

# CLARION RIVER GREENWAY PARTNERSHIP

## Steering Committee:

**Carl Harting**

Local property owner

**Bob Imhof**

PA Lumber Heritage Region

**Dave Love**

Love's Canoe

**Michael McMurray**

Barnett Township Supervisor

**James Reed**

Clarion County Planning  
Commission Board

**Bill Sabatose**

Little Toby Creek Watershed  
Association

**Joseph Surra**

Elk County Conservation  
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**Carla Wehler**

Northwest PA Great  
Outdoors Visitors Bureau

**Jack Williams**

Mill Creek Coalition



PA Department of  
Conservation & Natural  
Resources



Originally referred to as Stump Creek, and sometimes Toby's Creek, the **Clarion River** was so named because of the rippling sound it made. Located in northwestern Pennsylvania and flowing 101 miles through Elk, Forest, Jefferson, and Clarion Counties, the Clarion River empties into the Allegheny River near Parker, PA. In 1996, 51.7 miles of the river were federally designated Scenic & Recreational under the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. This act directs that a management plan be developed for all designated rivers.

The Clarion River Greenway will encompass the Scenic & Recreational portion of the river, from just below Ridgway to the backwaters of Piney Dam. The objectives of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System are to (1) protect and enhance the river's free

## CLARION RIVER



## GREENWAY PLAN

flowing character and outstandingly remarkable values, and (2) make the river and these values available to the public through managed development. The Clarion Greenway Plan will represent the local "voice" of how those objectives will be achieved.

### Definition

A "greenway" is not easy to define. Even more difficult, however, is proving that a greenway will benefit more than just the environment. According to the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership, a greenway is a corridor of open space. Greenways vary greatly in scale, from

narrow ribbons of green that run through urban, suburban, and rural areas to wide corridors that incorporate diverse natural, cultural, and scenic features.

**G**reenways can be land- or water-based, running along stream corridors, shorelines, or wetlands. Some follow old railways, canals, ridge tops, or other features. They can incorporate both public and private property. Some greenways are primarily recreational corridors, while others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage.

**G**reenways differ in their location and function, but overall, *a greenway network will protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources, provide recreational benefits, enhance the natural beauty and the quality of life in neighborhoods and communities, and stimulate economic development opportunities.* Greenways vary, depending on population density, existing landscapes, land uses, and local needs. Some types include conservation greenways, recreational greenways and trails, natural areas, and greenbelts. Each type of greenway has various benefits that serve communities well.



*Seneca Trail, Cook Forest State Park*

**Conservation greenways** exist to protect natural resources. They may be privately owned and not necessarily meant for human passage. They are designated, rather, to provide food, shelter, and cover to numerous species. A riparian buffer along a river or creek, a type of conservation or ecological greenway, traps sediment and nutrients, shades and cools the water, and also protects the bank from erosion, while providing a natural habitat for wildlife.

**Recreational greenways** are a great way for communities to benefit from the growing popularity of outdoor activities. These greenways can also enhance existing recreational resources by linking parks, schools, and other recreational centers, while also creating new use for features such as abandoned railroads and canals.

**Natural areas** are green spaces or greenways with nature observation or environmental education functions. These spaces sometimes incorporate camping areas and hiking trails and function as an outdoor learning center, while preserving wildlife areas.

**Greenbelts** are interconnected ribbons of conservation areas, corridors or trails that wrap around a community. Many cities have developed this idea, such as Boston's "Emerald Necklace." Each conservation area, natural area, or trail becomes a designated "jewel" on the necklace. The Capital Area Greenbelt is another example of this. The benefits of these different types of Greenways are interconnected and many.

**C**onservation greenways, while they are meant to preserve and protect the natural environment may also contain a trail within their land area. Recreation greenways can not only improve the health of the residents, but may also help stimulate the local economy, as many business leaders are selecting sites for the relocation and expansion of industries and corporations where the quality of life is high and recreation opportunities are abundant.

**G**reenways bring economic benefits to communities in many ways. Trail users spend money at businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, campgrounds, and gas stations. Just the presence of a greenway can increase the real estate value of adjacent properties. Greenways can aid with interpretation of natural, historic, and cultural resources that serve to educate the young and old alike. Communities are always looking for ways to improve quality of life, which not only includes a strong economy and low taxes, but also a clean environment, good education system, access to outdoor resources, and neighborhoods that are friendly and free of crime. Bringing in additional monies means more ability to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns.

Greenways are an inexpensive way for cities, towns, and rural areas to improve their quality of life by providing all of these benefits.



*Clarion River at Cooksburg*

**T**he Clarion River Greenway Partnership seeks to link existing greenways, natural, cultural, scenic and historic areas and more, into one unified greenway along the Clarion River corridor. The current phase of work includes an inventory of those existing places and projects to ensure no duplication of efforts. This phase will also determine or design what the Greenway will look like. The final, and ongoing, phase will result in implementation.

**G**reenways are corridors of land and water that have the ability to connect people and places together. Their benefits reach far beyond that of the environmental realm, touching the recreation, economy and education of their adjacent communities. Greenways cannot be defined in a single word or sentence; their benefits are numerous and their effects will last a lifetime.

### Purpose

**T**he Clarion River Greenway Plan will be an effort to unify information and management efforts of landholding entities within the 51.7 mile Wild & Scenic Clarion River Greenway. The plan will incorporate local opinion and encourage long-term public involvement in the development of the Greenway as a place for natural, historic and scenic resource protection, recreational adventures, and economic prosperity.

### Public Involvement

**B**road public involvement is needed to plan the Greenway and to meet the various needs and interests of communities, property owners, visitors, and businesses. The Clarion River Greenway effort works with the local stakeholders to develop the plan and long-term management recommendations through surveys, personal visits/interviews, local media, and public workshops.

### What this plan is NOT

**T**his plan will not place usage restrictions on land. The cooperation and input from private landowners will be sought and encouraged. The management plan will make recommendations for long-term management based upon the public outreach results and communications with private and public landholders, and it will seek to unify information and management efforts.



## Funding

Funding for the planning phase of the Clarion River Greenway is provided through a combination of local, state, and private funds. Local support, both public and private, will be essential to implementing the recommended projects.

### Join the Greenway effort!

You can become involved in the Greenway effort by joining the Community Advisory Group, participating in the upcoming public workshops, or completing a survey. Please tell us how you would like to see the natural, historic, and scenic resources protected, recreational adventures enhanced, and economic prosperity thriving in the Clarion River region. For more information on the Greenway Plan, contact Jessica Coil, Watershed Planning Specialist at Western Pennsylvania Conservancy: 724.459.0953 x110, or email [jcoil@paconserve.org](mailto:jcoil@paconserve.org).



*A hike in Cook Forest State Park*

