.1.5 K-5 – KIRBY NATURAL AREA LEVEE

- Eradicate invasive shrubs along the wooded margin spanning the entire length of this management unit starting just north of the Veteran's Memorial Bridge.

3.1.6 GENERAL PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR KIRBY NATURAL AREA

- Control knotweed in a phased manner using a combination of herbicide and mowing. If any grading is to be done either bury or remove the top 6 inches of soil in knotweed areas to prevent seedbank regeneration.
 - First priority is safety driven – target a minimum of 20-ft on either side of all trails. It is critical that thoughtful use of herbicide is implemented. Hire an ecological restoration firm to conduct the targeted herbicide application of undesirable invasive species without impacting the desirable, extant native plant species.
 - Sow rye seed (*Elymus riparia*) and a hardy custom mix of forbs and grasses to combat knotweed re-establishment.
 - Conduct test plots to determine the most effective method prior to large-scale implementation (varying seed mixes and shrub plantings).
 - The creation of a disc golf course is proposed within Kirby Park, and this presents an opportunity to manage the large stands of invasive knotweed. Large sections of knotweed in Kirby Park can be managed in direct association with the development of disc golf lanes or other low intensity/low impact active uses. The design, construction, and routine maintenance of the disc golf lanes, along with other low-impact recreational uses, will require selective clearing and regular upkeep to maintain sight lines and minimize vegetative obstacles. This ongoing management effort will directly support knotweed eradication and create more favorable conditions for the establishment of native plant species, thereby enhancing both the ecological value and functionality of the disc golf course. Similarly, should a formalized BMX track be established in Kirby Natural Area (and/or Riverbend Park) the same design parameters regarding invasive plant control and native plant establishment should be mandated.

3.2 NESBITT PARK

A thin naturalized margin was present along the shoreline within Nesbitt Park (N-2). The remainder of Nesbitt Park is managed as lawn, parking areas (both formal and informal), and a paved roadway. There are numerous mature/aging American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) trees that line the driveway. These trees add character and provide habitat to a number of avian species but should be assessed for health due to their age and the propensity for American sycamore to become a safety hazard when old or stressed.

3.2.1 N-1 – NESBITT PARK

- Consider reducing the overall acreage of maintained lawn by converting areas into native wildflower meadows. Many of the open lawn spaces appear unused or are infrequently utilized in their current state, and conversion into native wildflower meadows with infrequent mowing would improve wildlife habitat suitability and the aesthetics of the park.



- Consider planting younger trees to create a natural succession for the aging trees within the park-like setting.

3.2.2 N-2 – NESBITT SHORELINE

- Prohibit parking underneath the mature American sycamore trees to (1) protect the root structure; (2) prevent compaction, and (3) ensure the safety of park users
- Eradicate invasives from the river shoreline, notably knotweed. Sow native riparian (shade tolerant) and open canopy meadow seed mixes.
- Plant native shrubs, especially northern spicebush, common ninebark, and arrowwood viburnum.

3.1.5 N-3 – NESBITT LEVEE

- Eradicate invasive shrubs along the wooded margin.

3.3 RIVERBEND PARK

Riverbend Park has the least amount of structured access and has unique features not found in Nesbitt or Kirby Parks. Large sandy depositions along a natural shoreline support an array of plants, insects, and nesting turtles. A series of manmade ponds mostly in RB-2 support breeding amphibians, snapping and painted turtles, and nesting waterfowl. Some of the pools in RB-2 and RB-3 appear to be ephemeral in nature and should be stewarded as functioning vernal pools. Japanese knotweed is prevalent within this park but not nearly as expansive or ubiquitous as found in Kirby Park. From a strictly ecological perspective, this would be a high priority area for controlling knotweed since it has yet to fully colonize here. However, when considering public access and safety concerns, Kirby Natural Area remains the top priority (see Table 2 in Section 4.0).

3.3.1 RB-1 – RIVERBEND SOUTH

This narrow configuration has relatively high banks (~10-20 feet high) in the southern portion but still exhibited classic floodplain conditions due to seasonal flooding. The tree canopy is silver maple dominated but there is limited mid succession regeneration occurring. The herbaceous and shrub understory is largely invaded by common wormwood, but there were also multiple red maple and silver maple seedlings present, presumably stunted due to herbivory pressure from mammals. The margin abutting the levee has an increased density of invasive shrubs, such as multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), border privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*), and wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*). Heading towards the railroad tracks, the shoreline elevation drops to within two to three feet from the mean river elevation. Adjacent river shallows support native mussels, fish, turtles, and in-river plants. There was a semi-permanent dwelling constructed in this presumably to support unhoused people, so public safety must be taken into consideration when proposing any trail expansion.

3.3.2 RB-2 – THE PONDS

- Establish emergent wetland plants in the ponds to encourage marsh bird nesting. Potential species include broadleaf cattail (*Typha latifolia*), softstem bulrush (*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*), rice cutgrass (*Leersia oryzoides*), and native sedges (*Carex* spp.).



- Eradicate knotweed around the ponds and establish native grasses and native shrubs to combat reestablishment of knotweed.

3.3.3 RB-3 – RIVERBEND CENTRAL

Evidence of unnatural topography is prevalent within this forest. Significant trash and litter were present. Additionally, there is an informal BMX bike track in this area.

- Incorporate trash clean-up efforts in this area (volunteer and/or by city staff).
- Consider validating/formalizing the bike track into a multi-use trail.
- Protect vernal pools in this section.

3.3.4 RB-4 – THE LAKES

- This section has undesirable invasive plant species, but, overall, from an ecological assessment analysis, it was healthier than the other sections within Riverbend Park. Undertake spot treatment of invasive species, as necessary.

4.0 COST ESTIMATES FOR ECOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The site in its current condition needs a relatively significant amount of stewardship actions to control invasives, increase the aesthetic beauty and ecological functionality, and make these parks cleaner and safer for visitors. Table 3 is a list of prioritized recommendations to aid in achieving these goals. The combined Priority 1-ranked action items are collated to attempt a \$25,000/per year commitment for the first 15 years of implementation. This will cover approximately 6 acres of knotweed treatment, 10 acres of winter woody brushing, and sowing native seed and planting native trees and shrubs in areas recently controlled. In addition, this will cover spot-treatments in previously controlled areas. We strongly recommend the city be able to dedicate this amount of funds annually to the active ecological stewardship of these parks for the first 15 years to ensure notable and meaningful control of invasive plants and solid establishment of native plant communities that have been reduced and/or extirpated from the parks by aggressive invasive plants. See annual strategy by Management Unit proposed below in Table 2.

Table 2. Proposed Locations of Priority 1 Management Actions for the \$25,000/year Baseline Ecology Budget

Action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
6 ac knotweed control	K1	K1	N2	K2	K2	K2	K4	RB2	RB2	RB3	RB3	RB3	RB1	RB1	RB4
10 ac winter woody brushing	K5	K1	K2	K2	RB1	RB1	RB2	RB2	RB3	RB3	RB4	RB4	-	-	-
Sowing Native Seed	N1	K1	K1	N2	K2	K2	K2	K4	RB2	RB2	RB3	RB3	RB3	RB1	RB1
Native Tree/Shrub Plantings	K1	N1	K1	N2	K2	K2	K2	K4	RB2	RB2	RB3	RB3	RB3	RB1	RB1
Spot Treatments	-	K1	K1	N2	K2	K2	K2	K4	RB2	RB2	RB3	RB3	RB3	RB1	RB1



In addition, many of the Priority 2-ranked projects are readily fundable by grant programs at the state, federal, and private levels for technical and/or financial support. The improvement of existing on site BMX riding trails and jumps as well as the inclusion of a disc golf course within the woodland section of Kirby Natural Area both serve to facilitate funding for sustained invasive species eradication and native plant establishment. Should these projects get supported within the first 15 years the 25k budget set aside for invasive plant management can either increase the overall acreage of impact (facilitating sitewide control in less than 15 years) or be spent on other ecological priorities, such as added plantings of trees and shrubs, meadow establishments, wetland plantings, and other listed priorities.

Table 3. OOPC for Ecological Recommendations.

Priority Rank	Park	Action	Unit	Cost	Assumptions
1	Kirby	Knotweed control (annual)	~6 ac/yr	3,200	Professional labor rate, chemical, and removal of material
1	Kirby	Winter woody brushing (rose, privet, honeysuckle, and barberry)	~10 ac/yr	6,000	Professional labor rate, chemical, and removal of material
2	Kirby	Savanna Seeding	20lbs/ac @ 3 ac	3,600	Hand distributed perennial mix and cover crop with straw mulch
2	Kirby	Savanna Planting	~250 trees and shrubs	10,000	Gas powered auger for prepping holes, does not assume design
2	Kirby	Savanna M&M	3 visits per year	2,400	Spot treatments and overseeding
2	Kirby	Herbivory Protection	Fencing	1,500	Cluster fencing with t-posts
2	Kirby	Ornamental Pond Improvements	Plugs and seed	750	Does not include clean-out or ongoing maintenance
1	Kirby	Ornamental Pond Amphibian Ramps	Wooden construction	350	Simple design and bolt into curb
4	Kirby	Wetland Area Regrading	~ 5 acres	100,000	Preliminary estimate – subject to further refinement
3	Kirby	Wetland PSS Establishment	300 #3 shrubs	4,500	Material and labor costs

2	Kirby	Design and permitting	Sitewide (85ac.)	75-250k	Depends on effort engaged
1	Nesbitt	Demonstration Meadows	20lbs/ac @ 1 ac	2,500	High end mix (83/lb) – use native seed drill
1	Nesbitt	Tree health assessment	1	1,000	Professional arborist
2	Nesbitt	Tree and shrub plantings	~140 trees and shrubs	5,600	Material and labor costs
2	Nesbitt	Herbivory Protection	Fencing	1,000	Cluster fencing with t-posts
1	Nesbitt	Control invasives along the shoreline	Entire shoreline frontage	9,200	Combo of chemical and brush saw work (knotweed and woody plants)
1	Nesbitt	Seed Shoreline	20lb/ac @ 5 ac	4,000	Mid quality mix use (40/lb) native seed drill
1	Nesbitt	Plant shrubs along shoreline	500 shrubs	10,000	Material and labor costs
1	Nesbitt	Herbivory protection	600 cages	2,000	Individual cages
1	Riverbend	Knotweed (and other herbaceous weed) control (annual)	~6 ac/yr	3,200	Professional labor rate, chemical, and removal of material
1	Riverbend	Winter woody brushing (rose, privet, honeysuckle, and barberry)	~10 ac/yr	6,000	Professional labor rate, chemical, and removal of material
2	Riverbend	Emergent Marsh Planting	2,500 landscape plugs	14,000	Includes materials, delivery, and labor. Does not include design
1	Riverbend	Trash clean up	2x per year	1,000	Volunteer led. Costs for organizing, promoting, tool use and storage, etc.
2	Riverbend	Design and permitting	Sitewide (105 ac.)	75-250k	Depends on effort engaged

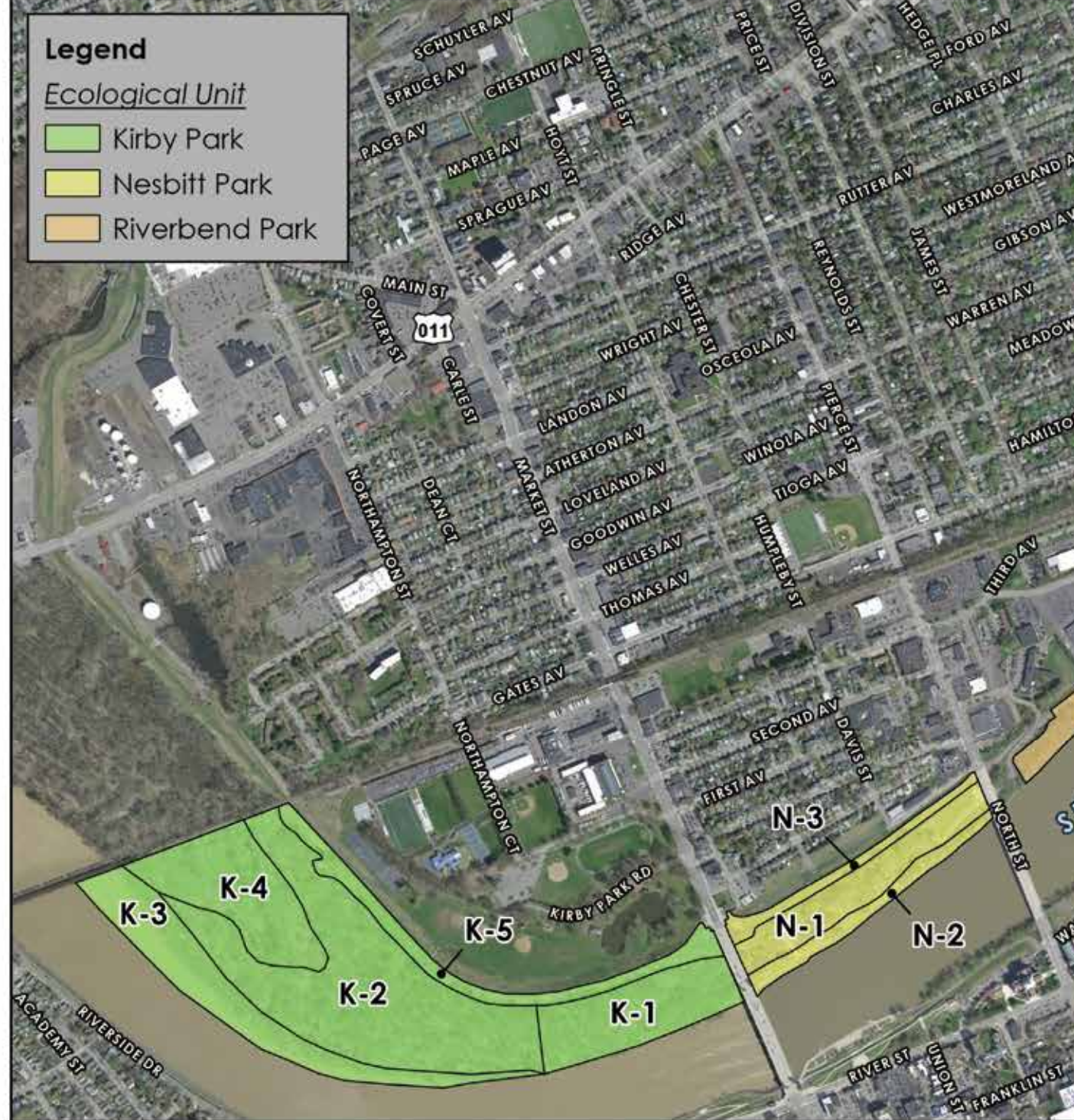
- This table does not account for annual escalation
- Cost estimates are based on 2025 professional ecological restoration rates and average wholesale costs for plant materials
 - Costs assume work will be conducted by licensed and permitted ecological restoration professionals, not conventional landscaping firms.
- Phasing by management unit can be modified for valid reasons, but a general framework is laid out should there be no justification to modify. This framework is supported by the combination of safety, ecology, and proximity to existing park resources as the primary weighted factors.



Figure 4. Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) perched atop a rapture sculpture on Veteran's Memorial Bridge.

3

Ecological Units Map

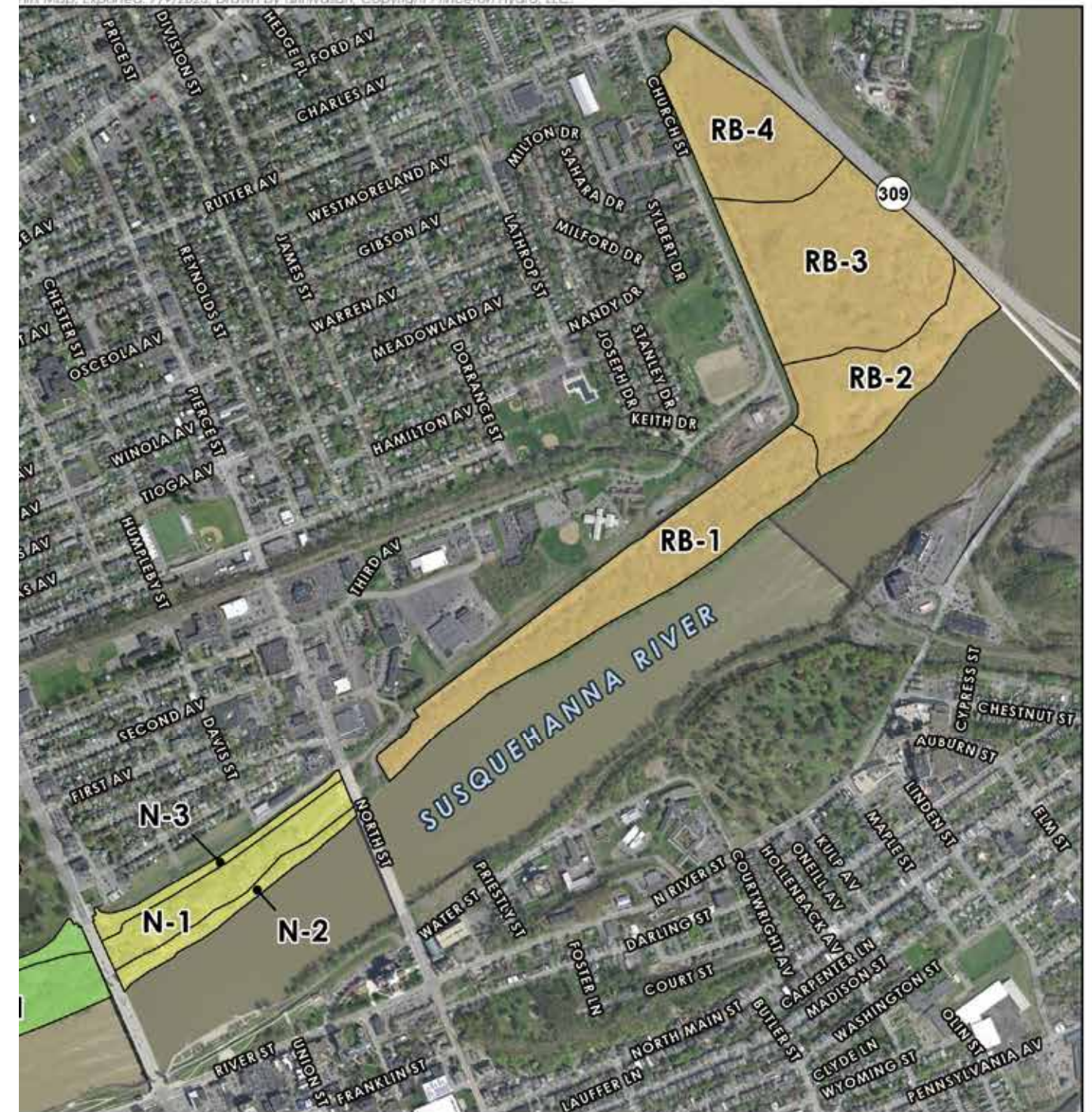


NOTES
 1. Ecological units are approximate.
 2. 2018 orthomimagery and roads obtained from the Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) portal: <http://www.pasda.psu.edu/>
 3. Roads obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) open data portal: <https://data-pennstate.opendata.arcgis.com/>

0 600 1,200 Feet
 Spatial Reference: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Pennsylvania North FIPS 3701 F1 US

ECOLOGICAL UNITS MAP

WILKES-BARRE RIVERFRONT PARKS PROJECT
 ECOLOGICAL SITE PLAN
 CITY OF WILKES-BARRE AND BOROUGH OF KINGSTON
 LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



ECOLOGICAL UNITS MAP

WILKES-BARRE RIVERFRONT PARKS PROJECT
 ECOLOGICAL SITE PLAN
 CITY OF WILKES-BARRE AND BOROUGH OF KINGSTON
 LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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4

Plant Species List

PLANT SPECIES LIST

The following is a list of plant species observed within Kirby, Nesbitt, and Riverside Parks situated in the City of Wilkes-Barre and Borough of Kingston, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Nomenclature follows the National Wetland Plant List: 2022 wetland ratings (USACE 2024) for the Northcentral and Northeast Region. NL = Not Listed. NI = No Indicator.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Indicator Status
Aceraceae	Maple Family	
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Boxelder	FAC
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple	UPL
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red maple	FAC
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver maple	FAC
Anacardiaceae	Sumac Family	
<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>	Eastern poison ivy	FAC
Apiaceae	Carrot Family	
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Queen Anne's lace	UPL
Apocynaceae	Dogbane Family	
<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	Indianhemp	FACU
Araceae	Arum Family	
<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i>	Eastern skunk cabbage	OBL
Araliaceae	Ginseng Family	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	English ivy	FACU
Asteraceae	Aster Family	
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Common wormwood	UPL
<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	Canadian goldenrod	FACU
<i>Solidago gigantea</i>	Giant goldenrod	FACW
<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>	New York ironweed	FACW
Asclepiadaceae	Milkweed Family	
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp milkweed	OBL
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common milkweed	UPL
Balsaminaceae	Touch-me-not Family	
<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	Jewelweed	FACW
Berberidaceae	Barberry Family	
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese barberry	FACU

Scientific Name	Common Name	Indicator Status
Bignoniaceae	Trumpet-creeper Family	
<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>	Northern catalpa	FACU
Betulaceae	Birch Family	
<i>Betula nigra</i>	River birch	FACW
Brassicaceae	Mustard Family	
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic mustard	FACU
Cannabaceae	Hemp Family	
<i>Humulus japonicus</i>	Japanese hops	FACU
Caprifoliaceae	Honeysuckle Family	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	European cranberrybush	FACW
Cyperaceae	Sedge Family	
<i>Carex blanda</i>	Eastern woodland sedge	FAC
<i>Carex stricta</i>	Tussock sedge	OBL
<i>Scirpus atrovirens</i>	Dark green bulrush	OBL
Dryopteridaceae	Wood Fern Family	
<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	Sensitive fern	FACW
Fabaceae	Pea Family	
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern redbud	FACU
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Black locust	FACU
Fagaceae	Beech Family	
<i>Quercus alba</i>	White oak	FACU
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Pin oak	FACW
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Northern red oak	FACU
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow flag iris	OBL
Juncaceae	Rush Family	
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Common rush	OBL
Lauraceae	Laurel Family	
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Northern spicebush	FACW
Liliaceae	Lily Family	
<i>Erythronium americanum</i>	Yellow trout lily	NL
Oleaceae	Olive Family	
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Green ash	FACW

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Indicator Status</u>
<i>Ligustrum obtusifolium</i>	Border privet	NL
Onagraceae <i>Ludwigia palustris</i>	Evening Primrose Family Marsh seedbox	OBL
Portulacaceae <i>Claytonia virginica</i>	Purslane Family Virginia springbeauty	FACU
Phytolaccaceae <i>Phytolacca americana</i>	Pokeweed Family American pokeweed	FACU
Platanaceae <i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	Planetree Family American sycamore	FACW
Plantaginaceae <i>Plantago major</i>	Plantain Family Broadleaf plantain	FAC
Poaceae <i>Cinna arundinacea</i> <i>Leersia oryzoides</i> <i>Microstegium vimineum</i> <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> <i>Phragmites australis</i> <i>Poa pratensis</i> <i>Setaria faberi</i>	Grass Family Sweet wood reed Rice cutgrass Japanese stiltgrass Reed canarygrass Common reed Kentucky bluegrass Japanese bristlegrass	FACW OBL FAC OBL FACW FACU FACU
Polygonaceae <i>Reynoutria japonica</i> <i>Rumex crispus</i>	Buckwheat Family Japanese knotweed Curly dock	UPL FAC
Rosaceae <i>Amelanchier canadensis</i> <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> <i>Rosa multiflora</i> <i>Rubus allegheniensis</i> <i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i>	Rose Family Canadian serviceberry Callery pear Multiflora rose Allegheny blackberry Wine raspberry	FAC NL FACU FACU FACU
Salicaceae <i>Populus deltoides</i> <i>Populus tremuloides</i> <i>Salix nigra</i>	Willow Family Eastern cottonwood Quaking aspen Black willow	FAC FAC OBL
Scrophulariaceae <i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	Figwort Family Common mullein	FACU

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Indicator Status</u>
Typhaceae <i>Typha latifolia</i>	Cattail Family Broadleaf cattail	OBL
Ulmaceae <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> <i>Ulmus rubra</i>	Elm Family Common hackberry Slippery elm	FAC FAC
Urticaceae <i>Boehmeria cylindrica</i> <i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettle Family False nettle Stinging nettle	FACW FAC
Verbenaceae <i>Verbena hastata</i>	Verbena Family Blue vervain	FACW
Vitaceae <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> <i>Vitis labrusca</i>	Grape Family Virginia creeper Fox grape	FACU FAC

5

Avian Species List

AVIAN SPECIES LIST

The following is a list of avian species that were documented within Kirby, Nesbitt, and Riverside Parks situated in the City of Wilkes-Barre and Borough of Kingston, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. An “X” indicates which survey dates each species was encountered on. Taxonomy and nomenclature for avian species follow that of the eBird/Clements Checklist, last updated October 2024.

Scientific Name	Common Name	April	May
Accipitridae		Hawks, Kites, & Eagles	
Astur cooperii	Cooper's Hawk	X	X
Buteo jamaicensis	Red-tailed Hawk	X	X
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald Eagle	X	-
Alcedinidae		Kingfishers	
Megaceryle alcyon	Belted Kingfisher	X	-
Anatidae		Waterfowl	
Aix sponsa	Wood Duck	X	X
Anas crecca	Green-winged Teal	X	-
Anas platyrhynchos	Mallard	X	-
Branta canadensis	Canada Goose	X	X
Bucephala albeola	Bufflehead	X	-
Mergus merganser	Common Merganser	X	X
Apodidae		Swifts	
Chaetura pelagica	Chimney Swift	-	X
Ardeidae		Herons, Egrets, & Bitterns	
Ardea alba	Great Egret	X	-
Bombycillidae		Waxwings	
Bombycilla cedrorum	Cedar Waxwing	-	X
Cardinalidae		Cardinals & Allies	
Cardinalis cardinalis	Northern Cardinal	X	X
Passerina cyanea	Indigo Bunting	-	X
Cathartidae		New World Vultures	
Coragyps atratus	Black Vulture	X	-
Cathartes aura	Turkey Vulture	X	-
Certhiidae		Treecreepers	
Certhia americana	Brown Creeper	X	-
Charadriidae		Plovers and Lapwings	
Charadrius vociferus	Killdeer	X	-
Columbidae		Pigeons and Doves	
Columba livia	Rock Pigeon	X	X
Zenaida macroura	Mourning Dove	X	X

Scientific Name	Common Name	April	May
Corvidae		Crows, Jays, & Magpies	
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American Crow	X	X
Corvus corax	Common Raven	X	-
Corvus ossifragus	Fish Crow	X	X
Cyanocitta cristata	Blue Jay	X	X
Falconidae		Falcons and Caracaras	
Falco columbarius	Merlin	X	-
Fringillidae		Finches & Allies	
Haemorhous mexicanus	House Finch	X	X
Haemorhous purpureus	Purple Finch	X	-
Spinus tristis	American Goldfinch	X	X
Hirundinidae		Swallows	
Stelgidopteryx serripennis	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	X	X
Tachycineta bicolor	Tree Swallow	X	X
Icteridae		Troupials and Allies	
Agelaius phoeniceus	Red-winged Blackbird	X	X
Euphagus carolinus	Rusty Blackbird	X	-
Molothrus ater	Brown-headed Cowbird	X	X
Quiscalus quiscula	Common Grackle	X	X
Laridae		Gulls, Terns, & Skimmers	
Chroicocephalus philadelphia	Bonaparte's Gull	X	-
Larus delawarensis	Ring-billed Gull	X	-
Mimidae		Mimids	
Dumetella carolinensis	Gray Catbird	-	X
Paridae		Chickadees & Titmice	
Baeolophus bicolor	Tufted Titmouse	X	X
Poecile atricapillus	Black-capped Chickadee	X	
Parulidae		New World Warblers	
Geothlypis trichas	Common Yellowthroat	-	X
Setophaga petechia	Yellow Warbler	-	X
Setophaga ruticilla	American Redstart	-	X
Passerellidae		New World Sparrows	
Junco hyemalis	Dark-eyed Junco	X	-
Melospiza georgiana	Swamp Sparrow	X	-
Melospiza melodia	Song Sparrow	X	X
Passerculus sandwichensis	Savannah Sparrow	X	-
Spizella passerina	Chipping Sparrow	X	X
Spizella pusilla	Field Sparrow	X	X
Zonotrichia albicollis	White-throated Sparrow	X	-
Passeridae		Old World Sparrows	
Passer domesticus	House Sparrow	X	X

Scientific Name	Common Name	April	May
Phalacrocoracidae	Cormorants and Shags		
<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	Double-crested Cormorant	-	X
Picidae	Woodpeckers		
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Northern Flicker	X	X
<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>	Downy Woodpecker	X	X
<i>Dryobates villosus</i>	Hairy Woodpecker	X	X
<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	Pileated Woodpecker	X	
<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	Red-bellied Woodpecker	X	X
Podicipedidae	Grebes		
<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	Horned Grebe	X	
Podicipedidae	Grebes		
<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	-	X
Regulidae	Kinglets		
<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	Golden-crowned Kinglet	X	-
Scolopacidae	Sandpipers and Allies		
<i>Actitis macularius</i>	Spotted Sandpiper	-	X
Sittidae	Nuthatches		
<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	White-breasted Nuthatch	X	X
Sturnidae	Starlings		
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	European Starling	X	X
Troglodytidae	Wrens		
<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	Carolina Wren	X	X
<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	Northern House Wren	-	X
Turdidae	Thrushes and Allies		
<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	Hermit Thrush	X	-
<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	Wood Thrush	-	X
<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	American Robin	X	X
Tyrannidae	Tyrant Flycatchers		
<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	Eastern Phoebe	X	-
<i>Contopus virens</i>	Eastern Wood-Pewee	-	X
<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	Great Crested Flycatcher	-	X
<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	Eastern Kingbird	-	X
Vireonidae	Vireos & Shrike-Babblers		
<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	Warbling Vireo	-	X
<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	Red-eyed Vireo	-	X

6

Forestry Stewardship Plan



FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN FOR KIRBY PARK NATURAL AREA, NESBITT PARK, AND RIVERBEND PARKS

WILKES-BARRE & KINGSTON, LUZERNE COUNTY, PA

*A Supplement to the Ecological Assessment in Support of
Master Planning*

SEPTEMBER 2025

PREPARED FOR:
SIMONE COLLINS LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE
119 E LAFAYETTE ST
NORRISTOWN, PA 19401

PREPARED BY:
PRINCETON HYDRO, LLC
35 CLARK STREET
P.O. BOX 3689
TRENTON, NJ 08629



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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

A Master Plan has been developed to envision the future of Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park, three river-adjacent parks within the City of Wilkes-Barre and Borough of Kingston in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. All three parks flank the Lehigh River on its west bank contiguously as it passes through the Wilkes Barre metro area, a highly urbanized landscape, offering a relatively narrow forested configuration within an otherwise highly developed corridor. All three parks exist outside of the manmade levee (on the river side) which serves as an abrupt border on their western edges. This document is a supplement to this Master Plan and is intended to provide a focus on the tree canopy with respect to maintaining and supporting healthy forested habitats within the parks as appropriate. The parks are situated within the Anthracite Valley Subsection of the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province. This valley has a long history of human industrial and residential development spanning the past 200 years, resulting in the loss of most interior forest habitats. Historically, expansive floodplain and riparian forests abutted upland mixed deciduous upland forests throughout the valley. Much of the lowlands within this region have been deforested with large tracts of riparian and floodplain forest remaining down river and in the mountainous, higher elevations outside of the valley.

For thousands of years prior to industrialization the entire river valley was and remains a sacred space for the Haudenosaunee people. These original human inhabitants interacted with this landscape and managed these forests through place-based existence, living within the bounds of nature and promoting a healthy and functional space for people, plants, and wildlife alike.

Each park is described in greater detail within the ecological assessment report. Please refer to that document for additional details.

FOREST INTENT AND VALUES

With varying site histories, management regimes, and other unique aspects each park varies in tree composition, density, and condition. The intents and values of each differ despite being a contiguous tract of land. An overarching theme of respect for the land's importance to the original inhabitants, the Haudenosaunee, and their proven union of human inhabitation and natural heritage is a common goal and theme through all three Park's intents and values.

The overarching intent and primary forest stewardship goal for all intact tree stands in these parks is to develop new and multiple generations of native trees to ensure resiliency in the face of canopy tree mortality, especially within Riverbend Park and Kirby Park Natural Area.

This supplement does not include any proposed timber harvest activities, timber management strategies (ex. thinning commercially undesirable trees), or the assessment of these forested spaces from the perspective of forestry products, as we feel strongly that this does not meet the intent and/or values of these Parks. There are proposed strategic removals of individual trees as described within the ecological assessment recommendations that are strictly related to human safety (ex. removal of dead and dying trees along formal trails) or specific to an intentional restoration concept (ex. savannah habitat creation project in Kirby Park Natural Area). Please refer to the ecological assessment for details related to these proposed activities.



Forested communities provide myriad ecological benefits, especially when in riparian settings (near water) such as soil stability, stormwater percolation and filtration, shading/cooling of both land and water, wildlife habitat, and flood storage during episodic events to name a few. When forests are near human settlements there are inherent stressors and impediments to these ecosystem services. Conversely, enhanced benefits for the lived human experience are presented because of this proximity. Balancing these ecological and anthropocentric values is critical for sustaining this collective resource for generations to come.

The combination of these three natural areas within this current urban setting provides a unique opportunity to provide forest and nature-based experiences for a densely populated residential area. Below are observed conditions and values as understood for each of the three parks.

RIVERBEND PARK

As its name suggests, this park is situated along a bend in the Lehigh River, resulting in the widest section of forested landscape of all the parks. A complex history of mineral soil extraction and the creation of manmade ponds and stormwater ditches influence the current topographic setting and post-disturbance forest age. Riverbend Park is flanked and bisected by rail lines, highways, and the levee. Portions of the Park are under control by the Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority. One inholding parcel remains under private ownership as well.

No formal trail network currently exists within this Park. Various rogue trails and a BMX bike track have been constructed. Most of the Park is under an even-aged canopy of silver maple, red maple, and American sycamore. Margins of ponds support box elder and black willow. Much of the understory where present is dominated by Japanese knotweed. Little to no tree regeneration is observed in this Park. The intent for this Park is to retain forest canopy cover and promote limited human access via a formal trail network. Otherwise, managing vegetation to ensure forest regeneration remains a priority.

NESBITT PARK

Nesbitt Park is mostly a cool season lawn with iconic, aging American Sycamore trees that line the shore and are widely spaced in a formal park-like setting throughout the lawn. This Park's intent is to support active recreational opportunities such as disc golf, fishing (boat launch and parking area), and other standard Park activities.

KIRBY PARK NATURAL AREA

Kirby Park Natural Area is nearly entirely forested and boasts some of the oldest oak, sycamore, and silver maples found within the three parks. Remnants of buildings, clearings, and other evidence of post-colonial occupancy remain and offer heterogeneity within the tree canopy. A series of formal as well as rogue trail networks exist in this Park, supporting both intended activities (e.g., birdwatching, running, dog-walking, etc.) as well as unintended activities (e.g., unhoused encampments, illicit drug use, vandalism, etc.). The values and intents in this Park are both rich in ecological and anthropocentric elements. Many years of bird research and ecological stewardship have helped elucidate the site's value for plants and myriad wildlife. Recurring unintended uses within this space demand conscientious improvements that can benefit both nature and people concurrently, resulting in a more nuanced and complex set of solutions for forest stewardship in this Park.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There are no sections of these parks that do not require active human intervention to ensure healthy forest regeneration, even in the formalized park setting at Nesbitt Park. Overpopulations of herbivorous mammals (especially white-tailed deer and eastern cottonmouth) coupled with significant invasive plant colonies are actively preventing the establishment of new generations of tree growth within these parks. Even aged stands with low species diversity represent an elevated risk of canopy loss. Signature old growth trees are suffering from a combination of root compaction and aging. Below are short term and long term actions called out to promote functional stewardship of the trees within this park system. Please see the recommendations section of the Ecological Assessment Report for specific details regarding locations, phasing, priorities, and cost estimates.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

ACTION 1 - CAGE VOLUNTEER SEEDLING TREES IN LATE SUMMER

Native hardwood deciduous trees that naturally occur in floodplain forests such as silver maple, red maple, and American sycamore are effective at seed dispersal in the spring months and germinate well within these settings, especially in small canopy gaps (when not already colonized by invasive plants). Each year many thousands of seedling trees emerge in Riverbend Park and Kirby Park Natural Area and each year these are browsed by white-tailed deer and other vertebrate herbivores in the late fall and winter months. Pre-construct herbivory prevention cages and place them around volunteer seedlings prior to deciduous plant senescence in late September. Focus especially on red oak seedlings in Kirby Park Natural Area. Repeat this each year to promote generational depth to the forest.

ACTION 2 - CUT AND STUMP TREAT WOODY INVASIVES

Nonnative shrubs such as multiflora rose, border privet, and European cranberrybush often readily colonize small canopy gaps and other disturbed areas within the Park. In the winter months cut and stump treat these invasives to promote native tree and shrub establishment. These locations will often be the best places to plant new trees and shrubs to add generational depth to the forest class.

ACTION 3 - ACTIVE REMOVAL OF KNOTWEED AND NATIVE SEED ESTABLISHMENT

Begin in Kirby Park Natural Area and follow details in the Ecological Assessment Report for converting 6-acres of space per year. This will ensure increased overall plant diversity and resultant wildlife habitat.

LONG TERM ACTIONS

ACTION 1 FOLLOW THROUGH WITH PROPOSED ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ACTIONS

By adhering to the stated ecological restoration recommendations in the Ecological Assessment Report, especially invasive species management and native tree and shrub plantings, the site will gain resiliency and establish multiple generations of canopy trees that can functionally replace diseased, storm-damaged, or otherwise dead and dying trees in the current canopy.



ACTION 2 - HIRE AN ARBORIST TO ASSESS TREE HEALTH OF AMERICAN SYCAMORES IN NESBITT PARK

Many of these trees are aging and/or diseased. Fund a discrete effort to develop a care plan for surviving trees and a strategic replacement of dead and dying trees.

ACTION 3 – CONTINUE VOLUNTEER TRASH CLEAN-UPS AND FUTURE SEEDLING TREE PROTECTION EFFORTS

Continue to engage the community through volunteer stewardship efforts especially trash clean ups and future efforts to cage seedling trees prior to being browsed by deer.

ACTION 4 – INCREASE TREE DIVERSITY

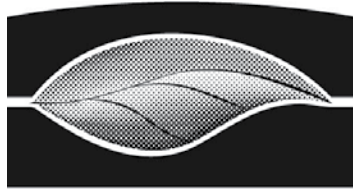
Consider supplementing the volunteer seedling tree protection effort with planted sapling pin oak, swamp white oak, shellbark hickory, butternut, and high quality trees that are currently absent from the Parks. Consider dedicating two locations (one in Kirby, one in Riverbend) to establish native conifer stands using white pine, red pine, and Virginia pine.

ACTION 5 – MONITOR FOR EMERGING DISEASES AND PESTS

Dedicate a Parks Department staff member or consultant to regularly search for information regarding emerging tree diseases and pests in the region for initiative-taking planning.

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Public Meeting Notes



SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE: (610) 889 0348 FAX: (610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Master Plan for the Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna River	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	Friedman JCC 613 S J Strauss Ln + online	Meeting Date/Time:	Monday, February 10, 2025 6:00 – 7:30 PM
Topic:	Public Meeting #1	Issue Date:	3/6/2025

ATTENDEES:

In Person:

- See attached copy of sign-in sheet

Online:

- Jeff Colella
- Christine Dettore
- Patrick Endler
- Hunter Lacomis
- Julia Oberg
- Michael Pilato
- Janelle Rushton

From the Project Team:

- Simone Collins Landscape Architecture
 - Peter Simone, RLA, FASLA, Principal in Charge psimone@simonecollins.com
 - David Bender, Associate ASLA, Staff Landscape Architect dbender@simonecollins.com
 - Toby Levin, RLA, Staff Landscape Architect tlevin@simonecollins.com
- Gibson-Thomas Engineering
 - Joe Nardella, CFM, Water Resource Manager

NOTES:

- Mayor Brown of Wilkes-Barre welcomed attendees and thanked them for participating in this master planning project.
- Peter Simone reviewed the goals and objectives of the Master Planning process, including a brief overview of Simone Collins Landscape Architecture's experience, the history of the sites, and the project schedule. This information is contained in the Public Meeting #1 PowerPoint presentation.

- Pete encouraged attendees to take the opinion survey and share with friends and neighbors.
- Pete encouraged interested attendees to reach out to the team with suggestions and questions.
- The public shared their thoughts, concerns, and ideas during the feedback portion of the meeting, detailed below:
 - GOALS
 - Develop a Master Plan for the West Side Parks
 - FACTS
 - Awesome parks!
 - Great community participation in this process!
 - Indigenous History
 - River parks were home to Haudenosaunee people
 - Kataroquen was the town located along river from Forty Fort down to Kirby Park natural areas that was home to the Haudenosaunee and the birthplace of matriarchal democracy (1745)
 - Used riverfront land for gardens and fishing
 - Many artifacts and burial sites remain
 - Sites are sacred
 - Simone Collins understands there may be archaeological exclusion zones in Riverbend Park, which will limit what can be done in those areas. SC is currently awaiting detailed boundaries.
 - Safety & Health
 - Wilkes-Barre police force recently acquired 8-10 bikes and will be patrolling parks regularly
 - River side of levee floods regularly
 - There is pollution in the River
 - Much of this comes from upstream, not locally
 - Do W-B & Kingston have combined sewers (waste & stormwater share same pipes)? – SC will meet with Sewer Authority.
 - Do sewer pipes leak/drain into parks?
 - Natural Areas
 - Are overgrown, which limits visibility
 - Are heavily eroded
 - Trails
 - Paved trails are not cleared in winter and become slippery with ice
 - Natural areas trails become covered in silt and debris after flooding events
 - Pedal-assist electric bikes are allowed on levee trails
 - Throttle-control electric bikes are NOT permitted
 - Market Street is extraordinarily wide and hard to cross as a pedestrian
 - Trolley used to run down middle of road
 - Not enough parking for all park users / park events
 - Kirby Park
 - Is undergoing improvements this year
 - New plantings around pond will beautify area and discourage geese from pond and pathways

- Geese don't like tall plantings because they inhibit their ability to see predators approaching
 - Geese feces are a health hazard to humans, especially with recent uptick in bird flu
 - Nothing will completely eliminate geese from park
 - New lighting and benches
 - New aeration fountains to increase oxygen in pond to reduce algae and clear the water
 - Will include lighting that can be changed by season/holiday/special event
- Food shack has been closed
 - Will be reopening in 2025 under lease to local business
- Events
 - 4th of July largest annual gathering
 - Self-directed TaiChi and Zumba occurs in parks / pavilions
- Kirby Park Natural Area
 - Is beautiful!
 - People don't feel safe in Natural Area
 - Hidden from view (over tall levee)
 - Shrub layer is overgrown, limiting sight lines
 - People have been periodically living in park natural areas
 - Trails are degraded
 - Paved trails are breaking up / missing
 - ATV use damages trails and off-trail areas
 - Lots of mosquitos from standing water in ruts
 - Ruts also serve as vernal (temporary) pools of water that support native amphibians where eggs/tadpoles hatch and grow
 - Remnants of original Olmsted design remain
 - Some trails remain
 - Ruins of zoo, greenhouse, pool remain
 - Old steel benches in this area are still standing (if beat up) after 100+ years and many floods
 - Birders love this park, and also the naturalized riverfront park adjacent to it, located in Kingston (accessed under railroad bridge)
 - Scores of bird species have been identified
 - Are the natural areas wetlands? To be determined.
 - Simone Collins understands that there are wetlands in natural areas – but locations not officially delineated
 - This will impact what can be done in this section of the park, but does not exclude some improvements
 - Also likely a factor in Riverbend Park
 - Natural springs are present in Kirby and in Nesbitt park
 - Mining may have historically taken place in/near park
 - Bore hole at edge of park may be discharging mine drainage during flood events
 - PA Environmental Council will be hosting a Bio-Blitz in May 2025 to identify what plants and animals are located in the park
 - Public is welcomed and encouraged to participate!

- Nesbitt Park
 - Well maintained
 - Solar lighting installed along road 7 years ago have batteries near end of life – those will need to be replaced soon
 - ATV use tears up disc golf course lawn areas
 - ATVs are brought in on cars that park in Nesbitt lot
 - Conflict between boat launch overflow parking lot (on grass) and disc golf course (grass parking area overlaps with Tee #1 for course)
 - Conflict occurs regularly because of intensive boat programming in Nesbitt
 - Boating events are by permit from PA Fish and Boat Commission
 - Existing ADA accessible parking spaces are located in area that gets flooded with silt often, making these spaces unusable
 - Kayakers using existing boat launch right next to large boats with cars and trailers in motion. Possible safety issue.
 - Bud Reilly owns 4.3 acre lot for sale just above park at Market Street
 - Possible location for building(s) or parking to serve park?
 - Riverbend Park
 - Named in 1990s during cleanup efforts
 - Has not been publicly accessible – no trails
 - May contains sacred indigenous burial sites
 - Birders love this park, too
 - CONCEPTS
 - All Parks
 - Use best practices for all park improvements/alterations
 - Make them a place people want to be
 - Make people feel safe in all areas
 - Make beautiful
 - Add flowers (native where possible)
 - Develop as linear parks
 - Access
 - Is there public transit to parks?
 - Add bike racks
 - Create loop trails
 - Formalize river access in more parts of the park (for boating, fishing, etc.)
 - New buildings
 - Build a nature center
 - Build an education center for schools to use
 - Create a small building in the park(s) that can be used by partner organizations to run programs out of
 - Build a boat house
 - Can one building combine these functions (example Camden, NJ boathouse)
 - Add rentable pavilions/gazebos for parties, etc.
 - Bicycle Rentals in/near parks
 - Public art

- SC team has been given a poster with Haudenosaunce artwork from Gere Reisinger
- Programming
 - Develop opportunities for underserved youth
 - Add education to park (signage, QR codes, tours/walks, etc.)
 - University students as educators & researchers
 - Honor industrial, natural, and indigenous histories
 - Use industrial materials (such as Cor-ten steel) where appropriate
 - Support health and wellness
 - Develop rowing/kayaking clubs
 - Create in-park community bulletin boards
- Respect nature (plants and animals)
 - Use regenerative restoration techniques
 - Use trees cut down in park as material to build park furnishings/fencing with
 - Respect geese
 - Use only native species, not cultivars
 - Improve drainage
 - Add used fishing line collection stations
 - Reintroduce native predators
- Is there federal funding available for improvements?
- Maintenance
 - Who will maintain long-term?
 - How will maintenance be funded? What will it cost?
 - Make sure all designs can withstand regular major flooding / ice flows
- Kirby Park
 - Plant trees to replace aging/dying trees
 - Improve paved pathways and parking lots
 - Improve levee trail crossing at railroad tracks for easier cycling
 - To do this would require resolving any legal issues with the railroad, which owns the property at that crossing
 - Add a large dog park
 - Build an indoor pool for year-round swimming
 - Create an amphitheater
- Kirby Park Natural Area
 - New designs/furnishings need to be able to withstand regular major flooding
 - Remove invasive knotweed
 - Create native gardens
 - Indigenous Haudenosaunce medicine/food gardens
 - Food forest
 - Demonstration gardens (for shade/wetland)
 - Reuse ruins
 - More seating
 - Add lighting
- Nesbitt Park
 - Expand disc golf course from 9 to 18 holes
 - Create barriers to prevent cars/ATVs from driving onto course / lawn areas and tearing it up

- Build a boathouse
 - Located under bridge? Above levee?
 - Kayak Rentals
- Develop rowing club
- Add more boat ramps
 - Widen existing boat ramp to allow 3 motorboats at a time
 - Add new, smaller kayak ramps spread out along river
 - Keeping them separate from main boat ramp is a safety issue
- Create bathrooms closer than Kirby Park
- More seating
- Open views to river through heavily vegetated banks
- Replace lighting (aging out)
- Riverbend Park
 - Create public access
 - New trails/boardwalks
 - Entry points
 - Archaeological digs/tours
 - More seating
 - Use indestructible materials (flooding, etc.)
 - Educational signage
 - Nature
 - History (indigenous, natural, industrial)
- POTENTIAL PARTNERS
 - Riverfront Parks Committee
 - Suskie Bassmasters
 - Kiwanis Club – have funds available for park improvements
 - Fish & Boat Commission
 - School District
 - North Branch Land Trust
 - American Chestnut Foundation
 - Back Mountain Trail
 - Anthracite Scenic Trails Association
 - Delta Waterfowl
 - Ducks Unlimited
 - PA DEP Growing Greener Plus Grants
 - Keep funding local by using local contractors

This report represents the Professional's summation of the proceedings and is not a transcript. Unless written notice of any correction or clarification is received by the Professional within ten days of issue, the report shall be considered factually correct and shall become part of the official project record.

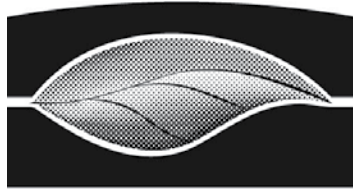
Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
David Bender,
Staff Landscape Architect

Monday, February 10, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

206 **West Side Parks Master Plan**

Monday, February 10, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

CHAPTER 6 APPENDIX 207



MEETING NOTES

Project:	Master Plan for the Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna River	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	Friedman JCC 613 S J Strauss Ln + online	Meeting Date/Time:	Wednesday, May 07, 2025 6:00 – 7:30 PM
Topic:	Public Meeting #2 – Initial Concepts	Issue Date:	5/13/2025

ATTENDANCE:

- In-Person:
 - **See attached sign-in sheet**
- Online:
 - **Jeff Colella**
 - **Patrick Endler**
- Project Team:
 - Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
 - **Peter Simone**, RLA, FASLA, Principal in Charge
 - **Toby Levin**, RLA, ASLA, Landscape Architect, Project Manager
 - **David Bender**, Associate ASLA, Staff Landscape Architect
 - Gibson-Thomas Engineering
 - **Joe Nardella**, CFM, Certified Floodplain Manager

NOTES:

- Mayor Brown welcomed attendees
- PROJECT OVERVIEW
 - Peter Simone introduced the project team and shared the draft mission statement, for which public feedback is requested
 - David Bender presented initial results of the online public opinion survey and an overview of input from Public Meeting #1
 - Toby Levin shared ecological observations from the team's April 2-3 site visit with ecologists and biologists from Princeton Hydro
 - Peter Simone shared design considerations and initial concepts for Kirby Park, Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park
 - Toby Levin shared pending improvements to the Kirby Park pond area, which include plantings to enhance and stabilize pond banks, discourage geese, as well as seating and lighting upgrades

- PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - Promote and market natural resources: consider partnership with destination management organizations for shared bike, shared kayak, and shared fishing pole / tackle programs
 - Important to show Kirby Park is a resource for parents / families / children
 - Provide an information hub for local attractions, etc. Use physical promotion materials (posters, pamphlets), not just digital
 - Susquehanna Warrior Trail trying to connect to Susquehanna Greenway (over 500 miles)
 - Riverfront parks are the birthplace of democracy and are a sacred site of the Haudenosaunee people (Canandaigua treaty lands)
 - Could Riverbend Park be available for disc golf?
 - SC: Riverbend is not as ecologically compromised as Kirby Park, so likely should treat this site as more of a nature preserve
 - SC: Riverbend Park includes a large private parcel, with remainder of lands owned by Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority (LCFPA)
 - SC: LCFPA cannot legally fund recreation on its lands, only flood prevention. And until / unless there is an easement signed or acquisition agreement for the private parcel, using that site is technically trespassing
 - Can volunteers do clean up and maintenance? Some have been told that it is union work
 - SC: The Riverfront Parks Committee actively undertakes volunteer cleanup and invasive removal measures. Suggest coordinating your efforts with them.
 - There was a cleanup in partnership with Luzerne County Corrections and their past-offenders program at Riverbend Park ~15 years ago
 - SC: Partnerships are key
 - Will parking remain at Nesbitt if the disc golf course moves?
 - SC: We propose increased parking at Nesbitt. Disc golfers could park in newly expanded lot there or at existing Kirby Park lot to access proposed new course in Kirby Park Natural Area
 - Could there be additional trails added to the Kirby Park Natural Area?
 - SC: Additional trails are definitely a consideration, locations TBD
 - A trail weaving in and out of woods at foot of levee could help attract additional visitors into the Natural Area when they view it from levee trail
 - How much grading would be needed to fix trails in the natural area?

- SC: Cannot add fill in a floodplain by regulation, but repairs to existing trails should be possible
- Any interventions planned at pond near railroad bridge in Kirby Park Natural Area? Mosquitos are a serious issue in the summer.
 - SC: Will need to see what ecologists' findings are re: pond health
- Any additional improvements planned at park entrance at Market St? Could use a plaza to welcome visitors.
 - SC: A good suggestion. Will explore in next phase of design.
- Are there bog turtles present in the natural areas?
 - SC: Princeton Hydro is investigating and a PA Natural Diversity Inventory report (PNDI) will be submitted for analysis
- Will SC be involved in seeking funding?
 - SC: Will depend on City / County, etc., but SC has written grants for many municipalities and is happy to remain involved
 - Mayor: W-B City has a full-time grant writer, as well
- Is there a "plan B" location for the Community / Nature Center?
 - Not at this time. Proposed location is the ideal one based on proximity to parks and protection from flooding
 - Irem Temple project site could be a possibility, but is located on east side of river
 - There was an older plan for a small nature education center overlooking Kirby Park Pond between the pond and the park entrance off of Market Street
 - SC will investigate old plan
- Will the plan include long-term maintenance / financing ideas?
 - SC: Yes. We are developing a long-term stewardship plan with costs. Securing funding will be the next step. Ongoing maintenance funding is a challenge for public parks in all communities. Grants can sometimes pay for past deferred maintenance, but usually only last up to three years. A permanent source of annual funding will be needed.
 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) could be interested in granting money for improvements, including deferred maintenance
 - PA is a great state to find funding for these types of projects. PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Fish and Boat Commission (FBC), and PA Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCED) are all possible funding sources for different parts of this project.
- Kirby and Nesbitt are well marked, Kirby Park Natural Area and Riverbend less so, so signage will be important for people to know they exist and are accessible. Could there be a cohesive name for the full system to provide the hook to draw additional visitors?

- SC: Yes, branding and signage are important. Events, too. Winter Fest and fishing competitions draw crowds to Nesbitt Park. Additional programming under the Market St Bridge could attract more regular visitors. Can look to other cities' successful programming (Parks on Tap in Philly, for example). Goal is to create a habit of going to these parks to encourage a sense of community ownership of the parks, increase regular usage, and then constituent pressure on local representatives for ongoing funding.
- Who does the project get handed off to after the final report is done?
 - SC: City, Borough, Universities, County, and you – the public. Sometimes a coalition of interested agencies and organizations take joint ownership of master plans. Could the West Side Parks plan be the start of a regional parks commission?
- Olmstead did great work at Kirby Park, but now the natural area is perceived as a degraded and dangerous site
 - Mayor Brown: Two major cleanups have been completed in Kirby Park Natural Area recently. City is also working with local service providers to find places for people living in the natural areas to go
 - SC: Both Wilkes-Barre and Kingston have recently acquired bikes for their police, and patrols of the natural areas and levee trail will be implemented this year.
 - Olmstead name is a draw. Could we restore the name or some of the original design?
 - SC: Agreed, we should pay respect to existing remnants. But investing in infrastructure to restore the original design is not feasible. If nothing else, floodplain permitting requirements would prevent infrastructure restoration in the natural areas.
- What can be done in the natural area? Could it be graded down? Could timber rights be used to fund improvements? Seems like calling it a natural area is a stretch. 50-60 years ago Kirby Park was a meadow
 - SC: Yes, it is not really a natural area – has been heavily influenced by humans (farming, parkland, resource extraction, neglect, larger floods due to development upstream, etc.).
 - Timber value is likely fairly low and getting heavy harvesting equipment into these floodplain areas would be a regulatory challenge
 - Excavation and mining were done before contemporary environmental regulations.
 - Ongoing risk of flooding makes significant investment in infrastructure in these areas a poor use of funds and efforts
 - Value of Kirby Park Natural Area is the wildlife.
 - Bob Wasilewski: "Kirby Park Natural Area" name was chosen by Kirby family, which is why it's called that today

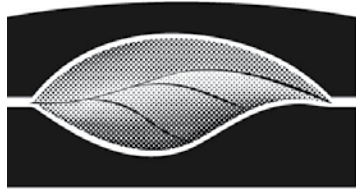
- Next public meeting July 30th, at which the Draft Master Plan will be presented for review and comment by the public
- SC to facilitate a meeting between Suski Bassmasters, disc golfers, and Riverfront Parks Committee to discuss usage conflicts and possible remedies

SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Wednesday, May 07, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Name	Email	Zip Code
Jim Bell		
Kate McMahon		
Bob Wasilewski		
BRAD WELLS		
Chuck Sivertsen		
Munter Lacomis		
Chris Matus		
Brian Ferry		
Holly Spoor		
katelin Kowalcinski		
kayla palencar		
Tom Tencer		
JAMES ZARRA		
Pam Fendrock		

CHAPTER 6 APPENDIX
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SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE:(610) 889 0348 FAX:(610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Master Plan for the Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna River	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	Friedman JCC 613 S J Strauss Ln + online	Meeting Date/Time:	Wednesday, July 30, 2025 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Topic:	Public Meeting #3 – Initial Concepts	Issue Date:	8/15/2025

ATTENDANCE:

- In-Person:
 - **See attached sign-in sheet**
- Online:
 - **Jeff Colella**
 - **Janelle Rushton**
 - **Kathleen Zawatski**
- Project Team:
 - Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
 - **Peter Simone**, RLA, FASLA, Principal in Charge
 - **Toby Levin**, RLA, ASLA, Landscape Architect, Project Manager
 - **David Bender**, Associate ASLA, Staff Landscape Architect
 - Princeton Hydro
 - **Mike McGraw**, CSE, QAWB, ACE, Senior Wildlife Biologist
 - **Eric Zawatski**, Staff Wildlife Biologist and Ecologist

NOTES:

- PROJECT OVERVIEW
 - Peter Simone introduced the project team and shared updates on the Kirby Park Pond Improvements and reviewed the planning process thus far.
 - Mike McGraw and Eric Zawatski presented their findings on the ecology of the natural areas within the Parks.
 - David Bender presented the draft plan, including the plan Mission Statement and proposed improvements in Kirby Park, the Kirby Park Natural Area, Nesbitt Park, and Riverbend Park.
 - Mike McGraw and Eric Zawatski then presented the draft ecological restoration plan for the Parks.

- Peter Simone then shared next steps for the plan and opened the floor for discussion.
- PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - Who will “drive the bus” on the implementation of this plan? Will it be the municipalities?
 - It is not yet clear who will be leading the implementation of this plan, but likely not the municipalities. The master plan is the “key” that unlocks the funding for implementation.
 - Could smaller organizations adopt portions of the park, similar to Adopt-a-Highway programs, and be responsible for cleanups and invasive species management?
 - Volunteerism is a key part of the management of the parks, but restoration activities need to be performed by professionals in the right way. It is too big of an undertaking for only volunteers to manage. Volunteer organizing is itself a full-time job and could be overseen by a 501(c)3 ‘Friends of the Riverside Parks’ organization.
 - Is implementation of such a 501(c)3 group in the plan?
 - Yes, we recommend this in the plan. If formed, this group would be eligible for additional grants. Showing incremental progress builds community investment.
 - Will the steering committee continue after the plan is completed?
 - The committee could continue to steward the plan after completion, but it would need to be at their suggestion.
 - How is the Riverfront Parks Committee different from the Friends of Kirby/Riverfront Parks?
 - The Riverfront Parks Committee was created by the City of Wilkes-Barre, but the four parks included in this Master Plan lie across multiple municipalities. The ‘Friends’ group could work across municipalities. Luzerne County could also be a good partner.
 - The Kirby Park natural area is perceived as dangerous and needs a safety plan/more policing.
 - Bringing more people to the natural area through programming such as Disc Golf, the pump track, and the under-bridge recreation areas will improve safety from additional ‘eyes and ears’ in the park and more people in the Parks will provide the City with reason for additional policing.
 - Human access is important in these parks. The idea of volunteers is good, but we have seen those efforts fail in other places because they ran out of steam. Education is the best place to start.
 - Yes, education is important for building attachment to the place. The focus will start with restoration close to trails, which will open sightlines. Volunteers are great, but design for safety is also important. Ongoing, dedicated, annual investment is also necessary.

- Could there be a police substation in the park staffed by all the involved municipalities?
 - That is a good idea but would likely be prohibitively expensive. Wilkes-Barre and Kingston have expanded bike patrols into both Kirby and Nesbitt Parks. The additional programming proposed in the plan will draw people in - and their presence will increase safety and the feeling of safety in the parks.
- The County created a plan for the Haudenosaunee cultural center years ago that has never been implemented.
 - The older plan is referenced in this Plan and recommendations from that older plan are included in this Plan.
- Will there be an ADA-accessible kayak launch?
 - The floating kayak launch under the Market Street Bridge could be made ADA-accessible.
- Why will herbicides be necessary for the ecological restoration work?
 - The scale and intensity of the problem (90+ acres dominated by Japanese knotweed, one of the most intensely invasive species in North America) will require herbicide applied by professional restorationists to surgically remove the invasives while preserving newly-sprouted native species. There will also need to be follow up with native seeding. Combating the knotweed along the riverfront will improve sightlines and the overall user experience and feelings of safety.
- How far will the tree planting and islands extend on Market Street?
 - Tree planting and islands are proposed up to the railroad trestle for traffic calming. There is funding available for this type of work. The trees and island could be extended further up Market Street if the local community desires and pushes for that larger vision.
- The tree planting and meadow establishment could be used for MS4 credits, which may open up the possibility of funding from stormwater fees. This may also apply to plantings on the riverside of the levee.
 - This is an excellent point – many of the proposals in this Master Plan can achieve multiple goals at once, which opens up more possibilities for funding each proposal.
- Who will remove the graffiti from the bridge?
 - PennDOT plans to do this as part of the planned bridge renovations, taking place over the next few years.
- What are the next steps to implement the under-bridge recreation?
 - Next steps will be for the municipalities (City, Borough, County, etc.) to apply for grants. Many grants require matching funds, so those funds also need to be budgeted, but often one grant can be used to match funding for another grant. The work will likely proceed incrementally. Each project will need design and permitting plans/construction documents, which then go out for bid. This is a 5- to 25-year plan with concepts only.

- NEXT STEPS

- Next public meeting October 15th, at which the Final Master Plan will be presented
- SC will share the Draft Master Plan for public comment by August 11th. Public comments can be submitted until September 30th at:
 - <https://qrco.de/Wilkes-Barre-Survey>

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Sincerely,
Toby Levin
Landscape Architect

SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

West Side Parks Master Site Development Plan

Public Meeting #3 Wednesday, July 30, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Name	Email	Zip Code
John Sokolowski		
DAVID WILSON		
Sarah Wilson		
Scye Wilson		
Denise Williams		
Robert Wasilowski		
Mark Jones		
John Levitsky		
LARRY NEWMAN		
Pat Quinn		
Alex Rung		
Sandra Weaver Cherry		
Pam Fendrock		

Key Agency Meeting Notes



SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE:(610) 889 0348 FAX:(610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	06 June 2025 [Time]
Topic:	Ft. Washington PA Disc Golf	Issue Date:	8/15/2025

ATTENDEES:

- Lee Gould, Ft. Washington Disc Golf Association
- Sean Smith, Ft. Washington Disc Golf Association
- Elya Beer, Ft. Washington Disc Golf Association
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, Simone Collins
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, Simone Collins

NOTES:

Meeting Purpose

Discuss Fort Washington State Park's disc golf course development and management to inform potential course implementation in Wilkes-Barre riverfront park.

Key Takeaways

- Fort Washington's disc golf course evolved from a neglected 9-hole to an active 18-hole course through community-driven efforts and park collaboration
- Invasive species management and native plant preservation were key strategies in gaining park trust and expanding the course
- Balancing conservation with recreation use is crucial; strategies include out-of-bounds areas, tree protection, and fostering a respectful disc golf community
- Disc golf can address park challenges by increasing foot traffic and providing volunteer labor for maintenance and invasive management

Fort Washington Disc Golf Course History

- Originally a 9-hole "object course" from a Boy Scout project, left unmaintained
- Local disc golfers approached park to clear invasives, mainly multiflora rose and privet
- Gradually expanded to 18 holes through trust-building with park management
- Community-driven development, including fundraising for baskets and volunteer labor – disc golfers attended all park cleanup events wearing disc golf shirts

Invasive Species Management and Conservation

- Removal of invasives was a key strategy to gain park's trust for course expansion
- Partnered with local experts to flag and preserve native plants during clearing
- Implemented tree planting initiatives (20 trees annually) to restore ecosystem
- Balanced conservation needs with recreational use, addressing concerns from conservation-focused groups

Park and Community Relations

- Built trust by demonstrating responsible land management and conservation efforts
- Encouraged disc golfers to participate in general park volunteer days
- Strategically fostered a culture of courtesy among disc golfers to maintain positive public perception
- Addressed concerns from birding groups and conservation-minded community members

Course Design and Management Considerations

- Implement out-of-bounds areas to protect sensitive ecosystems (e.g., vernal pools)
- Use physical barriers (logs, ropes) to prevent erosion and protect steep slopes
- Consider tree protection methods to prevent damage from disc impacts
 - Bamboo mats/slats wrapped (loosely) around trunks
 - 'Teepees' around trunks made of downed limbs
 - Metal poles driven into ground in front of tree trunks (make ringing sound when hit)
- Plan for increased foot traffic, potential erosion, and soil compaction around baskets – keep baskets away from root zone of important trees

Benefits and Challenges of Disc Golf Implementation

- Increases regular park visitation, potentially improving safety perceptions
- Provides volunteer workforce for park maintenance and invasive species management
- May face initial opposition from conservation-focused groups or nearby residents
- Requires ongoing management of potential issues (litter, substance use, tree damage) – volunteers clean up on Mondays after popular weekends

Next Steps

- Reach out to local disc golf community in Wilkes-Barre area for buy-in and support
- Consider implementing out-of-bounds areas in sensitive ecological zones
- Develop strategies to protect trees and manage potential erosion/compaction issues
- Foster a community-minded disc golf culture to ensure respectful multi-use of the park
- Keep Lee informed about the progress of the Wilkes-Barre disc golf course project

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Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect



SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE: (610) 889 0348 FAX: (610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Master Site Development Plan for the Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna River	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	6/26/2025 10:00 AM
Topic:	PennDOT Informational and Coordination Meeting	Issue Date:	6/27/2025

ATTENDANCE:

From PennDOT:

- April Hannon, Transportation Project Manager
- Robert Wasilchak, P.E. Senior Civil Engineering Supervisor
- Madelyn Keating, Government Services Intern
- Joseph Talutto, District 4-0
- Jennifer Borino, Acting District Permits Manager

From Project Team:

- Jim Brozena, Project Manager
- Peter Simone, Principal, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SCLA)
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SCLA
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SCLA

NOTES:

Meeting Purpose

- Discuss proposed improvements for Wilkes-Barre Market St Bridge and surrounding parks with PennDOT representatives.

Key Takeaways

- No fatal flaws identified in proposed concepts; PennDOT open to improvements if municipalities maintain them
- Traffic calming and pedestrian crossing enhancements needed on Market St Bridge approach.
- Recreational amenities proposed under bridge arches (bocce, pickleball, skate park, etc.)
- Decorative lighting upgrades for Market St Bridge as part of ongoing rehab project
- Further coordination needed with PennDOT bridge team on specific improvement details

Proposed Traffic Calming

- Concept includes road diet, reducing lanes from 5 to 4 on Market St Bridge
- Adding median (painted-only on bridge), vegetation, and pedestrian refuge island to improve crossing safety
- Rapid flashing beacon or other pedestrian-activated signal suggested at mid-block crossing
- PennDOT open to concept but detailed engineering study required
- City/Borough would need to agree to maintain added streetscape / landscape elements

Under-Bridge Amenities

- Recreational uses proposed under Market St and Memorial Bridge arches
- Concepts include bocce courts, plaza with seating, pickleball, court soccer, skate park
- Minimal improvements to avoid adding fill in floodplain
- Nylon netting curtains attached to bridge suggested to contain balls for active uses
- PennDOT generally supportive of concepts but bridge team review needed
- Permitting required for any possible floodplain impacts

Bridge Lighting Enhancements

- Decorative/aesthetic lighting proposed for Market St Bridge arches
- PennDOT confirms some lighting upgrades part of current bridge rehab project
- County interested in enhanced lighting for both Market St and Memorial Bridges
- Coordination needed with PennDOT project team on lighting plans

Boathouse Facility Concept

- New boathouse proposed just west of Nesbitt Park, near Market St Bridge
- Would provide secure boat storage to revive rowing activities

Natural Area Improvements

- Disc golf course proposed for Kirby Park natural area, just south of Market St Bridge
- Aims to increase activity/safety while also providing new, motivated volunteers to help managing invasive species
- New activities under Market St Bridge would act as gateway to get people into the natural area and put eyes and ears nearby, increasing sense of safety

Next Steps

- Simone Collins (SC) to send draft master plan to PennDOT in ~1 month for review
- SC to schedule virtual meeting with PennDOT bridge project manager and consultant (GPI)
- SC to refine concepts based on PennDOT feedback before finalizing master plan

Action Items

- Jim Brozena to contact Dom Lovallo & Bob Bochicchio re Market St Bridge project; discuss concerns, scope of work
- SC to send meeting slides to PennDOT reps for sharing w/ colleagues

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Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender, *IDSA, Associate ASLA*
Staff Landscape Architect



MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	05 Feb 2025 11:30 AM
Topic:	Indigenous History	Issue Date:	8/15/2025

ATTENDEES:

- Gerald Reisinger, Local Indigenous Historian
- Ken Parker, Indigenous Historian
- Peter Simone, Principal In-Charge, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SC
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Meeting Purpose

Discussion with Gerald Reisinger and Ken Parker about indigenous history and ecological restoration strategies for the Wilkes-Barre riverfront parks master planning project.

Key Takeaways

- The Wilkes-Barre riverfront area has profound Indigenous historical significance as "the birthplace of matriarchal democracy" and sacred Haudenosaunee sites that should be incorporated into park planning
- Current riverfront "natural areas" face serious problems: debris accumulation, invasive species, crime/safety concerns, and sewage issues that require immediate attention
- Restoration vision includes cleaning overgrowth, creating meadows and food forests with native plants, and establishing educational/interpretive elements
- Maintenance remains the critical challenge – while volunteer initiatives existed previously, sustainable funding and management strategies are needed alongside safety improvements

Topics

Indigenous Historical Significance

- The Wyoming Valley riverfront area was considered "Indian Paradise" by Indigenous peoples due to abundant resources
- Gerald identified the area as the birthplace of matriarchal democracy and the first democratic confederacy in the world
- The site contains numerous burial grounds (described as "one large cemetery") with significant archaeological importance
- The Irem Temple Project (opening next year with \$2M grant) will feature extensive Haudenosaunee history displays
- Gerald emphasized repeatedly that the indigenous contribution to American democracy deserves recognition in the park

Current Park Conditions & Challenges

- "Natural areas" in Kirby Park and River Bend Park are severely degraded with invasive species, debris accumulation, and erosion
- Stagnant water in sink ponds creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes and holds rotting fish carcasses
- Crime issues have made these areas unsafe, with homeless encampments, drug dealing, and regular bonfires (Gerald reported calling firefighters earlier that day)
- Raw sewage discharge from combined sewer overflows creates odor issues, particularly in River Bend Park near Pierce Street Bridge
- Previous volunteer cleanup efforts were substantial (26 pickup trucks of garbage from Nesbitt Park) but weren't sustained due to lack of municipal support

Restoration & Ecological Management Strategies

- Priority action: clean out debris and thin trees (not clear-cut) to improve water flow and reduce mosquito habitat
- Create meadows in currently overgrown areas to serve as bird habitat and reduce debris trapping
- Develop a food forest with native plants used historically by indigenous peoples for food and medicine
- Redistribute accumulated topsoil (described as "tons" that could be sold) to better locations
- Establish herb and medicine gardens near the caretaker's cottage, which sits at 35-38ft elevation (above typical 24-28ft flood levels)

Recreation & Educational Opportunities

- Clean the beach area in Kirby Park, described as "the most beautiful beach on 444 miles of the river"

- Restore/create trail networks that follow historic cavalry routes through River Bend Park
- Utilize bridge underpasses for boat storage (similar to Pittsburgh) and potentially farmers markets or sports courts
- Develop interpretive signage about indigenous history, potentially linked to downloadable website content
- Consider partnerships with inclusive education programs and local colleges for maintenance and programming

Maintenance & Implementation Challenges

- Ken emphasized that maintenance is "the million-dollar question" - grants fund installation but long-term care is difficult
- Flood Authority has some funding and could potentially maintain natural areas if framed as flood management
- Security/safety concerns must be addressed before other improvements - schools and volunteer groups have avoided the area due to perceived crime issues
- Previous volunteer initiatives were frustrated by lack of municipal support (no garbage trucks, equipment thrown in river)
- Potential funding sources include selling harvested topsoil, Olmsted park funding (historically significant design), and grants

Next Steps

- Schedule site walk-through with Gerald to better understand the areas, particularly River Bend Park
- Meet with Chris Bellman of the Flood Authority to discuss potential maintenance collaboration
- Engage Princeton Hydro ecologist Mike McGraw with Gerald and Ken to develop detailed ecological restoration plans
- Investigate the Irem Temple Project and its connection to riverfront planning
- Present indigenous history significance and ecological restoration concepts at upcoming public meeting (Feb 12)
- Explore sustainable maintenance strategies and potential security improvements with the city

Action Items

- **Research Irem Temple Project location, purpose, timeline for Haudenosaunee history exhibit**
- **Contact Chris Bellman at flood authority re potential maintenance role in natural areas beyond levee mowing**

- **Explore w/ Gibson Thomas engineer if flood authority should maintain Kirby Park natural area (levee protection/flood reduction rationale)**
- **Investigate potential for boathouse development under Market St Bridge arches (equipment storage, security needs)**
- **Obtain copy of Gerald's 1990s Olmstead restoration master plan for Kirby Park**
- **Research examples from other river cities on successful natural area management, compile photos**

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Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect



SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE: (610) 889 0348 FAX: (610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	11 March 2025 1:00 PM
Topic:	Fire + Police	Issue Date:	8/15/2025

NOTES:

- Jay Delaney, Fire Chief / EMS, Wilkes-Barre
- Joseph Coffay, Police Chief, Wilkes-Barre
- Peter Simone, Principal In-Charge, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SC
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Boat launch and emergency access

The fire department and police emphasized the need to upgrade the boat launch at Nesbit Park, as it is currently too small and not well-maintained, making it difficult for emergency vehicles to access the river. They requested the boat launch be doubled in size to allow for better emergency response. Additionally, they highlighted the need for improved emergency vehicle access into Kirby Park, as the current gates and paths are challenging to navigate, especially during events.

Park usage and safety concerns

The fire department and police discussed the frequent emergency calls they receive for incidents within the parks, ranging from medical emergencies to issues with the homeless population. They emphasized the need for better signage, lighting, and camera surveillance to improve safety and deter unlawful activity. The police also noted their use of bike patrols and community policing efforts to monitor the parks more effectively.

Potential park improvements

The landscape architects inquired about other potential facility improvements that could benefit the fire department and police, such as recreational amenities under the bridges. The police expressed openness to pickleball courts but had some reservations about basketball courts due to potential safety concerns. They also noted the popularity of disc golf in the parks and the need to consider expanding those facilities.

Recap and next steps

The meeting concluded with the landscape architects thanking the fire department and police for their input and indicating they would follow up if they had any further questions or needed additional information. The fire department reiterated the importance of the boat launch upgrade for public safety, emphasizing that it should be a priority consideration in the park's redevelopment.

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David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect



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WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	22 May 2025 1:00 PM
Topic:	Boat Parking @ Nesbitt	Issue Date:	5/23/2025

ATTENDEES:

- Chris Ostrowski, Treasurer, Suskie Bassmasters
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Current boat parking layout and issues

Christian Ostrowski from the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs discusses the current boat parking layout, noting that the 9 marked spaces are primarily reserved for board members, while the overflow parking requires boats to pull in and out of the grass area, which is causing damage to the ground. He expresses concerns about the feasibility of the current layout accommodating the growing number of boats using the launch.

Proposed layout changes to improve flow and capacity

David Bender from Simone Collins presents a revised layout that would double the number of pull-through boat parking spaces on the paved area, while shifting the second row of angled boat parking further to the right. Christian provides feedback on the turning radii needed for the boat trailers, as well as the importance of maintaining a clear path for the first row of boats to pull in and out without obstructions.

Considerations for moving existing infrastructure

The group discusses the challenges of relocating the existing weigh-in station and other structures, which are heavily reinforced and not easily movable. Christian emphasizes the club's history of taking initiative to improve the site without waiting for funding, and suggests the team look at other successful boat launch layouts for inspiration.

Prioritizing improvements and securing funding

David mentions the potential for a future community center development that could provide additional parking and relieve pressure on the existing boat launch area. Christian expresses

optimism about the proposed improvements and the need to work collectively to secure the necessary funding and approvals to make them a reality.

Meeting recap and next steps

The group agrees to continue collaborating on the design and implementation of the boat launch improvements, with David and the Simone Collins team taking the lead on revising the layout based on the feedback provided. Christian offers to provide additional input as needed, and the group discusses potential funding sources and partnerships to support the project.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
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SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE: (610) 889 0348 FAX: (610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	18 March 2025 4:00 PM
Topic:	Riverside Parks Committee	Issue Date:	3/20/2025

ATTENDEES:

- Vince Cotrone

NOTES:

Introductions and Meeting Overview

The meeting began with introductions of the participants and an overview from Peter Simone of Simone Collins. He explained the purpose of the meeting was to have an open discussion and get input from the group on the West Side Parks master plan.

History of Riverside Parks Committee

John Maday provided an overview of the Riverside Parks Committee's 30+ year history of maintaining trails, cleaning up trash, and expanding environmental education programming in the parks. He highlighted the importance of opening up the trail through the natural area to make it more accessible and usable for the public.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Parks

Vince Cotrone discussed the committee's role in managing vegetation, interpreting the parks' history, and educating the public about the natural areas. He noted challenges such as invasive species, homeless encampments, and public perceptions that the natural areas are "uncared for".

Potential Partnerships with Local Colleges

Ken Klemow and Garrett from local colleges expressed interest in potentially partnering on research and educational programming in the parks. John Maday encouraged them to provide letters of interest that could support future grant applications.

Parking and Access Challenges

The group discussed issues with parking, particularly related to conflicts between disc golfers, fishermen, and other park users. They explored options for improving signage, designating parking areas, and potentially relocating the disc golf course to another part of the park system.

Potential Improvements to Market Street

Peter Simone suggested exploring a "road diet" for Market Street to slow traffic, create a pedestrian refuge island, and make the area more inviting for walking and biking between the two halves of the park. The group agreed this could be an important recommendation in the master plan.

Acquisition of Riley Property

The group discussed the potential to acquire the Riley property adjacent to the parks, which they saw as a logical extension of the park system. However, the high asking price was noted as a significant challenge.

Enhancing Access and Safety in the Natural Areas

The group explored ideas for improving access and perceptions of safety in the natural areas, such as adding lighting, murals, or other features under the Market Street bridge to draw people in. They also discussed the need for the city to commit to better maintenance and management of these areas.

Future Coordination and Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the need for ongoing coordination and another meeting as the master plan process progresses. The group agreed to continue working together to identify solutions and advocate for improvements to the parks.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect



SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
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PHONE:(610) 889 0348 FAX:(610) 889 7521
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MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	13 March 2025 10:30 AM
Topic:	Kingston Fire + Police	Issue Date:	3/17/2025

ATTENDEES:

- Frank Guido, Fire Chief, Kingston
- Rich Kotchik, Police Chief, Kingston
- Pete Simone, Principal In Charge, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SC
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Overview of Riverbend Park and surrounding areas

The landscape architecture firm Simone Collins is developing a master plan for the West Side Parks, including Riverbend Park. They met with the city's fire and police departments to understand any issues or needs they have for the parks and waterfront areas. One key recommendation from the city was to enlarge the boat ramp at Nesbit Park to allow better emergency access.

Challenges and concerns in Riverbend Park

The Riverbend Park area is currently very overgrown and lacks formal access, as it is a flood-prone natural area. The fire and police departments noted that the homeless population in this area is relatively minimal and well-contained. However, they do occasionally respond to incidents and have found a deceased individual in the area in the past few months.

Potential improvements and considerations

The landscape architects are considering creating more managed trails and access points through the Riverbend Park area, while also studying the ecology and potential Native American burial sites. They learned that the city has plans to implement a police bike patrol unit that would periodically monitor the parks and natural areas. The fire and police departments emphasized the importance of clearing overgrowth to improve visibility and access in the Riverbend Park area.

Recap and next steps

The landscape architects will be developing a draft master plan for the West Side Parks later this summer, which they will share with the borough for review and feedback. They appreciate the fire and police departments' insights and look forward to their comments on the draft plan, especially regarding any safety or access considerations for the Riverbend Park area.

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SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect



MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	11 March 2025 11:00 AM
Topic:	Local Colleges	Issue Date:	3/14/2025

ATTENDEES:

- Gregory Morgan, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Kings College
- Anitra McShea, Vice President for Student Affairs, Kings College
- Jacqueline Grant, President’s Office, Kings College
- Maggie Rowland, Kings College
- Mike Wood, Assistant to the President, Wilkes University
- Jill Baer, Master Gardener Coordinator, Penn State University
- Vince Cotrone, Penn State University
- Peter Simone, Principal In Charge, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SC
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Meeting Purpose

Gather input from educational institutions (King's College, Wilkes University, and Penn State Extension) regarding current usage, improvement needs, and partnership opportunities for the West Side Riverfront Parks master plan.

Key Takeaways

- **Safety and accessibility concerns** dominate current limitations - inadequate lighting, challenging Market Street crossing, limited parking, and poor connections between campus areas and parks
- **Existing educational uses** include tennis facilities (King's College), Earth Day events (Penn State Extension), and recreational activities - all limited by current infrastructure

- **Partnership opportunities** emerged for several high-potential projects: renovated tennis/pickleball courts, track facilities, improved pedestrian connections, and potential boathouse/multi-use facility
- **Environmental education potential** exists through faculty/student research projects, master watershed stewards, and ecological uplift monitoring programs

Current Park Usage by Educational Institutions

- Penn State Extension participates in annual events (River Fest, Winter Fest, Chalk Fest) and conducts educational "walk and talks" in Kirby Natural Area and Nesbit Park
- Middle school students visit Nesbit Park annually for Earth Day activities with stations run by DCNR, Extension, and community groups
- King's College uses Kirby Park tennis courts as home facilities for men's/women's teams under maintenance agreement with city
- Wilkes primarily uses Kirby Park for athletics parking (100 spots) adjacent to their turf sports fields
- River Bend Park largely unused due to accessibility challenges
- Native American educational programming has been limited to occasional representation at events with no dedicated signage

Infrastructure Issues and Improvement Needs

- King's College tennis courts in poor condition requiring significant rehabilitation beyond maintenance capabilities
- Market Street crossing described as "daunting" with five lanes, high speeds, and inadequate pedestrian infrastructure
- Parking limitations severe in Nesbit Park with people parking in "muddy spots" during events
- Lighting inadequate throughout parks, particularly for student safety when traversing between athletic facilities and campus
- Track facilities at Kirby Park need upgrading (estimated \$2.5M project) with drainage issues and safety concerns
- Shelter/pavilion facilities needed to accommodate educational programming during weather events
- Restroom access limited to specific usage times and groups with keys

Pedestrian and Connectivity Concerns

- Wilkes students currently cannot safely return to campus after evening athletic events (parking closes at 6pm)
- Market Street lacks proper sidewalk connection from Kirby Park to Northampton Street

- Need for multi-modal pathway approach to connect campus areas to park facilities
- Wilkes attempted previous county-level funding for sidewalk connections but was unsuccessful
- Potential pathway through park vs. pathway around park debate (safety vs. access)
- Bridge pedestrian access constrained by pillars creating "pinch points" for bikes and pedestrians

Potential Partnership Opportunities

- Proposed boathouse/multi-use facility on Charlie Riley's property between levy and road
- Kings and Wilkes faculty could conduct environmental research/monitoring if ecological uplift projects implemented
- Master Watershed Stewards program could establish live staking nursery as collaborative project
- Tennis courts could be renovated with partial conversion to pickleball courts through multi-party agreement
- Track facility improvements could enable Wilkes to establish track program and host Keystone Games events
- Educational signage at Market Street crossing could leverage high pedestrian traffic area

Riverfront Assets and Adjacent Properties

- Former LCTA building (bus facility) currently for sale at \$4.5M with limited reuse potential due to interior columns
- Charlie Riley's property at Nesbit Park entrance could provide supplemental parking if acquired
- Wetland banking areas previously acquired as part of levy project offer ecological potential
- Potential natural ice skating opportunity in overflow water area near Nesbit Park

Next Steps

- Mike Wood to provide names of Wilkes faculty with environmental expertise for further consultation
- Anitra McShea to connect planning team with Brian Mangans (Kings environmental science professor)
- Planning team to check with Rachel from PEC about university participation in upcoming May "bioblitz" event

- Next public meeting scheduled for May 7th at the JCA
- Planning team to explore multi-modal funding opportunities (TA set-aside, DCED) for pedestrian connections
- Draft report to be available on city website later in summer for public review
- Detailed exploration of Market Street crossing improvements to coincide with PennDOT bridge renovation

Action Items

- **Send Jim names of Kings College faculty (including Brian Mangan) for potential park research collaboration**
- **Email Jim names of Wilkes faculty in biology/environmental science for potential collaboration on park research**
- **Coordinate with Mike and Greg to set up meeting with faculty from Wilkes and Kings College re: park research opportunities**
- **Contact Rachel from PEC re: university involvement in upcoming bioblitz at Kirby Park natural area**
- **Confirm official park hours in light of new lighting additions to Kirby Park trails**

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Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect



SIMONE COLLINS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
511 OLD LANCASTER RD. BERWYN, PA 19312
PHONE:(610) 889 0348 FAX:(610) 889 7521
WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverfront Parks on the West	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	05 March 2025 3:00 PM
Topic:	Flood Protection Authority	Issue Date:	3/7/2025

NOTES:

- Chris Belleman, Executive Director, Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority
- Jim Brozena, Project Manager
- Pete Simone, Principal In Charge, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SC
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Meeting Purpose

Interview with Luzerne County Flood Protection Authority to understand jurisdiction, ownership, and regulations affecting Riverfront Parks master planning.

Key Takeaways

- **Property Ownership Clarification:** Kirby Park Natural Area is owned by City of Wilkes-Barre; Riverbend Park is largely owned by the Flood Protection Authority with some Penn DOT and private ownership; Nesbitt Park is city-owned
- **Levee Management Restrictions:** Core of Engineers has strict vegetation standards (no trees within 20ft of toe, minimal vegetation on levee); relief wells must remain accessible and unobstructed
- **Development Opportunities:** Under-bridge areas offer potential for recreational amenities (pickleball/basketball courts) though would require regular post-flood cleanup of sediment
- **Coordination Need:** Any improvements near levees require Authority approval; they can co-sponsor grant applications but cannot contribute levy fee funds toward recreational improvements

Land Ownership & Jurisdictional Boundaries

- The 16-mile long Wyoming Valley flood protection system includes paved maintenance roads that allow public recreation
- **Kirby Park Natural Area:** Owned by City of Wilkes-Barre, not the Flood Protection Authority
- **Riverbend Park:** Primarily owned by the Flood Protection Authority from levee to river, with portions owned by Penn DOT (road right-of-way) and a private landowner (Sgarlatt family)
- **Nesbitt Park:** Owned by City of Wilkes-Barre
- Authority maintains easements across railroad property for levee access; negotiated crossing agreements with Norfolk Southern through Public Utility Commission
- Property mapping documentation available that will clarify exact ownership boundaries

Levee Management & Restrictions

- Core of Engineers standards prohibit large vegetation within 20ft of levee toe and minimal vegetation on levee itself
- Authority's focus is flood protection with 130+ relief wells that control seepage beneath levees during high water events
- Levee "rest areas" feature overbuild sections that allow ornamental plantings without compromising the actual levee structure
- Sledding on levee slopes poses safety concerns due to potential collisions with relief wells; Authority places "No Sledding" signs seasonally
- Relief wells are screened 360° around entire perimeter, rising 2ft above ground, cannot be obstructed

Recreation & Development Opportunities

- Under-bridge areas (Market Street Bridge, Veterans Bridge) present potential opportunities for recreational facilities like pickleball/basketball courts
- Pavement in these areas would have negligible impact on floodplain capacity due to proximity to river
- Post-flood cleanup would be major maintenance concern as sediment deposits after each high water event
- Flood Authority supportive of recreation improvements that increase legitimate use and reduce "unsavory characters" in these areas
- Railroad crossings need safety improvements; Authority pursuing a recreation grant to improve bicycle crossing at Norfolk Southern tracks

Ecological Considerations

- Riparian forest areas provide multiple benefits: habitat, protection for levee from floating debris during floods, and natural flood buffer
- Japanese knotweed infestation is a significant issue, reducing visibility and creating safety concerns
- Homeless encampments persist in natural areas despite periodic removal efforts
- Indigenous history of the area (former Native American settlements) deserves recognition in master plan per frequent public comments
- Significant silt deposition occurs at downstream end of Kirby Park natural area, creating beach-like conditions

Next Steps

- Flood Authority to provide property boundary mapping showing exact ownership limits
- Consider co-application opportunities for grants between municipalities and Flood Authority for appropriate improvements
- Evaluate safety improvements for railroad crossing to enhance bicycle accessibility
- Include indigenous/Native American historical recognition in master plan
- Schedule Princeton Hydro site visit (April 1-2) to conduct ecological assessment of natural areas
- Share future public meeting dates with Flood Authority to encourage participation

Action Items

- **Send real estate drawings showing property limits of Flood Protection Authority lands to Simone Collins team**

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WWW.SIMONECOLLINS.COM

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Riverside Parks on the West Banks of the Susquehanna	Project No.:	24050.10
Location:	online	Meeting Date/Time:	15 January 2025 10:00 AM
Topic:	Wilkes-Barre Leadership	Issue Date:	8/15/2025

ATTENDEES:

- George Brown, Mayor, Wilkes-Barre
- Charlie McCormick, City Administrator, Wilkes-Barre
- Tyler Ryan, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, Wilkes-Barre
- Jim Brozena, Project Manager
- Pete Simone, Principal In Charge, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC)
- David Bender, Staff Landscape Architect, SC
- Toby Levin, Staff Landscape Architect, SC

NOTES:

Kirby Park Enhancements

The meeting focused on two main projects for Kirby Park. The first involves enhancing the ponds and ADA pathway, including adding aerators to improve water quality, lighting along the pathway, and plantings to discourage geese. The goal is to complete this work by early fall before next year's 4th of July events in the park. The mayor emphasized the importance of making the park accessible for those with special needs, which the team confirmed will be a priority in all their design decisions.

Kirby Park Master Plan

The second project is a master plan to comprehensively assess Kirby Park, Nesbit Park, and surrounding areas. This will involve extensive public engagement, including steering committee meetings, public meetings, and a web-based survey. The plan will also analyze the ecological health of the riverfront areas and make recommendations for improving sustainability. The team noted they will need to coordinate closely with the Kirby Foundation, which has an important say in the park's development.

Next Steps and Timeline

The team outlined their timeline, with a public meeting scheduled for February 10th and a virtual committee meeting on February 3rd. They aim to have all work completed by the end of the year to meet funding requirements. The mayor expressed enthusiasm for the projects and emphasized the importance of Kirby Park as a heavily used community asset.

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Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David Bender
Staff Landscape Architect

Q1 Share your comments below on the Draft Master Plan:

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	It is good to see a comprehensive evaluation and the beginnings of a thoughtful plan for these areas. I would like to suggest the addition of one wall and/ or 3 wall handball courts, especially under the bridge, in Kirby park or near or even replacing a tennis court. The running track desperately needs improvement	9/7/2025 8:36 PM
2	I was part of the original Riverfront Parks Committee that designed the master plan. I'm excited this planning is happening and welcome updates.	8/29/2025 3:47 PM
3	This is extremely thorough and well thought-out. The only possible omission was in the "community partners" listing -- please include the Penn State Extension Master Gardeners!!	8/29/2025 2:39 PM
4	The budget for the disc golf course is generous. 9 holes added to the Kirby Park Natural Area would allow a total of 18 holes to facilitate PDGA events. The open space and current layout of the 9 holes in Nesbitt Park was intentional and enjoyed by many players including beginners for the fact that the park is already mowed and maintained. The 9 holes in the natural area would make the course diverse and attractive to challenge players. It was the intention to try and make the addition happen in the future from the inception of the 9 holes in Nesbitt. There is currently a Facebook page of 700 members for Nesbitt Disc Golf. This information has been shared with the group. Portapotties and/or facilitites added to the Nesbitt side of the park, even if atop of the levee would be welcomed by old and young alike. It was mentioned at meetings that the potential for flooding was a reason why portapotties were not in Nesbitt.	8/28/2025 3:42 PM
5	Please follow through with these plans. The area sincerely needs a quality running track. The pump track and other sports courts would also be a great addition to the area.	8/28/2025 2:32 PM
6	My critique is about creating a new non-profit, when there already is one doing great work – not to mention their partnerships they have formed to help with their maintenance and work. When it is mentioned in the draft that there should be a new group formed for this support, it will cause confusion. Especially since Riverfront Parks is already so involved in the community and has established various events within this area. By naming this new group something very similar, it may cause a divide in the outreach and deplete the support from volunteers Riverfront Parks has worked to build up over the years. Instead of forming a new group, this non-profit can be enhanced to fill those needs.	8/28/2025 11:14 AM
7	Most of the year nesbitt park is a swamp, filled with biting insects, or covered in goose poop. The only people who frequented the place prior to the disc golf course being installed were there for various illicit activities. If people wanted to play badminton, croquet, or have picnics, they would have been doing it all those years. The disc golf course is almost always in use by someone. The course is frequented by elderly players who can't play more challenging courses, and families with younger children for the same reason. The course is tick free. Ticks are a huge issue in most wooded courses, and many won't play those courses for that reason. Nesbitt is a great beginner friendly course that is accessible to people of all ability level. Removing the course will likely cause the area to revert back to an empty, underused park, only frequented by people "for reasons". As a person who walked my dog in Kirby natural area for years, I can attest to how unsafe the area felt prior to the disc golf community increasing the population and visibility of the park. Even the friday night teenage burnout car club, and the under the bridge salsa dance parties have tapered off because it's not an out of the way private location anymore. Don't remove nesbitt disc golf. It would be a disservice to many families, elderly and disabled people who frequent the park. Adding a second more challenging course is a great idea, but the original course offers a very unique experience and accessibility that can't be found in any other local disc golf course. Most course designers go out of their way to incorporate challenging elevation and difficult terrain but nesbitt avoids those challenges. Thank you.	8/27/2025 11:15 PM

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8	PARKING !!!! People are lazy, they want to park, get out and enjoy. You expect seniors to carry Bocce balls to under the bridge?? Parking, everywhere you plan events. When you think you have enough parking add MORE !!!! NO PARKING, NO USE !!!	8/27/2025 9:55 PM
9	My name is spelled wrong :) - Rachael Stark - Pennsylvania Environmental Council (second A missing) Recommendation 1 in Org and Policy - I think this should be reworded. We have a non profit "the RiverFront Parks Committee" and do not need a new one. Nonprofit professionals advise against more nonprofits for the sake of nonprofits, it is not good practice (Please contact me if you have a question or fight on this, because this is a common issue that has come up in my 10 years working with nonprofits and in my course work at the NLCP, so I feel very strongly about this). I agree with forming a volunteer coalition for stewardship as an ARM of the RiverFront Parks Committee (or even the city), and I'm willing to work to make that recommendation happen (and I missed the last meeting, but several people from other organizations called me concerned when they heard about that recommendation, so I'm not along in that thought). I think the creation of an arm is similar to point 3, so you might even just eliminate 1 altogether. Volunteer coordinator who is paid makes sense, it is a big job, RFP has some existing funding that can support, just not the capacity. 4 in Maintenance and Management: Again, remove this "Friends" idea and focus on adding capacity to the existing nonprofit. You're making way for someone to come in and split the already limited capacity rather than enhancing support, especially someone who doesn't know this work is already being done by riverfront parks committee (or someone who has conflicting interests and doesn't play nicely with others, used to happen all the time when i worked for the Scouts and it never ends well). LOVE the EE programming stuff, that all makes sense and I'm excited for someone to carry that forward. I think everything else makes sense. I agree with your assessment about changing the tactic to get people in the natural area with other activities (and that can be managed with a good education person who promotes responsible recreation). I also wonder if it is worth adding "identify a committee or group to champion the implementation of recommendations of the plan" which helps set the stage for it to not just sit on a shelf somewhere. It could even just be the existing steering committee carrying on the torch to get that stuff done.	8/27/2025 12:58 PM

10

Soils Report

Custom Soil Resource Report for Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

Preface

Soil surveys contain information that affects land use planning in survey areas. They highlight soil limitations that affect various land uses and provide information about the properties of the soils in the survey areas. Soil surveys are designed for many different users, including farmers, ranchers, foresters, agronomists, urban planners, community officials, engineers, developers, builders, and home buyers. Also, conservationists, teachers, students, and specialists in recreation, waste disposal, and pollution control can use the surveys to help them understand, protect, or enhance the environment.

Various land use regulations of Federal, State, and local governments may impose special restrictions on land use or land treatment. Soil surveys identify soil properties that are used in making various land use or land treatment decisions. The information is intended to help the land users identify and reduce the effects of soil limitations on various land uses. The landowner or user is responsible for identifying and complying with existing laws and regulations.

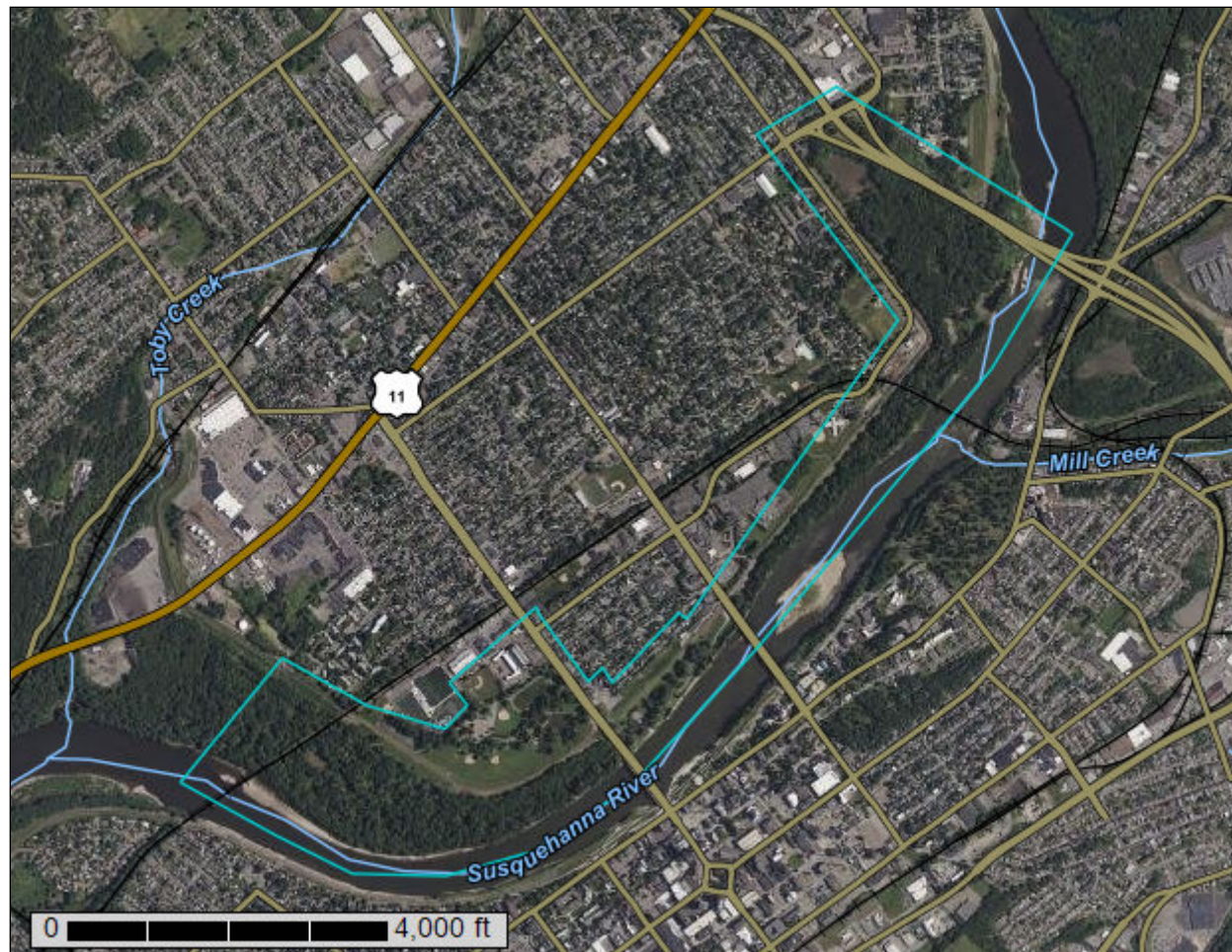
Although soil survey information can be used for general farm, local, and wider area planning, onsite investigation is needed to supplement this information in some cases. Examples include soil quality assessments (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/>) and certain conservation and engineering applications. For more detailed information, contact your local USDA Service Center (<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>) or your NRCS State Soil Scientist (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/contactus/?cid=nrcs142p2_053951).

Great differences in soil properties can occur within short distances. Some soils are seasonally wet or subject to flooding. Some are too unstable to be used as a foundation for buildings or roads. Clayey or wet soils are poorly suited to use as septic tank absorption fields. A high water table makes a soil poorly suited to basements or underground installations.

The National Cooperative Soil Survey is a joint effort of the United States Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies, State agencies including the Agricultural Experiment Stations, and local agencies. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has leadership for the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey.

Information about soils is updated periodically. Updated information is available through the NRCS Web Soil Survey, the site for official soil survey information.

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Bf—Basher soils.....	13
CF—Cut and fill land.....	14
GP—Gravel pits.....	14
Ho—Holly silt loam.....	15
Ln—Linden soils.....	16
Ps—Pope soils.....	17
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How Soil Surveys Are Made

Soil surveys are made to provide information about the soils and miscellaneous areas in a specific area. They include a description of the soils and miscellaneous areas and their location on the landscape and tables that show soil properties and limitations affecting various uses. Soil scientists observed the steepness, length, and shape of the slopes; the general pattern of drainage; the kinds of crops and native plants; and the kinds of bedrock. They observed and described many soil profiles. A soil profile is the sequence of natural layers, or horizons, in a soil. The profile extends from the surface down into the unconsolidated material in which the soil formed or from the surface down to bedrock. The unconsolidated material is devoid of roots and other living organisms and has not been changed by other biological activity.

Currently, soils are mapped according to the boundaries of major land resource areas (MLRAs). MLRAs are geographically associated land resource units that share common characteristics related to physiography, geology, climate, water resources, soils, biological resources, and land uses (USDA, 2006). Soil survey areas typically consist of parts of one or more MLRA.

The soils and miscellaneous areas in a survey area occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the geology, landforms, relief, climate, and natural vegetation of the area. Each kind of soil and miscellaneous area is associated with a particular kind of landform or with a segment of the landform. By observing the soils and miscellaneous areas in the survey area and relating their position to specific segments of the landform, a soil scientist develops a concept, or model, of how they were formed. Thus, during mapping, this model enables the soil scientist to predict with a considerable degree of accuracy the kind of soil or miscellaneous area at a specific location on the landscape.

Commonly, individual soils on the landscape merge into one another as their characteristics gradually change. To construct an accurate soil map, however, soil scientists must determine the boundaries between the soils. They can observe only a limited number of soil profiles. Nevertheless, these observations, supplemented by an understanding of the soil-vegetation-landscape relationship, are sufficient to verify predictions of the kinds of soil in an area and to determine the boundaries.

Soil scientists recorded the characteristics of the soil profiles that they studied. They noted soil color, texture, size and shape of soil aggregates, kind and amount of rock fragments, distribution of plant roots, reaction, and other features that enable them to identify soils. After describing the soils in the survey area and determining their properties, the soil scientists assigned the soils to taxonomic classes (units). Taxonomic classes are concepts. Each taxonomic class has a set of soil characteristics with precisely defined limits. The classes are used as a basis for comparison to classify soils systematically. Soil taxonomy, the system of taxonomic classification used in the United States, is based mainly on the kind and character of soil properties and the arrangement of horizons within the profile. After the soil

scientists classified and named the soils in the survey area, they compared the individual soils with similar soils in the same taxonomic class in other areas so that they could confirm data and assemble additional data based on experience and research.

The objective of soil mapping is not to delineate pure map unit components; the objective is to separate the landscape into landforms or landform segments that have similar use and management requirements. Each map unit is defined by a unique combination of soil components and/or miscellaneous areas in predictable proportions. Some components may be highly contrasting to the other components of the map unit. The presence of minor components in a map unit in no way diminishes the usefulness or accuracy of the data. The delineation of such landforms and landform segments on the map provides sufficient information for the development of resource plans. If intensive use of small areas is planned, onsite investigation is needed to define and locate the soils and miscellaneous areas.

Soil scientists make many field observations in the process of producing a soil map. The frequency of observation is dependent upon several factors, including scale of mapping, intensity of mapping, design of map units, complexity of the landscape, and experience of the soil scientist. Observations are made to test and refine the soil-landscape model and predictions and to verify the classification of the soils at specific locations. Once the soil-landscape model is refined, a significantly smaller number of measurements of individual soil properties are made and recorded. These measurements may include field measurements, such as those for color, depth to bedrock, and texture, and laboratory measurements, such as those for content of sand, silt, clay, salt, and other components. Properties of each soil typically vary from one point to another across the landscape.

Observations for map unit components are aggregated to develop ranges of characteristics for the components. The aggregated values are presented. Direct measurements do not exist for every property presented for every map unit component. Values for some properties are estimated from combinations of other properties.

While a soil survey is in progress, samples of some of the soils in the area generally are collected for laboratory analyses and for engineering tests. Soil scientists interpret the data from these analyses and tests as well as the field-observed characteristics and the soil properties to determine the expected behavior of the soils under different uses. Interpretations for all of the soils are field tested through observation of the soils in different uses and under different levels of management. Some interpretations are modified to fit local conditions, and some new interpretations are developed to meet local needs. Data are assembled from other sources, such as research information, production records, and field experience of specialists. For example, data on crop yields under defined levels of management are assembled from farm records and from field or plot experiments on the same kinds of soil.

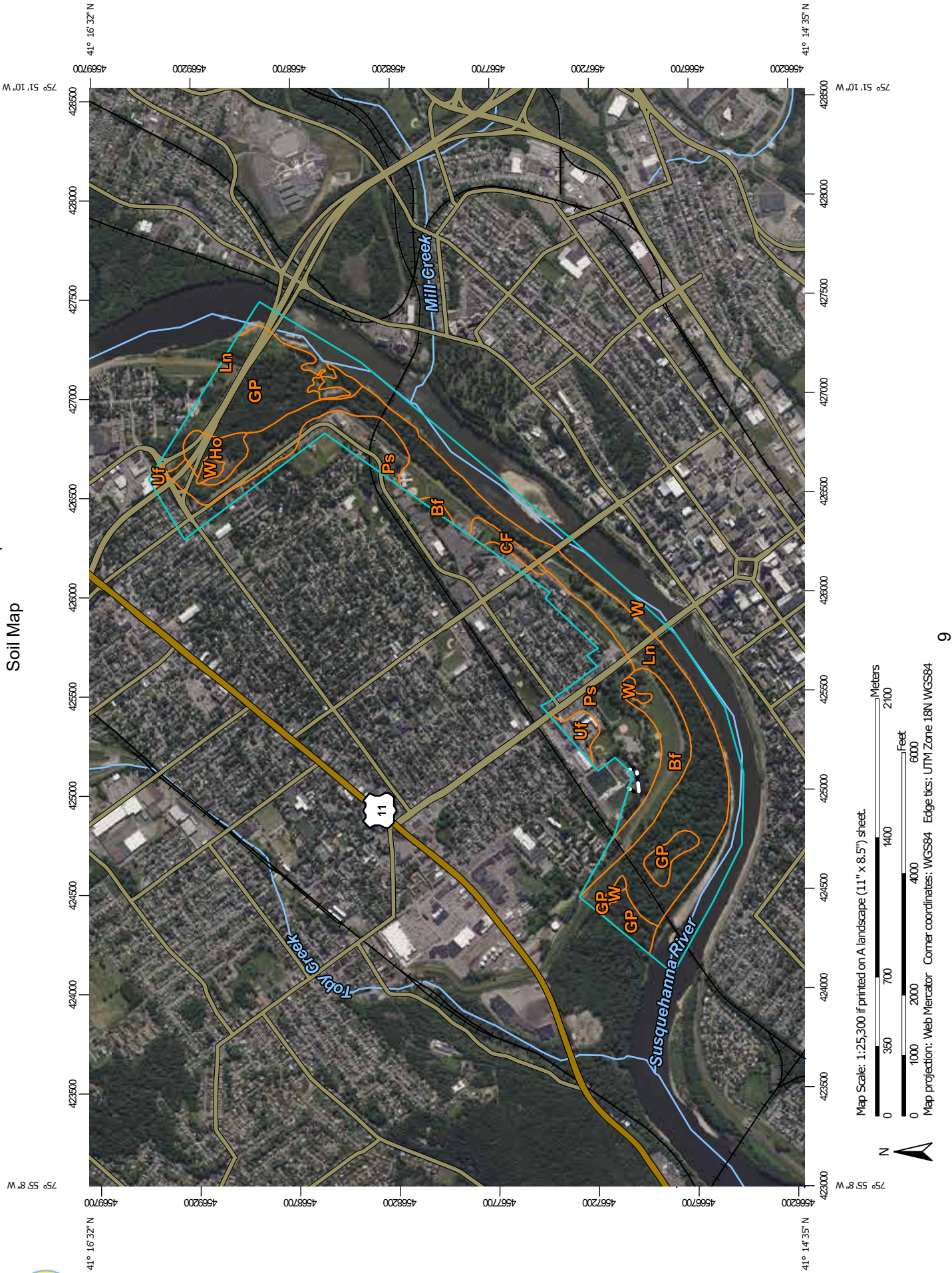
Predictions about soil behavior are based not only on soil properties but also on such variables as climate and biological activity. Soil conditions are predictable over long periods of time, but they are not predictable from year to year. For example, soil scientists can predict with a fairly high degree of accuracy that a given soil will have a high water table within certain depths in most years, but they cannot predict that a high water table will always be at a specific level in the soil on a specific date.

After soil scientists located and identified the significant natural bodies of soil in the survey area, they drew the boundaries of these bodies on aerial photographs and

identified each as a specific map unit. Aerial photographs show trees, buildings, fields, roads, and rivers, all of which help in locating boundaries accurately.

Soil Map

The soil map section includes the soil map for the defined area of interest, a list of soil map units on the map and extent of each map unit, and cartographic symbols displayed on the map. Also presented are various metadata about data used to produce the map, and a description of each soil map unit.



Custom Soil Resource Report

MAP LEGEND

- Area of Interest (AOI)**
Area of Interest (AOI)
- Soils**
Soil Map Unit Polygons
Soil Map Unit Lines
Soil Map Unit Points
- Special Point Features**
Blowout
Borrow Pit
Clay Spot
Closed Depression
Gravel Pit
Gravelly Spot
Landfill
Lava Flow
Marsh or swamp
Mine or Quarry
Miscellaneous Water
Perennial Water
Rock Outcrop
Saline Spot
Sandy Spot
Severely Eroded Spot
Sinkhole
Slide or Slip
Sodic Spot
- Water Features**
Streams and Canals
- Transportation**
Rails
Interstate Highways
US Routes
Major Roads
Local Roads
- Background**
Aerial Photography

MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:20,000.

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.

Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Web Soil Survey URL:
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)

Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.

This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.

Soil Survey Area: Luzerne County, Pennsylvania
Survey Area Data: Version 19, Sep 4, 2024

Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: May 21, 2022—Jun 5, 2022

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Bf	Basher soils	37.2	6.7%
CF	Cut and fill land	7.3	1.3%
GP	Gravel pits	83.2	15.0%
Ho	Holly silt loam	13.0	2.3%
Ln	Linden soils	171.8	30.9%
Ps	Pope soils	109.2	19.6%
Uf	Urban land, rarely flooded	8.7	1.6%
W	Water	125.0	22.5%
Totals for Area of Interest		555.5	100.0%

Map Unit Descriptions

The map units delineated on the detailed soil maps in a soil survey represent the soils or miscellaneous areas in the survey area. The map unit descriptions, along with the maps, can be used to determine the composition and properties of a unit.

A map unit delineation on a soil map represents an area dominated by one or more major kinds of soil or miscellaneous areas. A map unit is identified and named according to the taxonomic classification of the dominant soils. Within a taxonomic class there are precisely defined limits for the properties of the soils. On the landscape, however, the soils are natural phenomena, and they have the characteristic variability of all natural phenomena. Thus, the range of some observed properties may extend beyond the limits defined for a taxonomic class. Areas of soils of a single taxonomic class rarely, if ever, can be mapped without including areas of other taxonomic classes. Consequently, every map unit is made up of the soils or miscellaneous areas for which it is named and some minor components that belong to taxonomic classes other than those of the major soils.

Most minor soils have properties similar to those of the dominant soil or soils in the map unit, and thus they do not affect use and management. These are called noncontrasting, or similar, components. They may or may not be mentioned in a particular map unit description. Other minor components, however, have properties and behavioral characteristics divergent enough to affect use or to require different management. These are called contrasting, or dissimilar, components. They generally are in small areas and could not be mapped separately because of the scale used. Some small areas of strongly contrasting soils or miscellaneous areas are identified by a special symbol on the maps. If included in the database for a given area, the contrasting minor components are identified in the map unit descriptions along with some characteristics of each. A few areas of minor components may not have been observed, and consequently they are not mentioned in the descriptions, especially where the pattern was so complex that it was impractical to make enough observations to identify all the soils and miscellaneous areas on the landscape.

The presence of minor components in a map unit in no way diminishes the usefulness or accuracy of the data. The objective of mapping is not to delineate pure taxonomic classes but rather to separate the landscape into landforms or landform segments that have similar use and management requirements. The delineation of such segments on the map provides sufficient information for the development of resource plans. If intensive use of small areas is planned, however, onsite investigation is needed to define and locate the soils and miscellaneous areas.

An identifying symbol precedes the map unit name in the map unit descriptions. Each description includes general facts about the unit and gives important soil properties and qualities.

Soils that have profiles that are almost alike make up a *soil series*. Except for differences in texture of the surface layer, all the soils of a series have major horizons that are similar in composition, thickness, and arrangement.

Soils of one series can differ in texture of the surface layer, slope, stoniness, salinity, degree of erosion, and other characteristics that affect their use. On the basis of such differences, a soil series is divided into *soil phases*. Most of the areas shown on the detailed soil maps are phases of soil series. The name of a soil phase commonly indicates a feature that affects use or management. For example, Alpha silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is a phase of the Alpha series.

Some map units are made up of two or more major soils or miscellaneous areas. These map units are complexes, associations, or undifferentiated groups.

A *complex* consists of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas in such an intricate pattern or in such small areas that they cannot be shown separately on the maps. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar in all areas. Alpha-Beta complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes, is an example.

An *association* is made up of two or more geographically associated soils or miscellaneous areas that are shown as one unit on the maps. Because of present or anticipated uses of the map units in the survey area, it was not considered practical or necessary to map the soils or miscellaneous areas separately. The pattern and relative proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar. Alpha-Beta association, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

An *undifferentiated group* is made up of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas that could be mapped individually but are mapped as one unit because similar interpretations can be made for use and management. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas in a mapped area are not uniform. An area can be made up of only one of the major soils or miscellaneous areas, or it can be made up of all of them. Alpha and Beta soils, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

Some surveys include *miscellaneous areas*. Such areas have little or no soil material and support little or no vegetation. Rock outcrop is an example.

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

Bf—Basher soils

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 9yfm
Elevation: 400 to 840 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 30 to 45 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 45 to 54 degrees F
Frost-free period: 120 to 187 days
Farmland classification: All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Basher and similar soils: 90 percent
Minor components: 10 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Basher

Setting

Landform: Flood plains
Parent material: Reddish alluvium derived from sedimentary rock

Typical profile

H1 - 0 to 10 inches: silt loam
H2 - 10 to 37 inches: loam
H3 - 37 to 53 inches: fine sandy loam
H4 - 53 to 62 inches: very gravelly sand

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 3 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Moderately well drained
Runoff class: Low
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.20 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: About 12 to 36 inches
Frequency of flooding: Occasional
Frequency of ponding: None
Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches: Moderate (about 8.6 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 2w
Hydrologic Soil Group: C
Ecological site: F140XY014NY - Low Floodplain
Hydric soil rating: No

Minor Components

Holly

Percent of map unit: 10 percent
Landform: Depressions on flood plains, backswamps
Landform position (two-dimensional): Toeslope
Landform position (three-dimensional): Base slope
Down-slope shape: Concave

Across-slope shape: Linear
Hydric soil rating: Yes

CF—Cut and fill land

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 9yg0
Elevation: 490 to 2,260 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 36 to 46 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 46 to 56 degrees F
Frost-free period: 135 to 170 days
Farmland classification: Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Udorthents, cut and fill, and similar soils: 100 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Udorthents, Cut And Fill

Setting

Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 70 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Somewhat excessively drained
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None

GP—Gravel pits

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 1jrv7
Mean annual precipitation: 36 to 46 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 46 to 56 degrees F
Frost-free period: 135 to 170 days
Farmland classification: Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Pits, shale: 51 percent
Pits, gravel: 49 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Pits, Shale

Typical profile

C - 0 to 1 inches: channers
R - 1 to 2 inches: bedrock

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 40 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: 0 to 2 inches to paralithic bedrock
Drainage class: Excessively drained
Runoff class: Medium

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 8e
Hydric soil rating: No

Description of Pits, Gravel

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 8e
Hydric soil rating: No

Ho—Holly silt loam

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 9ygb
Elevation: 200 to 1,000 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 30 to 45 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 46 to 55 degrees F
Frost-free period: 120 to 187 days
Farmland classification: Farmland of statewide importance

Map Unit Composition

Holly and similar soils: 95 percent
Minor components: 5 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Holly

Setting

Landform: Backswamps, depressions on flood plains
Landform position (two-dimensional): Toeslope
Landform position (three-dimensional): Base slope
Down-slope shape: Concave
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Loamy alluvium derived from sandstone and shale

Typical profile

H1 - 0 to 5 inches: silt loam

H2 - 5 to 28 inches: silt loam
H3 - 28 to 43 inches: silt loam
H4 - 43 to 60 inches: stratified gravelly sand to silt loam

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 3 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Poorly drained
Runoff class: Negligible
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.20 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: About 0 to 6 inches
Frequency of flooding: Frequent
Frequency of ponding: Occasional
Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches: High (about 9.9 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 3w
Hydrologic Soil Group: B/D
Ecological site: F140XY015NY - Wet Low Floodplain
Hydric soil rating: Yes

Minor Components

Linden

Percent of map unit: 5 percent
Hydric soil rating: No

Ln—Linden soils

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 9ygv
Elevation: 200 to 1,000 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 30 to 45 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 46 to 55 degrees F
Frost-free period: 120 to 187 days
Farmland classification: All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Linden and similar soils: 92 percent
Minor components: 8 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Linden

Setting

Landform: Flood plains
Parent material: Alluvium derived from sedimentary rock

Typical profile

- H1 - 0 to 9 inches: silt loam
- H2 - 9 to 45 inches: silt loam
- H3 - 45 to 60 inches: very gravelly sand

Properties and qualities

- Slope: 0 to 3 percent
- Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
- Drainage class: Well drained
- Runoff class: Very low
- Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): High (2.00 to 6.00 in/hr)
- Depth to water table: About 36 to 72 inches
- Frequency of flooding: Occasional
- Frequency of ponding: None
- Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches: Moderate (about 8.2 inches)

Interpretive groups

- Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
- Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 1
- Hydrologic Soil Group: A
- Ecological site: F140XY013PA - High Floodplain
- Hydric soil rating: No

Minor Components

Holly

- Percent of map unit: 8 percent
- Landform: Depressions on flood plains, backswamps
- Landform position (two-dimensional): Toeslope
- Landform position (three-dimensional): Base slope
- Down-slope shape: Concave
- Across-slope shape: Linear
- Hydric soil rating: Yes

Ps—Pope soils

Map Unit Setting

- National map unit symbol: 9yht
- Elevation: 160 to 1,970 feet
- Mean annual precipitation: 30 to 51 inches
- Mean annual air temperature: 40 to 54 degrees F
- Frost-free period: 100 to 187 days
- Farmland classification: All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

- Pope and similar soils: 95 percent
- Minor components: 5 percent
- Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Pope

Setting

- Landform: Flood plains
- Down-slope shape: Linear
- Across-slope shape: Linear
- Parent material: Coarse-loamy alluvium derived from sandstone and siltstone

Typical profile

- H1 - 0 to 10 inches: silt loam
- H2 - 10 to 42 inches: fine sandy loam
- H3 - 42 to 62 inches: sandy loam

Properties and qualities

- Slope: 0 to 4 percent
- Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
- Drainage class: Well drained
- Runoff class: Low
- Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr)
- Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
- Frequency of flooding: None
- Frequency of ponding: None
- Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches: Moderate (about 8.9 inches)

Interpretive groups

- Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
- Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 1
- Hydrologic Soil Group: B
- Ecological site: F140XY013PA - High Floodplain
- Hydric soil rating: No

Minor Components

Holly

- Percent of map unit: 5 percent
- Landform: Depressions on flood plains, backswamps
- Landform position (two-dimensional): Toeslope
- Landform position (three-dimensional): Base slope
- Down-slope shape: Concave
- Across-slope shape: Linear
- Hydric soil rating: Yes

Uf—Urban land, rarely flooded

Map Unit Setting

- National map unit symbol: 9yj1
- Mean annual precipitation: 34 to 51 inches
- Mean annual air temperature: 40 to 50 degrees F
- Frost-free period: 100 to 160 days

Farmland classification: Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Urban land, rarely flooded: 100 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

Description of Urban Land, Rarely Flooded

Properties and qualities

Frequency of flooding: Rare

W—Water

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: 9yj6
Mean annual precipitation: 34 to 51 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 40 to 50 degrees F
Frost-free period: 100 to 160 days
Farmland classification: Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Bodies of water 2 to: 100 percent
Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.

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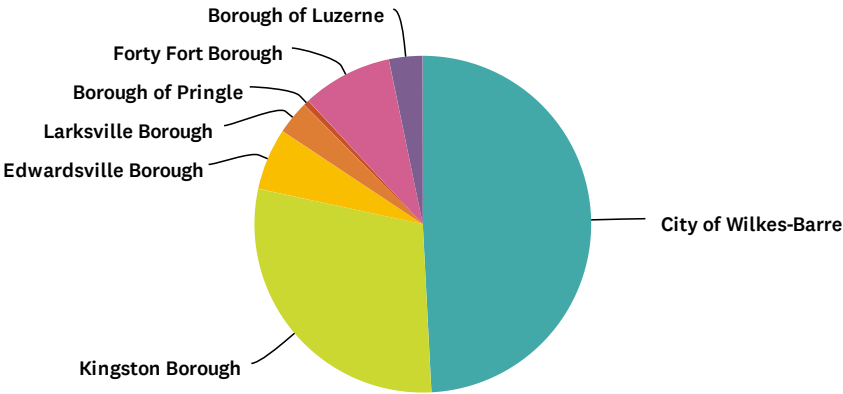
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11

Public Online Survey

Q1 In which municipality do you live?

Answered: 185 Skipped: 79



#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY):	DATE
1	Kingston Township	5/23/2025 2:15 PM
2	Ashley Borough	5/20/2025 10:29 AM
3	Hazleton	5/12/2025 9:25 PM
4	Hawley	5/12/2025 8:59 PM
5	Swoyersville	5/11/2025 5:24 AM
6	Blakey	5/10/2025 3:24 PM
7	Scranton	5/10/2025 11:42 AM
8	Wyoming Borough	5/10/2025 8:46 AM
9	Wyoming Borough	5/9/2025 4:52 PM
10	Washington Township	5/8/2025 8:03 PM
11	Mountain Top	5/8/2025 5:40 PM
12	Plymouth Township	5/8/2025 4:55 PM
13	Penn forest township	5/8/2025 4:55 PM
14	Plymouth	5/8/2025 4:23 PM
15	Hanover township	5/8/2025 3:55 PM
16	Swoyersville	5/8/2025 3:53 PM
17	Plymouth	5/8/2025 3:28 PM
18	West Pittston	5/8/2025 2:53 PM
19	Bear Creek twp	5/8/2025 2:40 PM
20	City of Scranton	5/8/2025 2:36 PM

21	Olyphant, PA	5/8/2025 1:53 PM
22	Necopect	5/8/2025 12:57 PM
23	Dallas borough	5/8/2025 7:13 AM
24	Huntington Township	5/7/2025 6:55 PM
25	I don't live in NEPA but I frequently visit family in Edwardsville.	5/7/2025 12:10 PM
26	Plymouth	5/6/2025 1:19 PM
27	Hanover township	5/5/2025 10:14 PM
28	West Wyoming	5/5/2025 3:11 PM
29	Wilkes Barre Township	5/5/2025 8:59 AM
30	Plains PA	5/2/2025 7:33 PM
31	Ashley	4/30/2025 11:55 AM
32	live in Butler Township, work in Wilkes-Barre City	4/29/2025 9:00 AM
33	Wilkes Barre Twp	4/29/2025 8:38 AM
34	Kingston Township	4/28/2025 10:22 PM
35	Harveys lake	4/27/2025 9:09 AM
36	Borough of Swoyersville	4/23/2025 1:44 PM
37	Borough of Archbald	4/21/2025 11:15 PM
38	Old Forge	4/9/2025 2:18 PM
39	Hanover Twp	4/6/2025 1:32 AM
40	Bear Creek Village Borough	4/2/2025 4:13 PM
41	Kingston Township	4/2/2025 1:46 PM
42	Live in Pittston- work in the City of Wilkes-Barre	4/2/2025 1:22 PM
43	Dallas Township	4/2/2025 10:56 AM
44	Bear Creek Township, work in Kingston	3/17/2025 8:07 AM
45	Pittston City	3/15/2025 10:08 PM
46	Dennison Township	3/14/2025 4:14 PM
47	Dallas borough	3/14/2025 7:45 AM
48	Pittston	3/14/2025 7:27 AM
49	Hazleton	3/13/2025 11:13 PM
50	Mountain Top	3/13/2025 10:45 PM
51	Parsons	3/13/2025 11:36 AM
52	Hanover Township	3/12/2025 1:57 PM
53	Bear creek	3/12/2025 8:02 AM
54	Monroe	3/12/2025 8:00 AM
55	I'm in Lackawanna	3/11/2025 1:14 AM
56	Tunkhannock, PA	3/11/2025 12:13 AM
57	Dupont	3/10/2025 10:51 PM
58	Mntop	3/10/2025 10:19 PM

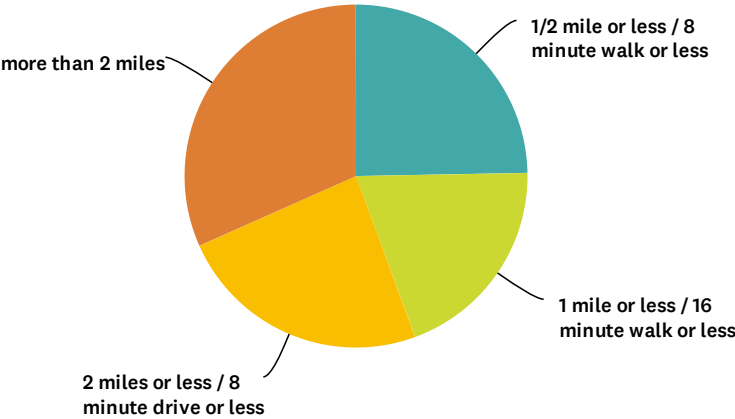
Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

59	Plymouth borough	3/10/2025 6:33 PM
60	Jenkins township	3/10/2025 3:03 PM
61	Hunlock Twp.	3/10/2025 2:36 PM
62	Dickson city	3/10/2025 2:21 PM
63	Wyoming Borough	3/10/2025 2:15 PM
64	Bear Creek Township	3/5/2025 12:59 PM
65	Wyoming	2/17/2025 11:37 AM
66	Wyoming	2/16/2025 4:48 PM
67	Wyoming Borough, but work in Kingston Borough	2/15/2025 5:23 PM
68	Pittston -- formerly Kingston	2/15/2025 1:42 PM
69	Dorrance twp	2/13/2025 11:39 AM
70	Hanover Twp.	2/12/2025 5:28 PM
71	Hanover twp	2/12/2025 5:06 PM
72	Lake twp	2/12/2025 9:34 AM
73	Wilkes-Barre Township	2/11/2025 4:13 PM
74	Plains	2/11/2025 1:31 PM
75	Wyoming Borough	2/11/2025 12:16 PM
76	Wilkes Barre Township	2/11/2025 12:07 PM
77	Hanover Twp	2/11/2025 10:41 AM
78	Kingston Township	2/11/2025 5:44 AM
79	Wyoming, PA	2/10/2025 8:22 PM
80	Warrior Run Borough	2/10/2025 7:13 PM
81	Warrior Run Boro	2/10/2025 7:12 PM

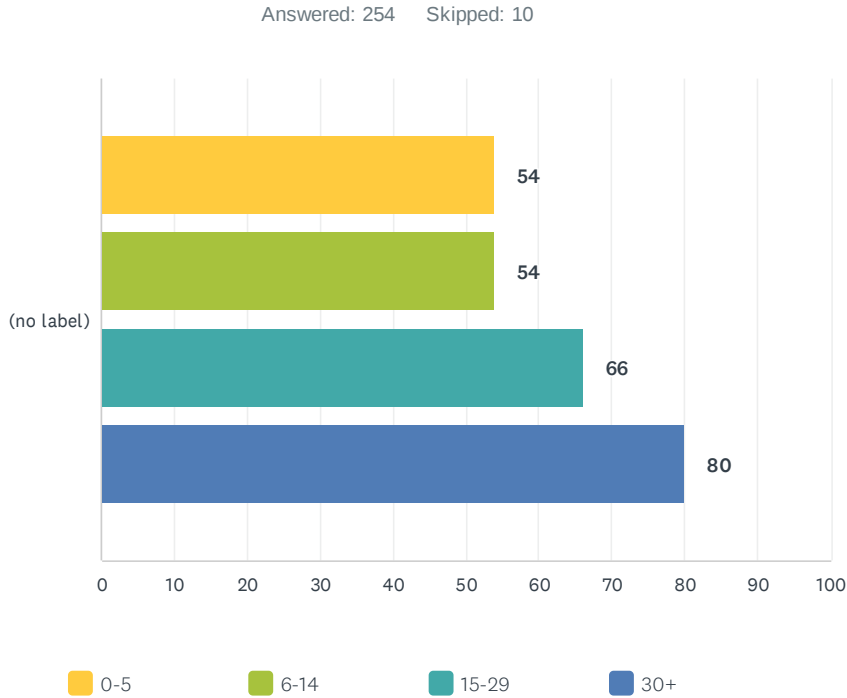
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Q2 Where do you live in relation to the West Side Parks?

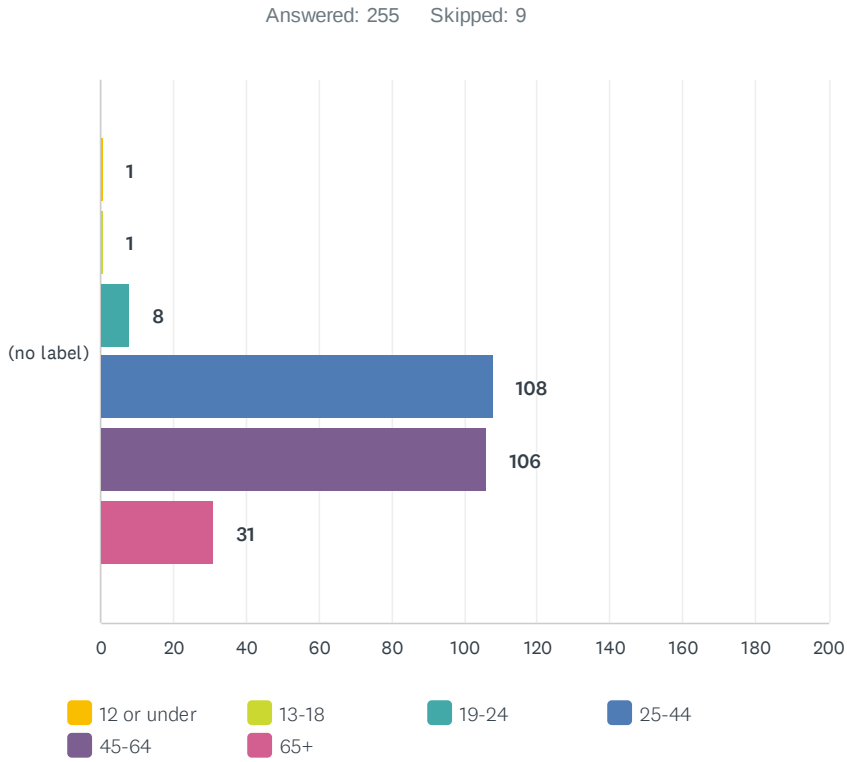
Answered: 259 Skipped: 5



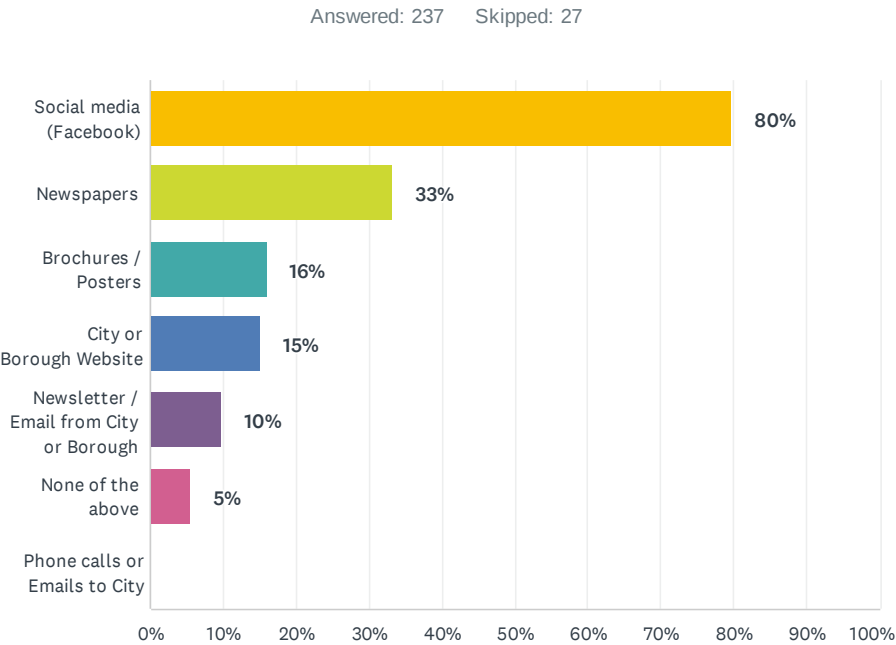
Q3 How many years have you lived in your current municipality?



Q4 What is your age?



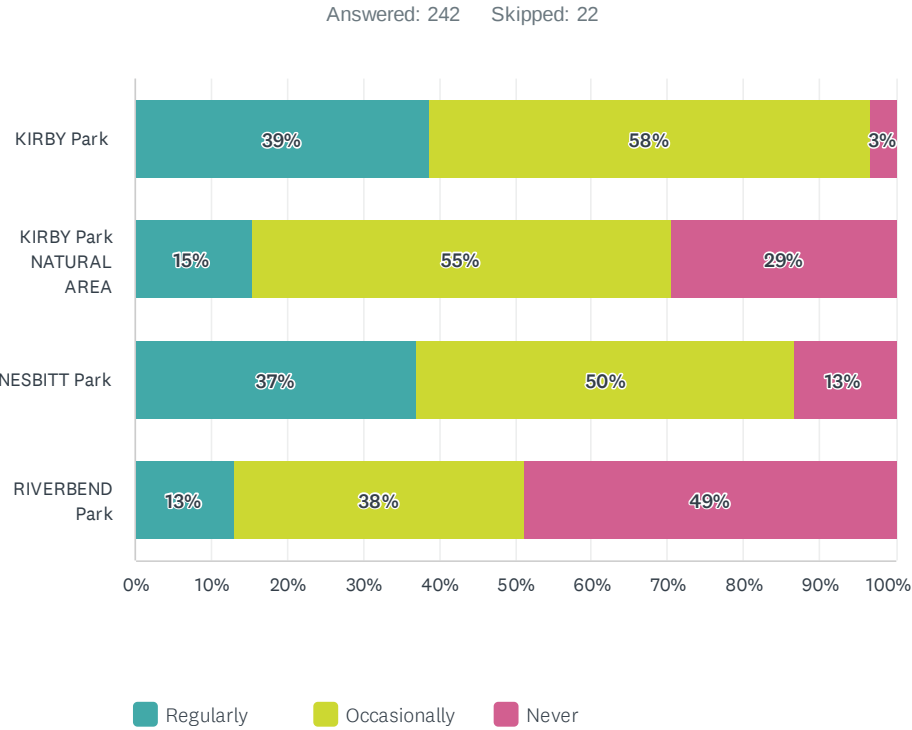
Q5 Currently, how do you obtain information about activities, events, and programs at KIRBY and NESBITT Parks? (check all that apply)



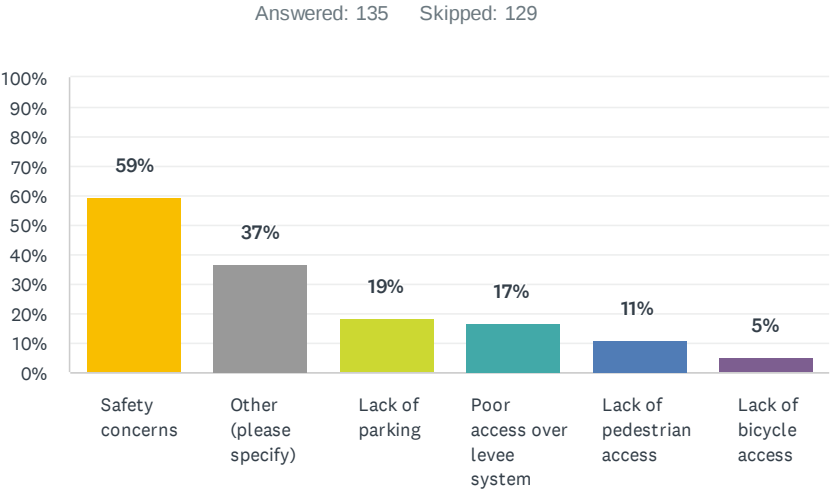
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Local news stations	5/21/2025 3:28 PM
2	Word of mouth	5/8/2025 9:43 PM
3	Friends, disc golf, word of mouth	5/8/2025 5:44 PM
4	I work a few blocks from the parks	5/8/2025 5:13 PM
5	TV	5/8/2025 2:43 PM
6	Disc golf group	5/8/2025 12:58 PM
7	Word of Mouth	5/7/2025 12:11 PM
8	Diamond city partnership email	5/7/2025 9:00 AM
9	Diamond City Partnership newsletter	4/29/2025 9:02 AM
10	Word of mouth	4/23/2025 8:46 PM
11	I find out when I walk the Dike. Or I find out what happened (past tense) in the newspaper.	3/25/2025 8:38 AM
12	Diamond City Newsletter	3/18/2025 2:25 PM
13	Local news stations	3/14/2025 6:30 AM
14	Facebook	3/13/2025 8:21 PM
15	Diamond City Partnership weekly email of events	3/12/2025 2:02 PM
16	Word of mouth	3/10/2025 3:17 PM

17	Riverfront Parks Committee	2/23/2025 2:04 PM
18	Mostly social media	2/20/2025 10:22 AM
19	Word of mouth or social media posts from friends	2/13/2025 2:39 PM
20	Riverfront park committee	2/13/2025 11:41 AM
21	Word of mouth	2/12/2025 3:41 PM
22	Riverfront Parks Committee	2/11/2025 4:14 PM
23	neparunner.com	2/11/2025 5:46 AM
24	weekly DCP e-blast	2/10/2025 8:43 PM
25	Friends and community postings	2/10/2025 8:24 PM
26	Involved with Suskie Bassmasters fishing tournament	2/10/2025 7:16 PM
27	Found out about this through physical signage.	2/10/2025 7:15 PM
28	Frequenting the park	2/10/2025 7:00 PM

Q6 How often do you visit the West Side Parks?



Q7 If you do not visit the West Side Parks often, why not? (check all that apply)



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Safety concerns		59%	80
Other (please specify)		37%	50
Lack of parking		19%	25
Poor access over levee system		17%	23
Lack of pedestrian access		11%	15
Lack of bicycle access		5%	7
Total Respondents: 135			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Unfamiliar with events/opportunities	5/27/2025 9:27 AM
2	I didn't realize there are 4 parks	5/11/2025 11:08 AM
3	NA	5/8/2025 8:04 PM
4	I play disc golf as Nesbitt all the time, but do not visit other areas	5/8/2025 5:44 PM
5	N/A	5/8/2025 5:13 PM
6	Too far from my house. Good parks though	5/8/2025 4:56 PM
7	I am only scared to go to the area behind kirby park because I have seen so many homeless there	5/8/2025 3:57 PM
8	Mosquitoes	5/8/2025 3:55 PM
9	Never heard of it	5/8/2025 3:11 PM
10	Like to visit other parks as well	5/8/2025 2:52 PM
11	I am there for disc golf	5/8/2025 12:58 PM

Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

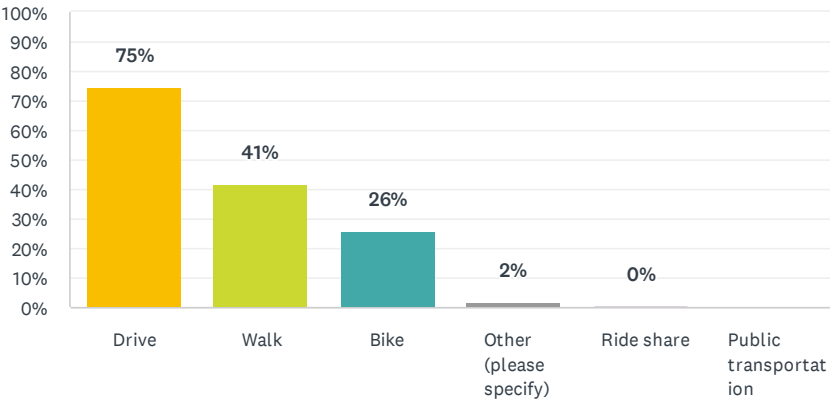
12	lack of amenities	5/8/2025 7:14 AM
13	Lack of time	5/7/2025 6:56 PM
14	Too much dog and geese poop. It also smells from the sanitation system on the levee behind the JCC	5/6/2025 3:36 PM
15	Kirby Park is nice and so is Nesbitt (but I get a weird feeling there). There are way too many homeless camps in the Natural area and I didn't even know Riverbend park was a thing. I'm also not sure I'd feel safe back there since there are always shady vehicles parked near the bridge as you come over the dike and into Nesbitt Park,	5/5/2025 3:20 PM
16	Busy lifestyle	5/4/2025 7:38 PM
17	Visit other outdoor areas	4/29/2025 3:07 PM
18	typically visit play area at kirby	4/29/2025 8:41 AM
19	Not as nice as they once were	4/23/2025 8:46 PM
20	Distance and lack of personal interests on site	4/21/2025 11:17 PM
21	Lack of time	4/9/2025 2:19 PM
22	Lack of knowledge of the other parks	4/9/2025 8:12 AM
23	Didn't realize there were other parks other than Kirby Park.	4/2/2025 4:15 PM
24	Lack of time	4/2/2025 10:59 AM
25	no reason in particular	4/1/2025 10:34 AM
26	I always go to kirby	3/19/2025 2:22 PM
27	weather and work hours	3/19/2025 2:22 PM
28	Visit regularly	3/15/2025 5:47 AM
29	Usually visit Frances slocum	3/13/2025 11:39 AM
30	I enjoy walking as a form of exercise, and walking along the levee and/or paved paths in Kirby Park have limitations. (I don't enjoy being passed by bikers or encountering dogs.)	3/12/2025 2:02 PM
31	No particular reason	3/12/2025 8:04 AM
32	Lack of community activities and local interest	3/11/2025 2:14 AM
33	Lack of time	3/10/2025 7:45 PM
34	Did not know it was anything other then woods	3/10/2025 7:11 PM
35	not as active as I used to be	3/10/2025 4:26 PM
36	Weather	3/10/2025 3:17 PM
37	I never knew Riverbend Park existed until today! Otherwise, it's the distance because I'm not in town all that often.	3/10/2025 2:37 PM
38	Overgrown, not maintained.	3/10/2025 2:21 PM
39	Lack of benches to rest on after walking.	3/10/2025 2:17 PM
40	Lack of things to do	3/10/2025 11:47 AM
41	No programming at Riverbend Park	2/26/2025 12:45 PM
42	Boring	2/24/2025 10:33 AM
43	Not a lot to do in the natural area	2/23/2025 2:04 PM
44	weather	2/19/2025 6:14 PM
45	Didn't know Riverbend park was a place.	2/14/2025 3:33 PM
46	Some areas appear undeveloped, so other than walking in through the woods, no clear access	2/12/2025 2:50 PM

Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

	apparent. Are there facilities, like benches, in the locations most remote from access points?	
47	I	2/11/2025 1:32 PM
48	No marked trails	2/11/2025 12:18 PM
49	Also improve and keep the disc golf course people from all over and different states travel to see this course ! We care truly	2/11/2025 11:17 AM
50	I wasn't aware Riverbend Park was publicly accessible!	2/10/2025 7:16 PM

Q8 How do you generally get to the West Side parks? (check all that apply)

Answered: 237 Skipped: 27



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Drive	75%177
Walk	41%98
Bike	26%61
Other (please specify)	2%4
Ride share	0%1
Public transportation	0%0
Total Respondents: 237	

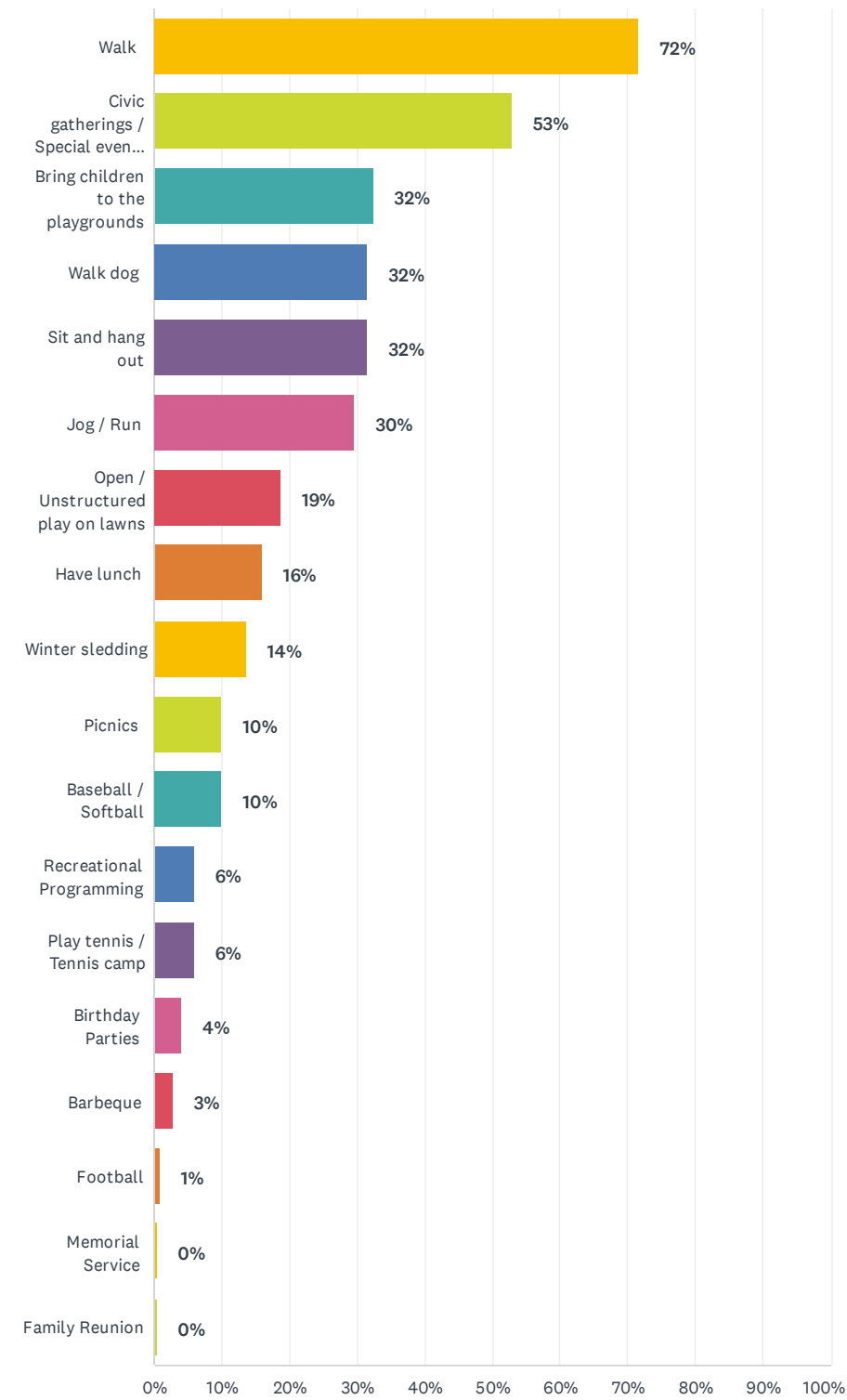
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	N/a	5/8/2025 3:11 PM
2	Run	2/26/2025 12:45 PM
3	Run	2/11/2025 12:08 PM
4	run	2/11/2025 5:46 AM

Q9 What do you do when you visit KIRBY Park? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 219 Skipped: 45



Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

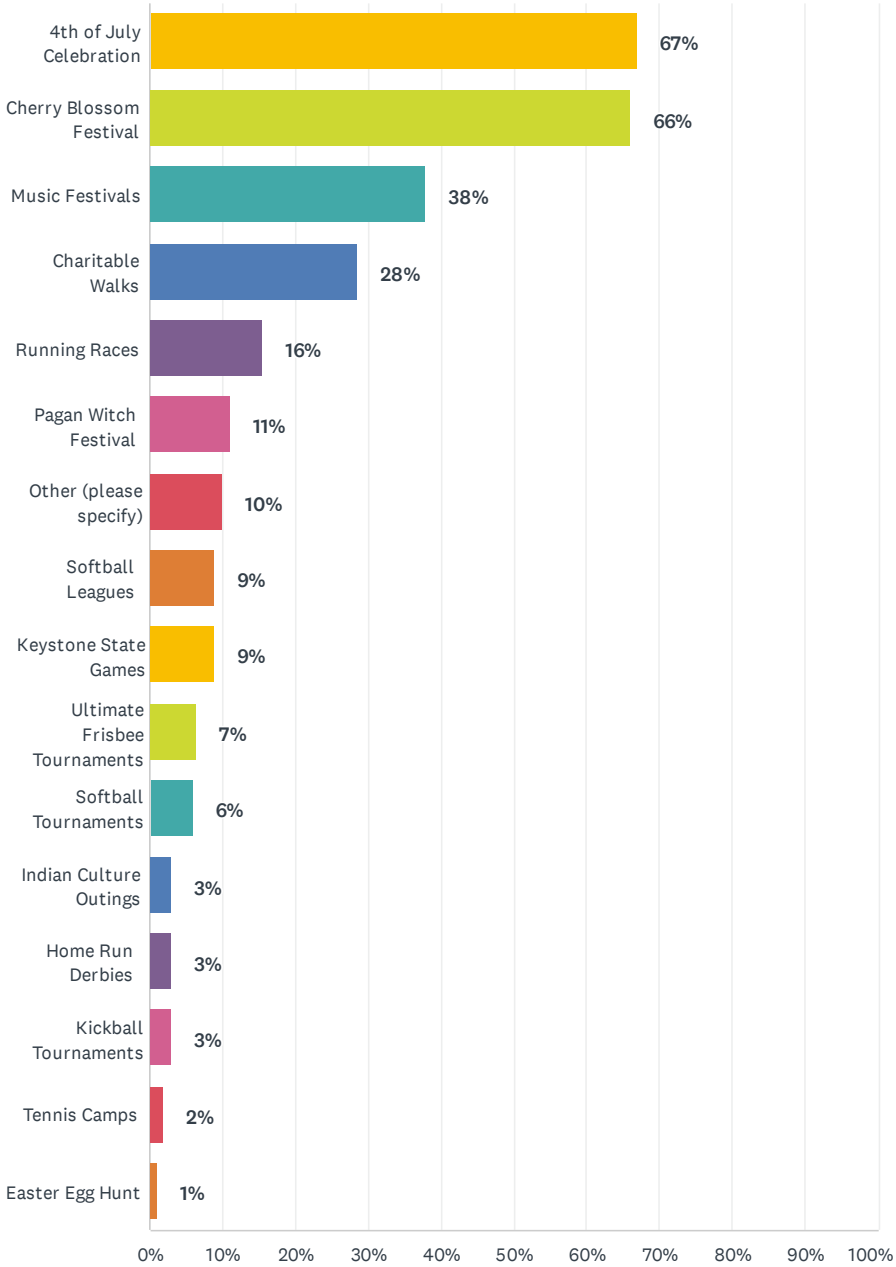


Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	OUR CHURCH WILL HAVE AN EVENT	5/29/2025 2:31 PM
2	bike	5/22/2025 3:32 PM
3	Bird watch	5/16/2025 10:19 AM
4	Ultimate frisbee	5/9/2025 1:51 AM
5	Disc golf	5/8/2025 5:45 PM
6	Ultimate Frisbee	5/8/2025 5:12 PM
7	I don't go here	5/8/2025 1:00 PM
8	Take photos: would love to see more natural wildflowers and landscaping, butterfly garden, etc.	5/6/2025 3:39 PM
9	River fishing	5/6/2025 1:00 PM
10	Bike	5/5/2025 9:02 AM
11	bike	4/30/2025 11:58 AM
12	bike through (and around)	4/28/2025 10:28 PM
13	Bike	4/9/2025 1:18 PM
14	Child's track for school (Holy Redemer)	4/9/2025 8:13 AM
15	ride bike on levee (used to bring child to park when little)	4/2/2025 1:31 PM
16	Biking	3/14/2025 7:30 AM
17	In my Y job we have done summer meals for youth at Kirby Park	2/23/2025 2:09 PM
18	None	2/19/2025 11:51 AM
19	Rowing	2/16/2025 4:50 PM
20	Ultimate	2/15/2025 5:29 PM
21	Ride bikes....(that not being an option here does not give this survey any credibility)	2/12/2025 10:44 PM
22	Would play tennis but courts are locked.	2/12/2025 5:11 PM
23	Look for birds	2/12/2025 4:27 PM
24	Use exercise equipment stations.	2/12/2025 2:55 PM
25	Special Events	2/11/2025 5:12 PM
26	Cycle	2/11/2025 3:47 PM
27	cycling	2/11/2025 10:45 AM
28	Fishing by boat	2/11/2025 7:00 AM
29	ride bicycles	2/10/2025 8:46 PM
30	Ride bikes, walk dog	2/10/2025 7:02 PM

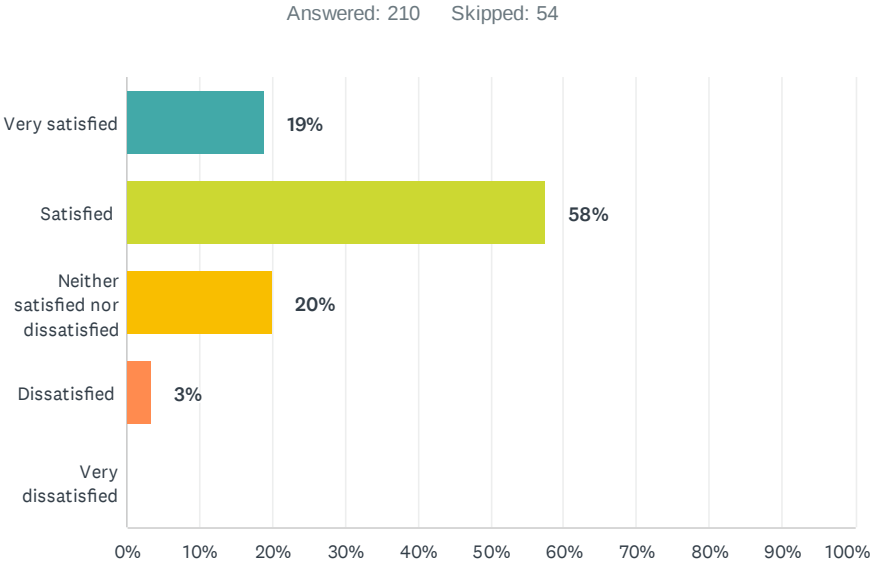
Q10 Which events in KIRBY Park do you attend / participate in? (check all that apply)

Answered: 200 Skipped: 64

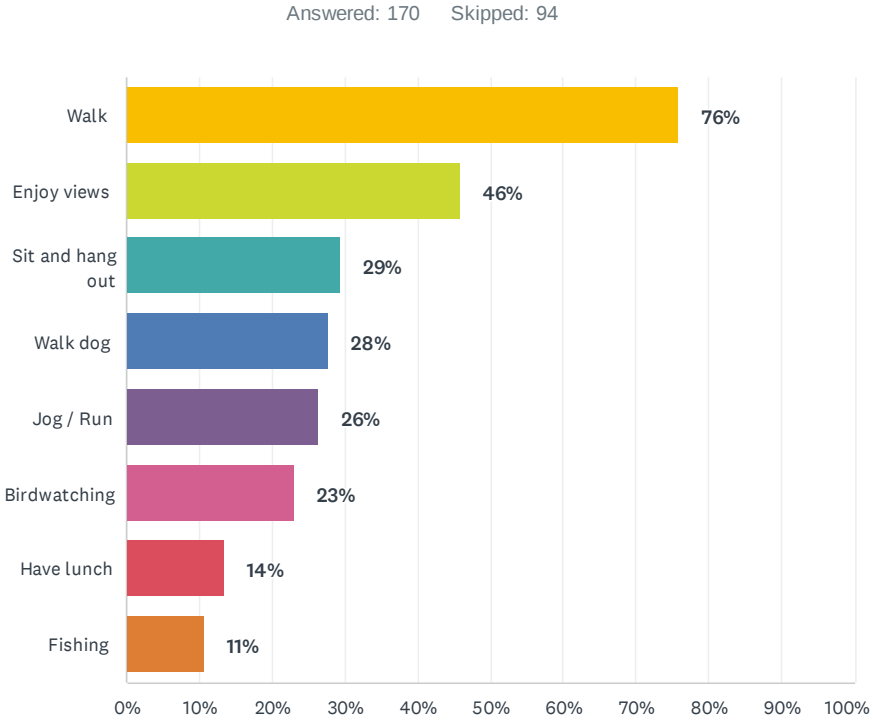


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	ORGANIATIONAL EVENTS	5/29/2025 2:31 PM
2	Special events	5/21/2025 3:33 PM
3	Disc golf	5/8/2025 5:45 PM
4	Tia chi at the pavilion	5/8/2025 3:59 PM
5	Softball	5/8/2025 3:56 PM
6	I don't go here	5/8/2025 1:00 PM
7	Pride	5/7/2025 6:57 PM
8	Master Watershed and Gardner events	5/2/2025 7:37 PM
9	MS Walk	4/8/2025 7:16 AM
10	football soccer	4/1/2025 2:28 PM
11	Pride	3/31/2025 11:49 PM
12	River fest	3/18/2025 2:27 PM
13	Didn't know about the Witch Fest!	3/17/2025 8:12 AM
14	Saturday morning tai chi class, environmental events	3/10/2025 2:41 PM
15	In my Y job we have lead our Y Walk Wednesday walks in and around Kirby Park	2/23/2025 2:09 PM
16	None	2/19/2025 11:51 AM
17	Rowing	2/16/2025 4:50 PM
18	Dragon boat races, Shiver on River	2/11/2025 4:16 PM
19	Riverfront Festival	2/11/2025 3:40 PM
20	Wilkes-Barre Bike Gang Rides	2/11/2025 12:12 PM

Q11 If you attend events and programs in KIRBY Park, how satisfied are you with these events?



Q12 What do you do when you visit KIRBY Park NATURAL AREA?
(Check all that apply)



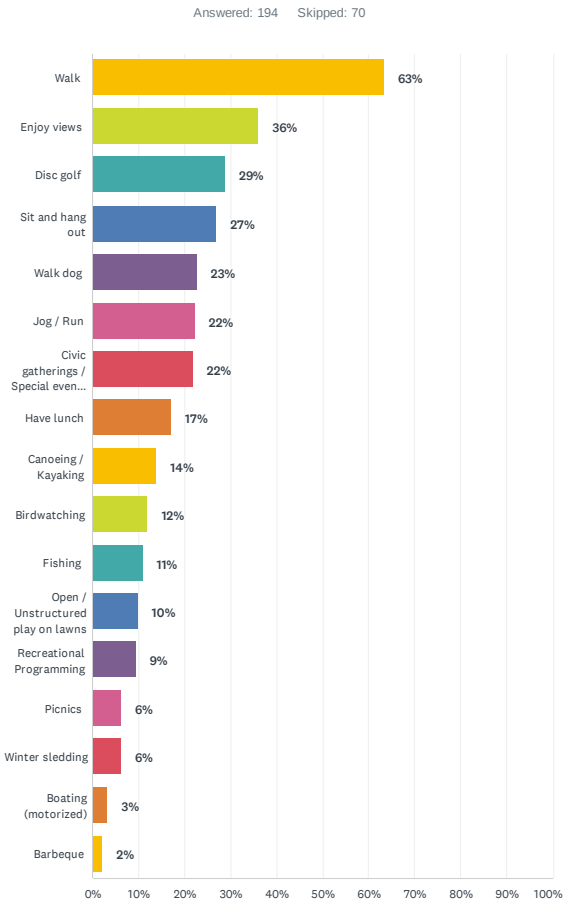
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	bike	5/22/2025 3:32 PM
2	Disc golf	5/21/2025 12:54 PM
3	Don't visit	5/18/2025 5:54 PM
4	Never been there but I will now	5/11/2025 11:11 AM
5	Bike ride with son	5/8/2025 2:54 PM
6	I don't go here	5/8/2025 1:00 PM
7	Bike	5/5/2025 9:02 AM
8	yoga	4/29/2025 9:03 AM
9	None	4/23/2025 1:49 PM
10	Bike	4/9/2025 1:18 PM
11	bike	4/2/2025 1:31 PM
12	woodland critters	4/1/2025 2:28 PM
13	I don't due to safety	3/20/2025 6:21 PM
14	Would if I felt safe there	3/17/2025 8:12 AM

Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

15	I don't visit this area, other than walking along the adjoining levee path.	3/12/2025 2:04 PM
16	Used to run, but then tents spilled onto the path and no longer felt like a great idea	2/26/2025 12:47 PM
17	Vinnie Cotrone has lead a Y Walk at the natural area, and we have done a botanical walk there as well for Y Walk Wednesdays	2/23/2025 2:09 PM
18	Participate in events	2/13/2025 11:43 AM
19	Never visit unsafe with the homeless.	2/12/2025 5:11 PM
20	bike	2/12/2025 2:55 PM
21	Cycle	2/11/2025 3:47 PM
22	While I don't, Birdwatch, I have spoken with birdwatchers who told me that this is on the migratory path of many birds in the spring, it was very informative, talking with this individual .	2/11/2025 3:40 PM
23	Bike	2/11/2025 1:34 PM
24	Boating	2/11/2025 11:15 AM
25	not convinced its safe	2/10/2025 7:17 PM

Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

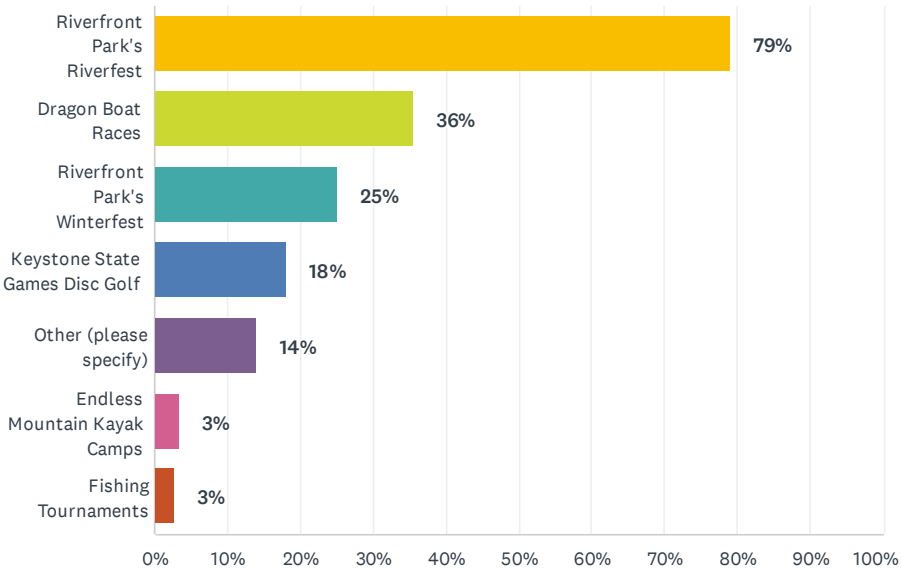
Q13 What do you do when you visit NESBITT Park? (Check all that apply)



#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	bike	5/22/2025 3:32 PM
2	I play disc golf twice a week	5/21/2025 12:54 PM
3	Don't visit	5/18/2025 5:54 PM
4	More Disc Golf	5/8/2025 3:13 PM
5	Bike	5/5/2025 9:02 AM
6	Bike	4/9/2025 1:18 PM
7	Bike	4/8/2025 7:16 AM
8	bike	4/2/2025 1:31 PM
9	Havent visited	3/19/2025 2:24 PM
10	Make mud pies with geandkids	3/18/2025 2:27 PM
11	Husband is member of Suskie Bassmasters	3/17/2025 8:12 AM
12	Bicycle	3/10/2025 6:37 PM
13	walk or bike to work at Y	2/23/2025 2:09 PM
14	bike	2/12/2025 2:55 PM
15	Cycle	2/11/2025 3:47 PM
16	Bike	2/11/2025 1:34 PM
17	DISC GOLF	2/11/2025 11:18 AM
18	cycling	2/11/2025 10:45 AM
19	Bike riding	2/10/2025 7:02 PM

Q14 Which events in NESBITT Park do you attend / participate in? (check all that apply)

Answered: 143 Skipped: 121

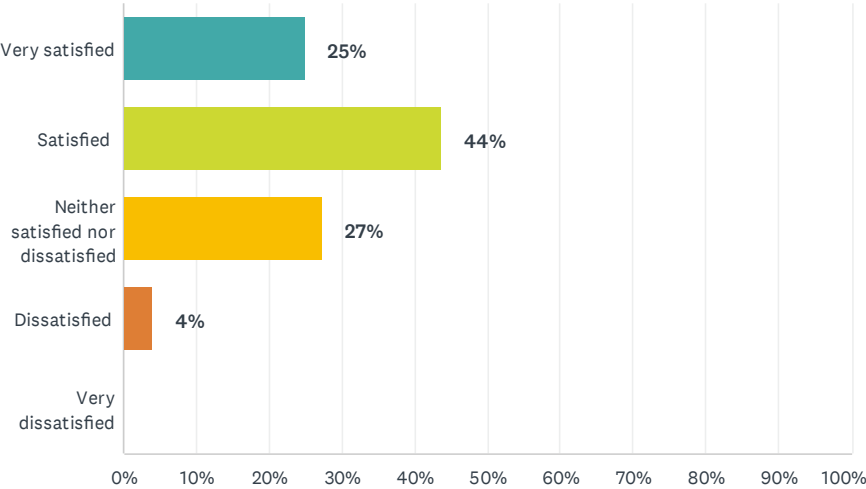


#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Disc golf Doubles League	5/21/2025 8:48 PM
2	Disc golf every Friday night	5/21/2025 12:54 PM
3	2x Riverfest, 1x Dragon boat	5/18/2025 5:54 PM
4	Any disc golf gatherings.	5/8/2025 8:05 PM
5	Disc golf league	5/8/2025 6:24 PM
6	Disc golf random draw doubles	5/8/2025 4:42 PM
7	Disc Golf Tournaments	5/8/2025 3:13 PM
8	Friday nights disc golf doubles event	5/8/2025 2:54 PM
9	Friday night disc golf leagues	5/8/2025 2:43 PM
10	I run a random draw doubles event every Friday from March to November	5/8/2025 12:24 PM
11	Havent visited	3/19/2025 2:24 PM
12	None	3/12/2025 2:04 PM
13	.	3/11/2025 4:21 AM
14	Earth Day	2/23/2025 2:09 PM
15	Watch the rockin the River concerts	2/20/2025 10:24 AM
16	None	2/18/2025 10:47 AM

17	Earth Day	2/15/2025 1:45 PM
18	Chalkfest	2/12/2025 11:18 AM
19	Fishing charters	2/11/2025 11:15 AM
20	Suskie Bassmasters	2/10/2025 7:19 PM

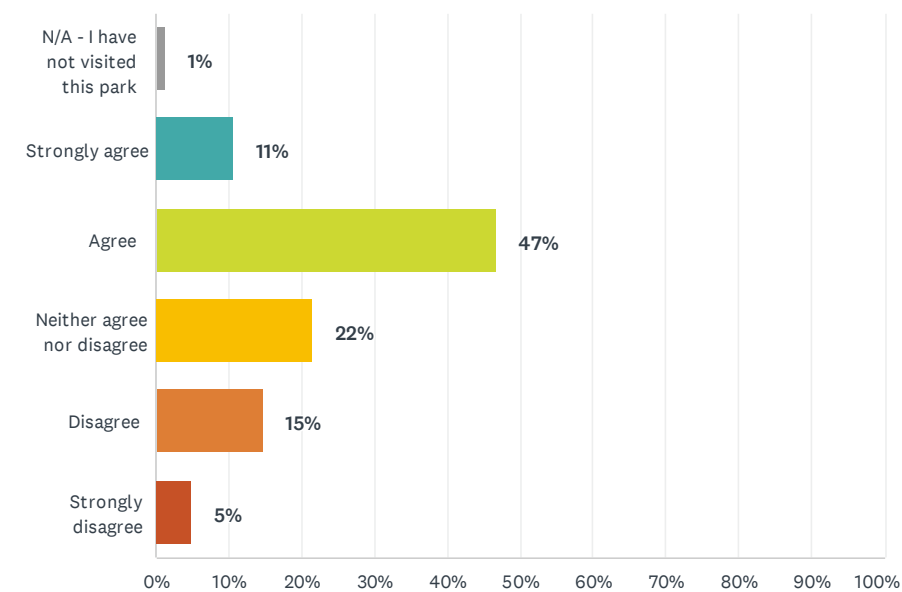
Q15 If you attend events and programs in NESBITT Park, how satisfied are you with these events?

Answered: 172 Skipped: 92



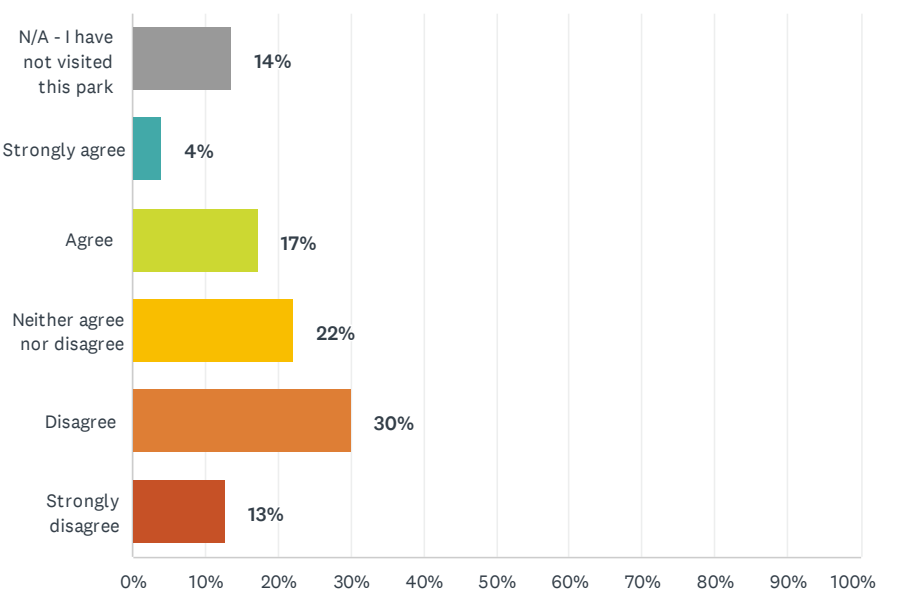
Q16 How much do you agree with the following statement: "I feel safe when visiting KIRBY Park"

Answered: 223 Skipped: 41



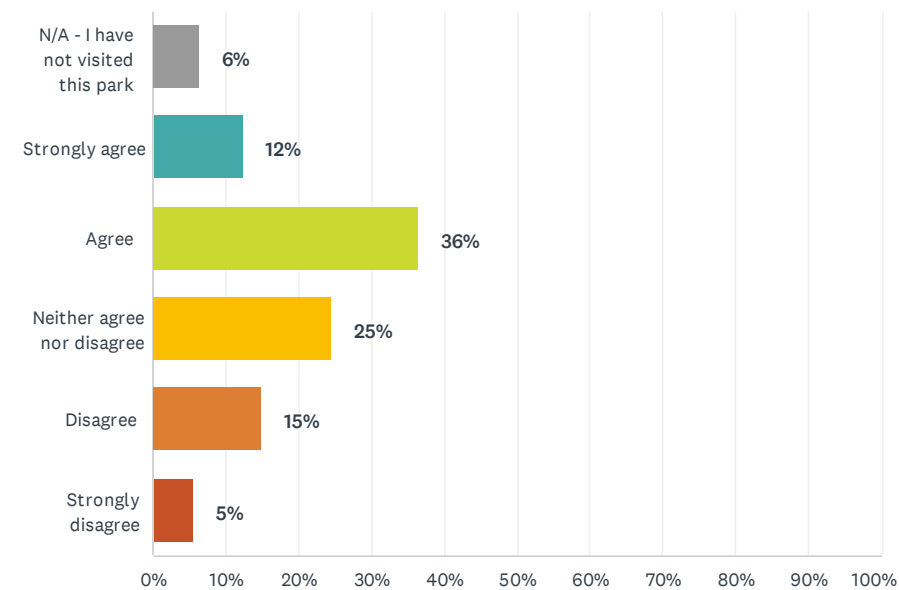
Q17 How much do you agree with the following statement: "I feel safe when visiting KIRBY Park NATURAL AREA"

Answered: 220 Skipped: 44



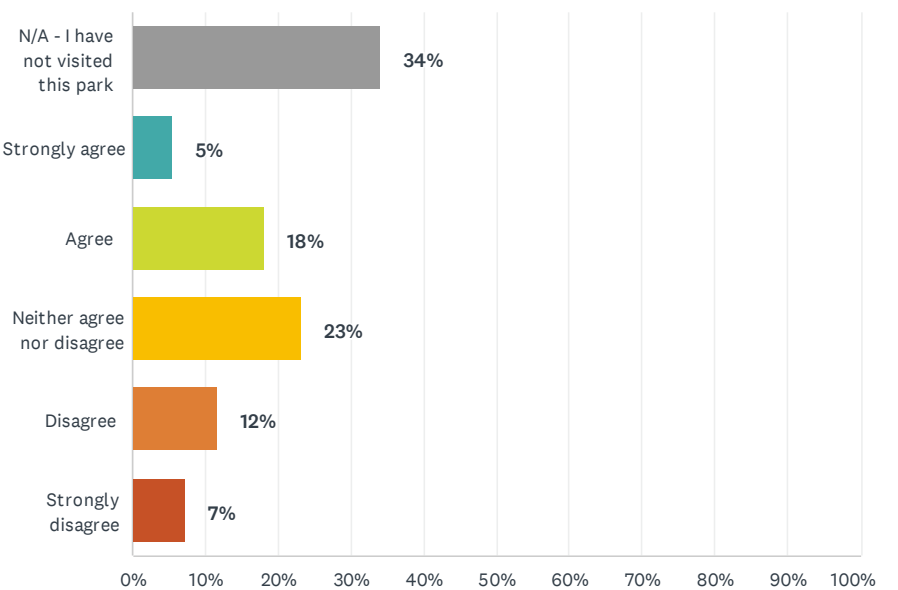
Q18 How much do you agree with the following statement: "I feel safe when visiting NESBITT Park"

Answered: 220 Skipped: 44



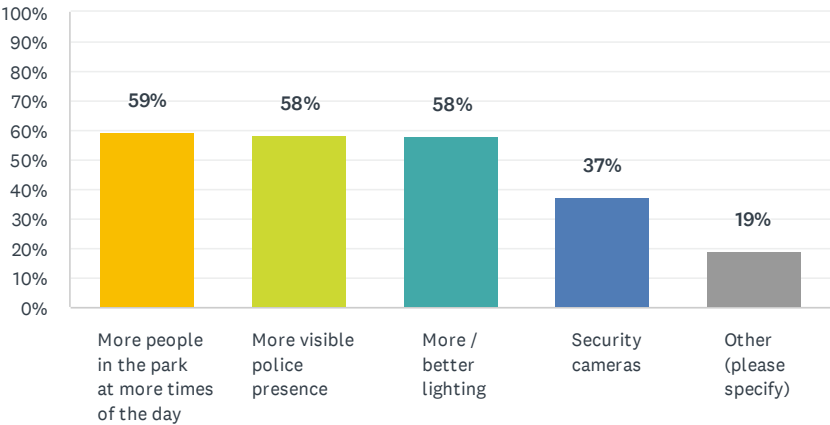
Q19 How much do you agree with the following statement: "I feel safe when visiting RIVERBEND Park"

Answered: 220 Skipped: 44



Q20 If you feel somewhat unsafe or very unsafe at any of the parks, what would make you feel safer? (check all that apply)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 69



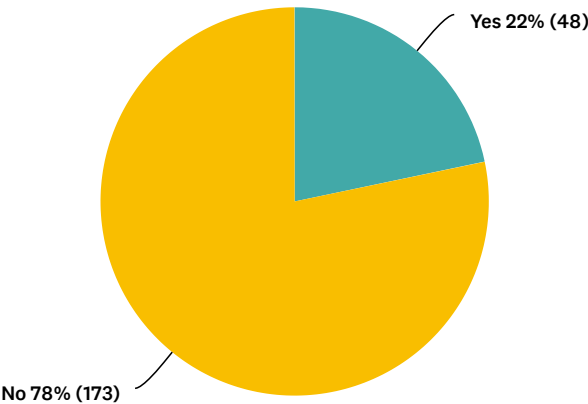
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More people in the park at more times of the day	59%	116
More visible police presence	58%	114
More / better lighting	58%	113
Security cameras	37%	73
Other (please specify)	19%	37
Total Respondents: 195		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Knowing that the police are more involved in the safety but not neccesarily present.	6/5/2025 9:14 AM
2	Police presence, especially at night	5/27/2025 9:29 AM
3	no encampments	5/22/2025 3:34 PM
4	Visibility is lacking in areas and trash seems to be there. Along with quads and or dirt bikes on trails.	5/21/2025 8:51 PM
5	Increased fines and sentences for illegal activities in the park--harsher sentences/enhancement for those committing crimes in a park area	5/20/2025 10:39 AM
6	More open space and no more homeless encampments	5/8/2025 4:00 PM
7	Get rid of the bums	5/8/2025 2:45 PM
8	Homeless encampments and litter, drug needles	5/8/2025 12:18 AM
9	I'm a woman so simply existing in the world feels unsafe. I don't think the parks can do much to change that. Police and surveillance would not make me more comfortable.	5/6/2025 3:43 PM
10	The homeless camps and what appear to be shady drug deals near the bridges have to go.	5/5/2025 3:24 PM

11	Less homeless people around	4/23/2025 8:52 PM
12	Less police presence and more people in the park at more times of day.	4/2/2025 11:01 AM
13	imposing security would NOT foster safety	4/1/2025 2:31 PM
14	no homeless encampments	4/1/2025 10:37 AM
15	Stop the loitering; and the drinking	3/25/2025 12:53 PM
16	security/police bike patrols on levees and in the parks	3/25/2025 9:44 AM
17	Y	3/25/2025 9:31 AM
18	Keep riff raff out and men sitting in vehicles	3/17/2025 8:14 AM
19	Clean up the homeless housing	3/14/2025 9:35 AM
20	Too many vagrants at all times.	3/13/2025 9:26 AM
21	Emergency call phones with cameras	3/11/2025 7:59 AM
22	I've only done guided walks in Kirby Natural Area	3/10/2025 4:30 PM
23	I'm sorry for the homeless people, but if they're in the parks I don't feel safe	3/10/2025 2:43 PM
24	Clear invasive brush and plant grass and wildflowers. Install a paved walkway/bike path.	3/10/2025 2:24 PM
25	leave the homeless camps alone	3/10/2025 11:25 AM
26	Bike patrols	3/10/2025 10:40 AM
27	Better visibility into and out from the space	2/26/2025 12:48 PM
28	natural area= natural: getting rid of encampments is good, but only way to make it feel more safe is to get rid of a lot of the vegetation & then it wouldn't be doing its job as a natural area	2/23/2025 2:10 PM
29	particularly in the Nesbitt Park area around the bridge	2/20/2025 10:27 AM
30	I do not feel UNSAFE	2/13/2025 2:33 PM
31	Emergency call boxes throughout the parks.	2/12/2025 5:12 PM
32	Invasive knotweed in both Riverbend and Natural area in high summer gives cover to suspicious individuals. You literally do not know who you might encounter 20 feet away. For context i spend about 1 hour in either or both parks every week all year long	2/12/2025 9:05 AM
33	I had a scary encounter with my dog and an unhoused man who had a tent set up. I think we surprised him and he became combative. I just left without incident. I was walking with my dog entering the Olmstead trail off of the top of the Dike at Kirby Park.	2/11/2025 3:45 PM
34	removal of cars under bridge with people sleeping in them	2/11/2025 12:47 PM
35	Nesbitt tend to have a lot of homeless and people pray on children's and just watch us and other	2/11/2025 11:19 AM
36	more visibility/less underbrush in Kirby Park Natural Area	2/10/2025 8:48 PM
37	Trail systems, people walking, less encampments	2/10/2025 7:21 PM

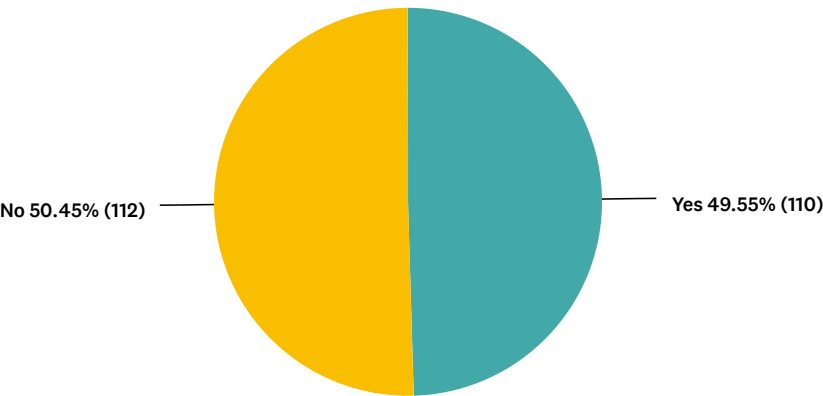
Q21 In general, do you think people know the difference between KIRBY, KIRBY NATURAL AREA, NESBITT, and RIVERBEND Parks?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 43



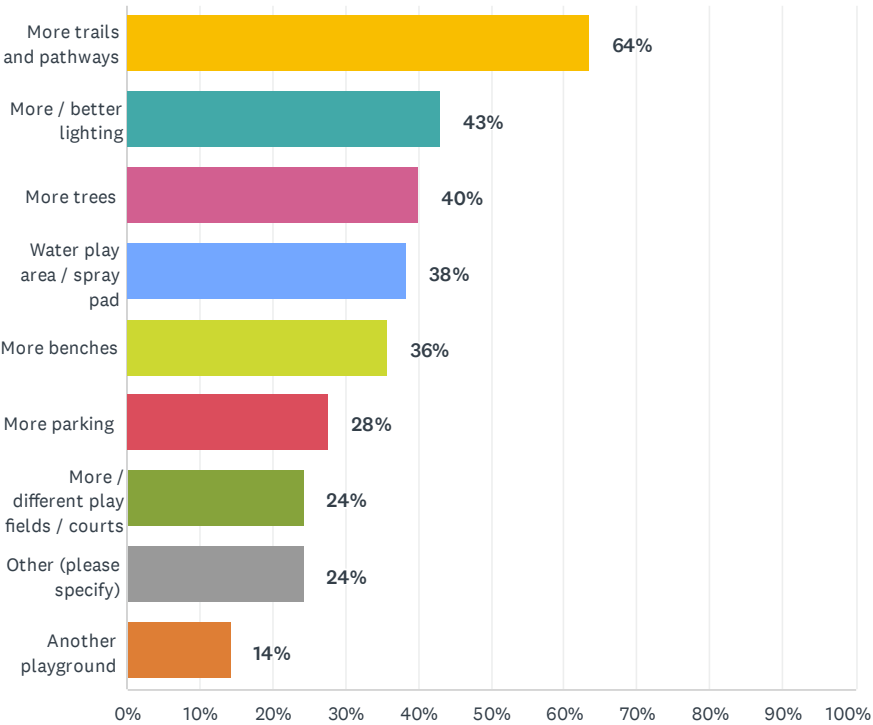
Q22 KIRBY Park celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2024. Were you aware of this?

Answered: 222 Skipped: 42



Q23 What new or improved facilities would you like to see in KIRBY Park?
(check all that apply)

Answered: 209 Skipped: 55



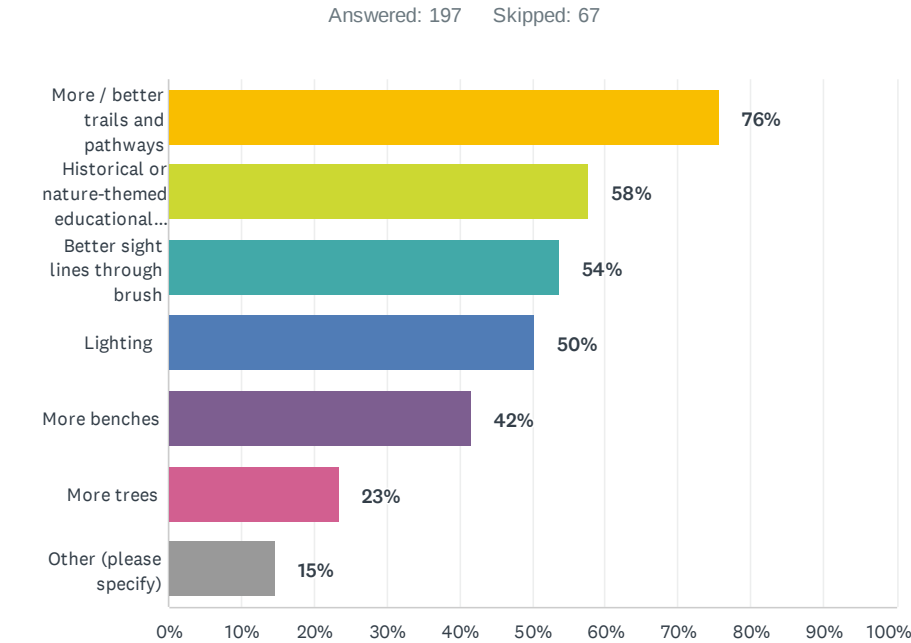
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More trails and pathways	64%	133
More / better lighting	43%	90
More trees	40%	84
Water play area / spray pad	38%	80
More benches	36%	75
More parking	28%	58
More / different play fields / courts	24%	51
Other (please specify)	24%	51
Another playground	14%	30
Total Respondents: 209		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
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1	More disc golf holes	5/21/2025 8:54 PM
2	More accessible fishing areas for handicapped wheelchairs and scooters	5/21/2025 3:40 PM
3	Nesbitt grass cut more often	5/21/2025 12:59 PM
4	Pollinator garden/native planting beds	5/20/2025 10:42 AM
5	More events	5/18/2025 5:59 PM
6	Disc Golf	5/14/2025 11:47 PM
7	Restrooms	5/11/2025 11:14 AM
8	Disc golf	5/9/2025 1:53 AM
9	Disc golf course. Low impact, low cost, high draw!	5/8/2025 8:07 PM
10	I have not been there	5/8/2025 5:50 PM
11	Disc golf	5/8/2025 4:59 PM
12	Disc golf course or expansion of nesbitt course	5/8/2025 4:44 PM
13	Pickleball and extended disc of course	5/8/2025 4:02 PM
14	More disc golf holes	5/8/2025 3:17 PM
15	Better disc golf	5/8/2025 1:56 PM
16	I don't go here	5/8/2025 1:03 PM
17	a paved bike pump track	5/8/2025 7:18 AM
18	Improved Maintenance of Existing Paths, Pavilions, Baseball Fields, etc	5/7/2025 3:08 AM
19	Butterfly garden, more benches in shade	5/6/2025 3:49 PM
20	Gardens, natural areas, less lawn, there is so much lawn, more interpretive signage, more art, something that entices people to go from one area to the next, something that invites discovery and surprise	5/5/2025 9:21 AM
21	flushable commodes	4/30/2025 2:28 PM
22	story walks	4/29/2025 10:14 AM
23	Improved picnic areas	4/23/2025 8:58 PM
24	Disc golf park	4/21/2025 11:19 PM
25	Clean up litter	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
26	Pickle ball courts	4/6/2025 1:39 AM
27	Full 18 holes of Disc golf!	4/2/2025 1:49 PM
28	More trash cans and less litter	3/25/2025 12:56 PM
29	Better landscaping and maintenance	3/14/2025 8:13 AM
30	Bathroom facilities	3/13/2025 1:28 PM
31	Pickleball courts	3/13/2025 10:14 AM
32	Pond must go it was not part of the original plan and is not essential	3/10/2025 6:41 PM
33	Diversify activities, increased activities for all age groups. Picnic/lawn games for seniors for one	2/26/2025 12:53 PM
34	More gardens/flowers/native plants/etc. Maybe a community garden area.	2/24/2025 3:16 PM
35	no water play - fountains have not worked in the Wyoming Valley because the municipalities can't maintain them. would be nice to have a bike rental place. also a nature preschool would be cool, that would be located at Kirby Park, but use the natural area as well.	2/23/2025 2:15 PM

36	expanded playground	2/20/2025 10:29 AM
37	More garbage/recycling cans that are emptied regularly. Better routine maintenance for the park in general.	2/14/2025 3:48 PM
38	Pickle ball court, improvements to existing facilities	2/13/2025 2:47 PM
39	All weather running/walking track	2/12/2025 5:42 PM
40	Art, sculpture of history or people who contributed to the city.	2/12/2025 5:17 PM
41	improvement to oval track surface... holds water, mud, etc.	2/12/2025 3:13 PM
42	Improved Tennis Courts; Improved pathways; Old/Outdated pieces/signage/gym equipment removed; Mural Art; Dog Park; Arboretum/Pollinator Garden	2/12/2025 9:13 AM
43	Nesbitt Park is fine as it is. Any more development will require maintenance due to flooding. The biggest problem is Wilkesboro's inability to fund regular maintenance of the natural area. As a result investment here is a waste of money, and Kingston Borough has no plan or budget for maintenance of Riverbend.	2/12/2025 9:09 AM
44	Clean safe Restroom and eateries	2/12/2025 7:39 AM
45	Disc golf is big, kids love it. Also, start some leagues, ultimate frisbee. College kids might enjoy it.	2/11/2025 3:50 PM
46	need light behind kingston dpw bldg	2/11/2025 12:48 PM
47	Bird Sanctuary/ bicycle lock up section	2/11/2025 12:15 PM
48	Ice skating	2/11/2025 12:11 PM
49	safer sledding conditions on levee	2/10/2025 8:57 PM
50	a well designed dog park	2/10/2025 7:23 PM
51	Improvements to softball fields; bathroom facilities	2/10/2025 4:54 PM

Q24 What new or improved facilities would you like to see in the KIRBY Park NATURAL AREA? (check all that apply)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More / better trails and pathways	76%	149
Historical or nature-themed educational signage	58%	114
Better sight lines through brush	54%	106
Lighting	50%	99
More benches	42%	82
More trees	23%	46
Other (please specify)	15%	29
Total Respondents: 197		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	More accessible fishing areas for handicapped wheelchairs and scooters	5/21/2025 3:40 PM
2	Bigger disc golf course	5/21/2025 12:59 PM
3	Pollinator garden/native planting beds	5/20/2025 10:42 AM
4	Events	5/18/2025 5:59 PM
5	Knowing it's there/signs	5/11/2025 11:14 AM
6	Disc golf	5/8/2025 6:27 PM

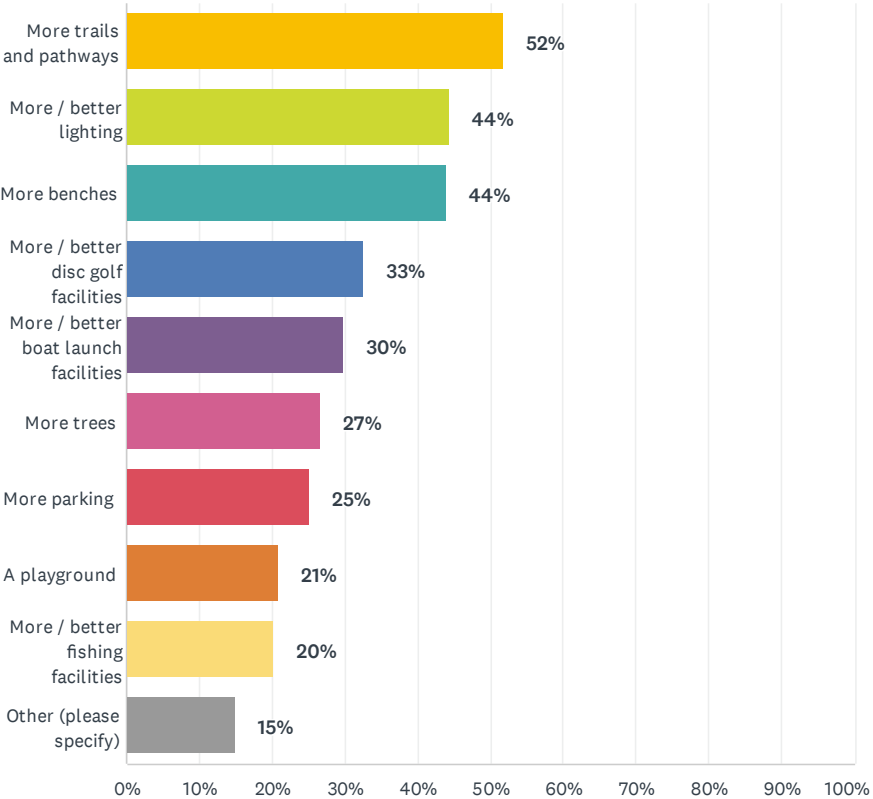
Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

7	N/A	5/8/2025 5:50 PM
8	Pickleball and extended disc golf course	5/8/2025 4:02 PM
9	More lighting will affect birds. It's a natural area. Leave it that way	5/8/2025 3:17 PM
10	I don't go here	5/8/2025 1:03 PM
11	Disc Golf	5/8/2025 12:27 PM
12	multi use trails	5/8/2025 7:18 AM
13	No homeless camps	5/5/2025 3:26 PM
14	Some brush, but some sight lines too; most importantly soften the boundary between the lawn of Kirby and the brush of Natural Area by creating transitional zones of gardens, meadows and groves of various levels of growth, so it's just not lawn/wall/jungle abruptly	5/5/2025 9:21 AM
15	Directional signage	4/23/2025 8:58 PM
16	A few disc golf holes	4/23/2025 7:11 PM
17	Disc golf park	4/21/2025 11:19 PM
18	Clearance of some trees	4/8/2025 9:04 AM
19	Pave trails	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
20	Do not use lighting in the natural area if it will deter animals.	4/2/2025 4:21 PM
21	Have never visited	3/19/2025 2:26 PM
22	Remove invasive brush, plant grass and wildflowers and install a paved bike path.	3/10/2025 2:27 PM
23	Educational opportunities, perhaps treating the space as an arboretum. An open area to help break up the dense forest and enable people to see across to the river from the top of the levee	2/26/2025 12:53 PM
24	A map of the trails posted at entrances if not one already.	2/14/2025 3:48 PM
25	Less Knotweed, More Native Plants, Healthier Understory	2/12/2025 4:31 PM
26	Nature Center	2/12/2025 9:13 AM
27	REGULAR MAINTENANCE	2/12/2025 9:09 AM
28	better maintenance/utilization of elements from original Olmsted Brothers park	2/10/2025 8:57 PM
29	Police enforced	2/10/2025 8:39 PM

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Q25 What new or improved facilities would you like to see in NESBITT Park? (check all that apply)

Answered: 187 Skipped: 77



Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

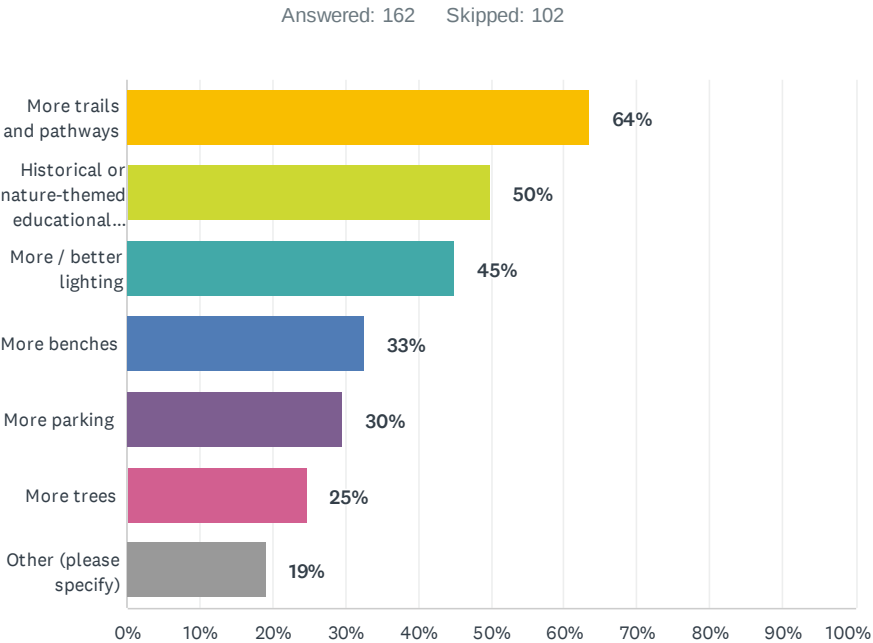
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More trails and pathways	52%	97
More / better lighting	44%	83
More benches	44%	82
More / better disc golf facilities	33%	61
More / better boat launch facilities	30%	56
More trees	27%	50
More parking	25%	47
A playground	21%	39
More / better fishing facilities	20%	38
Other (please specify)	15%	28
Total Respondents: 187		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	More accessible fishing areas for handicapped wheelchairs and scooters	5/21/2025 3:40 PM
2	Bigger disc golf course Grass cut more oftn	5/21/2025 12:59 PM
3	Error = Correction near of = near to think in the team = think as part of a team the actions they made for all people = their work on behalf of others made a show = had a concert a lot of persons = a lot of people give better conditions for people = create better living conditions for people	5/20/2025 10:42 AM
4	Less trees and brush	5/18/2025 5:59 PM
5	No	5/11/2025 5:28 AM
6	Nine more holes for disc golf	5/10/2025 7:50 PM
7	A live performance area for community arts, and better pedestrian & bike connectivity with Kirby Park and the levee trail	5/9/2025 10:08 AM
8	Bathrooms	5/8/2025 8:07 PM
9	Bathrooms	5/8/2025 5:50 PM
10	18 hole disc golf course would attract more people	5/8/2025 2:56 PM
11	Improved trail—less cool, ugly colored lighting — wider trail, with lines down the middle to encourage walkers to not take up the full width, also wish the trail wouldn't take a more interesting route that just the top of the levee—that's quite boring, can be so much more interesting , going up and down it, meandering into the park on both sides	5/5/2025 9:21 AM
12	Improved signage	4/23/2025 8:58 PM
13	Clean up litter	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
14	It seems fine As Is.	3/25/2025 8:42 AM
15	Never visited	3/19/2025 2:26 PM
16	Signage for access to the park, people dont know how to get there	3/10/2025 11:27 AM
17	its pretty good as it is. anything more would get flooded.	2/23/2025 2:15 PM
18	expand Discgolf to 18 holes	2/20/2025 10:29 AM
19	parking without potholes	2/19/2025 6:17 PM

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20	Boathouse for rowing	2/17/2025 11:43 AM
21	A boathouse for row boats	2/16/2025 4:58 PM
22	more manicured / inviting river overlook area with walking path and seating	2/12/2025 3:13 PM
23	Boat House/A place to sit out on the river/i.e. The Cosmic Cafe in Philadelphia; Beer Garden opportunity i.e. Parks on Tap at the Philadelphia Art Museum	2/12/2025 9:13 AM
24	It is sufficiently developed as is?	2/12/2025 9:09 AM
25	Better trails along the river, paved with benches.	2/11/2025 3:50 PM
26	Better tee pads disc golf or tee signs for people who just started playing . Make it more inviting to familys	2/11/2025 11:21 AM
27	Community boathouse/rowing facility	2/10/2025 8:57 PM
28	Kayak	2/10/2025 8:12 PM

Q26 What new or improved facilities would you like to see in RIVERBEND Park? (check all that apply)

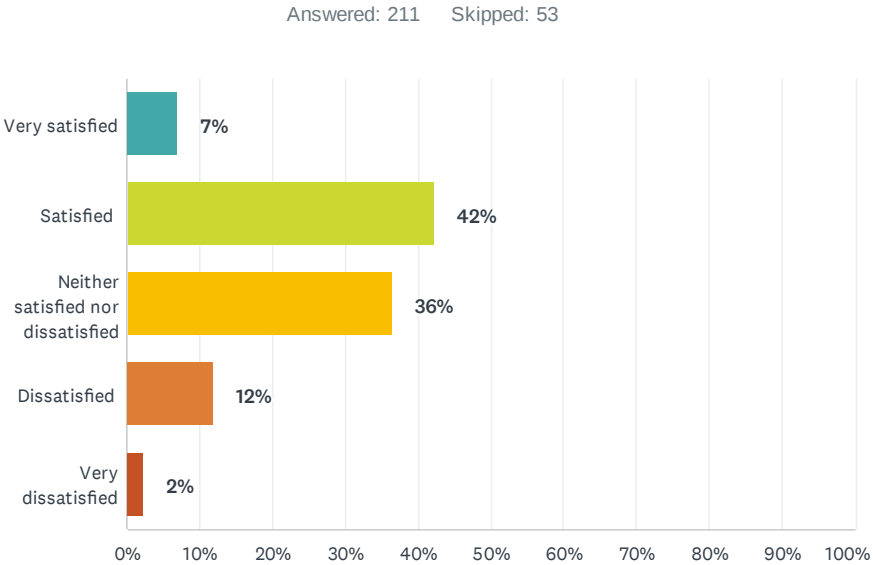


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More trails and pathways	64%	103
Historical or nature-themed educational signage	50%	81
More / better lighting	45%	73
More benches	33%	53
More parking	30%	48
More trees	25%	40
Other (please specify)	19%	31
Total Respondents: 162		

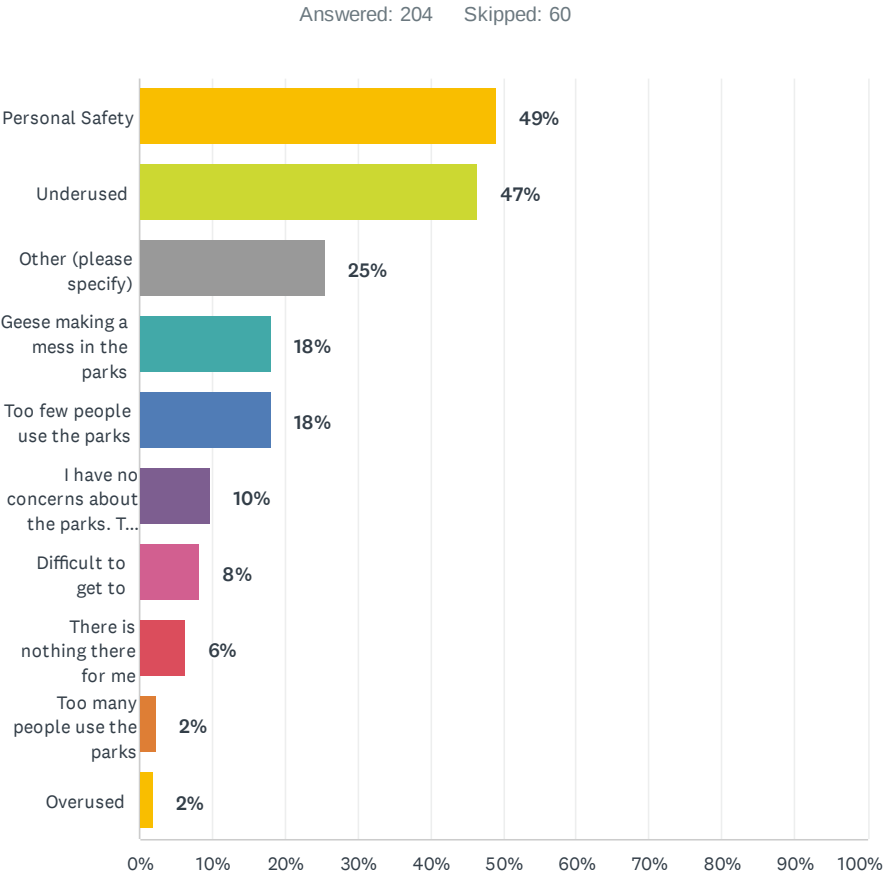
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	More accessible fishing areas for handicapped wheelchairs and scooters	5/21/2025 3:40 PM
2	Error = Correction near of = near to think in the team = think as part of a team the actions they made for all people = their work on behalf of others made a show = had a concert a lot of persons = a lot of people give better conditions for people = create better living conditions for people	5/20/2025 10:42 AM
3	Better connectivity with the levee trail on both sides of the Cross Valley Expressway	5/9/2025 10:08 AM
4	Have not frequented Riverbend park although I do ride my bike and walk along the levee frequently. Would like to see more activity in that area and better visibility of the river.	5/8/2025 9:54 PM

5	Na	5/8/2025 8:07 PM
6	Never been	5/8/2025 5:50 PM
7	Disc golf	5/8/2025 4:59 PM
8	Never been there. But more trees are always good	5/8/2025 3:17 PM
9	Disc golf	5/8/2025 1:03 PM
10	Disc Golf	5/8/2025 12:27 PM
11	More facilities/resources for people to pick up after their dogs	5/6/2025 3:49 PM
12	I didn't even know we were allowed into this area, some paths and boardwalks over the wet lands could be really interesting if they meander through different zones	5/5/2025 9:21 AM
13	Disc golf park	4/21/2025 11:19 PM
14	Clean up litter	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
15	Definitely need more trees	3/25/2025 12:56 PM
16	Leave it alone as a wildlife habitat.	3/25/2025 8:42 AM
17	never visited	3/19/2025 2:26 PM
18	I guess I'd just like to know how to access that park.	3/10/2025 2:46 PM
19	I thought it was Nesbitt, i didnt know it wasnt.	3/10/2025 11:27 AM
20	Slightly thinned out brush , perhaps a small 100' wide opening again to break up the dense forest	2/26/2025 12:53 PM
21	I like the idea of a pump track	2/23/2025 2:15 PM
22	Boathouse for rowing	2/17/2025 11:43 AM
23	a boathouse for row boats	2/16/2025 4:58 PM
24	Signage that denotes it as a public area and a trail map.	2/14/2025 3:48 PM
25	Haven't ventured in there.. maybe a brighter / welcoming access point?	2/12/2025 3:13 PM
26	More grills	2/12/2025 12:35 PM
27	This requires the active involvement of Kingston Borough council for budgeting maintenance funds. Otherwise a complete waste of time.	2/12/2025 9:09 AM
28	Never been, need to see first	2/12/2025 6:54 AM
29	Never been there	2/11/2025 5:14 PM
30	Never been	2/11/2025 8:18 AM
31	The public really doesn't view Riverbend Park as a park - instead, it's a well-known location for illicit activities.	2/10/2025 8:57 PM

Q27 In general, how satisfied are you with maintenance of the four West Side Parks (KIRBY, KIRBY NATURAL AREA, NESBITT, and RIVERBEND)?



Q28 What is your greatest concern about the West Side Parks? (check all that apply)



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ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
Personal Safety		49%100
Underused		47%95
Other (please specify)		25%52
Geese making a mess in the parks		18%37
Too few people use the parks		18%37
I have no concerns about the parks. They are great as is.		10%20
Difficult to get to		8%17
There is nothing there for me		6%13
Too many people use the parks		2%5
Overused		2%4
Total Respondents: 204		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	People not taking pride in keeping the areas neat and clean	5/21/2025 3:40 PM
2	Nesbit grass needs to be cut more often	5/21/2025 12:59 PM
3	People are disrespectful of others--loud, littering, causing fights, harrassing passersby.	5/20/2025 10:42 AM
4	Transients and gentlemen cruisers in the woods of Nesbitt	5/10/2025 8:51 AM
5	18 hole disc golf golf course would be amazing	5/8/2025 5:50 PM
6	Too far from my house	5/8/2025 4:59 PM
7	The predators parked on the side in Nesbit park. It's ridiculous	5/8/2025 4:54 PM
8	I get concerned near the dyke	5/8/2025 4:02 PM
9	Mosquitoes	5/8/2025 3:58 PM
10	N/A	5/8/2025 3:17 PM
11	People not taking care of it. Leaving trash, stealing tee pad pavers	5/8/2025 2:47 PM
12	Needs a bigger disc golf course	5/8/2025 1:03 PM
13	Homeless encampments	5/8/2025 12:19 AM
14	Poorly maintained	5/7/2025 3:08 AM
15	Too much dog poop on the levee	5/6/2025 3:49 PM
16	Uninteresting, nothing to write home about, mediocre compared to other cities parks	5/5/2025 9:21 AM
17	Others picking up after themselves-garbage left behind	4/29/2025 8:47 AM
18	General appearance and upkeep	4/23/2025 8:58 PM
19	Disparity of use between the parks	4/23/2025 1:47 PM
20	People not cleaning up after their dogs.	4/9/2025 8:14 AM
21	Homeless camps	4/8/2025 9:04 AM
22	Maintenance	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
23	These are gems of land, glad they are getting attention.	4/2/2025 4:21 PM

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24	Denoting these spaces as safe for people of all races, ethnicities, religions, identity, and sexual orientation to be.	4/2/2025 11:04 AM
25	proposed (suggested) security	4/1/2025 2:34 PM
26	needs to be kept cleaner.	3/25/2025 12:56 PM
27	Not being able to find parking, especially at Kirby Park.	3/19/2025 9:29 PM
28	A bit secluded. More people there would help.	3/17/2025 8:16 AM
29	Motorized vehicles on dike path	3/15/2025 5:53 AM
30	Vagrants all over	3/13/2025 10:14 AM
31	I generally feel safe when I go with someone else, but I would not feel totally safe walking alone in the West Side Parks.	3/12/2025 2:08 PM
32	More events for variety of ages	3/10/2025 9:04 PM
33	Keeping natural areas natural. Safe trails	3/10/2025 7:52 PM
34	I do not want the community to lose these parks! We need these parks filled with nature! Trees, greenery, plants & native animals). It's a great environment that can be helped with updates.	3/10/2025 7:30 PM
35	Kirby Park pond Must go	3/10/2025 6:41 PM
36	Better mosquito and gnat control	3/10/2025 4:59 PM
37	more flowers	3/10/2025 3:17 PM
38	Kirby park is always too crowded	3/10/2025 3:04 PM
39	I'd like to see the tangled undergrowth of invasive plants reduced.	3/10/2025 2:46 PM
40	Ease of accessibility for the mobility challenged	3/10/2025 2:22 PM
41	need more programming	2/23/2025 2:15 PM
42	Lack of well maintained trails	2/15/2025 5:33 PM
43	Some days there are too many people at the parks, other days it is desolate and feels unsafe with no one around	2/13/2025 2:47 PM
44	Used of Pavillion by other when they were rented by another. No signs to advise who has what Pavillion and what time.	2/12/2025 5:17 PM
45	They are good, but some fitness stations could be better kept or updated. I enjoy being able to go over there on a nice day sometimes instead of the gym. And during covid, it was very important.	2/12/2025 3:13 PM
46	Could use aesthetic improvements.	2/12/2025 9:36 AM
47	A "Friends of West Side Parks" Nonprofit group should be started	2/12/2025 9:13 AM
48	Maintenance of Natural Area	2/12/2025 9:09 AM
49	If more people are going to be near the river I'd like to see " how to be safe in/near water" education	2/12/2025 7:39 AM
50	Better trails, beautiful area to walk along the river, but can be overgrown.	2/11/2025 3:50 PM
51	Homeless camps	2/11/2025 11:17 AM
52	There's too much usage of Kirby Park, and not enough usage of the Kirby Park Natural Area or Nesbitt Park.	2/10/2025 8:57 PM

Q29 What excites you most about potential improvements to the West Side Parks?

Answered: 143 Skipped: 121

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Increased opportunity for physical activity, peace provided by exposure to nature.	6/5/2025 9:18 AM
2	IT WILL BE MORE UTILIZED	5/29/2025 2:38 PM
3	Potential upside to more people using them	5/28/2025 9:11 PM
4	preserving natural resources and beautiful parks	5/27/2025 9:31 AM
5	Safer Hopefully bigger disc golf course Grass Nesbitt grass cut more often	5/21/2025 1:00 PM
6	I want to be able to use the parks again like I did as a child and young adult. I don't feel safe going there by myself now. There are a lot of newer residents who don't treat the park respectfully, and a lot of older residents who are apathetic. It's a tough situation, but if you don't acknowledge this dichotomy, no improvements will be successful.	5/20/2025 10:49 AM
7	Having a reason to go	5/18/2025 6:03 PM
8	Adding disc golf holes throughout the park	5/14/2025 11:51 PM
9	Just being nosey	5/12/2025 9:31 PM
10	That improvements will encourage more community engagement and activities.	5/11/2025 11:16 AM
11	I'd love more places to sit and enjoy the river. Also more areas to bird watch	5/11/2025 5:29 AM
12	More disc golf holes	5/10/2025 7:51 PM
13	18 hole disc golf	5/10/2025 8:52 AM
14	An 18-hole Disc Golf Course	5/9/2025 4:55 PM
15	The possibility of a more unified parks system and better regional parks connectivity	5/9/2025 10:10 AM
16	Investing in the community is always good	5/9/2025 1:54 AM
17	More disc golf.	5/8/2025 10:57 PM
18	Expanded disc golf courses. I love that we have a river in this area, but I feel like there are not enough activities and recreational areas that allow you to spend time in view of the river or on the river. I hope these improvements will enhance our use of the Susquehanna. I would also generally love to see more people outside and actively enjoying those types of spaces. This would make a fantastic expansion of the existing west side parks as well as the Forty Fort recreational area.	5/8/2025 9:59 PM
19	Improvements/Expansion of the disc golf facilities.	5/8/2025 8:08 PM
20	More disc golf!	5/8/2025 6:23 PM
21	An 18 hole disc golf course	5/8/2025 5:52 PM
22	I feel it would bring better crowds	5/8/2025 5:16 PM
23	Lots of good open natural space for people to enjoy along the river	5/8/2025 5:00 PM
24	I'm excited to see additions to the disc golf course. Maybe even another one.	5/8/2025 4:58 PM
25	Pickleball and disc folf	5/8/2025 4:03 PM
26	Everything. Beautiful area	5/8/2025 3:59 PM
27	A larger disc golf course	5/8/2025 3:32 PM

28	Disc golf	5/8/2025 3:18 PM
29	Expanded disc golf facilities and nature trails.	5/8/2025 3:02 PM
30	18 hole disc golf course	5/8/2025 2:57 PM
31	Would love to see more historical markings and a bigger path that would accommodate walkers and bikes and,scooters.(there are more motorized bikes and scooters everywhere)	5/8/2025 2:52 PM
32	Improving the disc golf course	5/8/2025 2:35 PM
33	Disc golf improvements	5/8/2025 1:57 PM
34	As an avid disc golfer I would love to see a great course for everyone to enjoy and tourists to come play. I'm not a fan of driving an hour plus to have access to a great course.	5/8/2025 12:31 PM
35	This area is incredibly underserved by parks and open space. A bike park or paved pump track would be a great addition to the area.	5/8/2025 7:28 AM
36	People enjoying the outdoors	5/8/2025 4:54 AM
37	I'm excited about the potential improved usage and improvements tot he park systems	5/7/2025 7:00 PM
38	Potential to upgrade facilities and paths	5/7/2025 3:09 AM
39	The possibility of having a more enjoyable time there	5/6/2025 3:51 PM
40	that someone actually cared enough to ask	5/6/2025 1:25 PM
41	A stronger sense of community for all	5/5/2025 10:21 PM
42	That they will become a better option to take families to without feeling unsafe.	5/5/2025 3:37 PM
43	I have not seen any potential improvements but I hope we use this opportunity to design more interesting parks that draw people to use them with unique design. Most importantly, I hope we soften the boundaries between parks' current lawn-jungle binary with meadows, groves, gardens, and rethink the levee trail to meander through these zones.	5/5/2025 9:41 AM
44	Partnership with all 4 parks	5/2/2025 7:41 PM
45	more opportunities to get outside with other people, hopeful occasional live music	4/30/2025 12:02 PM
46	I would line to see some of it returned to the glory days when it was Olmsted designed	4/29/2025 3:15 PM
47	Cleaning them up, making them more attractive, safer, and more to do.	4/29/2025 10:15 AM
48	Improved recreational areas close to home would be priceless.	4/29/2025 9:14 AM
49	Accessibility to nature, perception of safety	4/29/2025 9:06 AM
50	I am excited to see the positive changes, more trails, cleaner resources for the public to use!	4/29/2025 8:49 AM
51	Vibrancy. Something for everyone!	4/23/2025 9:06 PM
52	Expansion of the nesbitt park disc golf course	4/23/2025 7:12 PM
53	Bringing a cohesive and connection vision of recreation and restoration to our riverside parks	4/23/2025 1:49 PM
54	More things to do	4/9/2025 1:22 PM
55	Cleaner and police presence	4/9/2025 8:15 AM
56	Pathways for use by residents which would (hopefully) help keep nuisances out.	4/8/2025 9:06 AM
57	The cleanliness	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
58	I have a place to walk and bike that could be safe.	4/6/2025 1:43 AM
59	More trails, nature signage.	4/2/2025 4:22 PM
60	It's great to see the parks being linked together	4/2/2025 1:36 PM
61	More people using the parks.	4/2/2025 11:04 AM
62	attraction for residential use	4/1/2025 2:38 PM

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63	More trails and better access for those who appreciate nature. Not seeing as many homeless camps and litter throughout the woods.	4/1/2025 10:41 AM
64	Being able to really make these parks a great outdoor resource in NEPA!	3/26/2025 3:54 PM
65	Access to the river	3/25/2025 7:32 PM
66	improved/updated playground equipment, more defined trails	3/25/2025 9:50 AM
67	Leave them alone. Maintain the Levee.	3/25/2025 9:09 AM
68	I am excited for more opportunities to visit the Parks!	3/19/2025 4:58 PM
69	More opportunities for families	3/18/2025 2:30 PM
70	It would be great to have more outside activities that are well kept. Pickle ball courts, maybe a driving range, disc golf, boat launch, etc.	3/18/2025 1:26 PM
71	People can feel safe going there and spending more time outdoors.	3/17/2025 8:17 AM
72	I would like to feel safe as I walk the pathways	3/15/2025 8:30 AM
73	That there is actually something being discussed about improving the area	3/15/2025 5:57 AM
74	Opportunity to redesign and revitalize these community assets so they can be enjoyed to their fullest potential.	3/14/2025 8:24 AM
75	More people using the facilities and more events	3/14/2025 7:34 AM
76	The parks are and should continue to be beautiful natural space in the city to be an attraction for recreation and events.	3/13/2025 10:59 PM
77	Never knew if riverbend park	3/13/2025 8:26 PM
78	More things to do with the kids when the weather is nice	3/13/2025 1:29 PM
79	Better use of natural areas.	3/13/2025 11:41 AM
80	I would be excited about the introduction of new walking trails that would provide me other options for walking for recreation/exercise in the greater Wilkes-Barre area.	3/12/2025 2:17 PM
81	That it is in walking distance to enjoy.	3/11/2025 6:21 PM
82	Making the parks safer	3/11/2025 12:44 AM
83	New & improved	3/11/2025 12:19 AM
84	Invigorate the area. Provide a means for people to get outdoors more in safe environment. I used to walk diles for years but don't feel safe anymore	3/10/2025 9:05 PM
85	Better trails	3/10/2025 7:54 PM
86	A Clean and a more inviting environment for families to enjoy the outdoors.	3/10/2025 7:34 PM
87	More events	3/10/2025 5:01 PM
88	More use	3/10/2025 3:18 PM
89	Outdoor recreation that is cost free	3/10/2025 3:07 PM
90	Would be more appealing to spend time there.	3/10/2025 2:47 PM
91	More space to jog, walk, and bike.	3/10/2025 2:29 PM
92	Easier accessibility for those who are mobility challenged. I can't walk long distances without a rest, so more benches would be awesome'	3/10/2025 2:26 PM
93	Getting outdoors locally more	3/10/2025 11:28 AM
94	Change can be good.	3/10/2025 10:49 AM
95	Increased awareness of parks. Increased handicap accessibility	3/6/2025 11:51 AM
96	Capitalizing on the opportunity we have	2/26/2025 12:55 PM

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97	The opportunity to add more facilities/features that helps build stronger community connections and provides them with more activities to participate in- especially educational activities (about the parks, the history of the area, and the environment). It will hopefully give long-time and new residents a better sense of place and a renewed appreciation for our area.	2/24/2025 3:23 PM
98	Get people outside. Bring the community together for events.	2/24/2025 10:41 AM
99	It will bring more people to the parks and feel safer at all times of the day.	2/24/2025 10:35 AM
100	making connections through the parks	2/23/2025 2:17 PM
101	expanded outdoor activities	2/20/2025 10:31 AM
102	Hopefully better lighting and more use	2/18/2025 10:56 AM
103	The west side parks are beautiful and add to the community. It would be great to have an area that allows better use of the river, such as a boathouse.	2/17/2025 11:47 AM
104	I would like to bring rowing to the community.	2/16/2025 5:01 PM
105	Better maintained trails	2/15/2025 5:35 PM
106	There is a possibility for more green space, actually for more educational projects.	2/15/2025 1:48 PM
107	That something is going to be done to make them better and bring more people to them, but that improvements to accommodate/sustain heavier usage will also be taken into consideration.	2/14/2025 4:00 PM
108	Accessible bathrooms, nicer amenities, easier access, more use from the community	2/13/2025 3:11 PM
109	None	2/13/2025 2:35 PM
110	Clearings for more walking trails, lighting, and landmarks.	2/13/2025 2:22 PM
111	More usage and the resultant improved feeling of security that responsible usage promotes	2/13/2025 11:46 AM
112	There is lots of opportunity to showcase the natural beauty of our area and enjoy nature. This could improve tourism.	2/12/2025 9:03 PM
113	Additional uses	2/12/2025 5:18 PM
114	Nature Center	2/12/2025 4:38 PM
115	The parks need updating so I can't wait to see how much nicer they become.	2/12/2025 3:50 PM
116	Just maximizing the natural resources we've got here for all the benefits they provide.	2/12/2025 3:18 PM
117	Progressive thinking is good	2/12/2025 12:39 PM
118	More trails and trees!	2/12/2025 11:28 AM
119	Plenty of opportunities for trail improvements, connections to other trails	2/12/2025 11:20 AM
120	The potential to have a prettier looking park with more to do.	2/12/2025 9:37 AM
121	As someone who just moved back to the area from Philadelphia, I can certainly see the potential, but there is much work to be done. This can greatly impact the revitalization of the Wilkes-Barre area.	2/12/2025 9:15 AM
122	Bringing good jobs to the area because we have good recreation facilities	2/12/2025 7:41 AM
123	More potential community events	2/12/2025 6:54 AM
124	Safety	2/12/2025 6:54 AM
125	Urban park	2/11/2025 5:16 PM
126	We need to get more families and young students even college age involved. Perhaps have college events at the parks.	2/11/2025 4:21 PM
127	Beautification of the area. Walking, biking, rollerblading trails. So much potential. I have often gone to Nesbitt Park when the riverfront bands play in the summer. Very enjoyable, and you can hear the bands great from across the river. Lots of people playing disc golf on Friday nights. It's really a beautiful spot and could be even better!	2/11/2025 3:57 PM

128	Connecting a bike path to the Forty Fort section	2/11/2025 3:49 PM
129	More free things to do	2/11/2025 3:16 PM
130	Making the area better so more people visit or host events there.	2/11/2025 12:42 PM
131	more community members getting outside - potential community clean up projects	2/11/2025 12:16 PM
132	It's a beautiful area that can be utilized by many different people. We are lucky to have such a great resource in our backyard. The park just needs some minor upgrades aesthetically. .	2/11/2025 11:48 AM
133	possibility of more bike trails	2/11/2025 10:51 AM
134	More walkable trails in Natural area	2/11/2025 10:16 AM
135	Possibly more parking for boats	2/11/2025 7:03 AM
136	Great resource close to home!	2/11/2025 6:08 AM
137	connected trails especially under expressway	2/11/2025 5:53 AM
138	The potential of reuniting the two halves of Kirby Park and Nesbitt Park into a single recreational destination - and the opportunity to get more people using the Natural Area and Nesbitt Park.	2/10/2025 9:05 PM
139	Saftey in natural area	2/10/2025 8:40 PM
140	parking	2/10/2025 8:36 PM
141	Safety, exploring other areas of park	2/10/2025 8:13 PM
142	Taking full advantage of our beautiful riverfront! It's on the flood side of the levee so some permanent development is difficult, but it is prime for recreation and is overdue to be promoted and utilized. Riverfront Park in WB is a great open space and is appropriate for bordering the downtown, but the West Side Parks will tie the river to adjacent communities and serve both natural and recreational good.	2/10/2025 7:51 PM
143	This is where I feel a sense of community. The more facilities that inspire activities and gatherings, the more pride I feel for where I live.	2/10/2025 7:28 PM

Q30 What concerns do you have about potential improvements to the West Side Parks?

Answered: 130 Skipped: 134

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Losing the natural beauty of a riverfront natural area.	6/5/2025 9:18 AM
2	SOMEONE WRECKING IT	5/29/2025 2:38 PM
3	Creating a cleaner and safer space	5/28/2025 9:11 PM
4	costs	5/27/2025 9:31 AM
5	Parks retaining their natural beauty	5/21/2025 3:41 PM
6	It doesn't matter what improvements you make if people don't know about them. There needs to be a dedicated social media presence for younger generations (dedicated Instagram for example) and information still put in newspapers for older people that don't have Facebook or social media. The parks collectively should have their own webpage for centralized information.	5/20/2025 10:49 AM
7	Costs and taxes getting increased.	5/18/2025 6:03 PM
8	No concerns. If we add activities that get the right type of people into the park things will continue to improve.	5/14/2025 11:51 PM
9	None	5/12/2025 9:31 PM
10	None. All construction has been safely roped off and not impeded use of the park	5/11/2025 11:16 AM
11	I have none	5/11/2025 5:29 AM
12	None	5/10/2025 8:52 AM
13	They won't be maintained	5/9/2025 4:55 PM
14	In the Kirby Park Natural Area and Riverbend Park, balancing ecological preservation with access via trails and better sightlines	5/9/2025 10:10 AM
15	Will not be properly maintained	5/9/2025 1:54 AM
16	None	5/8/2025 10:57 PM
17	I hope it does not attract unwanted visitors or people who are not using the facilities as intended or not respecting the property. I believe there is already an issue with people camping out or making poor use of the secluded areas in these parks. I would not want to see more of this.	5/8/2025 9:59 PM
18	Lack of restrooms.	5/8/2025 8:08 PM
19	Taking about the existing disc golf course	5/8/2025 6:23 PM
20	Construction and lake of access	5/8/2025 5:52 PM
21	N/A	5/8/2025 5:16 PM
22	Length of time to complete, even if it gets started. Not being able to use during improvements	5/8/2025 4:58 PM
23	None	5/8/2025 3:59 PM
24	That any improvements to Nesbitt would cause it to lose Disc Golf	5/8/2025 3:32 PM
25	N/A	5/8/2025 3:18 PM
26	More people, more problems	5/8/2025 2:57 PM

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27	would need more police presence as you bring more people	5/8/2025 2:52 PM
28	Vandalism of park property, and other illegal activities could scare people away	5/8/2025 1:57 PM
29	Money being used properly	5/8/2025 12:31 PM
30	damage from vandalism	5/8/2025 7:28 AM
31	More homeless folks	5/8/2025 4:54 AM
32	Lack of funding and a lack of follow through with implementation	5/7/2025 7:00 PM
33	New and expensive items will be added that will not be maintained and fall into disrepair.	5/7/2025 3:09 AM
34	Racism from cops if there is an increased police presence	5/6/2025 3:51 PM
35	That any changes won't be communicated to the public	5/6/2025 1:25 PM
36	I'm afraid nothing will be done about the homeless and if something is done, that they will just come right back like they always do.	5/5/2025 3:37 PM
37	That they won't be ambitious enough to make the parks a place worth visiting. Would like to see us dream big, but I fear this plan will recommend only small changes and new features that will not make the parks a destination.	5/5/2025 9:41 AM
38	don't make them commercial	5/2/2025 7:41 PM
39	If the improvements require additional maintenance, does the community have the money to maintain	4/29/2025 3:15 PM
40	crime and neglect.	4/29/2025 10:15 AM
41	Safety and homeless camps.	4/29/2025 9:14 AM
42	possible construction disturbance of traffic patterns	4/29/2025 9:06 AM
43	Homeless people, substance abusers in the park hiding out in the parks. General maintenance and upkeep sustainment.	4/23/2025 9:06 PM
44	Sustainability - both in terms of construction/design but also the sustainability of efforts to make the riverside parks more community friendly.	4/23/2025 1:49 PM
45	More people sometimes equals more trouble	4/9/2025 1:22 PM
46	None	4/9/2025 8:15 AM
47	None, things can only get better.	4/8/2025 9:06 AM
48	That it won't be maintained and open to vandalism	4/8/2025 7:19 AM
49	No concerns, anything would be an improvement.	4/6/2025 1:43 AM
50	Homeless population, prohibited "camping" participants	4/2/2025 4:22 PM
51	crime	4/2/2025 1:36 PM
52	Taking away the actual nature of the parks.	4/2/2025 1:29 PM
53	The potential damage to the ecosystem.	4/2/2025 11:04 AM
54	danger of exclusion, censorship, etc.	4/1/2025 2:38 PM
55	No concerns, the parks could use improvement to increase usership and respect for the environment.	4/1/2025 10:41 AM
56	I am concerned that people will not be respectful of the property or of other people.	3/26/2025 3:54 PM
57	Safety, especially in somewhat remote areas	3/25/2025 7:32 PM
58	Something needs to be done about people littering.	3/25/2025 1:00 PM
59	security needs to be upgraded	3/25/2025 9:50 AM
60	They will be totally crapified with plastic nonsense and harsh lighting. There will be no provisions for maintenance of any "improvements" and they will turn to junk like much of the	3/25/2025 9:09 AM

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	post Agnes improvements in Kirby Park, Coal Street Park, and Public Square Park.	
61	I am worried about losing the natural areas of the parks for development.	3/19/2025 4:58 PM
62	Should be flood resistant	3/18/2025 2:30 PM
63	Sadly, many people aren't respectful of the park and other park goers. I see garbage being left behind, loud music being played, aggressive dogs not leashed and foul language.	3/18/2025 1:26 PM
64	That it may not be maintained after the initial improvements are made.	3/17/2025 8:17 AM
65	Safety and cleanliness	3/15/2025 8:30 AM
66	No concerns, it's a great idea	3/15/2025 5:57 AM
67	Will be unable to keep up with maintenance.	3/14/2025 8:24 AM
68	The park should be staffed daily. Maintenance and upkeep of the park should be a priority. Homeless should be kept from loitering in the facilities. Upkeep of the trails should be a higher priority than it is. A police detail Assigned to the park would not be a bad idea. I think it's important to preserve some of the historical aspects of the park as well.	3/13/2025 10:59 PM
69	Being damaged More presence of homeless	3/13/2025 1:29 PM
70	I would hope that any new trails would be located in a manner to maximize the safety of users (e.g., in terms of the walking surface, sufficient pathway width to minimize exposure to ticks, and a reasonable distance from parking/access areas in case of emergency).	3/12/2025 2:17 PM
71	Limiting use.	3/11/2025 6:21 PM
72	None. Any improvements would be welcome	3/11/2025 12:44 AM
73	Crowded	3/11/2025 12:19 AM
74	My concern is that a lot of trees/ greenery will be lost. My hope is for the land to stay as green and fresh as possible while still being able to walk through and enjoy the park.	3/10/2025 7:34 PM
75	Needs better pet (mosquito and gnat) control.	3/10/2025 5:01 PM
76	Keeping it clean	3/10/2025 3:18 PM
77	Let's not end up with too much pavement and lights in a place that's supposed to be natural.	3/10/2025 2:47 PM
78	Wasting money on unnecessary improvements.	3/10/2025 2:29 PM
79	I'm concerned that the focus on safety will translate to 'police presence' when what we need is more lighting, more use, and a sense of community!	3/10/2025 2:26 PM
80	Destroying the nature of our riverside and destroying one of the only places homeless can exist. Seriously, leave them alone.	3/10/2025 11:28 AM
81	Lack of security and lighting in some places	3/10/2025 10:49 AM
82	Additional security would be helpful, especially in Nesbitt Park south of the Market St. bridge.	3/6/2025 11:51 AM
83	Too much disruption to the forested areas	2/26/2025 12:55 PM
84	Increased RE tax to the homeowners. We already pay high school tax!	2/24/2025 10:41 AM
85	None.	2/24/2025 10:35 AM
86	Making changes esp. to the natural area that are both expensive and will not be able to be maintained.	2/23/2025 2:17 PM
87	No concerns everything can be improved upon	2/20/2025 10:31 AM
88	Lighting and security	2/18/2025 10:56 AM
89	Keeping any improvements/new resources safe from vandalism would be important.	2/17/2025 11:47 AM
90	Time to implement positive improvements.	2/16/2025 5:01 PM
91	Over development of the Natural Area and Riverbend Park	2/15/2025 5:35 PM

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92	I fear more paving, less of a natural area.	2/15/2025 1:48 PM
93	Upgrades will be made but then regular maintenance will not be kept up. Things will be new or improved, but when vandalism occurs broken or defaced areas take forever to get repaired or cleaned up. Cameras to catch those who commit the crimes would be good. Also as deterrents. Those caught vandalizing should be made to pay for damages and do community service in the park to help keep it clean. If they can't pay add time to the community service hours.	2/14/2025 4:00 PM
94	Displacement of unhoused people living along the river	2/13/2025 3:11 PM
95	None	2/13/2025 2:35 PM
96	Devastation of natural areas (too much urban development)	2/13/2025 2:22 PM
97	More garbage and vandalism	2/13/2025 11:46 AM
98	We will need enough parking and have to get the word out better for events. I often don't know they are happening and I'm interested in that sort of thing. We would also need lots of trash and recycling cans so it doesn't become ugly/covered in trash like the Tubs. And people to enforce cleaning up after yourself. Maybe some guidelines about being considerate with music volume. Are there any restrooms in Nesbitt or Riverbend Park? Safety in Riverbend Park, it always seems like lots of people live there between the levee and the river. I am uncomfortable about thinking about going into that area. I've also heard of people living in the Natural Area.	2/12/2025 9:03 PM
99	Improvements will not make parks more utilized due to safety concerns	2/12/2025 5:44 PM
100	Adding things that will not be used or destroyed.	2/12/2025 5:18 PM
101	I want the Kirby Park Natural Area to remain as natural as possible with no lighting and no vegetation removal that is not under the direction of the Riverfront Parks Committee. I would like the dilapidated, graffiti-covered foundations to be removed.	2/12/2025 4:38 PM
102	Safety concerns aren't addressed	2/12/2025 3:50 PM
103	I guess the more there is to maintain, the greater the resource requirements, so just to be sure there is a maintenance plan in place to keep it all nice and inviting and functional.	2/12/2025 3:18 PM
104	Not enough improvemnt.	2/12/2025 12:39 PM
105	More parking would take away the beauty and cause unnecessary damage to the natural areas within these parks. There is plenty of parking, especially if people carpool or take public transportation.	2/12/2025 11:28 AM
106	Vandalism (kids)	2/12/2025 11:20 AM
107	That they'll harm the natural environment or do too much development.	2/12/2025 9:37 AM
108	Anything put on the Riverside of the Dyke is going to be ruined or destroyed. The Susquehanna river reached 28 foot flood stage five times since 2003 twice in the winter with ice jams the size of cars in Nesbit Park. The disc golf course was wise enough to remove their holes in time. This flooding destroyed the light fixtures that were in place and required the city to invest in putting in newer ones. This will happen again and again. likewise after the last parks improvement plan, the natural are c was c well developed with trails, signs, benches. Etc. after the first flood event, the city of Wilkes-Barre did not restore what was damaged and allowed it to progressively fall into further and further dis repair. They did at least once a year, sending a crew to remove tree falls, but this is insufficient to maintain any improvements in the park.	2/12/2025 9:17 AM
109	Funding. This is why I think starting a nonprofit benefitting the parks is the right move.	2/12/2025 9:15 AM
110	Safety. Personal safety and Water safety.	2/12/2025 7:41 AM
111	Vandalism	2/12/2025 6:54 AM
112	No concerns	2/12/2025 6:54 AM
113	Over improvement taking away the natural areas.	2/11/2025 5:16 PM
114	None anything is improvement	2/11/2025 4:21 PM
115	Flooding is always a concern, but comes with the territory. Keeping it safe. I feel horrible for	2/11/2025 3:57 PM

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our unhoused members of the community, but some years ago, I used to go through the trails, but there was so many abandoned tents and garbage, I stopped going onto the trails between Nesbitt Park and Kirby Park. With development, this may not be an issue.		
116	None	2/11/2025 3:49 PM
117	Future maintenance. It feels like things get put together and no one ever plans for what happens to them in a year or two and they fall apart.	2/11/2025 3:16 PM
118	Ruining wild life habitats, environmental impacts like construction or chemicals	2/11/2025 12:42 PM
119	How improvements will affect bicycle traffic	2/11/2025 12:36 PM
120	Over-crowdedness	2/11/2025 12:16 PM
121	Beautiful areas attract more people. There is limited parking for boaters right now and that often gets filled with non boaters leaving little space for a truck and boat trailer. Please consider creating a disc golf parking area. Fisherman often have to leave their equipment unattended while walking a distance to retrieve their trailer.	2/11/2025 11:48 AM
122	Flooding. Nothing should be added to the parks that would obstruct river flow and cause flooding to local community.	2/11/2025 10:16 AM
123	Lack of parking between all the visitors and the ability to vote	2/11/2025 7:03 AM
124	How long it will take & potential disruptions to current facilities.	2/11/2025 6:08 AM
125	in the natural areas flooding will be an issue so whatever improvements are made will need to be flood resistant	2/11/2025 5:53 AM
126	Is it possible to make improvements that allow people to feel comfortable using the Kirby Park Natural Area without destroying the natural features that make that section of the park system so special and ecologically significant?	2/10/2025 9:05 PM
127	Do not over-commercialse the parks	2/10/2025 8:40 PM
128	wild life	2/10/2025 8:36 PM
129	Over development	2/10/2025 8:13 PM
130	These are important riparian areas and need to remain mostly natural to serve the local environment. Also in Riverbend and KPNA, safety is a concern. It is not well advertised that these are public spaces, and appear "derelict" compared to Nesbitt and Kirby.	2/10/2025 7:51 PM

Q31 Please share any additional thoughts, comments, or ideas you have about the West Side Parks.

Answered: 77 Skipped: 187

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I'm grateful for them	5/27/2025 9:31 AM
2	I would like to see the levee pathway ending at Rutter Ave extended underneath 309 and connected to the Forty Fort Section	5/22/2025 3:38 PM
3	The focus shouldn't be on special events but on average, every day uses since that is what will help keep crime down. Also, there should be CCTV monitoring at the top of the launch road into Nesbitt Park. If there was a camera there with a few in the parking area and boat launch itself, you could easily discern who is there for a drug deal vs. actual park user. During the day time, all I see are drug dealers and buyers going down to this area. (You can see who drives back there easily from the Geisinger parking lot.)	5/20/2025 10:49 AM
4	The disc golf course at nesbitt park has been a great improvement overall. The park has remained clean due to the local disc golfers keeping the course maintained. It would be great to extend the course or possibly even have a professional layout throughout nesbitt and Kirby park.	5/14/2025 11:51 PM
5	Thanks for your work	5/10/2025 8:52 AM
6	N/a	5/9/2025 1:54 AM
7	Giant Pot holes at Nesbit.	5/8/2025 10:57 PM
8	More disc golf please. The players clean the park and keep people from causing mischief in the area	5/8/2025 6:23 PM
9	An additional 9 baskets to create an 18 basket disc golf course. Also Bathrooms at Nesbitt would be great for everyone.	5/8/2025 5:52 PM
10	More disc golf! Help establish a scene and help kids get out of the house.	5/8/2025 5:00 PM
11	Not only cleaning up behind Kirby park will make the park look better but ridding all the trees can help the river flow when it's higher	5/8/2025 4:58 PM
12	More holes of disc golf would be nice	5/8/2025 3:18 PM
13	Please consider improving and expanding the disc golf course. It is heavily used and would be very much used if and when improved. Thanks for your consideration.	5/8/2025 2:35 PM
14	I believe expanding to Riverbend rather than Kirby would be the best move for disc golf	5/8/2025 12:31 PM
15	Follow the link to see what's happening in Pittsburgh, NEPA has nothing like this. https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Parks-and-Events/Activities/Pump-Track-and-Climbing-Wall	5/8/2025 7:28 AM
16	Consolidate the park into one larger park with named smaller areas referring to the current park names.	5/7/2025 7:00 PM
17	Proper maintenance, and a maintenance or supervisory presence (i.e. a park ranger or community engagement person who is approachable and can answer questions - not more police)	5/7/2025 3:09 AM
18	More native plants and flowers please	5/6/2025 3:51 PM
19	I love the idea of these parks. Especially the natural areas. I love being out in nature to fish, birdwatch and be with my kids. With the exception of Kirby park, I just don't feel safe, though. I would never consider taking my kids to the kirby park natural area. Every time I've been there (and I've been there quite a few times) there's always trash strewn everywhere and homeless/homeless camps. I barley consider taking them to Nesbitt park unless it is for an	5/5/2025 3:37 PM

	event like riverfest. Otherwise, there's not much there and the shady cars that are always parked near the veterans memorial bridge make me feel uneasy.	
20	Would like to use park design to engage the river more. The parks as designed still very much encourage people to turn their backs on the river, reflecting a dated notion of our relationship with it — yet it is the river that makes the parks noteworthy. Hell, you can't even see the river from Kirby. Second, the levee trail can be so much more—wider for sure, with a center line to encourage better use, but also more interesting: meandering up and down from the levee (rather than just traveling on the tippy top for the whole length), entering different zones (meadow, forest etc) on both sizes, splitting lanes through some of them, even extending over the river in places with bridges. Would like to see us take inspiration from world class parks — Central Park (the ramble, for the natural area), the high line (to create zones and natural planting), Alexandria VA's river trail board walks, to name just a few. Overall a more thoughtful, intentional design is called for.	5/5/2025 9:41 AM
21	Improved paths and lighting	5/2/2025 7:41 PM
22	Probably not feasible, but an elevated pedestrian walkway above Market Street would make crossing easier; if you have to park on a nearby side street during an event at the Park, it is very hard to safely cross Market Street.	4/29/2025 2:20 PM
23	Would love to see more riverside yoga and kids outdoor events, guided tours, historical education, summer camps utilizing the water/river	4/29/2025 9:06 AM
24	There have been many improvements over the last few years that are very positive. I love that we are improving and caring about our parks.	4/29/2025 8:49 AM
25	I did not know til now that "Riverbend Park" was a park.	4/28/2025 10:31 PM
26	Continue your efforts! We need community parks. Need advertising about these efforts. Place on billboards, post on social media,	4/23/2025 9:06 PM
27	We must do this work with the involvement of our unhoused neighbors and the agencies that serve them.	4/23/2025 1:49 PM
28	Need police or at least peace police presence	4/9/2025 1:22 PM
29	I like to walk early mornings. I have had to stop because of the increase homelessness which has made it unsafe. I would love to see pickle ball courts and tennis courts that are free to the public. Restrooms that are safe and drug free. Police presence. There isn't any.	4/6/2025 1:43 AM
30	add more picnic facilities and restrooms	4/2/2025 1:36 PM
31	motor vehicle ban should be enforced, including the tennis court	4/1/2025 2:38 PM
32	I am so excited for the improvements!	3/26/2025 3:54 PM
33	Typically when there are events in the Parks, the communication to city residents is woefully inadequate. Many of these I find out about on the news after the fact. Events need to be better promoted before they happen	3/25/2025 1:00 PM
34	these parks are legacy assets for this community. They need to be preserved and upgraded to served an ever increasing population looking for quality recreational opportunities close to home.	3/25/2025 9:50 AM
35	Properly maintain the paved walkway on top of the Levee, rather than pouring tar in the cracks and painting over it.	3/25/2025 9:09 AM
36	The space feels underutilized at events like the Cherry Blossom Festival, but I believe that's a problem for the festival organization.	3/19/2025 4:58 PM
37	Thank you. Much appreciated.	3/17/2025 8:17 AM
38	More police presence is needed on the dike walking path, especially in the late afternoon. Motorized dirt bikes are an issue	3/15/2025 5:57 AM
39	Par 3 chip and putt	3/13/2025 8:26 PM
40	Would love to see more walking trails for hiking/dog walking.	3/13/2025 11:41 AM
41	I've visited other city's that have created designated areas for food trucks to set up in their	3/11/2025 6:21 PM

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	parks, which was quite enjoyable and attracted quite a few visitors.	
42	Please keep natural area's natural. And keep parks clean. Maintain and improve trails and walking paths.	3/10/2025 7:54 PM
43	Need better pest control	3/10/2025 5:01 PM
44	Remove the ugly yellow markers in front of Kirby Park.	3/10/2025 3:18 PM
45	I love all the festivals and events, but standing or walking for so long is not manageable. I often bring my own seat, but that means having to carry it as well! More benches would be most welcome!	3/10/2025 2:26 PM
46	During the festivals when there are rides, do those actually bring in money and crowds. I've heard families spending a lot of money on tickets going on these generic type of rides.	3/10/2025 10:49 AM
47	Can't wait to see the draft!	2/26/2025 12:55 PM
48	It would be great if there was an effort to incorporate more native plants/flowers/shrubs in the parks. Maybe there is an opportunity for community planting events and walks- so folks can be involved in the process and learn more about the importance of preserving our native environment.	2/24/2025 3:23 PM
49	Events to raise funds... not to increase RE tax to the homeowners.	2/24/2025 10:41 AM
50	N/A	2/24/2025 10:35 AM
51	Good luck! Remember partnerships! The Greater Wyoming Valley Area YMCA is another potential partner...	2/23/2025 2:17 PM
52	Expanded disc golf course safety near the veteran's bridge/ Perhaps cleaning up the brush and trim trimming trees a lot of Undesirableactivity goes on back there	2/20/2025 10:31 AM
53	Do it right	2/18/2025 10:56 AM
54	I think the team is doing a great job and I appreciate the public outreach. I want to be part of the solution!	2/16/2025 5:01 PM
55	Please, please make it more possible for kids to learn about the value of natural areas, the pollinators, the animals. It's not just playgrounds and places for drunks to hang out!	2/15/2025 1:48 PM
56	They are nice greenspaces that I would like utilize more. I have some safety concerns in the natural areas. Also, getting more attention/information out rhat the natural areas are places people can go would be good to get more positive users and deter negative users of them. Such as discover NEPA, alltrails and similar apps.	2/14/2025 4:00 PM
57	I had no idea Riverbend Park was a place, other than walking on the levee. What do people do there? Fish? What do people use Nesbitt Park for? I don't see too many people there when I walk by on the levee. I love the Kirby Park Natural Area and would love to see that be more utilized and people feel safe to go in there.	2/12/2025 9:03 PM
58	The Riverfront Parks Committee has done an excellent job of maintaining the Kirby Park Natural Area. All maintenance of the Natural Area regarding enhanced native vegetation and removal of invasive vegetation should be under the direction, and based solely on the recommendations, of the Committee.	2/12/2025 4:38 PM
59	I'd love to see basketball courts and improved tennis courts. The current ones are almost unusable.	2/12/2025 3:50 PM
60	The real shame is that this is not a community driven program by the municipal Boroughs , who need to take responsibility for active maintenance of improvements in the floodplain area. What this is is a grant of taxpayer funds Meant to improve our area being spent by firms outside our area and taking the money out of the community to develop plans and have as many outside firms with their fingers in the pot to have their say and develop a wonderful plan which will not be acted upon because there is no funds for it, and the municipalities do nit have the funds to maintain it. In the end this is a jobs program for Philly area professionals who have no vested interest in the success of their plans as evidenced by the 5 years of doing nothing to connect Forty Fort and Kingston dike paths.	2/12/2025 9:17 AM
61	Virtually every park in Philadelphia has a "Friends of" organization. I think there is great potential to bring that here.	2/12/2025 9:15 AM

Public Survey - Riverside Parks on the West Side of the Susquehanna

62	More funds are needed.	2/12/2025 7:41 AM
63	I do not think a dog park is a good idea, some people do not vaccinate their dogs leaving others vulnerable. If I bite occurs it can be difficult to locate the owner.	2/12/2025 6:54 AM
64	Riverfront parks committee is headed in the right direction. They just need to allow for more people to help them. I'm on their committee but overtime i offer help it's often declined or already completed or not needed. Don't be afraid to allow difference of opinions. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.	2/11/2025 4:21 PM
65	I think it is an outstanding use of American Rescue \$\$\$\$. Community development means making use of the beautiful areas for all to enjoy. Thank you. Looking forward to the development of this project.	2/11/2025 3:57 PM
66	Connect a bike path to the Forty Fort section	2/11/2025 3:49 PM
67	The parks are very nice. Kirby park needs a better fountain pump to aerate the pond better. Nesbit park needs some more lighting and some new trees. The existing ones are rotten inside and dangerous. The woods needs to get cleaned up. Clear out the camps and make some trails for police to drive through when it's dry to keep dumpers and camps from ruining the woodlands.	2/11/2025 11:48 AM
68	keep Nesbit disc golf maybe have some more parking needs / picnic area that won't be interfering with disc golf course , or even when people walk some people leave garbage everywhere and you guys mow the grass but don't pick up the trash and run it over so broken glass and soda/beer cans torn apart where children and animals do walk. Than people ride their ATV and rip up the course .	2/11/2025 11:23 AM
69	off road connection from Riverbend to Forty Fort levee trail	2/11/2025 10:51 AM
70	Great ideas at the public meeting. Love the idea of having natural local plants, more education on Native American history. Would suggest more animal waste stations in the park not just the levee. A splash pad would be nice for the children. A kayak assist dock would be nice. I am not in favor of any structures on the river side of the levee. Due to flooding, ice jamming. Would not be money well spent and could possibly add to flooding	2/11/2025 10:16 AM
71	When the disc golf players use the park they take the boat trailer parking	2/11/2025 7:03 AM
72	Please make it happen!	2/11/2025 6:08 AM
73	Given floodplan issues, what are the practical options for a community boathouse or rowing facility? Right now, it's a missed opportunity.	2/10/2025 9:05 PM
74	Beautiful area	2/10/2025 8:40 PM
75	safety,	2/10/2025 8:36 PM
76	This is a prime greenway area for thousands of local residents, and we are SO lucky to have undeveloped waterfront that is not a brownfield or highway. Use other riverfront parks for reference, like Fairmount Park in Philadelphia or Zilker Park and Butler Hike/Bike Trail in Austin TX. Opening up KPNA and Riverbend to recreation and integrating them into the surrounding communities will truly keep the Wyoming Valley on an upward swing.	2/10/2025 7:51 PM
77	connecting these parks either on the Wilkes-barre side or by other means would show great thought and intention in joining the communities in the area (IMO)	2/10/2025 7:28 PM

12

PA DCNR Land and Water
Conservation Fund Agreement
& Manual
(for Kirby Park)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Agreement

State: Pennsylvania	Project Number: 42-01510
Project Title: Wilkes-Barre City – Kirby Park	
Project Period: Approval to 12/31/06	Project Stage Covered by this Agreement: Entire Project

Project Scope (Description of Project)

Rehabilitation of Kirby Park located in the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County.

Development will consist of: Sports & Playfields, Support Facility

Project Cost:		The following are hereby incorporated into this Agreement: 1. General Provisions (LWCF Manual) 2. Project Application and Attachments 3. _____ 4. _____
Total Cost	\$ 300,000	
Fund Support not to exceed 50% Fund Amount	\$ 150,000	
Cost of this Stage Assistance this Stage	\$ 300,000	
	\$ 150,000	

NPS 10-902
(7-81)

The United States of America, represented by the Director, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, and the State named above (hereinafter referred to as the State), mutually agree to perform this agreement in accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964), the provisions and conditions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants Manual, and with the terms, promises, conditions, plans, specifications, estimates, procedures, project proposals, maps, and assurances attached hereto or retained by the State and hereby made a part hereof.

The United States hereby promises, in consideration of the promises made by the State herein, to obligate to the State the amount of money referred to above, and to tender to the State that portion of the obligation which is required to pay the United States' share of the costs of the above project stage, based upon the above percentage of assistance. The State hereby promises, in consideration of the promises made by the United States herein, to execute the project described above in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

The following special project terms and conditions were added to this agreement before it was signed by the parties hereto:

State Historical Preservation Officer's Section 106

Comments/Recommendations must be addressed prior to initial Drawdown.

A Section 6(f) map signed & dated) must be submitted prior to initial drawdown.

In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the date entered below.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
By: Mary Darrow
project manager
(Signature)

National Park Service
United States Department
of the Interior

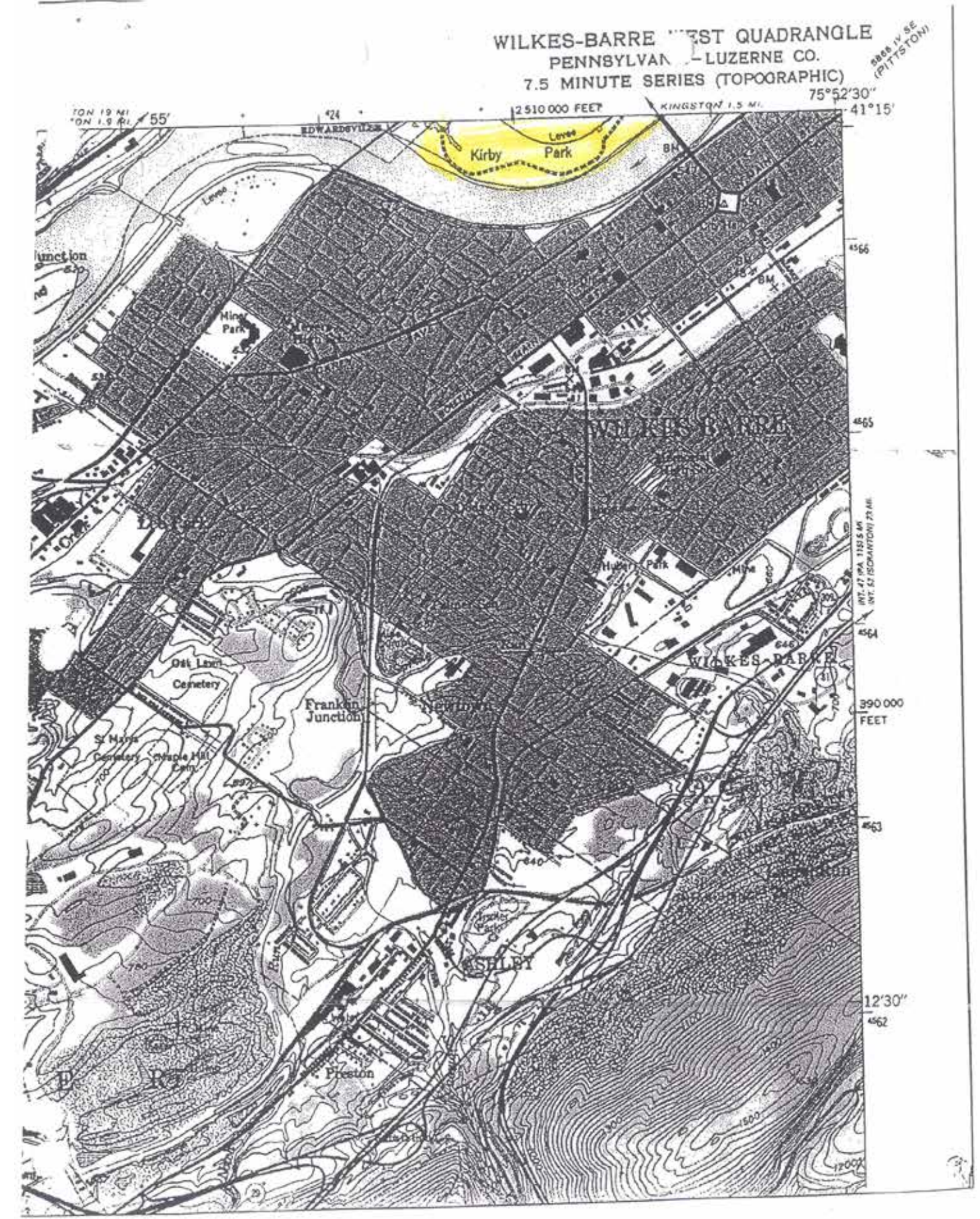
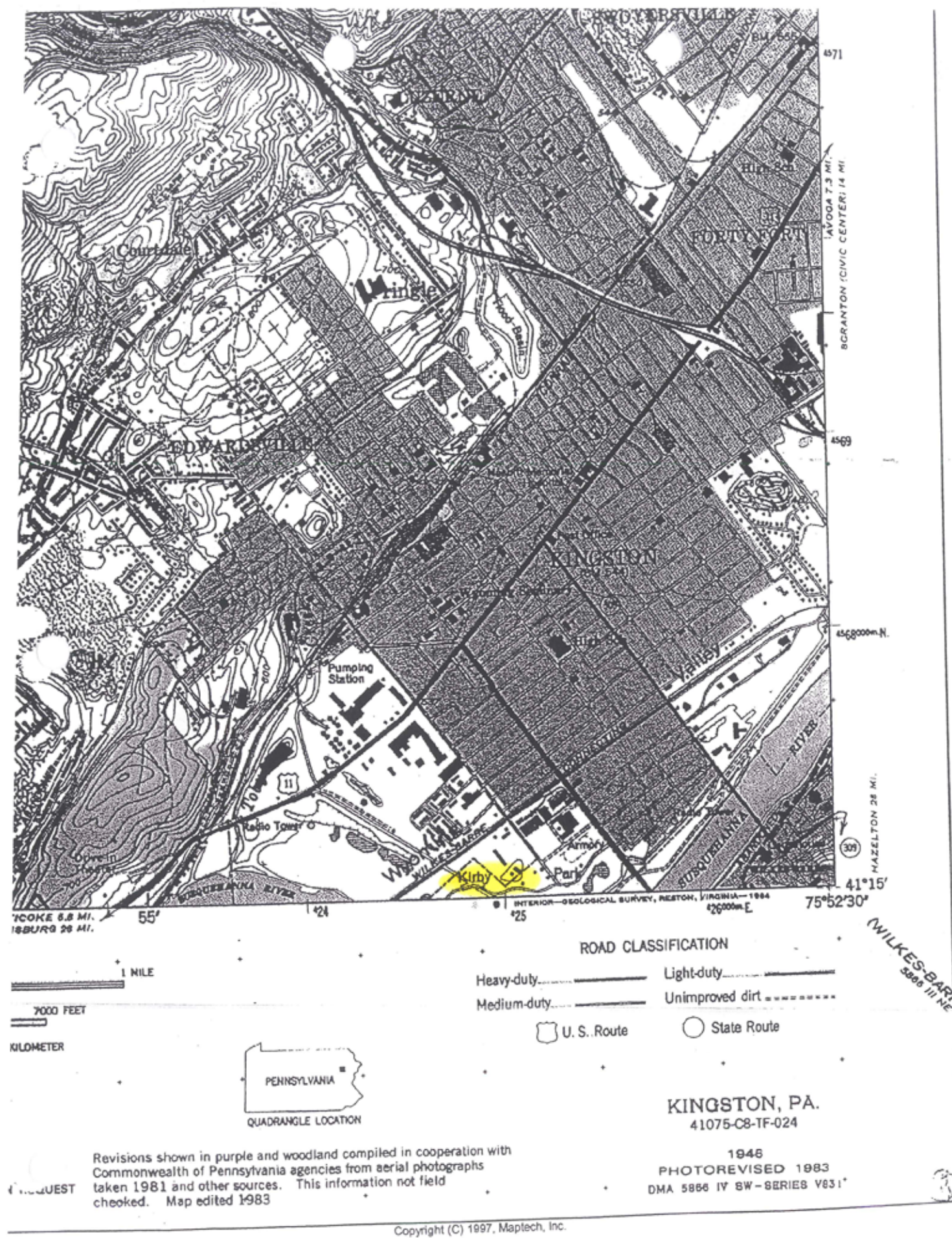
Date: JUL 15 2004

NPS 10-902
(7-81)

STATE
Pennsylvania
By: Larry G. Williamson
(Signature)

Larry G. Williamson
(Name)

Alternate State Liaison Officer
(Title)



1510



LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND STATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Post-Completion Responsibilities and 6(f)(3) Conversions

A Guide for Local Project Sponsors

Prepared by:

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR)
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

LWCF CONTACT

Liz Clark
Land and Water Conservation Fund Program Specialist
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
400 Market Street, RSCSOB 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101-2301
Email: elizclark@pa.gov

Revised 2/6/25

INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to provide information on post completion responsibilities to local project sponsors who have received LWCF funds for land acquired and/or developed with Land and Water Conservation Program (LWCF) and the LWCF Act administered by the National Park Service (NPS) thorough DCNR. It is not intended to be used by local municipalities to make their own decisions regarding compliance with the LWCF program requirements and the LWCF Act. DCNR is responsible to coordinate through the State Liaison Officer (SLO) or Alternate State Liaison Officer (ASLO) with NPS for compliance with the LWCF Program.

Information contained within this document is subject to change at any time or as policy updates are provided by NPS.

The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program, established in 1965, is a federal source of funding provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior’s National Park Service to all states to provide 50% matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The intent of the Program is to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation areas and facilities for the general public to enjoy.

The [LWCF Act](#) requires that local project sponsors maintain to acceptable standards the properties and/or facilities acquired and/or developed for outdoor recreation use.

Section 6(f)(3) of the Act states that “No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary (Department of the Interior), be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The secretary shall approve such conversion only if he/she finds it to be in accord with the then existing Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and only upon such conditions as he/she deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonable equivalent usefulness and location.” The Secretary has authority to disapprove conversion requests and/or to reject proposed property substitutions.

The restriction on the use of the LWCF-assisted properties is a **perpetual restriction**, which can only be removed by an Act of Congress. The basis for determining the area covered by Section 6(f)(3) is through the LWCF Agreements with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and any attachments made a part of the agreement and the LWCF boundary map.

A copy of the [LWCF State Assistance Program Manual](#) can be found on NPS’s website.

Post-Completion Responsibilities for Local Project Sponsor

Purpose (Chapter 8.A.)

Pursuant to the LWCF Act at 54 U.S.C. § 200301 et seq., 36 C.F.R. Part 59, and 2 C.F.R. § 200.316, this chapter contains the requirements for maintaining LWCF assisted sites and facilities in public outdoor recreation use following project completion and to assure that LWCF-assisted areas remain accessible to the general public including non-residents of assisted jurisdictions. These post-completion responsibilities apply to each area or facility for which LWCF assistance is obtained, regardless of the extent of participation of the program in the assisted area or facility and consistent with the contractual agreement between NPS and DCNR. Responsibility for compliance and enforcement of these requirements rests with DCNR for both State and locally sponsored projects (36 C.F.R. § 59.1). The responsibilities cited herein are applicable to the area depicted or otherwise described on the LWCF boundary map and/or as described in other project documentation approved by the NPS (36 C.F.R. § 59.1).

Operations and Maintenance (Chapter 8.B.)

Local Project Sponsors are required as recipients of LWCF assistance to properly maintain and operate assisted sites and facilities in public outdoor recreation use for public use in perpetuity. To find an existing LWCF project in your community, visit DCNR’s interactive map [Grant Acquisition and Development Projects](#).

Property acquired and/or developed with LWCF assistance shall be operated and maintained per the following standards:

- 1. The property shall be maintained so as to appear attractive and inviting to the public. Staffing and servicing of facilities shall be adequate.
- 2. Proper sanitation and sanitary facilities shall be maintained in accordance with applicable health standards.
- 3. Any outdoor recreation facilities should comply with all State and Federal legislation (e.g., 42 U.S.C. § 6901 et. seq. and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as required and compliance will be indicated by signs posted in visible public areas, statements in public information brochures, etc.
- 4. Properties shall be kept reasonably open, accessible, and safe for public use. Fire prevention, lifeguard, and similar activities shall be maintained for proper public safety.
- 5. All facilities, buildings, roads, trails, and other structures and improvements shall be kept in reasonable repair throughout their estimated lifetime to prevent undue deterioration and to encourage public use. Erosion problems shall be corrected. Evidence of vandalism should be repaired as quickly as possible.
- 6. The facility shall be kept open for public use at reasonable hours and times of the year according to the type of area or facility. Restrooms shall be unlocked during normal park hours.
- 7. All facilities should be ADA accessible. As of March 15, 2012, compliance with the [2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design](#) is required for any new construction/alterations and future rehabilitation to existing facilities.
- 8. The LWCF acknowledgement sign shall be displayed on site throughout the project life/in perpetuity.

Post-Completion Inspections and Reporting (Chapter 8.C.)

All projects funded through the LWCF State Assistance Program are permanently protected for the benefit of the public. Upon completion of the project, DCNR is responsible to complete post on-site inspections at five (5) year intervals on all projects. The inspection areas are defined by the “LWCF boundary map” which is on file with DCNR and NPS. If it is discovered that the property has been converted to a use that is not consistent with public outdoor recreation it is the community’s responsibility to work with the DCNR to reach a solution. It is through this process that we can be sure that LWCF will help provide outdoor recreation opportunities for this and future generations.

The following points should be taken into consideration during the inspection of properties that have been developed for public use:

- a. Retention and use. Is the LWCF boundary area intact and the property being used for outdoor recreation purposes including those intended through the projects funded with LWCF assistance?
- b. Appearance. Is the property attractive and inviting to the public?

- c. Maintenance. Is upkeep and repair of structures and improvements adequate? Is there evidence of poor workmanship or use of inferior quality materials or construction? Is vandalism a problem? Is the area being maintained?
- d. Management. Does staffing and servicing of facilities appear adequate?
- e. Availability. Is there evidence of discrimination (including based on residence, see Section D below)? Is the property readily accessible and open to the public during reasonable hours and times of the year?
- f. Signing. Is the area properly signed to allow for user information and safety, and proper acknowledgement of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund?
- g. Interim use. Where lands have been acquired but not yet developed, the inspection should determine whether the interim uses of the property are in accordance with agreements with the NPS.

During these site inspections, DCNR is looking for the following items:

- 1. Does it appear that the property is being used for public recreation purposes?
- 2. Does the site appear to conform to the Section 6(f) boundary with no area(s) converted to uses other than those related to public recreation?
- 3. Do the site and facilities appear to have reasonable accessibility for disabled persons?
- 4. Do up-keep and maintenance appear to be adequate?
- 5. Is access to the site and/or facilities available to the general public during reasonable hours?
- 6. Is there a [LWCF project acknowledgement sign](#) posted at the site?
- 7. Does it appear that all buildings are used for recreational and park related purposes?

Availability of Users (Chapter 8.D.)

Property acquired and/or developed with LWCF assistance shall be available to all persons to use and enjoy. The local project sponsor must comply with the following:

- 1. **Discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or sex.** Pursuant to Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance shall be open to entry and use by all persons regardless of race, color, or national origin, who are otherwise eligible. Title 43, Part 17 (43 C.F.R. Part 17), effectuates the provisions of Title VI. The prohibitions imposed by Title VI apply to park or recreation areas benefiting from federal assistance and to any other recreation areas administered by the State agency (DCNR) or local agency receiving the assistance. Discrimination is also prohibited on the basis of religion or sex.
- 2. **Discrimination on the basis of residence.** The Prohibition of Discrimination section of the LWCF Act (54 U.S.C. § 200305(ii)) provides that, with respect to property acquired and/or developed with LWCF assistance, discrimination on the basis of residence, including preferential reservation, membership or annual permit systems is prohibited except to the extent that reasonable differences in admission and other fees may be maintained on the basis of residence. This prohibition applies to both regularly scheduled and special events (36 C.F.R. § 59.4(a)).
Fees charged to nonresidents cannot exceed twice the amount charged to residents. Where there is no charge for residents, but a fee is charged to nonresidents, nonresident fees cannot exceed fees charged for residents at comparable State or local public facilities. Reservation, membership, or annual permit

systems available to residents must also be available to nonresidents and the period of availability must be the same for both residents and nonresidents. Recipients are prohibited from providing residents the option of purchasing annual or daily permits while at the same time restricting nonresidents to the purchase of annual permits only (36 C.F.R. § 59.4(c)).

These provisions apply to whole recreation area within the LWCF boundary area. Nonresident fishing and hunting license fees are excluded from these requirements (36 C.F.R. § 59.4(c)).

- 3. **Discrimination on the basis of disability.** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that no qualified person shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 100-336) simply references and reinforces these requirements for federally-assisted programs.
- 4. **Reasonable use limitations.** Project sponsors may impose reasonable limits on the type and extent of use of areas and facilities acquired and/or developed with Fund assistance when such a limitation is necessary for maintenance or preservation. Thus, limitations may be imposed on the numbers of persons using an area or facility or the type of users, such as “hunters only” or “hikers only.” All limitations shall be in accordance with the applicable grant agreement and amendments.

Leasing and Concession Operations (Chapter 8.E.)

A project sponsor may provide for the operation of a LWCF boundary area by leasing the area/facility to a private organization or individual or by entering into a concession agreement with an operator to provide a public outdoor recreation opportunity at the LWCF-assisted site.

All lease documents and concession agreements for the operation of LWCF-assisted sites by private organizations or individuals must address the following:

- 1. In order to protect the public interest, the local project sponsor must have a clear ability to periodically review the performance of the lessee/concessioner and terminate the lease/agreement if its terms and the provisions of the grant agreement, including standards or maintenance, public use, and accessibility, are not met.
- 2. The lease/agreement document should clearly indicate that the leased/concessioned area is to be operated by the lessee/concessioner for public outdoor recreation purposes in compliance with provisions of the LWCF Act and implementing regulations (36 CFR 59). As such, the document should require the area be identified as publicly owned and operated as a public outdoor recreation facility in all signs, literature, and advertising, and is operated by a lessee/concessioner as identified in the public information to eliminate the perception that the area is private.
- 3. The lease/agreement document should require all fees charged by the lessee/concessioner to the public must be competitive with similar private facilities.
- 4. The lease/agreement document should make clear that compliance with all Civil Rights and accessibility legislation (e.g., Title VI of Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)) is required, and compliance will be indicated by signs posted in visible public areas, statements in public information brochures, etc.

Note: As a local sponsor of LWCF assistance if you are currently leasing or have a concessioner agreement on LWCF protected park land, please update and provide DCNR a copy of those lease or concessionaire agreements incorporating the above requirements for our review and concurrence. If the local sponsor

intends to enter into a new lease or concessionaire agreement, please forward a draft copy of the document incorporating the above requirements for our review and concurrence prior to executing the agreement.

Earned Income (Chapter 7.B.D.E.)

Income earned by the project sponsor after the project period, including from recreational user fees, leases, concession operations and land management practices, may be disposed of at the sponsor’s discretion. However, the sponsor is encouraged to use such income to further recreation objectives related to the facility when state and local laws allow. Exceptions include: the sale of improvements or structures acquired with LWCF assistance; and non-destructive mineral extraction. See [LWCF Manual](#) for details.

Conversions of Use (Chapter 8.F)

Property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance shall be retained and used for public outdoor recreation in **perpetuity**. Any property so acquired and/or developed shall not be wholly or partly converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses without prior approval of NPS pursuant to the LWCF Act and conversion requirements outlines in regulations (36 C.F.R. § 59.3). The conversion provisions of the LWCF Act, regulations, and these guidelines apply to each area or facility for which LWCF assistance is obtained, regardless of the extent of participation of the program in the assisted area or facility and consistent with the contractual agreement between NPS and DCNR.

Local project sponsors must consult early with [DCNR staff](#) when a conversion is under consideration or has been discovered. DCNR staff will in turn consult with NPS as early as possible in the conversion process for guidance and to sort out and discuss details of the conversion proposal to avoid mid-course corrections and unnecessary delays. **A critical first step is for DCNR and NPS to agree on the size of the LWCF-assisted area (or LWCF-assisted property) impacted by any non-recreation, non-public use, especially prior to any appraisal activity.** Any previous LWCF project agreements and actions **must** be identified and understood to determine the actual LWCF boundary area.

Conversion Process: There is a formal process required for any project that is proposed to be converted from public outdoor recreation use. The conversion process must be followed in any disposition of conversion of lands acquired or developed in total or part with Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars. More information on DCNR’s Conversion Process can be found in the [“LWCF Conversion Process Policy”](#) on our website.

Situations that **may not** trigger a conversion if NPS determined that certain criteria are met include:

- 1. Underground utility easements that do not impact the recreational use of the park and are restored to their original surface condition. These must be reviewed by the NPS.
- 2. Proposals to construct public facilities, such as recreation centers and indoor pool buildings, within an LWCF boundary area where It can be shown there is a gain or increased benefit to the public outdoor recreational opportunity. These proposals must be reviewed by the NPS as a “public facility request.”
- 3. Proposals for “temporary non-conforming uses,” which are temporary non-recreation activities of less than a six (6)-month duration within an LWCF boundary area. These must be reviewed by the NPS.
- 4. Proposals to build sheltered facilities or to shelter facilities within an LWCF boundary area provided they do not change the overall public outdoor recreation characteristics. These must be reviewed by the NPS.

- 5. Proposals for changing the overall outdoor recreation use of an LWCF-assisted area from that intended in the original LWCF project agreement. These proposals must be reviewed by NPS.

Situations **that** trigger a conversion include:

- 1. Property interests are conveyed for private or non-public outdoor recreations uses.
- 2. Non-outdoor recreation uses (public or private) are made of the project area, or a portion thereof, including those occurring on pre-existing rights-of-way and easements, or by a lessor.
- 3. Unallowable indoor facilities are developed within the project area without NPS concurrence, such as unauthorized public facilities and sheltering of an outdoor facility.
- 4. Public outdoor recreation use of property acquired or develop with LWCF assistance is terminated.

Examples of conversions are accommodating non-recreational uses on a piece of property including, but not limited to the construction of through-roads; construction of residential, industrial, and commercial developments; energy development; municipal buildings; telecommunication towers; resource extraction; disposition of the property; no public access; and other users not permitted under the LWCF Program. The [“Top 10 Conversion Issues”](#) can be found on DCNR’s website.

Conversions are normally discovered in the following manner:

- 1. Inspection by DCNR personnel or by the NPS Regional personnel.
- 2. Contact with local officials.

Pre-conversion activities, those activities leading to a conversion of park property, may also be discovered using the above-mentioned means and the following:

- 1. Local news media reports.
- 2. Intergovernmental review process.

Some examples of pre-conversion activities are plans and specifications for construction, public hearings, application for permits, etc.

Cellular Towers (NPS Memo)

The construction of communication towers on a LWCF-assisted site would trigger a conversion. The cell tower, safety area or buffer area that may be required, access road, and impact on remaining parkland will all be considered when determining the amount of acreage that must be replaced.

Underground Utility Easements and Rights-of-Way (Chapter 8.G.)

Currently, many of the proposed underground “utility” projects involve installation of what is actually transportation infrastructure, both in their purpose and regulation, to facilitate efficient movement of goods and services. Often the alignments for these underground utility projects extend for miles beyond the LWCF recreation area, cross multiple jurisdictions including state lines, require owners to surrender or give up a property right through an executed legal instrument (easement), and maintain standardized rights of way widths of 50 to 200 feet instead of the 20 to 30 feet more typical of local utility lines. Many of these do not meet the policy. **All projects that fit under this category must first be reviewed by NPS to evaluate the impacts of the alignment and determine if the project will trigger a conversion.**

Underground utilities within an LWCF boundary area may be allowed as long as the ground above the alignment can be and is restored to its pre-existing condition to ensure the continuation of public outdoor recreational use of the area within twelve (12) months after the ground is disturbed. Unless there is a pre-existing easement, the legal arrangement providing the rights for the utility must be a license or other limited use agreement. Arrangements that require granting property rights such as an easement will constitute a conversion.

If the recreation use is not restored within the 12-month period, or the utility installation results in permanent above-ground changes, the NPS shall be consulted to determine if the changes will trigger a conversion. If present or future outdoor recreation opportunities will be impacted in the easement area or in the remainder of the LWCF boundary area, a conversion will be triggered.

Note: If your municipality is planning to construct underground infrastructure (from fiber optic lines to pipelines) or above ground utilities within LWCF-assisted area, please contact DCNR before signing any easement or right of way agreements.

Commercial Signage (Chapter 8.H.)

Commercial signs are only allowable within LWCF boundary areas when the advertising is attached to allowable park structures such as benches, fencing, walls, and buildings, and are not inconsistent with the park setting and/or the built environment in which it is located (e.g., athletic fields). Signs may face either outside or inside the park. Commercial advertising in the form of a stand-alone structure such as a billboard that creates a footprint in the park, or commercial signage permanently affixed to a natural feature within the LWCF-assisted area, is a conversion regardless of which direction it faces.

Proposals to Construct Public Facilities (Chapter 8.I)

Public facility requests will only be concurred with if the public facility clearly enhances or benefits outdoor recreation use of the entire park, and the facility is compatible with and supportive of the outdoor recreation resources and opportunities of the LWCF-assisted area. Requests to construct sponsor-funded public facilities will be considered when it’s shown that the following criteria have been met:

- 1. Uses of the facility will be compatible with and supportive of outdoor recreation at the rest of the site and recreation use remains the overall primary function of the site. The proposed public facility will include a recreation component and encourages the outdoor recreation use of the remaining LWCF boundary area.
- 2. All design and location alternatives have been adequately considered, documented, and rejected on a sound basis.
- 3. The proposed structure is compatible and significantly supportive of the outdoor recreation resources of the site, whether existing or planned. The park’s outdoor recreation use must continue to be greater than that expected for any indoor uses, unless the site is a single use facility, such as a swimming pool building, which virtually occupies the entire site.
Examples of uses which would not ordinarily be allowed include, but are not limited to, a community recreation center which takes up all or most of a small park site; clinics; police stations; restaurants catering primarily to the general public; fire stations; professional sports facilities or commercial resort or other facilities which: (1) are not accessible to the general public; or, (2) require memberships; or, (3) which, because of high user fees, have the effect of excluding elements of the public; or (4), which include office, residential or elaborate lodging facilities.

Restaurant-type establishments with indoor dining/seating that cater primarily to the outdoor recreating public must be reviewed under this public facility policy. Other park food service operations such as snack bars, carry-out food service, and concession stands with outdoor dining including pavilions and protected patios are allowable without further NPS approval if the primary purpose is to serve the outdoor recreating public.

- 4. Potential and future benefits to the total park's outdoor recreation utility must be identified in the proposal. Any costs or detriments should be documented, and a net recreation benefit must result.
- 5. The proposed facility must be under the control and tenure of the public agency that sponsors and administers the original park area.
- 6. The proposal has been adequately reviewed at the state level and has been recommended by DCNR.

Pre-existing Buildings (Chapter 8.J.)

Buildings located within the LWCF boundary area that were constructed before the award of an LWCF grant and establishment of the LWCF boundary area can be important backdrops or anchors that hold special meaning for park visitors and local communities. Restoration and reuse of these pre-existing buildings may offer opportunities for attracting visitors to a public park area and for keeping them secure and maintained, all while conducting operations that support the LWCF outdoor recreation purpose of the site.

A necessary first step for pre-existing building proposals is to determine if the subject building is included within the LWCF boundary area, and if so, whether it was constructed before or after LWCF boundary area was first established. If the building was constructed after the boundary was established or has yet to be constructed, please refer instead to the Public Facilities policy, in Section I above.

Allowable uses of pre-existing buildings constructed before the LWCF boundary area establishment where NPS approval is not required include the following supporting uses:

- 1. Site administration, operation and maintenance;
- 2. Visitor information, park interpretation, education, and historic structure tours;
- 3. Park safety and security;
- 4. Resource protection and park related research;
- 5. Site visitor amenities including lodging (see details below) and dining (see details below); gift shops/park stores; and comfort facilities; and
- 6. Assembly for park/outdoor recreation related meetings and public programs (see details below).

If the DCNR determines the proposed use of a pre-existing building will primarily support the outdoor recreation purpose(s) within the LWCF boundary area, NPS review is not required. The NPS should be consulted if any of the above indoor uses will primarily support or serve other non-LWCF-assisted areas at the same time, other non-LWCF assisted areas in the system (e.g., system-wide maintenance facilities), and/or the non-park using public.

Lodging, Dining, and Meeting facilities: LWCF-assisted areas consist of many types of visitor amenities, including accommodations for lodging, dining, and meetings as follows: Overnight accommodations: These types of indoor overnight accommodations are allowable when the primary purpose is serving visitors of the LWCF-assisted area as the primary market and not the general non-park using public:

- 1. Cabins
- 2. Multi-bed hostels
- 3. Multi-unit lodge
- 4. Bed and breakfast operations; inns

Dining: These types of indoor dining accommodations are allowable when the primary purpose is serving visitors of the LWCF-assisted area as the primary market and not the general non-park using public:

- 1. Restaurant-type establishments
- 2. Snack bars
- 3. Carry-out food service
- 4. Concession stands

Meeting facilities: Types of allowable indoor meeting uses include activities, meetings, events, classes, and programs primarily for outdoor recreation and park-related purposes.

Improvements to Pre-existing Buildings: NPS review and approval is not needed for proposed improvements or changes to buildings accommodating the allowable uses described above, including related renovations and support facilities such as parking and storage, as long as the intended use of these improvements is continued support of the primary outdoor recreation purpose of the LWCF-assisted area. DCNR is responsible for ensuring this purpose is maintained, and that the building improvements and enhancements will not dominate the outdoor recreation use of the LWCF-assisted area, which could trigger a conversion pursuant to the LWCF Act. However, improvements that will increase the footprint of the pre-existing building or supporting facilities will require review.

NPS review is required for uses of pre-existing buildings constructed before LWCF grant award if: the proposed building uses will primarily support and serve areas not within the LWCF boundary area, will support non-outdoor recreation purposes, and/or will support the non-park using public. For these uses, NPS review is required to determine if the use will trigger a conversion

Temporary Non-Conforming Uses (Chapter 8.K.)

All requests for temporary uses for purposes that do not conform to the public outdoor recreation requirement must be submitted to and reviewed by DCNR. DCNR, in turn, will submit a formal request to NPS describing the temporary non-conforming use proposal.

Continued use beyond six (6)-months will not be considered temporary, but will result in a conversion of use and will require DCNR/project sponsor to provide new replacement recreation area(s) pursuant to 54 U.S.C. § 200305(f)(3) of the LWCF Act.

Sheltering Facilities (Chapter 3.C.7 and 8.L.)

Proposals to build sheltered facilities or to shelter existing facilities, such as an indoor pool or ice rink, within a LWCF-assisted area may be allowable if they are located in areas which meet the cold climatic criteria established by NPS, thereby significantly increasing the recreation opportunities provided. Such proposals must be reviewed and approved by NPS. Consult with DCNR staff for assistance with this process.

Obsolete Facilities (Chapter 8.M.)

Local project sponsors are not required to continue operation of a particular recreation area or assisted facility beyond its useful life. However, Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act requires local project sponsors to continue to maintain the entire area within the LWCF boundary area in some form of public outdoor recreation use. The LWCF Act obligations cannot be discharged by declaring a facility obsolete.

Notwithstanding neglect or inadequate maintenance on the part of the local project sponsor, a recreation area or facility may be determined to be obsolete if:

- 1. Reasonable maintenance and repairs are not sufficient to keep the recreation area or facility operating;
- 2. Changing recreation needs dictate a change in the type of facilities provided;
- 3. Park operating practices dictate a change in the type of facilities required; or
- 4. The recreation area or facility is destroyed by fire, natural disaster, or vandalism.

A facility may be considered obsolete and its use may be discontinued or changed if the local project sponsor provides a sound justification statement for determining obsolescence and DCNR staff concur with the change. However, NPS approval must be obtained prior to any change from one LWCF allowable use to another when the proposed use would significantly contravene the original plans for the area. LWCF assistance may be provided to renovate outdoor recreation facilities that have previously received LWCF assistance, if DCNR determines the renovation is not required as a result of neglect or inadequate maintenance, and the local project sponsor provides documentation to that effect.

Significant Change of Use (Chapter 8.N.)

The LWCF Act requires local project sponsors maintain the entire area defined in the project agreement in some form of public outdoor recreation use. NPS approval must be obtained prior to any change from one eligible use to another when the proposed use would significantly contravene the original plans or intent for the area as described in the original LWCF project(s).

NPS approval is not, however, required for each and every facility use change. Uses within an LWCF-assisted area should be viewed in the context of overall use and should be monitored in this context. A change from a swimming pool with substantial recreational development to a less intense area of limited development such as a passive park, or vice versa would for example, require NPS approval. Local project sponsors are required to consult with DCNR staff prior to initiating any such change.

DCNR staff will in turn notify NPS in writing of proposals to significantly change the use of LWCF-assisted area in advance of this occurrence. NPS will expedite a determination of whether a formal review and approval process will be required. A primary NPS consideration in the review will be the consistency of the proposal with the [SCORP](#). Changes to any use other than public outdoor recreation use constitute a conversion and will require NPS approval and the substitution of replacement land in accordance with the LWCF Act.

Visit the following websites to find more information about the LWCF Assistance Program:

NPS: <http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/index.htm>
DCNR: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/programs-and-services/grants.html> - scroll down to the “Land and Water Conservation Fund” Section on the page.

