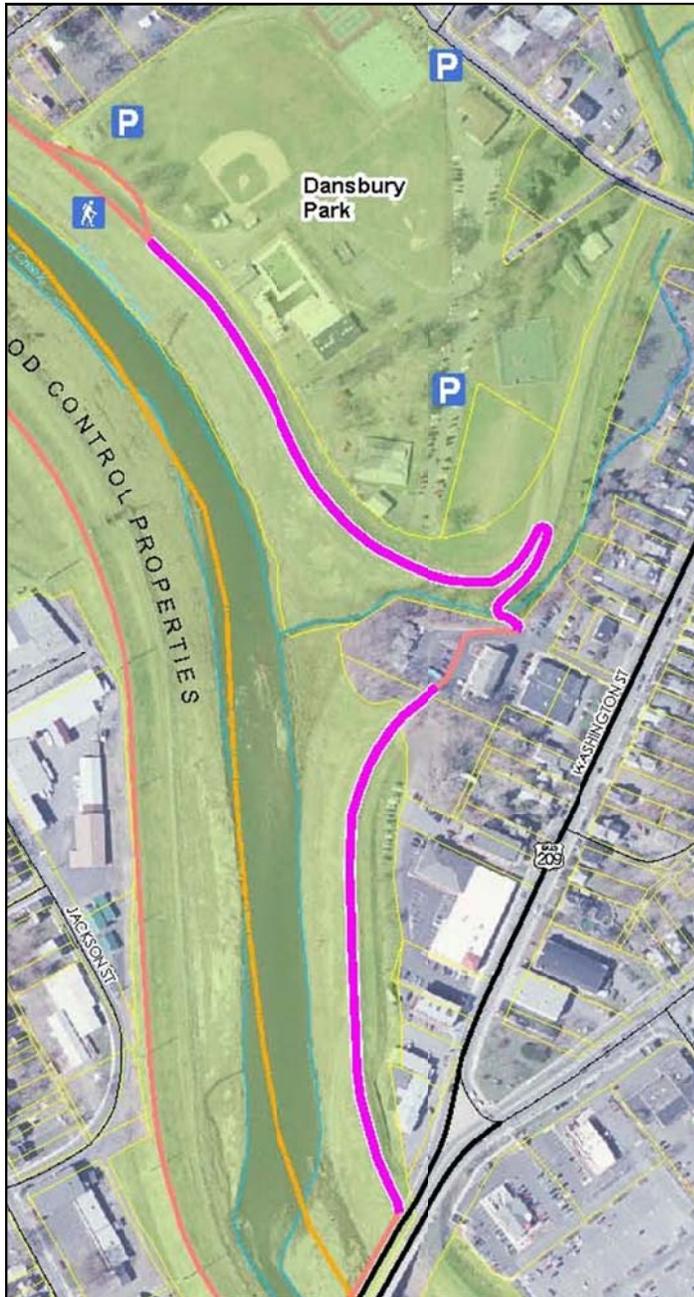


Hard-surfacing a Portion of the Levee Loop Trail

A Project of the Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission

Rationale

Newly established, the Levee Loop Trail is still a “well-known secret” of the Stroud Region requiring further promotion, awareness, and acceptance by potential users. Yet it lacks a uniformly accommodating surface for walkers, bikers, rollerbladers, strollers, wheelchairs, and other users.



- In a series of ongoing meetings among the members of the Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission, its Recreation Advisory Board, Greenway Advisory Board, and the Friends of Stroud Region, the stakeholders have doubly determined to create both a user-friendly trail and a highly visible attraction to impact the awareness and use of the Brodhead, McMichael, and Pocono Creeks Greenway and the Levee Loop Trail.

- With the elevation in public awareness, the trail’s influence spreads with the assistance of its knowledgeable citizenry, who becomes motivated to work toward solutions to economic, environmental, and social problems, which in turn produces a revitalized and invigorated community.

- This project continues developing the vision outlined in the Levee Loop Trail Master Plan, the Stroud Area Regional Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002), the Brodhead, McMichael, and Pocono Creeks Greenway Plan (2002), and the Monroe County Open Space Plan (2001) by establishing a uniform and accommodating trail surface of permeable pavement.

Project Site

The portion of the Levee Loop Trail to receive hard surfacing is shown in pink at left. It consists of 2,228 linear feet of trail 8 feet wide between the east end of the Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Dansbury Trailhead in East Stroudsburg, excepting its crossing of the Salvation Army parking lot.

Project Benefits

- The trail has enormous potential as a nonmotorized transportation route for both residents and tourists, substantially contributing to needed regional economic development, alleviating traffic congestion and associated pollutants, facilitating healthier lifestyles, increasing the mobility of non-drivers, and enhancing the cultural, social, and historical vitality of the surrounding community.
- Instead of asphalt, the Commission has elected to use pervious paving through partnering with Penn State's Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies for technical assistance on paving with its trail mix aggregate, which is more permeable and less expensive costly than pervious asphalt.
- When thus developed, the Levee Loop Trail will become much more accommodating to more users and visitors, including those currently underserved because of physical or social handicaps.
- Not only is this section the most heavily used, it is also the most publicly-visible portion of both the trail and the greenway. Such a project will further solicit public and private support for its completion, as well as enlist long-term supporters for future greenway enhancements.

Sustainable Project Principles

1. Site Suitability Applying permeable paving to this most popularly used portion of the Levee Loop Trail is consistent with all applicable recreation and land use plans, and improves both the accessibility and functionality of the trail.

- Because the trail is atop the flood control levee, it has no negative impact on the levee or other existing structures, and a minimal impact on the existing landscape.
- No excavation is required.
- Native grasses will continue to grow on the levee sides.
- The top of the levee is an ideal application for the pervious pavement because it provides excellent drainage without low spots for puddling and plenty of sunshine for drying, and already has the correct crown slope for paving, avoiding disturbance of the existing topsoil and vegetation, which in turn minimizes any impact with wildlife habitat and populations.

2. Managing Stormwater The use of the recommended trail mix aggregate and its proper installation promotes groundwater infiltration and eliminates the runoff that would otherwise be generated by asphalt in the same application.

- Because the trail is routed atop a flood control project specifically built to manage floodwaters and protect both the landscape and the area residents, this project is entirely consistent with the best stormwater management practices in use at the site.

3. Green Design and Construction Practices No preparatory excavation is required: the trail mix aggregate will be applied to the existing crown of the levee at four inches deep and be compacted to three without any built edges to contain the pavement, nor need for runoff barriers.

- All trail rock aggregate is derived from natural stone formations and restricted to local quarries of existing geologic formations; energy used for transportation is minimized, as is vehicular exhaust.
- Standing time waiting to dump is kept to a minimum by purposeful planning of the construction needs and pacing.
- During transportation, tarps will cover 100 percent of the load's exposed surface from the time of loading until immediately before dumping, minimizing airborne particulate matter.

- The trail mix, as specified and tested by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, is more permeable than pervious asphalt, allowing insoak of precipitation and minimizing runoff.
- The derivation, construction, and application of this aggregate product is consistent with LEED Guidelines, and contributes minimal impact on the existent landscape.

4. Connecting People to Nature Connecting people to nature, the outdoors, and the land is the principal reason for the construction of the Levee Loop Trail and its user-friendly surfacing—and is what it is best known and used for. The trail connects residents and users with 14 public parks, 3 playgrounds, 2 skate parks, 12 ball fields, 2 pools, 2 fishing ponds, 1 disc golf course, 1 regular golf course, 9 schools, a university, a Community Center, and the historic downtown districts of Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg.

- This project section of trail is also served by the main trailhead and public access to the entire trail, located at Dansbury Park. Among the amenities offered at the trailhead are ADA-compliant paved ramps to the top of the levee trail, benches, bike rack, shade trees, water fountain, informational kiosk, parking area, and a stairway.
- Both directional and interpretational signage is placed at strategic locations along the trail and trailhead. By special permission of PennDOT, the opening of the guardrail along the Veterans Memorial Bridge now allows permanent pedestrian and biker access to the trail from Business Route 209 over the Brodhead Creek.
- Many of the ongoing recreational, environmental, cultural, and historic programs offered by the Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission incorporate the use of the trail and engaging outdoor places of its associated greenway system, including its popular summertime Stroud Kids Day Camp program and an annual Trail Run.
- The trail and its links also allow easy access to the creek itself by anglers, boaters, kayakers, canoers, and waders.

Project Partners & Budget

• PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant	\$37,900
• Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission Project management, grant match contributor	\$ 7,970
• Friends of Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Advocacy, fundraising, grant match contributor	\$10,000
• East Stroudsburg Borough Property owner and grant match contributor	\$17,000
• Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies In-kind technical support	\$ 3,000
• Member Municipalities of the SROSRC Representative input and advocacy	
Total	\$75,870

Project Schedule

The project period extends through 2013, with an expected construction date of spring-summer 2012.

Contact

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Economic Benefits

Trail systems bring economic benefits to the regions they serve. The study and analysis of the economic impact of trails and trail systems consistently show a strong net value in the sale of both hard goods (bikes, accessories, clothing, sports equipment, etc.) and soft goods (drinks, snacks, meals, etc) by trail users.

The Stroud Region's Levee Loop Trail and its linkages to other trails and destinations is still in its infancy, but investment in its features and connections holds a tremendous potential as a substantial economic contributor to the region as the following few examples show.

Ghost Trail, Cambria and Indiana counties, PA, 2009:

- Hard goods: Average expenditures \$357.63
- Soft goods: Average \$13.62 per visit.

Heritage Rail Trail, York County, PA, 2007

- Hard goods: \$367 average, by 85% users
- Soft goods: \$12.86 per visit, by 72% of users

Pine Creek Trail, Tioga County, PA 2006

- \$30 per visitor per trip

Virginia Creeper Trail, VA, 2004

- Each visitor generated a net value between \$23-\$38 per person
- Supported 30 jobs in the area.
- Contributed \$1.2 million directly to the local economy.

Great Allegheny Passage, Pittsburgh to D.C., 2007-2008

- Trail businesses on or around the trail received more than \$32 million in receipts and paid their employees more than \$6 million in wages to accommodate trail generated business.
- These receipts were 4 times larger, and the wages 6 times larger than levels in 1998.