

LEWISBURG RIVER LAUNCH

UTILIZING THE WATERWAYS SO CLOSE TO HOME



This presentation builds on an earlier study by Bloomsburg planning student Jesse Lewis, who was an Intern at the Lewisburg Neighborhood Corporation (LNC) during the summer of 2013.

Revised and expanded by Andrew Ciotola and Samantha Pearson.

Design Concept

- ❑ Lewisburg area currently has no adequate river access for non-motorized watercraft (canoes, kayaks, paddle boards, inner tubes, etc.)
- ❑ There is one access ramp but with inadequate parking availability and a launch point of unreliable solidity.



Motorized vs. Non-motorized Boat Launches

- ▣ Non-motorized (NM) launches require less space because parking and driveway are for individual vehicles rather than vehicles with trailers.
- ▣ NM launches generally require less engineering and construction and no construction in the waterway (i.e. boat ramps).
- ▣ NM launches entail less noise, water, and air pollution, and less traffic disruption (individual vehicles versus vehicles with trailers)
- ▣ Lewisburg area already has a state-maintained motorized launch at Chillisquaque FBC Access on Rt. 405

Main Stakeholders

- ▣ Borough of Lewisburg
- ▣ Union County and Northumberland County
- ▣ Property Owners (both adjacent and surrounding)
- ▣ Residents
- ▣ Tourists
- ▣ Susquehanna Valley Visitors' Bureau
- ▣ Buffalo Valley Recreational Authority
- ▣ Local canoe/kayak liveries
- ▣ PA Fish and Boat Commission
- ▣ Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance
- ▣ PA DCNR
- ▣ Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
- ▣ Bucknell University

Benefits of Recreational River Access

- ❑ Enhances property values.
- ❑ Attracts visitors to community, with consequent benefit to local economy (like Buffalo Valley Rail Trail).
- ❑ Improves aesthetic appeal & community identity.
- ❑ Encourages healthy lifestyle / exercise / recreation.
- ❑ Increases appreciation of local waterways and environment among residents.
- ❑ Increases appreciation for Lewisburg's historic and cultural connection to the river and the creek.
- ❑ Offers great “active” opportunity for families.

Possible Negative Aspects

- ▣ Possible injuries at launch sites.
- ▣ Potential tax increases to residents.
- ▣ Risk of negative environmental effects due to litter at access site.

Possible Models



Hamilton Bottom DCNR Access, Pine Creek, Waterville, PA.

Possible Models



Clark Farm DCNR Access, Pine Creek, Cammal, PA.
(Simple launch is at far end of parking area.)

Possible Models



Black Pond Hand Launch, NYDEC, Franklin County, NY

Possible Models



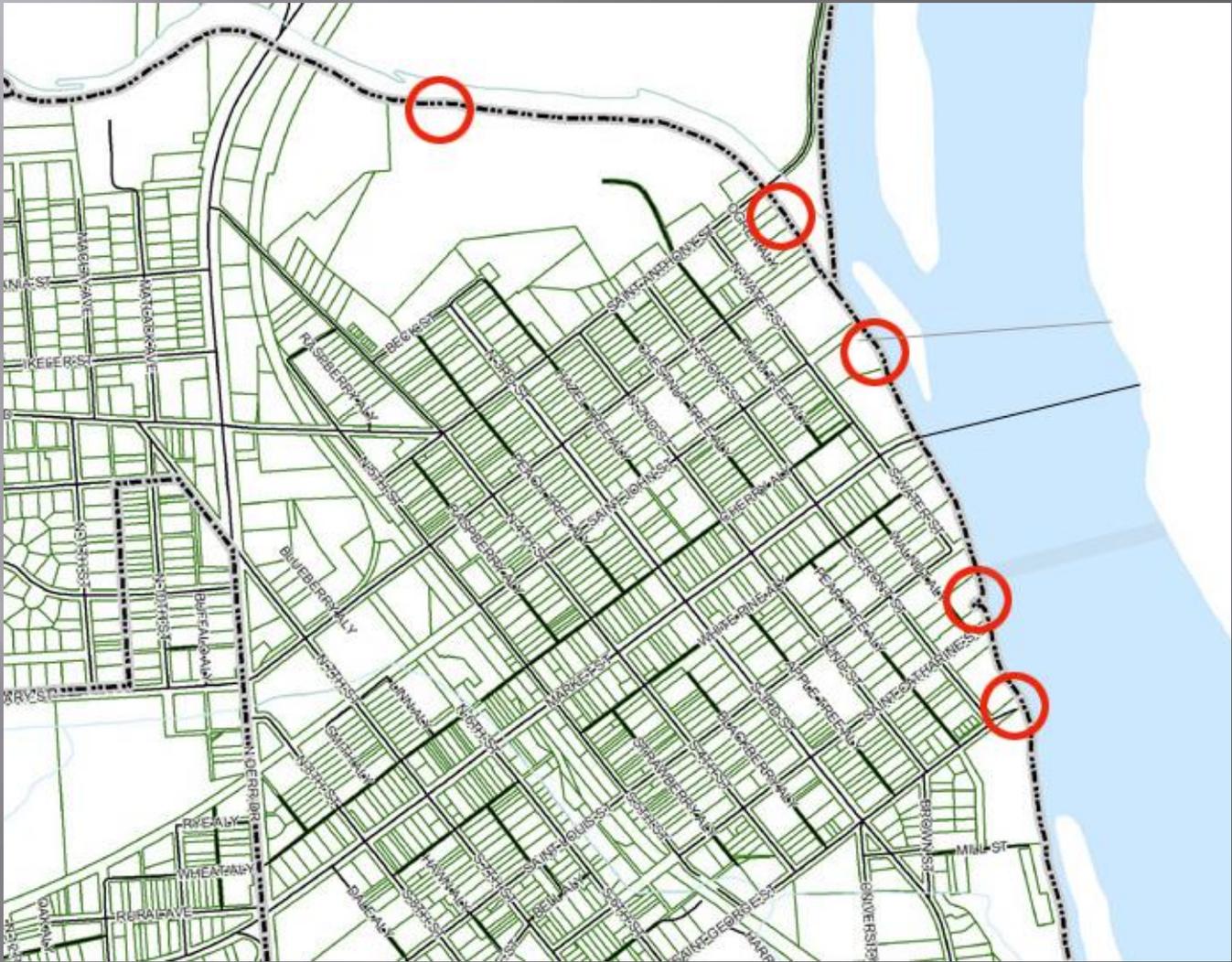
Raquette River Hand Launch, NYDEC, Near Tupper Lake, NY.

Possible Models



Indian Carry Hand Launch, NYDEC, Franklin County, NY.

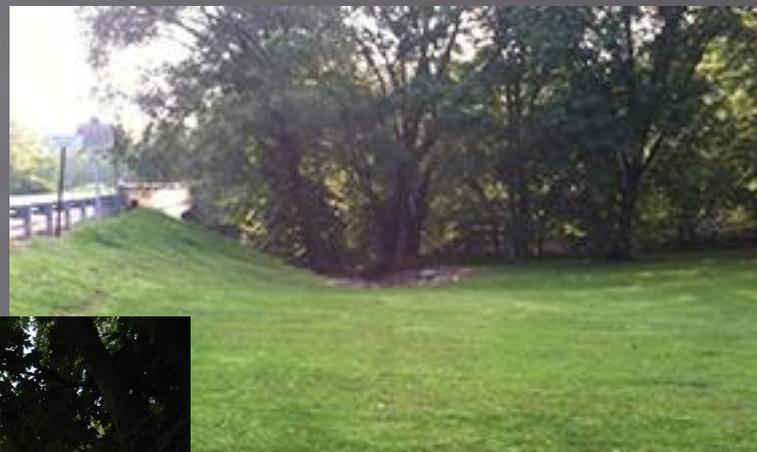
Potential Launch Sites



Potential Launch Sites



WOLFE FIELD SITE



ST ANTHONY ST SITE



MARIAH'S GARDEN SITE

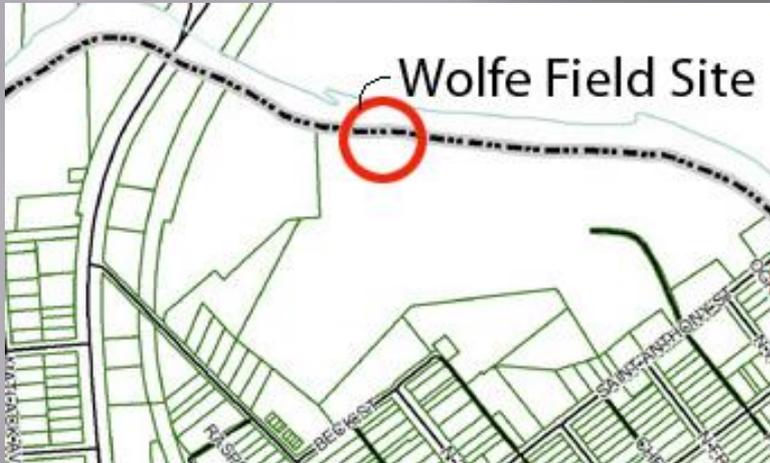


SOLDIERS PARK SITE



ST GEORGE ST SITE

Wolfe Field Site



- ▣ Located in the rear (western) section of Wolfe Field park, on Buffalo Creek, adjacent to the brush piles.

Advantages of Wolfe Field Site



- ❑ Conveniently already in a park with an existing gravel lane for access. (No additional road construction required).
- ❑ Borough property.
- ❑ Topography is conducive to the project. Would require relatively little excavating.
- ❑ Relatively quiet, in spite of Rt 15 traffic noise
- ❑ Plenty of space for picnic tables, benches, etc.

Disadvantages of Wolfe Field Site

- ❑ Buffalo Creek water levels are often very low in the summer, limiting navigability in peak season.
- ❑ At a remove from the Susquehanna River, where water is more navigable.
- ❑ Return from Susquehanna River to launch requires upstream paddle against current.
- ❑ This portion of Wolfe Field is currently inaccessible (behind locked gate) most of the week.
- ❑ Remote location might lend itself to vandalism and other unlawful behavior.
- ❑ Routine flooding could damage landscaping or structures.

Advantages of St Anthony Site

- ▣ Prominent location would make the launch a community showpiece, meaningfully connecting borough to the river.
- ▣ This area has already been developed for community and recreational facilities (Community Garden, playing fields, recycling).
- ▣ Easy access to/from Rt. 15, facilitating shuttle runs up- or down-river.
- ▣ Gently contoured topography suitable for a launch site. Would require limited landscaping work.
- ▣ Plenty of space for benches, picnic tables, etc.

Disadvantages of St Anthony Site

- ▣ Land is currently in private hands.
- ▣ Routine flooding could damage landscaping or structures.
- ▣ Indirect access to main channel (behind island); especially difficult at low water.
- ▣ Old coffer dam poses some risk at low water levels. (Adequate signage could help solve this problem).
- ▣ Limited space for parking.
- ▣ St. Anthony Street / River Road is a busy corridor.
- ▣ Would need to deal with existing structure (flood-prone house).

Advantages of Soldiers Park Site

- ▣ A central, highly visible location that would make the site a community showpiece, meaningfully connecting the borough to the river.
- ▣ Owned by the Borough.
- ▣ Would occupy an under-utilized portion of an under-utilized park. This area is currently an open power-line cut.
- ▣ Area would be suitable for further recreational development (picnic table, pavilion, etc.), especially along the undeveloped bank.
- ▣ Topography is suited to the project.

Soldiers Memorial Park Site



Potential space for parking under powerline along bridge abutment

Soldiers Memorial Park Site



Boat launch would enliven a currently under-utilized park.

Disadvantages of Soldiers Park Site

- ❑ Indirect access to the main channel (behind an island), especially at low water.
- ❑ Relatively high bank.
- ❑ Need to remove metal debris in riverbed to eliminate some safety issues (minimal).
- ❑ Busy street and bridge.
- ❑ Seen to possibly impinge on and even threaten formal, historic park.

Mariah's Garden Site



- ▣ This site is located at a small park off of Walnut Alley between St Louis and St Catherine Streets.

Mariah's Garden Site



Advantages of Mariah's Garden Site

- ▣ Owned by the Borough.
- ▣ Would highlight the presence of an under-utilized park.
- ▣ Area would be suitable for further recreational site furniture (picnic table to complement existing benches) especially in the existing park area.
- ▣ Has direct access to the main channel with no intervening island.

Disadvantages of Mariah's Garden Site

- ▣ Land is surround by private land.
- ▣ Alley location is hard to find.
- ▣ Difficult topography with an area with a high bank adjacent to much lower land.
- ▣ Directly below slack water dam.
- ▣ Limited space for parking.
- ▣ Alley is private space for adjacent residences.
- ▣ Riverbottom at bank is muddy, not rocky, with a great distance to slightly deeper water.

St George St Site



Current informal river access where St George St Right-of-Way extends toward the river.

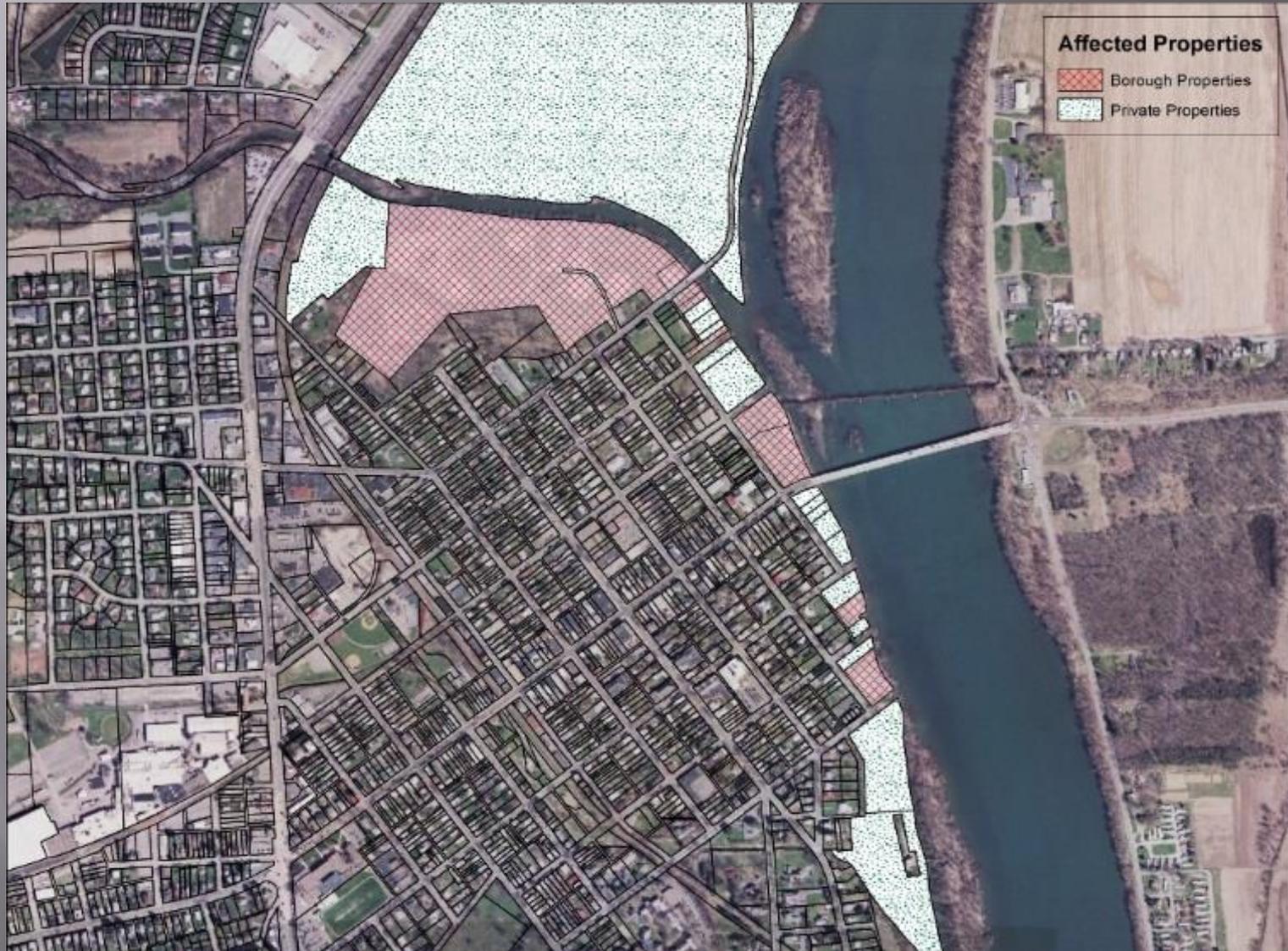
Advantages of St George St Site

- ▣ This site is an existing river access.
- ▣ There is already space for some parking.
- ▣ Adjacent to an existing nature trail and an open lot that has further potential for recreational development (picnic area, etc.).
- ▣ There have already been talks of implementing a “mattress” style gabion basket for a temporary removable boat launch.
- ▣ This is a feasible spot because of the existing infrastructure and access.
- ▣ From the river, this is the most visible and easiest to access of the five sites. It has the most direct access to the main channel.

Negative aspects of site

- ▣ Site is partially on private land.
- ▣ Adjacent open land is a brownfield with more stringent development requirements should any improvements be pursued.
- ▣ To shift the access onto Borough-controlled property would require significant excavation and removal of trees.
- ▣ It is below the remains of the slackwater dam, limiting direction of travel to downstream for some users.
- ▣ Limited space for parking and turnaround.
- ▣ Riverbottom at this location is muddy and the bank is quite a distance from the slightly deeper channel.

Properties Directly Adjacent to Sites



Funding Options

- ▣ Grant applications can be completed and submitted to
 - PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
 - PA Fish and Boat Commission
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
- ▣ Seek partnerships with local employers
- ▣ Promote partnerships with wellness programs

Next Steps

- ▣ Would the Borough Council authorize the North Ward Neighborhood group to pursue the idea of a canoe/kayak launch site in the Borough further?
- ▣ Would Council care to narrow the options now or to move on to the next steps in a public design process with all four sites in the running?
- ▣ Assemble a committee with representatives from various official bodies and stakeholder groups to organize a design charrette.
- ▣ Publicize the effort to get more people involved.
- ▣ Conduct surveys to gauge public interest.

Conclusion

- ▣ Thanks for your time and consideration!
- ▣ Questions?

