



Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation

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For Immediate Release

One in a series of educational essays on the essential community services of parks and recreation systems.

What is a Greenway?

by Gage Bongiovi

A Greenway is commonly defined as a corridor of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation, and non-motorized transportation. Many greenways are a network of parks with interconnecting trails centered along a stream. The Stroud Region is fortunate to be centrally situated on the confluence of the beautiful Pocono, McMichael and Brodhead Creeks, which, along with some two dozen parks and several trail systems, comprise the Stroud Greenway.

Frederick Law Olmstead, head architect of Central Park in New York City, was the first person to design parks incorporating a linked system. The first greenway he created was the Emerald Necklace in Boston. Olmstead's basis for creating a greenway was the accessibility it would give to the residents located all over the city. This revolutionary idea was greatly influential to the American Park Movement during the late 19th century. Olmstead is also credited with instituting other landscape design principles like underpasses and overpasses.

Although the greenway concept was established over a century ago, its extensive benefits are still relevant to today's lifestyles. As a resident of the Stroudsburg area I have firsthand experience with the many applications of the Stroud Greenway. One feature that offers multiple uses is the Levee Loop Trail.

Built on top of the levee that lines both sides of the Brodhead Creek, the trail allows many local businesses and parks to be accessible by walkers and bikers, and as such, promotes both non-motorized transportation and healthful exercise as community and personal benefits.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, seven out of ten deaths each year in the United States are caused by a chronic disease; and one in two American adults live with at least one chronic illness. Exercising is a key component to helping the body defend against chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. The greenway in Stroud Region gives the residents of the area ample opportunities to exercise by providing trails, playgrounds, ball fields, skate parks, basketball courts, and tennis courts within a short distance of their homes. Having these outdoor recreational facilities leads to healthier lifestyles and a reduced rate of chronic disease in the area.

Along with accessibility and health benefits, open space lands near residential areas bring financial value. The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) maintains that open space helps sustain and improve home and property values. A recent study by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission found that homes situated closer to open space in southeastern Pennsylvania are worth an average of \$10,000 more than all other properties.

I have used the Stroud Greenway in many ways, from playing disc golf at Yetter Park to riding my bike on the Levee Loop Trail to get to the local supermarket. With over 2,700 acres in parks and preserved open space in the region, the greenway offers virtually endless opportunities for outdoor recreation and interaction with the natural environment. Cherish this. Many other locales simply cannot boast of such natural treasures as abundant and grandiose as the ones in our backyard. This week, visit any part of the Stroud Greenway and discover for yourself one of the most vital and vibrant aspects of our home.

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