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## INTRODUCTION

Different types of park and recreation lands serve different recreational purposes. Municipal neighborhood and community parks typically serve the active, close-to-home recreation needs of nearby citizens. County and regional parks frequently provide larger sites for resource-based recreation; preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources; and enjoyment of scenic resources. State and federal agencies typically offer recreation areas and allow recreational activities where they are compatible with resource conservation policies.

This Appendix presents an inventory of park and recreation lands in the Northern Chester County (the Region) and an analysis of the location of these lands in relation to population centers and the resources they feature, diversity of park environments and facilities in relation to residents’ needs, planning to meet recreational needs, and tools used to acquire park land.

## PARK AND RECREATION LANDS

This inventory of park lands and recreational facilities, as shown on *Map 8, Recreation Features*, was compiled from municipal plans; narratives on county, state, and federal parks as described in the *Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*; private park and facility Web sites; and field investigation.

### HOPEWELL FURNACE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The **Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site**<sup>1</sup> (NHS) is an 848-acre complex of village structures and landscapes that tell the story of the development of the early iron industry. Nearly one-third of the site – 271 acres – lies in Warwick Township.

The complex of historic and reconstructed structures represents Hopewell between 1820 and 1840, featuring a cold-blast furnace restored to its 1830s appearance. It serves as an example of an early American iron-making community that once utilized charcoal-fueled iron furnaces. These furnaces produced iron items to make arms as early as the American Revolution and to support the nation’s

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<sup>1</sup> *Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*, 2009. Hopewell Big Woods Partnership.

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growth during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Remnants of the iron industry are evident in the landscape, and include earthworks such as colliers' pits and built structures.

Hopewell Furnace NHS features a visitor center hosting museum exhibits, restrooms, a bookstore, audio-visual programs and staff who inform and orient visitors to the site. Outdoors, 70 miles of blazed trails wind throughout the site and connect hikers with neighboring French Creek State Park. Bicycling is allowed on the site's paved roads. Much of the surrounding landscape is protected today as the French Creek State Park, State Game Lands 43, and the Crow's Nest Preserve. In addition, the Horse-Shoe Trail passes through the site.

Hopewell Furnace NHS currently serves a great number of interpretive functions. It represents the only assemblage of buildings, in one location, that characterize the form and arrangement typical of eighteenth-century iron plantations. The site explores the lives of ironmasters Mark Bird and Clement Brooke, provides a characterization of Iron Plantation life, and provides the only opportunity within the region to see all of the components necessary to eighteenth-century iron production in one place. It is also an excellent place to interpret African American resources such as Sixpenny Village and the contribution of African Americans to the region's iron industry.

*The Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*<sup>2</sup> identifies various opportunities to expand or enhance interpretation of the iron industry at or in the vicinity of Hopewell Furnace NHS:

- The *Hopewell Furnace NHS General Management Plan* suggests reorienting access to the park from the south, which would have been the historical entry point to the furnace.
- Diversifying the set of forest stands – also important to maintaining healthy and diverse ecosystems – would suggest the historical approach to forest management in the interest of fueling the furnace. This diversification would occur through managing for different age stands and leaving down and dead woody debris and cavities for nesting animals. A working demonstration of the 30-year rotation system is possible.
- During summer months, costumed historical interpreters demonstrate, describe, and tell the story of Hopewell's iron-making years (1771-1883) and depict village occupations. Lumber carving and producing charcoal on a small scale are activities that could be part of the hands-on approach appropriate to this former Recreation Demonstration Area.
- Hopewell Furnace NHS could be one of five venues to tell the conservation story, along with Crow's Nest Preserve, Welkinweir, French Creek State Park, and Birdsboro Waters.
- Nature walks and talks at French Creek State Park and Hopewell Furnace NHS could be expanded in partnership with the Natural Lands Trust.

### SCHUYLKILL RIVER NATIONAL AND STATE HERITAGE AREA

Like other National Heritage Areas, the **Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area** is recognized for its unique qualities, resources, and historical significance to America's past. Its designation acknowledges the Schuylkill River Valley as the birthplace of several movements that shaped the nation, fueled its growth, and reclaimed its future. Along these riverbanks, the American,

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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Industrial, and Environmental Revolutions were born. The Heritage Area was designated a State Heritage Area by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1995 and a National Heritage Area (NHA) by Congress in 2000. It encompasses lands from Ashland and Tamaqua in Schuylkill County, along the 128-mile river and throughout most of Berks County, from portions of Chester and Montgomery counties, and from the City of Philadelphia. In addition to the Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, this Schuylkill River NHA is also home to the Valley Forge National Historic Park and Independence National Historic Park.

Designation as a heritage area does not represent federal land ownership. Instead, it recognizes the area, its resources, and its communities as having significant value for present and future generations. *Living with the River: The Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Schuylkill River Heritage Area*<sup>3</sup> outlines the goals, strategies, and tasks for achieving resource conservation, recreation, education and interpretation, community revitalization, and heritage tourism through partnerships, program linkages, and investments that have regional impact and contribute to a unique sense of place. The Schuylkill River Greenway Association (SRGA) is the designated management organization for the Heritage Area. SRGA leads the implementation of the management plan and supports further action through grants and partnership projects.

Though not located within Northern Chester County, **Valley Forge National Historic Park**<sup>4</sup> is a popular destination among the region's residents. On the site of the 1777-78 winter encampment of the Continental Army, the park commemorates the sacrifices and perseverance of the Revolutionary War generation and honors the ability of citizens to pull together and overcome adversity during extraordinary times. Within the park, visitors can take tours, explore the museum, watch reenactments, speak with interpreters, and visit the buildings and monuments. The park also contains 28 miles of authorized trails that are popular for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.

### STATE LANDS

Together, French Creek State Park and State Game Lands 43 offer 10,639 acres of public land for a variety of recreational activities.

At 7,730 acres, **French Creek State Park**<sup>5</sup> is the largest public recreational facility in the Hopewell Big Woods region and a major recreational destination. French Creek offers two lakes – Hopewell and Scotts Run – extensive forests, and almost 40 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and limited horseback riding. Lake activities include boating, fishing, and swimming, with the availability of boat rentals, showers, restrooms, phones, and a food concession shoreside. Winter activities include ice fishing as well as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on the park trails. Hunting is quite popular in season and is allowed in most areas of the park except around the two lakes and campgrounds. The pool at French Creek State Park is also very popular, attracting visitors from Lancaster, Reading, and other parts of southeastern Pennsylvania. The visitor center provides information on available activities within the park and nearby.

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<sup>3</sup> *Living with the River: The Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Schuylkill River Heritage Area*, 2003. Schuylkill River Greenway Association.

<sup>4</sup> [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), accessed December 8, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> *Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*, 2009. Hopewell Big Woods Partnership.

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The most significant recreational use at the state park occurs at Hopewell Lake and the adjacent campgrounds. The state park is one of the few recreational facilities in the Hopewell Big Woods area that includes overnight camping. There is an extensive, year-round campground with 200 wooded campsites in the more-developed part of the park north of Hopewell Lake. The campground has paved parking pads, hot showers, a playground, 60 sites with electric hookups for RVs, accessible campsites, and two family-assist restrooms. There are also three heated cabins and two Mongolian-style round tents or “yurts” on wooden decks. A showerhouse is nearby.

A former quarry, with a total depth of some 300 feet, is a geological and scenic wonder at the northern tip of French Creek State Park. There is currently no authorized trail access to the quarry. In addition to enhanced interpretation of the iron industry items noted under the Hopewell Furnace NHS, *The Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*<sup>6</sup> identified both the unique opportunity for rock climbing and safety concern for rock climbers at French Creek State Park, St. Peters Village, and Birdsboro Waters.

**Marsh Creek State Park** lies just to the south of the study area in Upper Uwchlan Township in northcentral Chester County and outside the Hopewell Big Woods region. The 1,705-acre park contains the 535-acre Marsh Creek Lake, which offers fishing and sailing and is a rest stop for migrating waterfowl. Other recreational opportunities include hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, swimming, hunting, birding, sledding, and ice skating, iceboating, and ice fishing on the frozen lake in winter.<sup>7</sup>

The 2,909 acres of **Pennsylvania Game Lands 43**<sup>8</sup> span Berks and Chester counties with the vast majority – 2,156 acres – in Warwick Township. This site consists of three noncontiguous wooded properties. The western tract can be accessed from Laurel Road; the central tract by Pine Swamp Road, Northside Road, or Harmonyville Road; and the eastern tract by Trythall Road and St. Peters Village. Pennsylvania Game Commission policies focus on managing wildlife populations and minimizing impacts to their habitat, to the extent possible, for the benefit of hunters. Its educational focus is limited to hunting safety and management of wildlife habitat on State Game Lands. It provides no visitor support facilities such as a visitor center, restrooms, and picnic or rest areas.

State Game Lands 43, and designated portions of French Creek State Park, are major regional hunting destinations. A shooting range is available on the State Game Lands off of Laurel Road. Hunting is possible most times of the year (bow season, deer season, bird season), although limited to bow hunting and shotgun. Rifle hunting is not permitted in Chester County but is permitted in the Berks County portions of the Game Lands.

With the exception of the Horse-Shoe Trail, the trails on the State Game Lands are essentially service roads used primarily by hunters. Trails are open to the public on a limited basis for public safety. Trail access is permitted on Sundays or on roads open to public travel, from the last Saturday in September to the third Saturday in January, and after 1 p.m. from the second Saturday in April to the last Saturday in May. There are no authorized single-track or cross-country trails and no authorized connections to French Creek State Park or Hopewell Furnace trails, with the exception of the Horse-Shoe Trail.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us), accessed December 1, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> *Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*, 2009. Hopewell Big Woods Partnership.

### COUNTY PARKS

The Chester County Park System encompasses more than 4,500 acres of dedicated parklands open for public use, and created to preserve the natural and cultural history of the county, as well as provide passive recreational pursuits. Facilities are open from 8 a.m. to sunset, and offer many recreational opportunities and services. All facilities are available year-round, weather permitting.<sup>9</sup> Warwick County Park is the only park located in the Region. Chester County is also developing the Schuylkill River Trail through Northern Chester County and a visitor center and trailhead in the village of Parker Ford.

**Warwick County Park**<sup>10</sup> is a popular recreational destination. The 538-acre park includes a variety of habitats, from vernal pools and wetlands to meadows to woods; an extensive system of trails that offers numerous opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and bird watching; and a day use area. The Horse-Shoe Trail winds its way along the southern boundary of the park. Fishing in French Creek is a popular recreational pastime. Two miles of this state-designated exceptional value waterway can be accessed from within the park. French Creek is one of the most popular destinations in southeastern Pennsylvania for trout fishing, and is stocked each year with rainbow and brown trout.

The developed day use area is confined to the western end of the park. This area offers several single-family picnic tables and two roofed pavilions that can be reserved for special events. Park facilities feature two age-appropriate playgrounds, a sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, and a quoit pit. The day use area also includes a water spigot. Restrooms are available and there is a ranger station. There is even a public telephone. Other areas of the park are generally unimproved, although there are two parking areas and trailheads at the eastern end of the park, along Mt. Pleasant Road and Coventryville Road.

*The Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*<sup>11</sup> identifies opportunities to expand or enhance natural resource and iron heritage interpretation at Warwick County Park:

1. Explanation of the process of reducing wood to charcoal, and the way of life of the collier through artifact and photograph display, as recommended in Chester County's *Strategic Plan for the Iron and Steel Heritage Region*.
2. Trails/tours for travel on foot, on bike, or by an historically-relevant mode among interpretive sites at Hopewell Furnace NHS, Coventryville, and St. Peters Village.
3. Education about water resources in the park (vernal pools, wetlands, and French Creek) as well as source water and their relationship to water quality in downstream communities of the French Creek and Schuylkill River watersheds.

In 2008, Chester County purchased the Parker House and its 5.5-acre lot in the village of **Parker Ford** with the intent of developing it as a Schuylkill River Trail visitor center and maintenance facility. The

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<sup>9</sup> Chester County Parks and Recreation, <http://dsf.chesco.org>, accessed December 1, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan*, 2009. Hopewell Big Woods Partnership.

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village is a National Historic District deemed historically significant in the areas of commerce, transportation, and military history between the years 1700 and 1899. In September 1777, General Washington's Continental troops crossed the Schuylkill River to the banks of Parker Ford after the Battle of Brandywine. For its location and significance, the village has been designated as a gateway to the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. The county also owns the riverfront tract at the outfall of Pigeon Creek to the Schuylkill River; East Coventry Township owns an adjacent riverfront tract, the Wade Tract. East Vincent owns the Parker Ford Tavern and Stable and envisions restoration of the buildings and grounds to their original eighteenth-century appearance and re-use as a museum or similar public amenity to complement the Schuylkill River Trailhead at Parker Ford.<sup>12</sup>

Chester County also owns the **Linfield and Saratoga de-silting basins** along the Schuylkill River in East Coventry with long-term plans to manage them as preserves, much like the Black Rock Sanctuary.

### MUNICIPAL PARKS

#### *ACTIVE PARKLAND*

The 11 municipal parks in the Region offer 208.7 acres of developed parkland for active recreation, as listed in *Table A2.1* and shown on *Map 8, Recreational Features*.

**Table A2.1: Municipal Parkland**

Facility Name	Municipal Location	Ownership	Acreage
Ellis Woods Park	East Coventry	Municipal	14.9
Towpath Park	East Coventry	Municipal	7.5
Kimberton Community Park	East Pikeland	Municipal	15.0
Community Park on the Ridge	East Vincent	Municipal	23.0
Kenilworth Park	North Coventry	Municipal	22.3
River Bend Park	North Coventry	Municipal	10.8
Riverside Park	North Coventry	Municipal	3.7
Connie Batdorf Park	South Coventry	Municipal	14.0
Pickering Grove	West Pikeland	Municipal	16.4
Pine Creek Park	West Pikeland	Municipal	71.1
Andrew Evans Park	West Vincent	Municipal	10.0
<b>Total</b>			<b>208.7</b>

Source: Gannett Fleming, Inc.

**Ellis Woods Park** is a 14.9-acre suburban site in East Coventry Township adjacent to the township municipal building and Pigeon Creek. The site offers a walking path (loop) and a nature trail through wooded areas, as well as a playground, picnic area, and parking lot.

**Towpath Park** is a 7.5-acre park between Route 724 and the Schuylkill River in East Coventry Township. The park offers a multipurpose field, a volleyball court (net available upon request), a pond,

<sup>12</sup> [www.eastvincent.org](http://www.eastvincent.org), accessed December 1, 2010.

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boat launch, and children’s play area, as well as pavilions, picnic tables, and grills. Interpretative signage along a walking trail highlights the site’s history related to the former Schuylkill River canal.

The **Kimberton Community Park** is a 15.0-acre park located along Route 113 in the historic village of Kimberton. The park offers a basketball court, tennis courts, a hockey rink, and playground, as well as a walking trail and benches sited among the facilities. A gazebo, restrooms, and a drinking fountain are also provided.

**Community Park on the Ridge** is a 23-acre active and passive recreation park along Ridge Road (Route 23) in the central portion of East Vincent Township. The township’s administration building is located on the south side of Route 23; the park is located behind it. Park facilities include a sand volleyball court, tether ball, basketball court, soccer field, 60’ baseball/softball fields, two tennis courts, lacrosse nets, environmental markers, a meadow, child playground equipment, ornamental gardens, birdhouses, a dozen exercise stations and two paved trail loops. A small stream passing under a bridge flows through the west side of the park flanked by two riparian buffers. Also are picnic tables in and around a pavilion with grills. Rest benches are situated throughout the two trail loops.

**Kenilworth Park** is a 22.3-acre park in the Kenilworth neighborhood of North Coventry Township. Park facilities include two ball fields, one multi-purpose field, two tennis courts, a picnic area, a playground, and a walking path around the nearly one-acre pond. The park’s community building is currently used by the Tae KWON Do Academy, Pottstown.

**River Bend Park**, including an area known as the Pottstown Landing, is a 10.8-acre active recreation park in North Coventry Township. Facilities include two Little League ball fields, one multipurpose field, some playground equipment, a picnic pavilion, and tables. Each of the fields is a memorial field. Port-a-johns and parking are available on the site. The park is heavily used by sports leagues. Parking is located at the east end of the park, though visitors park in a small gravel area at the west end and on the adjacent grassy areas.

**Riverside Park** is a 3.7-acre park with locations along Coyne Alley and along Penn Street in North Coventry Township. The Coyne Alley location has a grass field. The Penn Street location offers two tennis courts, a basketball court, a boat launch, and parking.

**Connie Batdorf Park** is South Coventry Township’s active recreation park. The 14-acre park along Route 100 includes a football field, playground, and picnic pavilion. A port-a-john and parking are available.

**Pickering Grove** is a 16.4-acre site just off Route 113 in West Pikeland Township. The site is largely wooded with clearings primarily used for summer camp programs and parking. It includes a lodge, two informal ball fields primarily used as play areas, and access to Pickering Creek as it passes through the property. Informal pavilions and picnic areas have also been built on the site.

**Pine Creek Park** is West Pikeland Township’s active recreation park. This 71.1-acre site was once home to a horseracing track with a stable and associated structures. Today, the track is used for leisure and fitness walking, and the buildings are used for storage and maintenance. A half-acre pond is also found on the site. A playground, two soccer fields, two multipurpose fields, walking paths, benches, and

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picnic areas with a pavilion, tables, and grills have been added to the site. Natural areas of woodland, brush, and fields comprise the remainder of the site. Dogs are permitted in the park.

**Andrew Evans Park** is West Vincent Township’s park. The 10-acre active recreation park includes a Little League/softball field, a soccer field, a basketball court, and a playground. A picnic pavilion with tables is located at the highest point of the park. A walking path links several of the facilities. Benches and ornamental plantings are located throughout the site. Restrooms and parking are available.

### *PASSIVE PARKLAND (MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE)*

Seven of the nine municipalities own or hold easement to a total of 1,265.7 acres of land for passive recreation, as listed in *Table A2.2* and shown on *Map 8*. Most of these tracts are wooded and offer trails or are planned to offer trails.

**Table A2.2: Municipal Open Space/Passive Parkland**

Facility Name	Municipal Location	Ownership	Acreage
Maack Property	East Coventry	Municipal	59.9
French Creek Open Space at Rapps Dam (multiple parcels)	East Pikeland	Municipal	98.7
Graham Tract Reserve	East Pikeland	Municipal	38.6
Hares Hill Bridge Reserve	East Pikeland	Municipal	12.7
Pickering Creek Reserve (A and B)	East Pikeland	Municipal	30.7
Township Municipal Complex	East Pikeland	Municipal	22.0
Coventry Woods	North Coventry	Municipal	538.0
Coventry Woods	South Coventry	Municipal	15.0
Town Forest (Woody's Woods)	South Coventry	Municipal	263.0
Coventry Woods	Warwick	Municipal	67.0
Hill School Tract (Coventry Woods)	Warwick	Municipal	16.1
Hallman's Field (Pickering Preserve)	West Pikeland	Municipal	2.0
Weatherstone	West Vincent	Easement	102.0
<b>Total</b>			<b>1265.7</b>

The nearly 60-acre **Maack Property** was acquired by East Coventry Township to protect trails on the site used by the horse community and others.

Various lands in East Pikeland Township have been acquired or eased to protect open space along French and Pickering creeks and provide a planned corridor for the French Creek Trail. These parcels total 98.7 acres along the creek. The township has in fact adopted a master plan for the development of a two-mile segment of the French Creek Trail that will be constructed within these parcels. Snyder’s Mill, a gunpower mill for Washington’s Continental Army, is located within these parcels. The Township is pursuing grants to restore the mill and develop this site as the Continental Powder Works Historic Park. Additional parcels including the **Graham Tract Reserve**, the **Hares Hill Bridge reserve**, and **Pickering Creek Reserve**, as well as grass and wooded areas along the creek at the township complex, raise the total municipal open space to 202.7 acres.

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**Coventry Woods** is the name given to an assembly of approximately 600 acres of protected parcels in North Coventry, South Coventry, and Warwick townships. The Fernbrook Access to Coventry Woods in North Coventry Township was formerly a private church camp; its facilities included a lodge, swimming pool, basketball court, arts and crafts building, pavilion, and on-site residence/office. Approximately six miles of trails exist here and more are planned as part of the North Coventry Township Trail System. The physical condition of the buildings and sports facilities varies and some, like the swimming pool, may be removed. Approximately 15 acres of Coventry Woods are located in South Coventry Township. Approximately 67 acres of Coventry Woods, including the 16.1-acre Hill School Tract, are located in Warwick Township.

**Town Forest**, more commonly known as **Woody's Woods**, is a 263-acre protected area located at one of the highest points in Northern Chester County. Woody's Woods offers nearly five miles of trails through wooded wilderness, offering opportunities for hiking, seasonal bow hunting, and birding. The main entrance is on Coventryville Road; a second access is on Harmonyville Road.

More than 100 acres of the **Weatherstone** development at Ludwig's Corner are protected as open space through a West Vincent Township-held easement. The tract is not to be developed for active recreation.

### *FUTURE PARKLAND*

Six of the nine municipalities own a total of 395.7 acres of land for future parkland, as listed in *Table A2.3* and shown on *Map 8*.

**Table A2.3 : Future Municipal Parkland**

Facility Name	Municipal Location	Ownership	Acreage
Faulk Tract	East Coventry	Municipal	12.0
Heyser Tract	East Coventry	Municipal	32.6
Wade Tract	East Coventry	Municipal	6.8
Snyder Avenue Park (proposed)	East Pikeland	Municipal	57.6
Parker Tavern	East Vincent	Municipal	2.0
Pennhurst Tracts A and B	East Vincent	Municipal	94.5
Reiff Lands	East Vincent	Municipal	32.4
Bickels Run Park on Kemp Road	North Coventry	Municipal	32.0
Bryton Avenue Park	North Coventry	Municipal	1.0
Hanover Meadows	North Coventry	Municipal	22
Riverside Ave. Playlot	North Coventry	Municipal	0.9
Warwick Township Parkland	Warwick	Municipal	93.0
Windolph Knoll	West Pikeland	Municipal	23.8
<b>Total</b>			<b>411.0</b>

Four sites acquired by East Coventry Township for future recreational use total 111.3 acres of land. These sites include the **Faulk Tract** and the **Heyser Tract** (located north of Towpath Park along Route 724), and the **Wade Tract** near Parker Ford.

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A 57.6-acre park has been proposed and master planned along **Snyder Avenue Park** in East Pikeland Township. A portion of the site is currently operated as a driving range. Once completed, the park would offer two Little League/softball fields, three multipurpose fields, three basketball courts, six tennis courts, two playgrounds, a skatepark, and an amphitheatre. The various facilities would be interconnected by a walking trail. Benches, bleachers, picnic areas, restrooms, drinking fountains, and storage facilities would also be located in the park.

East Vincent owns the **Parker Tavern and Stable** and envisions restoration of the buildings and grounds to their original eighteenth-century appearance and re-use as a museum or similar public amenity to complement the Schuylkill River Trailhead at Parker Ford.

East Vincent Township acquired the **Pennhurst Tracts** along Pennhurst Road for future recreational use through the Commonwealth's decommissioning of the Pennhurst State School and Hospital. Pennhurst Tract A is a sloping 79.5-acre tract of land with views of the Schuylkill River. Pennhurst Tract B is a 15.4-acre tract of relatively flat land, also with views of the river. The site's potential to serve recreational uses was characterized by the Township Engineer, CMX:

"The central area of Tract A [the 79.5-acre tract] is a significant natural corridor containing a perennial stream channel which is referred to by the Commonwealth as Tributary No. 2 to the Schuylkill River. In addition to a federally-regulated 100-year floodplain, there are noteworthy areas of woodland vegetation, steep slopes, riparian buffer, and potential wetlands that virtually bisect the land mass. The area of land to be conveyed to East Vincent Township is significant in quantity, though active recreation is limited due to the amount of grading necessary to meet current accessibility standards while honoring the natural resources corridor. ... Tract B, located northwest of Tract A at the intersection of Pennhurst Road and Dunlap Drive, has significant potential for active recreational uses. Should the Township acquire these approximately 15 acres of gradually sloping land, there is potential for two additional high school regulated soccer fields, with parking and public amenities.... The remaining natural resources areas...lend best to natural trail systems and passive uses."

The **Reiff Land** is a 36.2-acre tract behind Vincent Elementary School on Route 23. The site is owned by East Vincent Township and is planned for active and passive recreational uses, including athletic fields and walking trails.

Three one-acre lots are designated as parkland but not currently used as such. **Bryton Avenue Park** is a one-acre site in the Pottstown Landing neighborhood of North Coventry Township. The site was formerly used for parking and is currently undeveloped for recreation. Similarly, the **Riverside Ave. Playlot** is a one-acre grass lot on Riverside Drive between Route 422 and the Schuylkill River. The **Town Square Property** is a one-acre lot at the Town Square shopping area.

**Bickels Run Park** on Kemp Road and **Hanover Meadows** are lands held by North Coventry Township for future recreational development. Bickels Run Park is currently a set of three contiguous and one noncontiguous parcels totaling 32 acres. Future acquisitions or easements along Bickels Run are envisioned to create one large public park. Hanover Meadows is a 22-acre site between the Pottstown Pike and South Hanover Street.

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The **Pew Tract** is a 93-acre site at the intersection of Trythall Road and Route 23 in Warwick Township. The site adjoins the eastern tract of State Game Lands 43. Portions of the site are farmed while the rest is wooded. An informal trail connects the site to the Game Lands and the Boars Back Trail.

**Windolph Knoll** is a 23.8-acre tract of land at the intersection of Upper Pike Creek Road and Route 401 in West Pikeland Township. The roughly square site slopes from the southern corner to the northern corner at the road intersection. The site is being held by the township as future recreational land.

### OTHER MUNICIPAL SITES SUPPORTING RECREATION

West Pikeland Township owns and maintains the **Yellow Springs Cultural Center**, which also houses the township offices. The Cultural Center is housed in a preserved historic barn, which was adapted for use as a sculpture studio by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts' Summer School at Chester Spring in the early 1900s. The studio was converted to a Black Box Theater by the Yellow Springs Institute in the 1960s. The theater became the home of the People's Light and Theater Company, a nonprofit, professional theatre founded in service to the community from 1974 to 1979. An outdoor earthworks sculpture known as Stonehenge was the venue for avant-garde dance and music performances during this time. The 300-seat theater, including its overhead grid of theatrical lighting, is maintained in working condition and is available for community and private events.

### PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES

There are nine school sites with recreational facilities or grass fields, as well as three undeveloped district-owned tracts, in the Region. The developed sites are listed in *Table A2.4* and shown on *Map 8*.

The **East Coventry Elementary School** in East Coventry Township is sited on a 14.6-acre parcel and hosts two soccer fields, two multipurpose fields, a basketball court, and two playgrounds. An adjacent 4.8-acre site fronting Sanatoga Road accommodates additional practice soccer fields. In January 2011, the Owen J. Roberts School Board approved the purchase of two contiguous parcels totaling 52.0 acres adjacent to the school. A 16.5-acre parcel fronts East Cedarville Road. The other lies between the school and the Coventry Glen subdivision and is accessible from Old Schuylkill Road.

The **Vincent Elementary School** in East Vincent Township is located on a 20-acre parcel and offers a multipurpose field and a playground.

The 24.8-acre **French Creek Elementary School** property spans the East Nantmeal and South Coventry township border. The site offers a playground and a multipurpose field.

The **North Coventry Elementary School** is located on a 24.2-acre parcel along Kemp Road. The site includes one Little League ball field, a multipurpose field, three basketball hoops, and a playground, as well as several hard courts painted on the pavement. A nature trail is also located on the site.

The **West Vincent Elementary School** is sited on a 24.8-acre tract of wooded land along Route 401 in Ludwig's Corners.

The 90.5-acre **Owen J. Roberts Middle School/High School** campus is located along Route 23 in South Coventry Township. The campus is home to the district's largest concentration of recreational facilities. The site offers a stadium with an artificial turf multipurpose field, track, restrooms, and concession stand; two artificial turf multipurpose fields; two baseball and two softball fields; and seven tennis

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courts. Indoor facilities include two gymnasiums for volleyball and basketball, an auditorium, and a swimming pool.

The **Owen J. Roberts Administration Building** is located on an 8.4-acre parcel along Route 23 in Warwick Township. The building was converted from a former elementary school to a facility for administrative offices in 2009. The site has no recreational facilities but does offer relatively flat grass areas for informal play.

**Table A2.4: Public School Sites**

Facility Name	Municipal Location	Parcel Number	Address	Parcel Acreage	Site Acreage
East Coventry Elementary School	East Coventry	18-4-51.1-E	932 Sanatoga Road		14.6
French Creek Elementary School	South Coventry	20-4-101.2-E	3590 Coventryville Road	12.0	20.0
	East Nantmeal	24-2-1.1-E	3570 Coventryville Road	8.0	
North Coventry Elementary School	North Coventry	17-3-276-E	1206 S Hanover Street (no developed access)	24.2	25.4
	North Coventry	17-3-308.8-E	475 Kemp Road	1.2	
Vincent Elementary School	East Vincent	21-4-89-E	340 Ridge Road		20.0
West Vincent Elementary School	West Vincent	25-7-8-E	2750 Conestoga Road		24.8
Owen J Roberts Middle School/High School Campus	South Coventry	20-4-92-E	901 Ridge Road	56.3	90.5
	South Coventry	20-4-93-E	990 Cadmus Road	9.7	
	South Coventry	20-4D-1-E	974 Ridge Road	7.7	
	South Coventry	20-4-100-E	881 Ridge Road	16.8	
Warwick Administration Building	Warwick		Ridge Road		8.4
Bealer Tract	South Coventry	20-2-120	1788 Pottstown Pike	0.5	57.6
	South Coventry	20-2-121	1782 Pottstown Pike	0.2	
	South Coventry	20-2-125	220 Bealer Road	56.9	
Kutz-Painter Tract	South Coventry	20-4-71	1081 Cadmus Road	9.1	38.6
	South Coventry	20-4-71.5-E	n/a	0.6	
	South Coventry	20-4-76.1-E	n/a	28.9	
Unknown Tract	East Vincent	21-1-92.4-E	830 Brown Drive		22.4
East Pikeland Elementary School, Phoenixville Area School District	East Pikeland		Hares Hill Road		6.8
Spring City Elementary School, Spring Ford Area School District	East Vincent		Wall Street		10.0
<b>Total</b>					<b>339.1</b>

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The **East Pikeland Elementary School** on Hares Hill Road is a facility of the Phoenixville Area School District. The 6.8-acre site offers two multipurpose fields, an informal ball field, two basketball nets, and a playground. The Phoenixville Area School District has submitted a land development plan to East Pikeland Township to expand the elementary school, which would diminish the amount of play area on the site.

The **Spring City Elementary School** on Wall Street in East Vincent Township is a facility of the Spring Ford Area School District serving Royersford Borough and Limerick and Upper Providence townships, in Montgomery County, as well as Spring City Borough in Chester County. The school site includes a playground. The adjacent 10-acre parcel is owned by Spring City Borough and leased to the Spring Ford Youth Athletic League (SFYAL), which provides recreational programs to youth of the school district. The league operates the site as the SFYAL complex. Facilities include four Little League ball fields, a T-ball field, batting cages, bleachers, and a concession stand. A dirt road provides access to the site, which lies behind the school, and there is minimal paved parking.

Due to the tremendous growth in league participation, the complex is overwhelmed by heavy use from league participants, the majority of whom are not from Spring City or East Vincent Township but from Montgomery County. On typical game days, 200 to 300 cars enter the site on the dirt road, sending fine particles into the air, which then blow into the surrounding neighborhood, creating a health concern for residents and leaders of East Vincent Township.

All parties – the league, the Township, the Borough, and the school district – have begun discussing a new paved access and termination of use of the dirt road as a solution. The league has requested that league participants observe the 5 m.p.h. speed limit on the driveway to the complex. Additional tension was added to the already complex situation when the league expanded the field area(s) without permit from the township. A subsequent request to approve night lighting to extend league play hours was denied by the Township Planning Commission.

### PRIVATE SCHOOL SITES

There are six private schools in the Northern Chester Country region. All but one have developed recreational facilities for use by their student populations.

**Camp Hill Special School** on Fairview Road in East Nantmeal Township is home to children, ages 5-19 years with intellectual and development disabilities, who live in an extended family community where the educational program focuses on experiential learning and emphasizes social, artistic, and practical skills, supported by a variety of therapies to help the child in his or her development. The community consists of approximately 90 students, 40 teachers and teacher aides, 10 therapists, 70 additional coworkers, and 11 staff.<sup>13</sup> This facility has no active recreation facilities.

**Coventry Christian School** on East Schuylkill Road in North Coventry Township has a small multipurpose field and a play area.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.camphill.org](http://www.camphill.org), accessed December 15, 2010.

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**Kimberton Waldorf School** in East Vincent Township has a small multipurpose field, a tennis court, a basketball court, and a playground.

**Montgomery School** along Route 113 in West Pikeland Township hosts a soccer field, a multipurpose field, a swimming pool, and two playgrounds/play areas.

**St. Basil the Great School** and grounds on Kimberton Road in East Pikeland Township include one softball field, a fenced playground, and a gymnasium. The gym is used primarily for Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) basketball but is available for event rental from the school office.

**West Mont Christian Academy** on South Hanover Street in North Coventry Township owns one baseball field, one softball field, a soccer field, a multipurpose field, and a playground.

### PRIVATE LANDS WITH PUBLIC RECREATIONAL ACCESS

There are more than 1,100 acres of privately owned lands among 10 sites that permit public access for recreational purposes, as listed in *Table A2.5*.

**Table A2.5: Private Lands with Public Access**

Facility Name	Municipal Location	Acreage
Crow's Nest Preserve	Warwick	600
Welkinweir	East Nantmeal	197
Binky Lee Preserve	West Pikeland	112
Tri-Town	East Vincent	9
Covered Bridge Crossing (along French Creek)	East Pikeland	10
Covered Bridge Crossing Playlot	East Pikeland	3
Wampler Little League Complex	North Coventry	15
Kimberton Fire Company	East Pikeland	17
Historic Yellow Springs	West Pikeland	106
Ludwig's Corners Horse Show Grounds	West Vincent	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,102</b>

The privately-owned **Crow's Nest Preserve** is a 600-acre property along French Creek characterized by wildflower meadows and grasslands, crop fields, and forested areas typical of Piedmont flora and dissected by French Creek. Natural Lands Trust (NLT), a nonprofit land trust, owns and manages the Preserve for native habitat as well as for agricultural and passive public use. The visitor center is located in a restored barn, and farmhouses on the property are being restored for staff housing and program uses. The visitor center includes a library, meeting space, and restrooms; however, the center is only open by appointment.

More than six miles of hiking trails take visitors through forests of oak, hickory, tulip poplar, beech, maple, and spicebush; through grassland meadows and wildflowers; and through crop fields reflecting the continuing tradition of Chester County farming. Connections to the adjacent Hopewell Furnace NHS and to trails in French Creek State Park are available.–NLT provides environmental education and research opportunities, including a summer day camp and afterschool programs. Bow hunting for deer only is also allowed. The Preserve is one of several major tracts of privately-owned conservation lands within Northern Chester County.

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**Welkinweir** is the 197-acre property and former estate of Everett and Grace Rodebaugh, founding members of the conservation-minded Green Valleys Association. The property now houses the offices of the Green Valleys Association. Welkinweir was placed into a conservation easement held by Natural Lands Trust in 1976 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. Welkinweir's grounds include formal gardens, an arboretum, and a diversity of native habitats with trails open daily to the public. Only hiking is permitted on the trails, with the exception of the Horse-Shoe Trail, which passes through the site. On-site facilities include a visitor education center with restrooms and parking and a picnic pavilion. Green Valleys offers a summer nature day camp for children on the site. *The Hopewell Big Woods Trail and Recreation Concept Plan* suggested Welkinweir as a hub for interpreting land conservation and providing information on recreational facilities and visitor services.

**Binky Lee Preserve**<sup>14</sup> is a 112-acre expanse of former agricultural land that is being restored to natural woodlands and meadows by the Natural Lands Trust. A walk along the Preserve's four miles of trails provides a wonderful introduction to natural area restoration techniques. The view from atop the hill offers a rare glimpse of Chester County of the past: undeveloped woodlands and fields in all directions. Two tributaries to the Pickering Creek pass through the property – one designated as a "high quality" stream and the other as a public drinking source. The rolling topography supports a variety of native forest types: mature native upland woodlands filled with oak, hickory, and sugar maple; young floodplain forest; and successional forest in areas still transitioning from former clearings. A white pine plantation is also found on the property. Warm- and cool-season grasslands with native wildflowers populate the meadows. The woodlands, meadows, and wetlands host an abundance of local bird and animal species. Visitors are greeted by an information kiosk at the parking area and educational signs throughout the preserve.

**Historic Yellow Springs (HYS)**<sup>15</sup> is a private, nonprofit enterprise in Chester County that preserves and promotes the history and arts of 100+ acre Yellow Springs village. Trails through the grounds are open to the public. Historic Yellow Springs is home to the **Chester Springs Studio**, a vibrant arts center that hosts classes, workshops, and exhibitions in the visual arts. HYS' programs allow visitors to explore more than 300 years of history, a rich artistic heritage, and inspiring natural beauty. Education staff offer custom group tours and maintain a self-guided tour program. Exhibits, including a permanent orientation exhibit, *The Lure of the Springs*, trace the site's history through original artifacts and images and present the work of innovative artists. Special programs include lifelong learning opportunities for senior groups and summer camps for youth. A lecture series, "Third Wednesdays," brings experts in a variety of fields to the village for enriching discussions.

The French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust owns an 8.5-acre parcel along French Creek known as **Tri-Town (Park)**. The site has been master planned to provide an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible fishing park. The plan includes accessible parking, trail, fishing dock, and picnic facilities.

**Hallman's Field** is the corner tract of the Pickering Preserve located at the intersection of Route 113 and Pikeland Road in West Pikeland Township. The two-acre grassed site is available to township residents

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<sup>14</sup> [www.natlands.org](http://www.natlands.org), accessed December 8, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> [www.yellowsprings.org](http://www.yellowsprings.org), accessed December 10, 2010.

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through a deed restriction for use as a baseball field. Use of the field can be arranged at Hallman’s Store, across Route 113.

The **Wampler Little League Complex** is a 15-acre site owned by the Coventry Little League organization. The complex includes three Little League fields (two with field lighting), one T-ball field, and batting cages for league play. Bleachers, an announcer’s box, concession stand, and port-a-johns are available for players and spectators. On game days, the parking demand often exceeds the available number of spaces.

The **Kimberton Fire Company** owns a 16.5-acre site adjacent to the Community Park. The Fire Company uses the site for its annual fair – its longest-running fundraising event. The Fire Company leases a portion of the site to the Kimberton Youth Association, and the township allows use of some adjacent parkland, for its Little League complex. The complex includes three Little League ball fields (all with field lighting), a playground, a concession stand, restrooms, and a storage building.

**Covered Bridge Crossing Playlot** is a 3.2-acre neighborhood park owned by the Covered Bridge Crossing Homeowners Association in East Pikeland Township. The park contains a playground and grass field. The Association also owns a 9.6-acre tract of protected open space land with stream access known as the **Covered Bridge Crossing**.

**Ludwig’s Corners Horse Show Association** owns and manages a 33-acre property along Route 100 in West Vincent Township. Organized in 1943 by a group of area residents, the Association has successfully hosted an annual horse show and country fair to bring together lovers of horses and the countryside to aid various community activities and organizations with open space missions. The Association makes the site and facilities available to other groups for horse shows, dog shows, antique shows, and automobile shows, as well as for company picnics and corporate or family events. It also allows groups such as the Glenmoore and Eagle Youth Association (GEYA) to use its grounds. GEYA stripes eight soccer fields for the spring and fall seasons.<sup>16</sup>

### RECREATION LANDS WITH RESTRICTED ACCESS

There are fifteen for-profit recreation businesses and nonprofit recreation organizations with facilities and/or land holdings in the Region, as listed in *Table A2.6* and shown on *Map 8*.

**Table A2.6: Private Lands with Restricted Access**

Facility Name	Municipal Location	Acreage
Longstreth Academy	East Vincent	33
Water World	East Pikeland	22
Camp Innabah	East Vincent	179
Camp Sankanac	East Vincent	150
Indian Springs Day Camp	West Pikeland	46
Bellewood Golf Course	North Coventry	175
French Creek Golf Club	East Nantmeal	168
Kimberton Country Club	East Vincent	125

<sup>16</sup> [www.ludwigshorseshow.org](http://www.ludwigshorseshow.org), accessed December 3, 2010.

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Facility Name	Municipal Location	Acreage
Spring Hollow Golf Course	East Vincent	115
Stone Wall Golf Course	East Nantmeal, Warwick	338
Frontier Archery	South Coventry	56
Kimberton Fish and Game Club	East Pikeland	32
Elverson Rod and Gun Club	Warwick	8
Northern Chester County Sportsmen’s Club	Warwick	13
Warwick Woods Family Camping Resort	Warwick	82
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,542</b>

**Longstreth Training Academy** is located at 88 Wells Road in East Vincent Township. The academy offers a 4,300-square-foot indoor facility, one artificial turf field, and three grass fields for field hockey training, as well as seasonal clinics for field hockey, softball, and lacrosse. The facilities can be rented for a per hour fee.

Located nearby in Pottstown, the **422 SportsPlex** provides indoor sports classes, leagues, and camps for fees, as well as rental of its indoor sporting facilities for recreational use. It offers two domed turf fields for soccer, field hockey, and lacrosse; two standard inline hockey rinks with professional-style dasher boards; a basketball/volleyball court; batting cages; and a party room.

**Water World** is a commercial water park occupying six acres of a 22.2-acre tract along Route 724 in East Pikeland Township. The facility includes a half-million-gallon Olympic-sized pool with a separate area for two water slides and a rope swing, a “kiddy” pool, pavilions with shaded areas, a bathhouse, and a snack bar. The facility is open seasonally at daily rates and for seasonal membership.<sup>17</sup>

Founded in 1929 and comprised of 179 acres of meadows and woodlands in East Vincent Township, **Camp Innabah**, is one of the oldest church-affiliated camps in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and is owned and operated by the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. The name “Innabah” was given by the Navajo People to the daughter of Rees J. Frescoln, the man who donated the original \$5,000 to purchase the property. Innabah translates to “The Great Spirit Be With You Always.” Innabah is not only a summer camp, but also a year-round retreat facility available to all types of church and faith-based guest groups. Indoor facilities include four lodges, the farmhouse, several unheated cabins and Adirondack Shelters, and a gymnasium. Outdoor facilities include two picnic areas, a swimming pool, an archery field, two playgrounds, and two pavilions. All facilities are available to the public for fee-based use.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, **Camp Sankanac** operates as a ministry of Bible-Centered Ministries International. The 150-acre property adjacent to Camp Innabah was purchased in 1941 for the development of a year-round camp. Its facilities include two retreat lodges, two cabins, a swimming pool, a boating area along French Creek, a maintenance building, and a year-round residence for camp staff. Its “professional-

<sup>17</sup> [www.waterworldrec.com](http://www.waterworldrec.com), accessed December 3, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> [www.innabah.org](http://www.innabah.org), accessed December 1, 2010.

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grade” 18-hole disc-golf (Frisbee®) course is available to the public by arrangement. The 74-par course travels through the entire camp and has various terrains and obstacles.<sup>19</sup>

**Indian Springs Day Camp** is located on 46 acres of rolling countryside in West Pikeland Township. The camp offers boys and girls ages 3-14 a variety of recreation, fitness, and learning experiences. Campers enjoy hiking, fishing, and boating on the three-acre lake; horseback riding; and pool swimming. The camp has multiple courts for basketball, GaGa (a form of dodgeball), volleyball or Newcomb (a variation on volleyball), kickball, and street hockey as well as ball fields and soccer fields. Its climbing wall, zipline, batting cage, and pool slide are also popular attractions. Arts and crafts, nature programs, and dodge ball are enjoyed in a large two-story barn. The camp’s trails connect to the adjacent Charlestown Township trail system. The camp can also be rented and catered for private picnics.<sup>20</sup>

There are **five private golf courses** in the Region:

- Bellewood Golf Course in North Coventry Township.
- French Creek Golf Club in East Nantmeal Township.
- Kimberton Country Club in East Vincent Township.
- Spring Hollow Golf Course in East Vincent Township.
- Stone Wall Golf Course in East Nantmeal and Warwick Townships.

Residents of the region also have nearby access to the Limerick Golf Club, the Turtle Creek Golf Course, and the Waltz Golf Farm, offering two mini-golf courses, a Par 3 course, batting cages, and a driving range, across the river in Montgomery County.

The region is home to **four sportsmen’s clubs** and their properties:

- The Elverson Rod and Gun Club owns an 8-acre tract in Warwick Township.
- Frontier Archery owns a 56.4-acre tract in South Coventry Township.
- The Kimberton Fish and Game Club owns a 31.6-acre tract in East Pikeland Township.
- The Northern Chester County Sportsmen’s Club owns a 13-acre tract between Crow’s Nest Preserve and French Creek State Park in Warwick Township.

There is one private campground in the Region. The **Warwick Woods Family Camping Resort** offers 220 large, secluded campsites for trailers, motorhomes, pop-ups, and tents, spread out over 82 acres, located along Trythall Road. Each campsite has a picnic table and fire ring. Water, electric, and sewer hookups are available. Hiking, biking, and exploring are available on-site and along the Horse-Shoe Trail, which runs through the campground. The resort has both an Olympic-sized pool and a kiddie pool. Its fishing pond is about an acre in size and is stocked with fish throughout the season. Bass, trout, catfish, bluegill, and several other varieties of fish are found in the pond. Several facilities for

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<sup>19</sup> [www.campsankanac.org](http://www.campsankanac.org), accessed December 3, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> [www.indianspringsdaycamp.com](http://www.indianspringsdaycamp.com), accessed December 15, 2010.

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outdoor games including basketball, volleyball, shuffleboard, horseshoes, and badminton are available, as well as two playgrounds.<sup>21</sup>

### INDOOR RECREATION CENTERS

There are no public or private indoor recreation or community centers in Northern Chester County. Four facilities of this type are available just outside the region. The Phoenixville YMCA and Pottstown YMCA are branch facilities of the Freedom Valley YMCA organization. The Upper Perkiomen Branch in East Greenville Township, Montgomery County, has an outdoor pool complex; members of the Pottstown Branch may use the complex. Other Freedom Valley Branches are located in Audubon and Spring Valley. The Lionville Community YMCA is located just east of Downingtown High School East along Route 113.

Interviews found that the Freedom Valley YMCA's feasibility study for establishing a YM/YWCA in Northern Chester County research found an insufficient support for such a facility. The Ludwig's Corner master site plan reserves a footprint for a future YM/YWCA should conditions change and Freedom Valley or other organization determine it feasible to construct and operate a facility here.

## ANALYSIS OF PARKLAND

### AMOUNT OF PARKLAND LAND

Lands developed or reserved for recreation use in Northern Chester County total 7,834 acres. The majority of this land, 6,755 acres, is currently available for public recreation use and 3,856 acres are locally owned.

Lands owned by federal, state, and county agencies offer 12,025 acres of protected open space accessible from the Region. More than 4,200 acres lie within the region alone. These lands are rich in history, natural scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation opportunities, ranging from hiking, biking, and horseback riding to camping, boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, and winter activities.

The nine townships collectively own or hold easement to 1,824.4 acres of protected open space for public recreational use. There are 11 township-owned parks on a total of 208.7 acres, developed in whole or part for active recreation. There are 20 sites, largely township-owned, on 1,220.1 acres dedicated to passive recreation; nearly all of the sites offer trails. There are 13 township-owned sites on 395.6 acres held in reserve for future parkland development.

There are eight public school facilities with on-site recreation facilities and undeveloped and other district-owned lands, on a total of 339.1 acres. Another 52 acres was approved for purchase in January 2011.

There are 25 privately-owned recreation sites. Six are available to the public for free passive recreation use and three are private sites owned by nonprofit community recreation organizations; these lands

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<sup>21</sup> [www.warwickwoods.com](http://www.warwickwoods.com), accessed December 3, 2010.

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total 1,102 acres. The remaining 1,542 acres of private recreation lands are owned by commercial entities or private clubs that require membership or service fees.

### CONVENTIONAL PARKLAND ANALYSIS

Many communities use a population-based standard, interpreted from the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines published by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1983, to measure their parkland needs. From the detailed classification of park types, each with its own function, these communities inferred a universal 10.5 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents as the recommended standard.

This analysis applied to Northern Chester County results in a deficiency of 230.5 acres for the 2010 population. If all the undeveloped land in holding for public parks was developed and there was no additional increase in population, the region would have a surplus of 226.2 acres. Even so, projected regional growth through 2030 would not fully absorb the surplus parkland.

However, this analysis is simply a land acreage calculation and does not account for the types of recreational facilities provided in the parks and those desired by residents. A detailed sports field level of service analysis has been prepared and is reported in Appendix 8.

	2010 Acreage	Population	Current Parkland Acres per 1,000 Residents	Parkland Acres at 10.5 Acres per 1,000 Residents	Surplus (+) / Deficiency (-)
Developed local public parkland	208.7	43,907	0.5	439.1	-230.4
If all undeveloped public parkland were developed (no change in population)	665.3	43,907	1.5	439.1	226.2
If all undeveloped public parkland were developed (projected 2020 population)	665.3	48,860	1.4	488.6	176.7
If all undeveloped public parkland were developed (projected 2030 population)	665.3	53,100	1.3	531.0	134.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; DVRPC, 2020 and 2030 population projections; Gannett Fleming, Inc.

### LOCATION AND SIZE OF MUNICIPAL PARKLAND AND SCHOOL SITES

Most of the municipal parkland for active recreation is located within or adjacent to the most intensively developed areas of the region, where large concentrations of the population reside. Towpath Park, Kenilworth Park, River Bend Park, and Riverside Park lie along the Route 724/New Schuylkill Road corridor. Kimberton Community Park is located along Route 113.

Connie Batdorf Park lies within the urbanized area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and Andrew Evans Park and Community Park on the Ridge lie adjacent to the urbanized area. Both are sited along

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major travel routes to aid their accessibility within these somewhat more rural municipalities. Pickering Grove and Pine Creek Park were sited by their original owners in proximity to Route 113. Township parks for active recreation range in size from 1.5 acres (Riverside Park) to 71 acres (Pine Creek Park). Removing these two extremes, the average park size for the remaining parks is 15 acres.

Overall, parks are located in the more densely populated areas of the region, yet, development densities are relatively low and few sidewalk systems or alternative bicycle/ pedestrian pathways are in place to enable safe, non-motorized travel to the parks. As a result, the parks are recreational destinations that require park visitors to drive to and from the park and thus require some portion of the site to be used for parking. Exceptions include Riverside and Kenilworth Parks in North Coventry.

Parkland for passive recreation, and those parks that offer both active and passive recreational opportunities, have been sited to take advantage of the resources that support nature-based recreation. Those lands along the Schuylkill River also happen to lie in close proximity to the most concentrated residential areas. River Bend, Riverside, and Towpath parks all feature views of the river; Riverside and Towpath offer direct access for boating and fishing. The Ellis Woods Park lies along Pigeon Creek. Pickering Creek flows through Pickering Grove. Coventry Woods and Woody's Woods feature large expanses of wooded hilltops; Pigeon Creek also passes through Coventry Woods.

Notably, there is no municipal parkland along French Creek, the region's central waterway. Warwick County Park is located here and features a largely natural landscape, and the Tri-Town Park will soon offer universal public access to the creek. The French Creek Trail is planned along the waterway, including 98.7 acres owned by East Pikeland Township, but the trail is still several years from formal completion; some segments and loop trail routes along the creek are informally used today.

Lands for passive recreation range in size from one acre (French Creek – Tract A, Pickering Preserve B) to more than 500 acres (Coventry Woods). Removing these extremes, the average park size for the remaining parks is 42 acres. While the natural resources (and parcel boundaries) drive the location and size of these lands, a portion of the parkland must again be reserved for parking to accommodate the only reasonable access to the parks.

Like the existing active recreation parks, most parcels owned for future municipal parkland are also located in proximity to concentrations of development. In fact, all but the Pew Tract are located in the eastern riverfront municipalities less than a mile from the Route 724/New Schuylkill Road corridor – six on the riverside and four with riverfront access. The Faulk and Heyser tracts front the highway corridor and the river. The future Snyder Avenue Park will have direct access from the highway.

The Wade Tract and Parker Ford Tavern are clustered in the village of Parker Ford. The Pennhurst Tract nearly spans the distance between Route 724 and the Schuylkill River. The Bryton Avenue Park and Riverside Avenue Playlot were sited to serve older neighborhoods of South Pottstown. Hanover Meadows and Bickel Run Park will be accessible from South Hanover Street. The Pew Tract at Trythall Road along Route 23 in Warwick Township is the only site not located near a residential cluster.

Lands in holding for future parkland range in size from one acre (Bryton Avenue Park, Riverside Avenue Playlot, and Town Square Property) to 93 acres (Pew Tract). Removing these extremes, the average park size for the remaining parks is 33 acres.

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Due to their common interest in serving residents with close-to-home facilities, schools and parks (or future parklands) exist relatively close to one another in several urbanized locations. Hanover Meadows and Bickel Run Park are nearly adjacent to the North Coventry Elementary School. A site adjacent to the East Coventry Elementary School is used by soccer, football, and lacrosse leagues. The Reiff Tract lies adjacent to the Vincent Elementary School; a trail is envisioned to connect to the nearby Community Park on the Ridge.

Warwick County Park and protected open space adjoin French Creek Elementary School. Connie Batdorf Park lies less than a mile, though across busy Route 23, from the OJR middle school/high school campus. Only the West Vincent Elementary School has no land for future parkland in its immediate vicinity, though there are more than 100 acres of protected open space across Route 401 at the Weatherstone development.

The Owen J. Roberts School District also holds lands in reserve for future facilities. Two tracts (or tract clusters) are located along Route 100. The Kutz-Painter Tract lies nearly adjacent to the current middle school/high school campus just east of Route 100. The Bealer Tract lies farther north between Bealer Road and Pigeon Creek. A third tract lies just east of Route 724 along Pennhurst Road not far from the Pennhurst tracts owned by East Vincent Township. Finally, a pair of parcels totaling 52 acres adjacent to the East Coventry Elementary was approved for purchase in early 2011.

### ADDITIONAL PARKLAND AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY

The Region holds more than 400 acres of land in 14 tracts for future parkland development. Of the 14 sites in holding as future parkland, only the Snyder Avenue Park has been master-planned as a multi-use park with active and passive facilities. The Parker Tavern and Wade Tract are envisioned as complementary sites to the Schuylkill River Trailhead at the Parker House, though no detailed planning has occurred. The Heyser Tract has been proposed as a baseball field for the Norchester Baseball League and soccer fields for Vincent United Futbol Club; concept sketches have been prepared. The Pennhurst Tract had a preliminary engineering evaluation that indicated a few fields could be sited on the land without negative impact to the natural resources corridor. Other sites have had minimal discussion of future development.

As the Region continues to grow, so will the need for parkland and likely the region's desire to protect open space for environmental and scenic quality. Currently, 32,557 acres or 45 percent of the region remains in agricultural, forest, or vacant use as defined by the Chester County assessment data. Portions of this total area are already protected and are not intended to be developed for recreational uses. Of the remainder, only certain lands are appropriate for future parkland, given that land requirements for active and passive recreation uses vary and the costs of site modification to meet these requirements can be significant.

The primary factor for active recreation parkland is adequate flat land for fields, however, other features and conditions are relevant in determining the value of a site as new park land. Its location and accessibility influences its convenience and use by residents. Its size and configuration affects the number, arrangement, and orientation of facilities. The presence of floodplains, wetlands, and other environmental features determines how much of the site can be developed. Access to water and sewer facilities may also be considered if permanent comfort facilities are desired. Such would suggest examining the Route 100, 113, and 724 corridors for needed large parks and sports complexes.

## Appendix 2 Park and Recreation Lands

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These criteria should be applied to all lands considered for active parkland, whether acquired through fee-simple purchase, mandatory dedication, or donation. They may also be used as screening criteria to identify parcels of potential value as future parkland for acquisition and landbanking until needed. A simple analysis of agricultural or vacant parcels of 50 acres or more with less than 5 percent slope on 75 percent of the tract was used to identify potential parcels that could accommodate multiple flat or diamond fields. This analysis identified 103 parcels in the Region. Parcels that meet these criteria were found in every municipality.

Passive recreation parkland typically has no site requirements, since the resource or resources to be protected drive the location, size, and configuration of the site. However, some of the same site conditions, such as location, access, and proximity to other recreation and open space lands, are relevant to user convenience of passive parkland. Therefore, even sites considered for passive recreational use should be evaluated by these criteria prior to acquisition.

### FINDINGS

#### PARKLAND AVAILABILITY

1. Lands developed, available or reserved for recreation use in Northern Chester County total 9,985 acres. Two-thirds of this land, 6,659 acres, is currently available for public recreation use and nearly one-third, 3,096 acres, is municipally-owned or locally-eased properties.
2. There are 11 township-owned parks on a total of 208.7 acres, developed in whole or part for active recreation; the average size is 15 acres. There are 20 sites, largely township-owned, on 1,220.1 acres dedicated to passive recreation; many sites comprise multiple parcels and nearly all of the sites offer trails. There are 13 township-owned sites on 395.7 acres held in reserve for future active and passive parkland development; the average size is 42 acres.
3. Large public landscapes owned by federal, state, and county agencies offer more than 4,200 acres of protected open space with abundant passive recreation opportunities. These lands are rich in history, natural scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation opportunities, ranging from hiking, biking, and horseback riding to camping, boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, and winter activities. They host unique natural and cultural resources significant to local, state, and national history. The *Hopewell Big Woods Trails and Recreation Concept Plan* identifies various opportunities to improve, enhance or expand physical and knowledge-based linkages among these landscapes.
4. Public schools in the Region make their recreational facilities available for community recreation programs. There are eight public school facilities with on-site recreation facilities as well as three undeveloped or other district-owned tracts, on a total of 391.1 acres. The six private schools generally limit the use of their recreational facilities to their student populations.
5. There are 22 privately-owned recreation sites on 2,600 acres, including more than 1,100 acres with limited public access. Lands with public access include nature preserves, sports league ballfields, show grounds, and heritage centers. The remaining 1,542 acres of private recreation lands are

## Appendix 2 Park and Recreation Lands

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owned by commercial entities or private clubs that provide land access and services based on membership or fees.

### PARKLAND LOCATION AND ACCESS

6. Overall, parks are located in the more densely populated areas of the region. Most future municipal parkland is also located in proximity to concentrations of development. As a result of their common interest in serving residents with close-to-home facilities, several school and park (or future parkland) sites are relatively close to one another.
7. Without a non-motorized transportation network, most parks require park visitors to drive to and from the park, and thus demand that some portion of the park parcel be used for parking. Development densities in the region area relatively low and few sidewalk systems or trail/path networks are in place to enable safe non-motorized travel to the parks.
8. There are several parks, as well as long-range county parkland, along the Schuylkill River but no municipal parkland along French Creek, the region's central waterway. The French Creek Trail is planned along the waterway, but the trail is still several years from formal completion; some segments and loop trail routes along the creek are informally used today.

### ADDITIONAL PARKLAND

9. If existing park types, recreation facilities and locations, are well-matched to resident needs, no additional parkland is needed in the foreseeable future. A conventional analysis of local parkland applied to the Region results in a deficiency of 230.5 acres of developed local parkland for the 2010 population. If all the undeveloped land in holding for public parks was developed, and even with the projected population, the region would not fully absorb the surplus parkland. However, this analysis is simply a land acreage calculation and does not compare the types of recreational facilities provided in the parks and those desired by residents.
10. If additional park types, active recreation facilities or specific locations are needed, additional land may be needed. There are sizeable tracts of relatively flat unprotected land, which may be suitable for active recreation fields, in every municipality of the Region. A simple analysis of agricultural or vacant or agricultural parcels of 50 acres or more with less than 5 percent slope (on 75% of the tract) was used to identify potential parcels that could accommodate multiple flat or diamond fields. This analysis identified 103 parcels in the Region.