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IMPROVING RIVER ACCESS IN LEWISBURG, PA

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Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Contents

Introduction to River Access	2
Background Information.....	3
Planning Process	5
Ethnography	6
Proposed Trail Network.....	8
Decision Points.....	8
Map.....	9
Assets and Parks.....	10
Design Standards	15
General Trail Design Recommendations	15
Individual Trail Segment Design Needs & Recommendations	16
Handoff and Maintenance Plan.....	18
Handoff.....	18
Maintenance Plan	19
Appendix.....	20

Cover Photo Taken From

http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/brh010/photos/susquehanna_river_initiative_photos.html

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Introduction to River Access

Communities located along rivers have strong ties both to the river and other towns sharing the asset. Historically, people have relied on rivers for commercial, transportation, and recreational purposes. This usage instills a sense of place for the people who live and work nearby, creating an identity intricately connected to a local geography. By forming this connection to place, communities become invested in the continued existence and health of their environment. Shifting needs by cities and towns can change how residents use and perceive the river. As focus of a town shifts away from river, the identity of the town, its physical and emotional connection to the river or other river towns, and its environmental concerns will change.

The Susquehanna River represents a unique asset to its surrounding communities. Communities located along the Susquehanna River have a special quality in that they are located near the longest non-navigable river in the United States. While many previously relied on the Susquehanna commercially, it is no longer an economic focus, and many towns have lost their river connection. We have identified communities both north and south of Lewisburg which have regained a connection to the river by implementing both river trails and vistas in their towns. River access in Lewisburg could create a stronger community tie to the river and utilize the Susquehanna River for community growth by recreational, boating, fishing, and other involvements through developments such as river trails, boat launches, and scenic vistas.

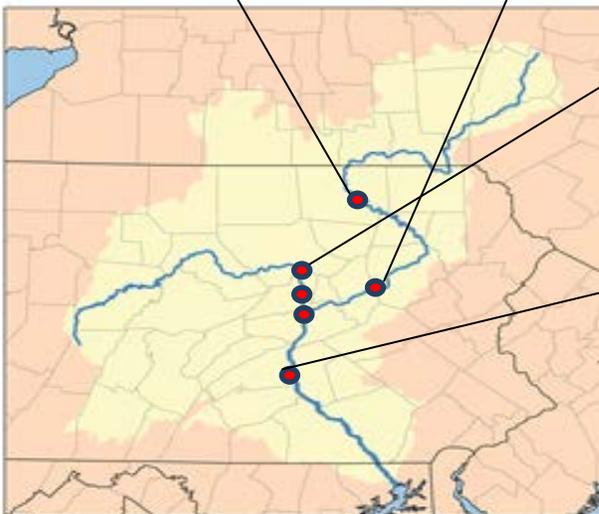
Towanda River Walk



Wilkes Barre River Commons



Williamsport River Walk



Harrisburg River Trail



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Background Information

In Lewisburg's history, there have been a series of calls for improved river access and plans for trails along the river. Lewisburg used to be very connected with the river economically. Its role in Pennsylvania logging and reliance on the Susquehanna demanded use of canals and mills. However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, this role has diminished and Lewisburg has turned away from the river as its needs have shifted. There have still been plans to create more interaction with the Susquehanna. The 1933 Bucknell University master plan outlined a trail leading north along the riverfront from the current Bucknell facilities building. This plan was not specific, but vaguely suggested a connection into Lewisburg along the river.

More recently, the Lewisburg Garden Club, in partnership with the Sierra Club, established a "River Walk" near the Susquehanna River in 1995. This walk heads south from the St. George St. boat launch, down to Limestone Run, and loops back away from the river before reconnecting to itself. Most of the walk is about twenty feet to the west of a canal separated from the river by a small island. The walk was well publicized in the local newspaper and supported by Union County. The walk crosses three parcels of land, two by private landowners and the third a water treatment facility. Members of the Garden Club secured five year conservation easements between these landowners and Union County. Lewisburg Garden Club and Sierra Club agreed to maintain the trail for five years, at which time maintenance would be turned over to Union County. According to the members of Lewisburg Garden Club, it was at this point that the trail began falling into disrepair. Union County did not maintain the trail at previous levels. This fact, combined with frequent flooding and littering, led to the current state of the trail. Although the trail itself still exists, it is not well maintained and would need renovations and a new maintenance plan. From conversations with involved parties, it seems Union County neglected its obligation for the trail. More information about the River Walk, including a news article and a pamphlet, can be found in the appendix.

Recently Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) pursued a new project associated with the river. They worked with Albright Care Services, (Riverwoods) to secure a 25-year easement north of Buffalo Creek along River Road (at the St. Anthony's St. Bridge). This project would have resulted in a 0.8 mile trail, with potential for another landowner easement doubling its length. The project did not come to fruition because of two concerns. The first was a lack of parking access for the trail. The other was the issue of planning such a project in a floodplain. In addition, the focus on the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail took attention away from the LARA-Riverwoods project. The positive take away from this effort is that Albright Care Services is open to conservation easements. On the other hand, flooding and access concerns need to be addressed.

Lewisburg has made major strides recently with pedestrian and biking trails connecting the community with a Rails-to-Trails project. The Buffalo Valley Rail Trail, connecting Lewisburg and Mifflinburg, has been very successful. It is used for recreational and transport purposes by members of both communities. While the rail trail was the subject of some harsh criticism and opposition prior to its construction, it's been well-received since the completion of the project. The next step for the project is a spur that extends east of Rt. 15 into downtown Lewisburg. This extension reaches the old railroad bridge crossing the Susquehanna River at Soldier's Park, where it would also cross the river access trail proposed in this document.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

In summary, there have been a number of projects in Lewisburg promoting pedestrian activity and river access.

They include:

- 1) The vague plan suggested by the Bucknell University Master Plan of 1933
- 2) The Lewisburg Garden Club trail at St. George St., which has not been well-maintained since the handoff to Union County, but was an extremely effective project for five years
- 3) The LARA-Riverwoods Project, which did not materialize because of concerns about flooding and a shift in focus to the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail project
- 4) The Buffalo Valley Rail Trail project, which does not focus on access to the Susquehanna River, but focuses on pedestrian connectivity and displays the success and community appreciation for pedestrian projects. It will connect to the Susquehanna River following the completion of the next extension

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Planning Process

After exploring the topic and theory of river access, our group set a goal of improving river access for Lewisburg. We were aware of previous plans made by Bucknell University and Union County. We also were aware of the existence of a path down by the St. George St. launch point on the Susquehanna River. However, we did not know who was responsible for this walk. We realized that it was important for us to learn more about previous plans. We also needed to engage with community partners to understand how we could most effectively enhance river access. Because of this, the river access group spent a lot of time communicating with other stakeholders to educate ourselves. The list of individuals and organizations is quite extensive:

- Susquehanna Greenways at SEDA-COG
- Merrill-Linn Conservancy
- Lewisburg Garden Club
- Union County Planning Commission
- Bucknell University Civil Engineering
- Larson Design Group
- Lewisburg Recreation Authority
- Lewisburg Borough Manager
- National Wildlife Foundation
- Lewisburg Downtown Partnership
- Lewisburg Neighborhoods Association
- Bucknell Facilities
- Union County Conservation District
- Kayak Tours

The river access group used these contacts as a source of experts, each with their own perspective on planning in the Lewisburg area. Some we met with only once to glean some background information; others, particularly Susquehanna Greenways, were involved in the entire process. From this learning period, we came to realize that Lewisburg did not need a quick fix for the existing St. George St. River Walk. Instead, river access would best be improved through a comprehensive plan that ties together the town through a pedestrian path. We focused on connecting physical assets in downtown Lewisburg to each other and to the Susquehanna River.

From this point, our focus was on developing a concrete project proposal for river access in the Lewisburg community. We studied examples of river access plans in other Susquehanna Valley river towns. We also worked to identify assets in downtown Lewisburg that we believe should be connected to the river, and looked for ways to improve vistas and access points along a potential river walk. This process involved completing ethnographic observation and interviews in the areas through which the proposed trail would pass.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Ethnography

A major component of the plan was to determine what the priorities of local citizens were with regards to river relations. This goal was accomplished by conducting ethnographic research, utilizing both participant observation and interviews. The research was conducted by Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certified Personnel. Researchers went out to various locations along the Susquehanna River in Lewisburg from the months of February to April to conduct this research. Over the course of these months, we obtained interviews from 15 people and observed several people utilizing the river and nearby assets to some degree.

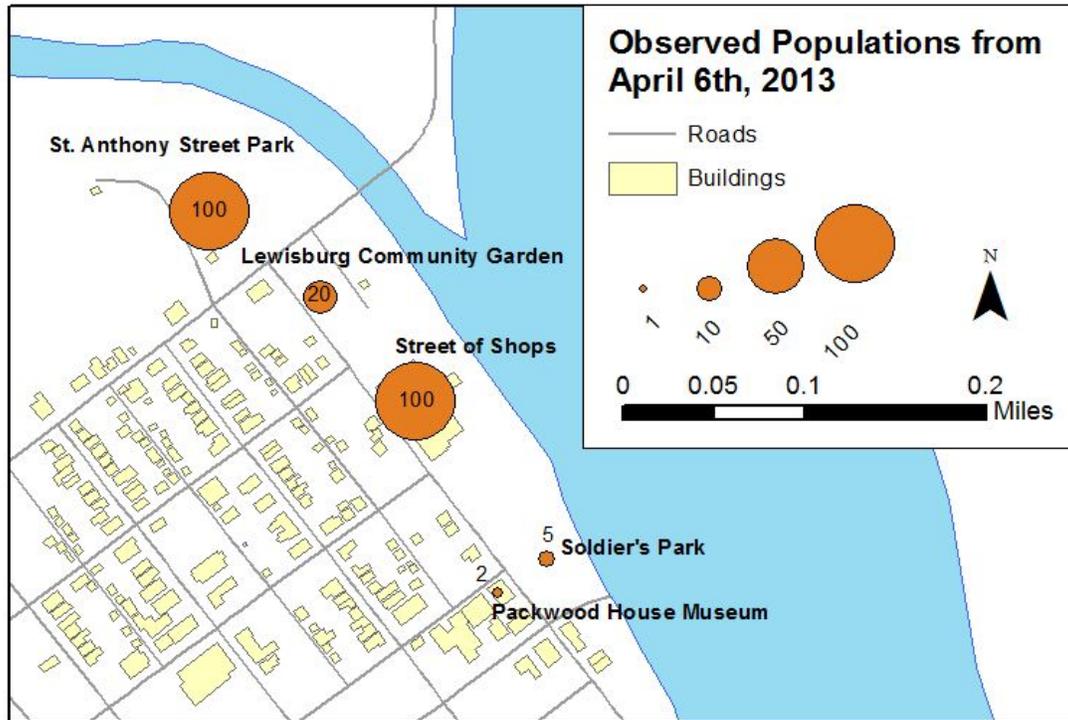
The responses from the interviews overwhelmingly suggested a river walk type trail to be implemented in Lewisburg. Several others requested that the trail somehow be connected to the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail along Route 45. The majority of respondents who were not Bucknell students also noted that the question of river relations in Lewisburg was not a question that they had on their minds. On the other hand, of the four Bucknell students interviewed, three had stated that they wondered why the Susquehanna River wasn't a bigger part of Lewisburg culture. This could suggest that river access may be more important to a younger population.

From our interviews, we found that people recommended that if a trail or river walk were built that it should have certain safety parameters. Below are some of the suggested design implements we gathered:

- Improved sidewalks
- Implementation of bike lanes
- Water fountains for pedestrians and for dogs
- "Blue light" phones with direct access to police
- Even flat terrain features along trail
- Signage to direct people along trail

In addition to a river walk, several individuals suggested more accessible landings throughout Lewisburg, and lookouts over the Susquehanna River. The need for maintenance of existing recreational and trail facilities was a common comment by respondents.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa



During our participant observation, we observed about 5-20 individuals during the observation period utilizing Soldier's Park or walking in the vicinity of the proposed trail. Inside of the Street of Shops, we observed approximately 100 people in the store at one time on a Sunday in April. There were also around 100 people at St. Anthony St. Park, watching or playing softball. We also observed several bicyclists and runners using river road as part of their workout. Many of these athletes belonged to either the Bucknell cross-country, track, or cycling teams. We also observed people volunteering at the Community Garden to prepare for gardening season.

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Proposed Trail Network

A map was compiled to illustrate proposed trails, existing trails, community assets, local parks, and water bodies (Next page). This map can also be found in .PDF format, where more detailed examination can be made. A larger map, along with a map of flood risks, can be found in the appendix.

The existing railroad along River Rd. offers an opportunity for a proposed trail complex that connects the residential areas to the south of Bucknell University with downtown Lewisburg. In addition, the railroad enters the downtown and intersects the CENG Senior Design Proposed Trail. Where the railroad enters downtown Lewisburg, the proposed trail network offers the option to continue along the river eventually connecting to the existing Lewisburg Riverwalk. This portion will utilize sidewalks and bike lanes with appropriate signage. The proposed trail continues north beyond the Lewisburg Garden Club Riverwalk, connecting several community assets with Market Street. Still using primarily sidewalks along Water Street, the proposed trail would serve as a connection for community assets located to north of Market Street. An important component of this stretch is the fact that this is the second place where the proposed trail would intersect and build off of the CENG Senior Design Rail Trail Extension. These trails will provide an essential connection to the senior design planned Rail Trail extension for residents living north and south of downtown, while also connecting them with the Susquehanna River. The trail system also incorporates an under-developed existing trail bordering River Road around the Riverwoods/AYSO soccer complex; promoting usage of the existing trail and proposing a loop trail around the park. In summary, the trail network connects several identified assets within the downtown Lewisburg community, while also encouraging river access through scenic vistas located along the trail.

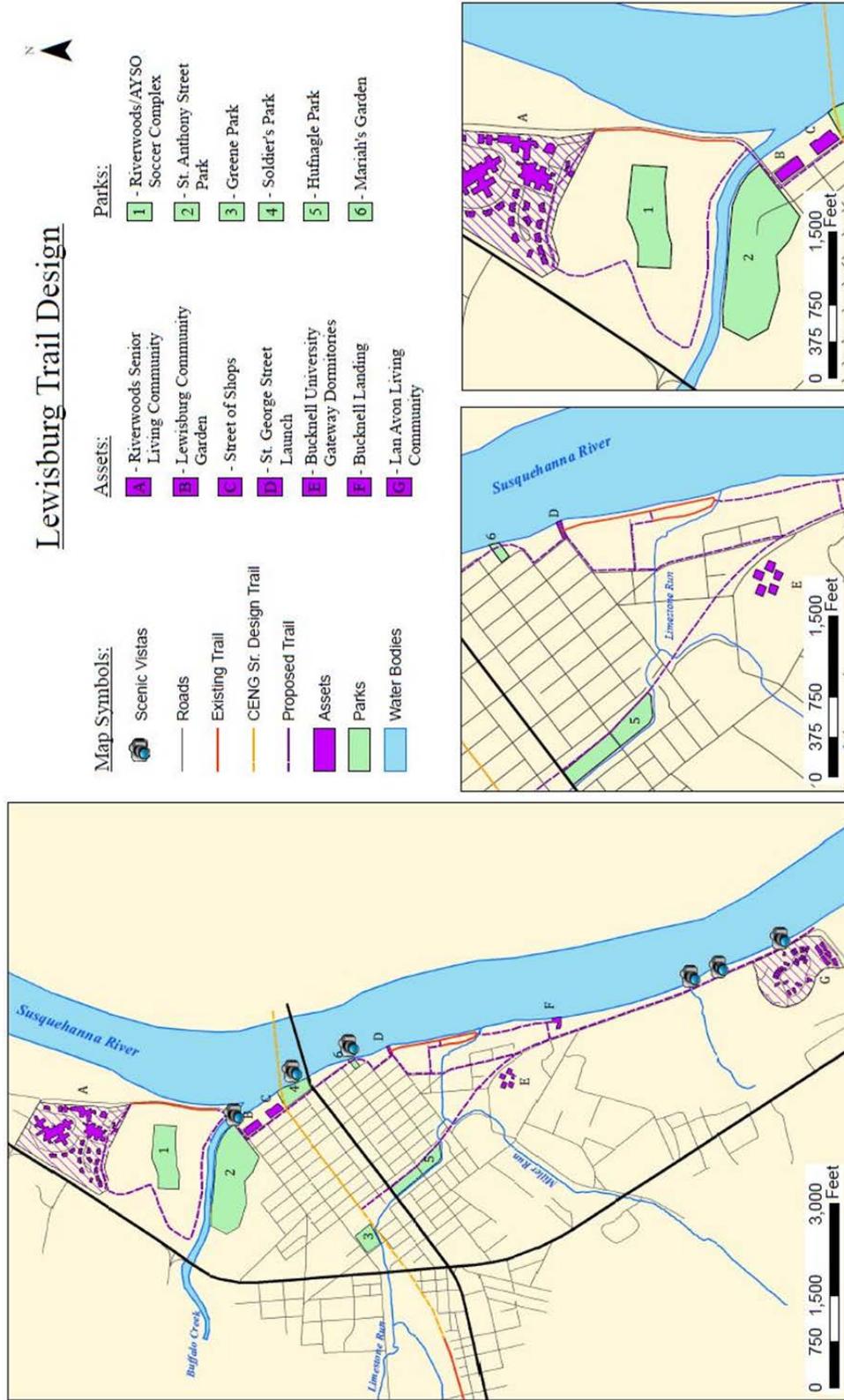
Decision Points

This proposal leaves a number of decision points to be made before implementation. They will be outlined here from south to north.

- 1) From Bucknell Landing, one possibility suggests building a new trail along the waterfront north to Limestone Run. The completion of a suggested pedestrian bridge would connect the trail over the creek to the existing Lewisburg RiverWalk. Instead of this possibility, another choice would include following River Road and using sidewalks until Mill Road, where it could connect with the Lewisburg RiverWalk.
- 2) Near the same point, the railroad diverges from River Road into the heart of Lewisburg, towards Hufnagle Park. We recommend a Rails with Trails connection here, splitting away from the river trail, but connecting it to downtown Lewisburg and its assets.
- 3) At the Riverwoods soccer complex, the map outlines an existing trail along the roadway, as well as a proposed trail along Buffalo Creek and around the complex. A successful trail could include both trails or only one.

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Map



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Assets and Parks

One of the unique elements of our plan is asset-based planning. We have taken into consideration the multitude of community assets located in Lewisburg, and have devised a plan to connect them. This is where we see one of the successes in our plan. Below is a description of the assets we plan on connecting.



River Woods is a senior living community, which accommodates several different living styles. River Woods is located north of Lewisburg downtown and is cut off by Buffalo Creek, isolating it from the Lewisburg community. However, River Woods already has a walking path as well as soccer fields for residents and community members to use. By connecting River Woods to the rest of the Lewisburg community, the trail would provide access to not only the Susquehanna River, but also access to the Lewisburg community at large.



Saint Anthony St. Bridge connects St Anthony Street and River Road to the North of downtown Lewisburg. The Saint Anthony St. Bridge is a historical landmark, and is one of the earliest metal truss bridges in the area. St. Anthony's Bridge has a pedestrian walkway; however as you cross over from South to North, you find that the walkway ends once you are across the bridge. One of our proposals is to further enhance pedestrian access across this bridge or near it.

The **Lewisburg Community Garden** is a joint project between Bucknell University and the Borough of Lewisburg that began in April 2012. It is located on the Southeast corner of the North Water Street and St. Anthony's Street Intersection. The Garden seeks to increase access to fresh, healthy, low-cost, locally grown food in the Lewisburg community. The Garden is a space that creates cooperative and long term learning opportunities between the University and the local community.



Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa



Further down Water Street is the **Street of Shops**, a chair factory turned flea market. Inside are antique dealers, specialty shops, a restaurant, and a unique “indoor country village” atmosphere. Most people we interviewed used vehicles to make it to the Street of Shops. However, on one sunny day, we observed a group of Bucknell students that had walked into the Street of Shops out of curiosity during a stroll beside the Susquehanna River.

Soldier’s Park is located on the north end of the intersection between Market and Water Street. According to the town’s website, it is a shady, quiet, river-front park. However, it does not fully capitalize on its potential. There is a steep drop off between the park and the river. By establishing some sort of landing at the park, we believe this will greatly enhance potential for river access in Lewisburg. The park will also be the site of the intersection between the proposed river access trail the Bucknell Civil Engineering Rail Trail extension.



Market Street is the commercial hub of Lewisburg. Along with the Route 45 Bridge, this Street is home to small businesses, Victorian architecture, and the iconic Lewisburg street lights, which contribute to Lewisburg’s identity. Market Street contains many of the cultural landmarks of the town.



Further southeast, as you walk along Walnut Alley, you will see an opportunity to take a break and enjoy the Susquehanna River. **Mariah’s Garden** is a privately owned garden that is open to the public. It is nestled on a river front lookout.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

In between S Front Street and St George is a gorgeous river-front **park**. It is open to the public, and has the potential to be an impressive river front lookout. The park currently has only two benches, however the view is wonderful. It may be worth investing in more places to sit down here, especially in picnic tables.



The **St. George Street Launch** is the only public river access point in Lewisburg. It is mostly used to launch kayaks, canoes, and is sometimes used as a fishing spot. Improved safety precautions may promote more use of this launch.

The current **RiverWalk** that begins at St. George St. has huge potential to become a widely-used and accessible river walk. The location is ideal in that it provides several opportunities to enjoy the river, as well as the nature that surrounds the trail. An enhancement of the maintenance of this trail, and perhaps future developments using this trail will help restore this vital resource in Lewisburg's river relations.



At the end of 7th Street and River Road is the **Bucknell Landing**. It provides the campus community with a direct access to the river to be used for academic research, educational use, and recreational use.

(image taken from <http://www.bucknell.edu/x67584.xml>)

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa



Just east of Bucknell is the railroad. The railroad tracks hug the Susquehanna River, and provide the opportunity for a “**rails with trails**” in the future.

Heading south along River Road, this railroad passes by many **scenic vistas** of the Susquehanna River and **fishing areas**.



The proposed trail network also provides the option of connecting the trail to another trail that parallels St. John Street. Along the way, we would be connecting more community assets.



Hufnagle Park is a space that is regularly used by the community to host events such as the Lewisburg Arts Festival.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Green Park, on the other side of Market Street, is home to athletic fields and a playground.



The proposed trail network also provides safe pedestrian access to the river and the downtown Lewisburg community for **Bucknell University** and the **Lan Avon Living Community**.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Design Standards

General Trail Design Recommendations

The following recommendations are meant to be taken in consideration with the existing guidelines concerning multi-purpose trail construction. The following design elements are intended to create safe trails that are pedestrian and bike friendly. The secondary recommendations can be utilized to make the trails more aesthetically pleasing and enjoyable for users.

Surfaces: Decisions must be made as to what type of material will be used on different segments of the proposed trail. Several factors will inform these decisions including: the cost to purchase and install the material, cost of maintenance, life expectancy, accessibility, and use expectancy. Possible materials include hard (asphalt, concrete, crushed stone) and soft (natural earth, wood chips) materials. Hard materials are more expensive upfront but require less maintenance, last longer, and are more accommodating to users. Soft surfaces are less expensive to install, but require more maintenance and may not be able to withstand heavy rains or flooding.

Sidewalks: The existing sidewalks will be utilized in several segments of the proposed trail. Improvements can be made in these places to accommodate heavier traffic flow.

Bike Lanes: In the segments of the trail that utilize roads and sidewalks, bike lanes should be designated where they are feasible. This will discourage bikers from using sidewalks and increase safety for all users.

Intersections: Where the trails intersect with roads and rails, measures need to be taken to assure safe trail use for all. Crosswalks can be constructed in ways that provide guidance for trail users and also, alert road users of the pedestrian crossing. At railroad intersections modular block systems can be constructed to raise the crossing to the grade of the rail.

Lighting: For the stretches of the trail that have the highest traffic, planners may want to consider using lighting to create a safer environment for trail users. Additionally, blue light emergency systems should be installed to ensure the safety of users.

Signage: Signs should be placed along the trail to inform users of trails rules and to direct users where trails utilize sidewalks and roads and to other trails in the region. Signs can serve to create a sense of community by telling stories of the region's history and the river in general to further connect people with the river. Signs also add to the character of the trail by creating a certain atmosphere through their design and message. For example, they could describe the history of:

- Canals
- The chair factory
- Lumber mills
- Bridges
- Flooding
- The Packwood House

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Secondary: These recommendations are not essential to the success of the proposed trails; however, these elements will strengthen the sense of place along the trails, thus making them desirable locations for recreation and transportation.

- **Scenic Vistas** – Locations for benches can be strategically chosen at locations that provide a scenic view of the Susquehanna River.
- **Landscape Design** – Landscaping can be done along the trail to serve as a natural buffer and to beautify the trails. Native plants should be used as they will require less maintenance and place the trails within the broader context of the natural environment in which they are situated.
- **Public Art** – public art can transform a trail from simply a means of transportation into a place that is valued by the community. Art in the form of sculptures and murals can also serve in strengthening the trail and community identity.

Individual Trail Segment Design Needs & Recommendations

The following is a discussion of specific design elements that we recommend for individual stretches of our proposed trail network. These recommendations take into account the unique needs and opportunities of each trail segment.

Riverwoods Loop Trail

Given the topography, flood concerns, and setting for this trail, we recommend a soft surface trail. The path should be cleared at a width of ~5 feet to provide ample room for trail goers while not harming the natural environment in which it is located. Signage should be used here as well to guide users and also, to simply notify residents of the new trail's existence. Depending upon the success of this trail segment, further design elements may be relevant in future discussions.

Downtown Riverfront Connector Trail

In order for this trail to serve as a viable pedestrian connection between the area surrounding Riverwoods and Downtown Lewisburg, a pedestrian bridge must be constructed across Buffalo Creek, on the Western side of the existing bridge. Environmental considerations must be made in the selection of materials and overall bridge design as it will run across a major stream.

A marked crosswalk is needed at the intersection of St. Anthony and Water Streets. As the trail follows Water St., it will utilize the sidewalk on the west side of the street since there is none on the opposite side. Improvements to the existing sidewalk would be beneficial to the trail's function as well. The intersection of the proposed trail with Market St. is perhaps the largest obstacle in this planning process. In order for this trail to connect the North and South sides of Market St., a crosswalk should be constructed using brick to mark it and fit in with the rest of Downtown. Furthermore, it would be extremely beneficial to eventually place a traffic light at this intersection to allow for safer pedestrian crossing.

The trail will continue to follow the west side of the street as it continues south. The trail should utilize a portion of Water St that is currently blocked by hedges, behind an existing house. This

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

land is technically the Borough's property, but does not have clear public access at this time. Signage will be needed throughout to guide users along this segment until it converges with the Rails with Trails segment. Also, signage should be used to note the Lewisburg Riverwalk Trail at the bottom of St. George St. and other assets like Mariah's Garden.

Rails with Trails

These segments of trails will follow the guidelines laid out by Rails to Trails, for trails running alongside active railroads.

Downtown Segment

Where this trail intersects with Market St., a crosswalk should be constructed to lead south to Hufnagle Park. From that point southward, the area alongside the trail belongs to the railroad company, so in order to alleviate concerns about liability the county or borough would most likely have to purchase the land or come to some sort of agreement with the rail company. Where the trail crosses over St. George St., the existing railroad bridge should be renovated. The bridge appears to be in sound structural shape; however, wooden boards would have to be laid in order for people to walk across it. Also, where the trail crosses University Avenue, there should be a marked crosswalk. In terms of material, gravel or crushed stone is probably most appropriate for the majority of this stretch.

River Road Segment

This stretch of trail will require a great deal of alterations to the physical landscape in order to make the trail possible. The ground will need to be leveled throughout, raised or lowered in many locations. This may present some problems as it appears the area currently serves as a drainage ditch for runoff. Along this stretch there are two locations that we believe can serve as scenic vistas of the river and rest stops for trail goers. Gravel would be a good choice for material along this trail as well, but pavement might be better given flood concerns. This stretch provides a good setting to place signs that tell the history of the town and river, serving to enhance place identity and connect and educate people about the Susquehanna.

Alterations to Existing Trails

Lewisburg Riverwalk: This trail is great in that it provides a connection with nature for Lewisburg residents; however, there are a few ways in which it could be improved. In the context of our proposed trail network, signs could be used to notify people of its existence and direct trail goers to it. We believe it would be a good idea to pave the trail with permeable asphalt, which would decrease the need for maintenance and also keep poison ivy out of the path. This is a better option than gravel due to the consistent flooding of this area. We also believe that eventually it would be beneficial to expand the trail, connecting it with the Rails with Trails portion on River Road. A bridge would have to be constructed over Limestone Run in this scenario. Signage would be needed to direct people along the trail, especially where it would diverge. This expansion would increase the amount of accessible green space in Lewisburg and serve as a means of keeping trail goers off the streets and in a more natural setting.

Handoff and Maintenance Plan

Handoff

We have identified that a typical way to approach planning river access is in four steps:

- 1) *Assessment of current state of river access*
- 2) *Coordinate Community Partnerships*
- 3) *Creation of Plans*
- 4) *Implementation*

It is important to note that because of our one-semester timeframe, our efforts involve a high level of consideration for steps #1, #2 and #3. However, this document will be handed off to stakeholders and partnerships in the Lewisburg community in hopes of consideration for future implementations of river access in Lewisburg. We hope that our unique asset-based approach for river access planning in Lewisburg is considered in the near future and this document will be handed off to the following:

- Susquehanna Greenways Partnership
- Lewisburg Downtown Partnership
- Lewisburg Borough
- Lewisburg Neighborhood Association
- Union County Planning Commission
- Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority
- Michelle Oswald

We have further identified that post-implementation, there are recommendations as to how to make river access in Lewisburg sustainable. Refer to the next section for information on sustainability of river access in Lewisburg and maintenance of the trail.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Maintenance Plan

This section recommends a maintenance plan that will keep the proposed trail safe and useable year-round.

- 1) **Yearly Inspection-** Inspections should be incorporated into a trail maintenance plan to ensure safety of all users including areas such as debris removal and surface conditions. Additionally, trail signage/safety signs should be checked to maintain both awareness and safety to all users.
- 2) **Trash Removal/Cleanup Days-** We recommend that there should be a monthly cleaning of the trail to remove trash and debris. This will help with the quality and sustainability of the trail.
- 3) **Vegetation Pruning-** We recommend that shrubs, plants, trees, etc. be pruned/removed on a monthly basis to ensure the walkability of the path.
- 4) **Snow and Ice Removal-** During the winter months, the trail should be maintained on a weekly basis if there is a sufficient amount of snow and ice.
- 5) **Weed Control-** Plants such as poison ivy pose a problem to users. We suggest on a monthly basis that plants such as poison ivy be both checked for and removed.
- 6) **Trail Edging-** We recommend that trail edging should be done a few times a year to keep the trail width.

Overall, we have a few additional recommendations to ensure sustainability of the proposed river access trail.

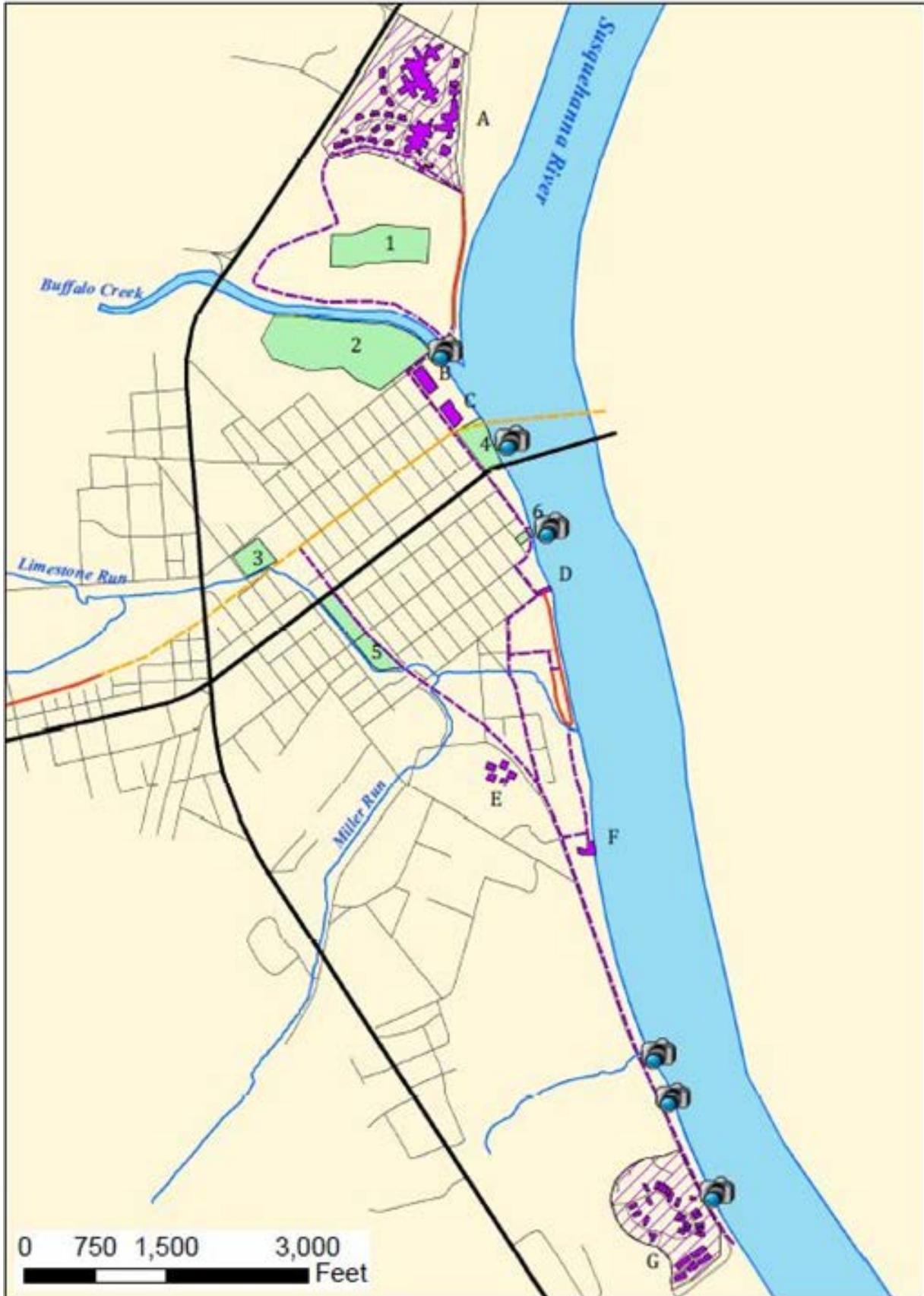
- 1) **Volunteer coordination:** We recommend that groups such as ROTC, JROTC, Boy Scouts, Bucknell students (fraternities, student organizations, etc.), and high school students could be directed to do most of the maintenance.
- 2) **Keeping good records** of when maintenance is scheduled and completed.
- 3) **Updating maps** according to the changing landscape of Lewisburg.

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Appendix

Map of Proposed Trail.....	21
Legend and Callouts.....	22
Map of Flood Risks.....	23
Lewisburg River Walk Pamphlet.....	24-25
Lewisburg River Walk News Article (<i>The Daily Item</i> , May 19, 1994).....	26

Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa



Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa

Lewisburg Trail Design



Map Symbols:

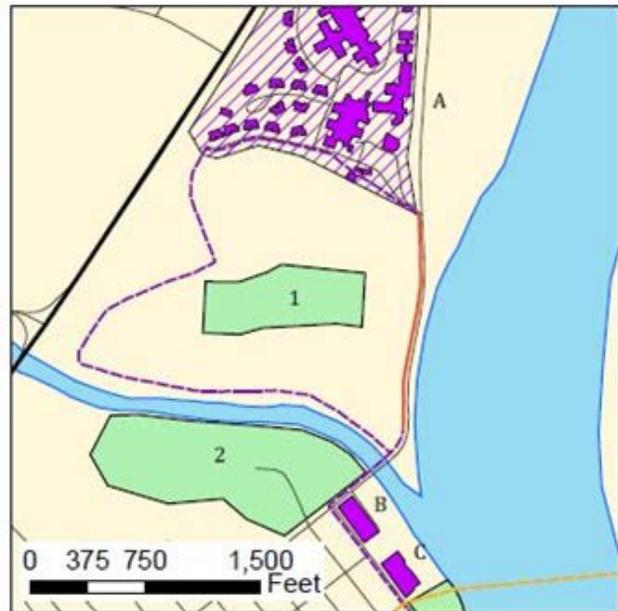
-  Scenic Vistas
-  Roads
-  Existing Trail
-  CENG Sr. Design Trail
-  Proposed Trail
-  Assets
-  Parks
-  Water Bodies

Assets:

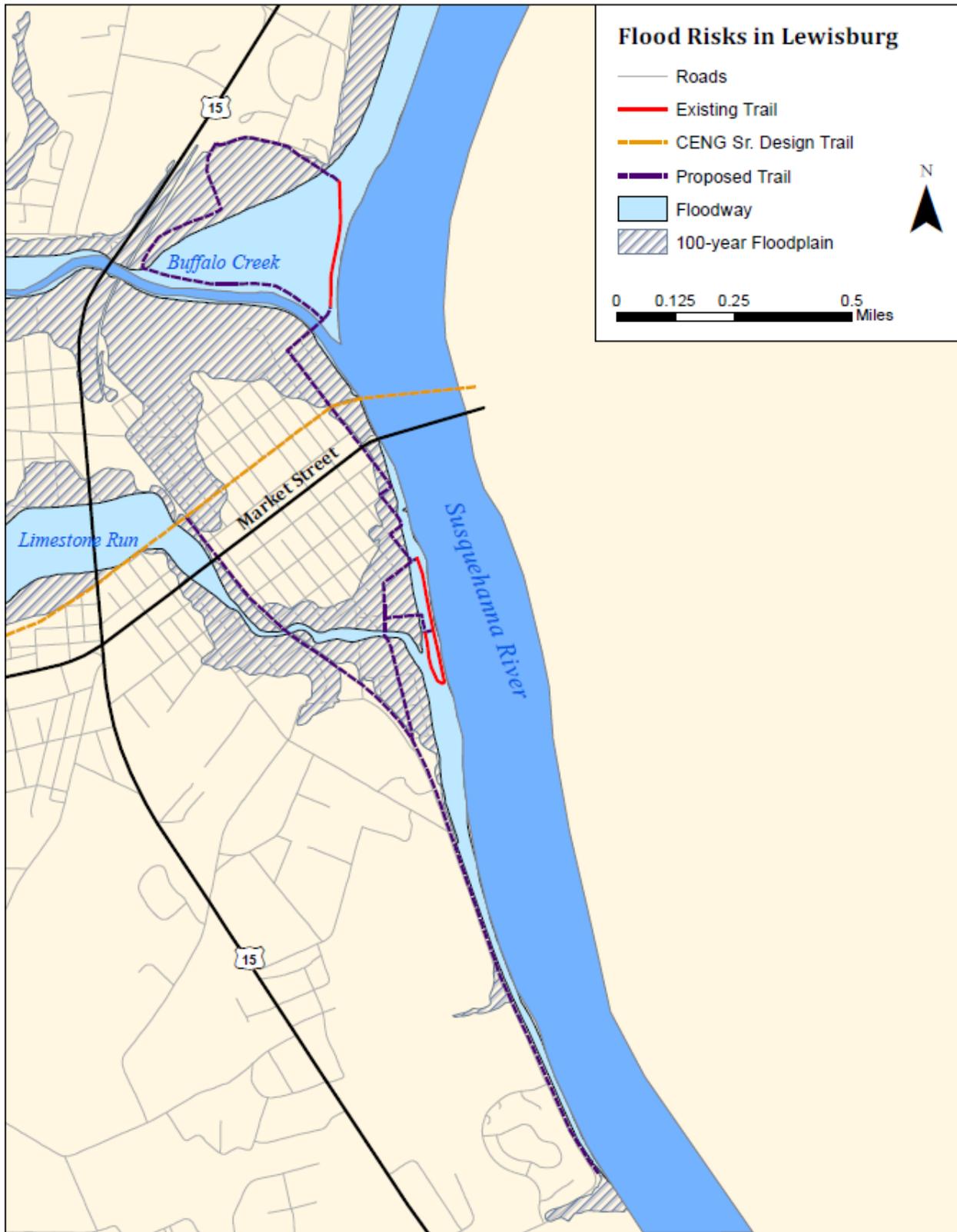
-  **A** - Riverwoods Senior Living Community
-  **B** - Lewisburg Community Garden
-  **C** - Street of Shops
-  **D** - St. George Street Launch
-  **E** - Bucknell University Gateway Dormitories
-  **F** - Bucknell Landing
-  **G** - Lan Avon Living Community

Parks:

-  **1** - Riverwoods/AYSO Soccer Complex
-  **2** - St. Anthony Street Park
-  **3** - Greene Park
-  **4** - Soldier's Park
-  **5** - Hufnagle Park
-  **6** - Mariah's Garden



Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa



GREENWAYS

A greenway is simply a corridor of open land. Greenways are an established landscape tradition gaining new life. They may have traditional park-like character, including golf courses and other recreational uses or they may preserve corridors of forest and meadows.

In practice, most greenways provide multiple benefits. Greenways vary from narrow ribbons of green through urban and suburban development to complex corridors a mile or more in width, incorporating diverse natural and cultural features. It is appropriate for greenways to be created and preserved along stream corridors.

Greenways may consist of both public and private property and are often mixtures of the two. It is not uncommon to establish greenways within a right-of-way in order to provide a trail or bikeway or to provide habitat. Transportation, railroad and utility rights-of-way may be used for this purpose.

The vegetation moderates summer heat and winds. As a result, the daily living environment can be made more healthful and pleasant. Greenways along waterways have proved effective as filter strips that trap sediment and pollutants that damage water quality.

Greenways can provide space for streams and wetlands to function naturally to accommodate both normal and flood flows. By protecting floodplains from development, greenways protect people and property from flood damage. The preservation of greenways can therefore be an important aspect of flood and stormwater management programs for watersheds.

As you walk along the path, notice several breaks in the slope as you move away from the river. They represent history written by the water. Hydrologists who know the language gain information on, among other things, the flood history and seasonal water levels. The soils here are very young, recently scoured or deposited.

This profile varies along the river, sometimes subtle or wide as in the broad floodplain on the opposite side of the river. Here the transitions are quick. Some sections have a naturally formed berm or terrace.

The entire path can expect to be under water at some time during the decade, and lower areas at the level of the kiosk will usually experience annual flooding!

Moving away from the river, also notice the quick changes in plant species and profusion. Flooded areas form distinct ecosystems. Water drives this system at some distance away from the river as changes in water levels affect the plants and soils. Species here must endure unpredictable submergence, survive moving water with occasional ice flows, and establish quickly. For those that do the rewards are constant replenishment of nutrients and water that can make floodplains a farmer's dream and a nightmare for development.

Rivers are also a highway for animals, paths for migrating birds and maturing fish. The depth of natural vegetation here offers a home to wildlife sometimes not available.

While we wouldn't want to discourage bodily exercise, you may wish to replenish the spirit too. With a little stillness you may gain a glimpse of shy, rarely seen critters.

LEWISBURG

RIVER

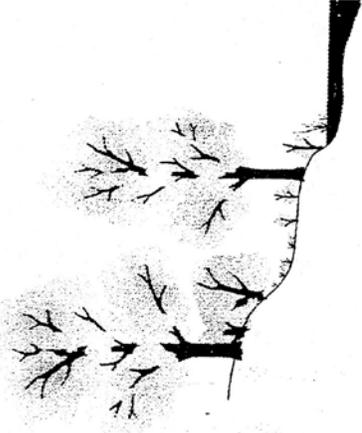
WALK

This half-mile walk is made possible by the generosity of two private property owners and support of the Union County Commissioners. It is maintained by the

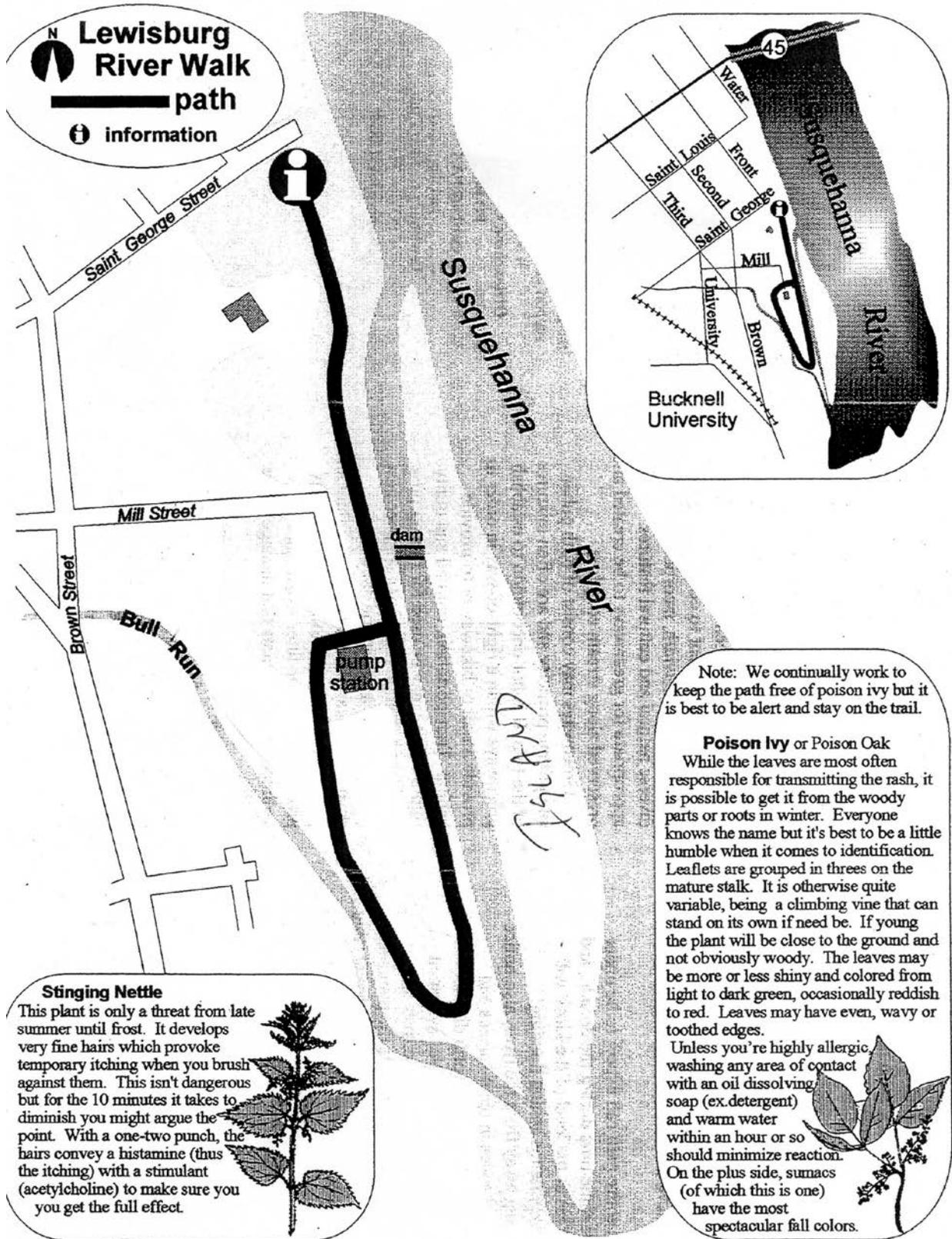
Ozlinachson Group of the Sierra Club
PO Box 65

Lewisburg PA 17837
and the

Lewisburg Garden Club
PO Box 344
Lewisburg PA 17837



Improving River Access in Lewisburg, Pa



Lewisburg Daily Journal 5-19-94

River Walk a reality soon

Project to rely on community effort

By MIKE GLAZER

LEWISBURG — Wednesday morning was cloudy and cold. There was a chilled wind blowing up from the Susquehanna as Betty Cook walked through ankle high bishop's gout and dodged downed limbs fallen from giant old white oaks.

If you did not know better this scene could have occurred before the first white settlers came to the area. It could have occurred a century ago, but it didn't. It happened this week.

Cook was showing off the virgin area that the proposed "River Walk" will occupy.

The walk will extend south from Saint George Street (starting about 100 feet west of the river) and continue about a half mile towards where the Bull Run empties into the Susquehanna River. Then, the trail curves back to the west and north, for a quarter mile or so, to meet the Mill Street Extension.

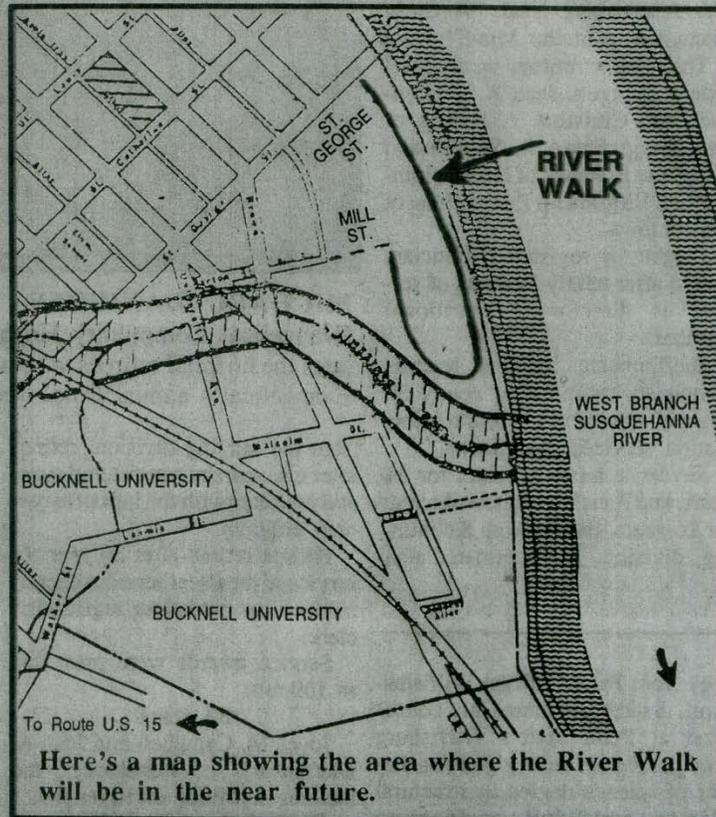
Presently the path is walkable, but in a month, when summer arrives, parts of it will be overgrown unless Black's two-year-old plan is undertaken.

Black proposed the River Walk in 1992 at a planning board meeting. The idea met with approval.

This year's plans call for work on the trail to begin almost immediately. Black tells that Ed Stapelton, a local tree surgeon, has already taken his chain saw to trees that have fallen across the walk.

Norm Conrad, from the Agricultural Extension, has volunteered to rid the area of poison ivy. Members of the "Master Gardeners Club" will also pitch in to help Conrad.

By early June the River Walk trail should be a well-defined three-foot-wide trail. Wood chips — recycled from the areas fallen tree



Here's a map showing the area where the River Walk will be in the near future.

and dead brush — will be spread on the path.

The Merrill Linn Conservancy will place vegetation identification markers along the trail.

The maintenance of the River Walk will be primarily left to the volunteers of the local Sierra Club Otzinachson (American Indian for west bank) group with added assistance from the Lewisburg Garden Club.

Black also says that Environmental Planner Shannon Rossman, of the Union County Planning Department, has given her technical assistance and will see that the project conforms with all local ordinances.

Sponsors of the program, so far, have been The National Council of State Garden Clubs and The Shell Oil Company through their PETALS program.

Black says that the only thing missing is the borough to take some interest in the project.

"(The borough is) hesitant because of liability concerns. We really need them to be a part of this," says the walks organizer.

For those in town, once completed, the River Walk will be something very special. Folks will be able to leave their homes and, a few minutes later, be surrounded by nature, completely detached from the rush of the world.