



Connecting People to the North Branch Susquehanna Diahoga Trail

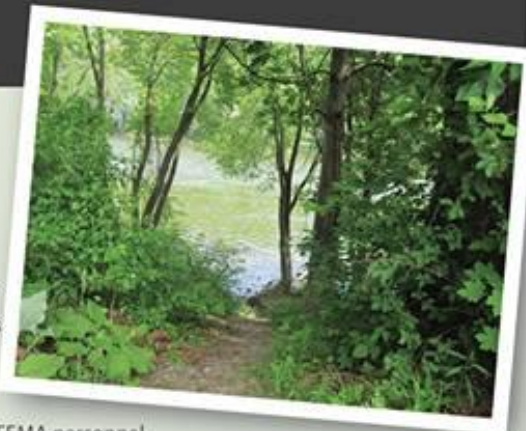
PROJECT PROFILE

The Susquehanna Greenway with its connected walking, biking, and water trails, unique river towns, and conserved land improves the quality of life for the people who live near it, enhances the economic vitality of the communities that foster it, and preserves the natural resources of the Susquehanna River itself. The Greenway helps to protect our water quality, encourages healthy lifestyles, and inspires stewardship and civic pride in places where people love to live, work, play and visit.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Following Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in September 2011, FEMA facilitated a public process in which the Boroughs of Athens and Sayre formed a Steering Committee to assess their community needs and develop a plan to move forward for recovery. This Committee included local and state elected officials, members of both communities, and economic development professionals. The steering committee, FEMA personnel, and local leaders held public meetings to obtain feedback from citizens. This process produced a community long-term recovery plan that noted riverfront recreation as one of 14 prioritized projects. The Committee applied for 501(c)3 status and became the non-profit organization, Futurescapes. After working with students from Cornell University to help the community envision a future trail along the Susquehanna River, Futurescapes identified riverfront recreation as one of their top five priorities - and so the Diahoga Trail is now proposed as a project for implementation.

Athens and Sayre Boroughs together with the Valley Joint Sewer Authority have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize that they will work together to plan and develop this trail, with both Boroughs accepting responsibility to maintain their portion of the trail. The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, the Bradford County Conservation District, the Boroughs, Futurescapes, and Todd Babcock, P.L.S. have all worked together to develop a conceptual Master Site Plan, a budget, and a partnership strategy for funding and implementation of this trail.



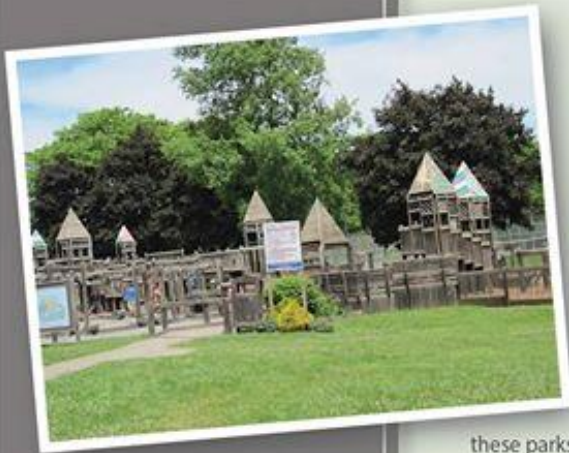
GOALS

- Create a safe pedestrian/bike connection between community parks in Athens and Sayre Boroughs, linking these communities to the river.
- Provide public access to one of the region's best natural and cultural resources and connect visitors to the river's rich Native American heritage.
- Increase personal well-being and physical activity in the outdoors.
- Promote sustainable economic development through recreational and heritage tourism.

BENEFITS

- The Trail will become a destination for residents and visitors and be a catalyst for other long-term recovery projects identified by Futurescapes.
- Residents will have the opportunity to lead more active and healthy lives. Convenient access to the riverfront will increase the use of existing parks.
- Businesses prefer to locate in communities that have a high quality of life for their employees, including outdoor recreation.





The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership is a leading champion for the Susquehanna River Watershed. We advocate for public and private efforts to connect people with our natural and cultural resources, and promote a sustainable and healthy environment.



PROJECT PLANS

The first phase of construction will develop a two mile trail between the Athens River Bridge and Higgins Street in Sayre. This will connect the Valley Playland Park in Athens to Riverfront Park in Sayre, including access to the boat launch and Kinal Loop Trail. This project will provide public walkways on the southern end of the trail where pedestrians currently walk on the street adjacent to the proposed trail. The trail will extend to Riverfront Park in Sayre, providing safe walking, river viewing, benches for sitting, and a connection to Valley Playland. Additionally, a connector trail to Thomas Avenue will provide a loop option for bikers, walkers and runners.

The intent of the project is to promote healthy lifestyles by providing a trail to safely connect these parks and communities to each other and the river, and encourage retail support uses and small business opportunities by creating a place that becomes a destination for Valley residents and visitors.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Athens Borough – Owns and Maintains Land for Trail Corridor, Financial Support, In-kind Services
- Sayre Borough – Owns and Maintains Land for Trail Corridor, Financial Support, In-kind Services
- Valley Joint Authority - Owner of Land for Trail Corridor
- Bradford County Commissioners – Financial Support
- Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission – Grant Preparation Assistance
- Bradford County Conservation District – Technical Assistance
- Carantouan Greenway - Volunteers
- Todd Babcock, P.L.S. – Volunteer Professional Surveyor/Technical Consultant
- Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc. (CEC) – Volunteer Professional/Technical Consultant
- Endless Mountains Heritage Region - Technical Assistance
- Susquehanna Greenway Partnership – Technical Assistance

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS

DCNR grant funding is secured for phase I project plans, but additional money is still needed. The second phase of the trail will explore options for expanding the Diahoga Trail to the Cayuta Creek Bridge in Sayre. If you would like to become a project sponsor, please contact:

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