



ALLEGHENY'S RIVERFRONTS

A Progress Report on Municipal Riverfront Development in Allegheny County

DECEMBER 2010



ALLEGHENY COUNTY







COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

101 COURTHOUSE • 436 GRANT STREET
PITTSBURGH, PA 15219
PHONE (412) 350-6500 • FAX (412) 350-6512
WWW.ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US

Dear Friends:

In Allegheny County, we are known for our rivers. In fact, our rivers have repeatedly been in the national spotlight – during the Forrest L. Wood Cup and Pittsburgh G-20 Summit in 2009, and during World Environment Day in 2010. We are fortunate to have more than 185 miles of riverfront property along the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio and Youghiogheny Rivers. Our riverfronts provide opportunities for recreation, conservation and economic development.

Providing access to our waterways has always been a key priority and we have been very successful in connecting communities through our trail and greenway system. Through partnerships with businesses, foundations and trail groups, we are on target to complete the Great Allegheny Passage along the Monongahela River before the end of 2011. This trail has been improving the economy and quality of life in towns throughout the Laurel Highlands and Southwestern Pennsylvania, and now its benefits will spread north through the Mon Valley and into the City of Pittsburgh.

Our riverfronts provide opportunities for greening our region through the use of new trees, rain gardens and riverside vegetation that aid in flood control, improved water quality and a more natural experience. Allegheny County riverfronts have also always been great places to live. More people will be able to experience riverfront living with the development of communities such as Edgewater at Oakmont, which promises to be one of the best new neighborhoods in the region.

I am so proud of all that we have accomplished along our riverfronts and excited about all that is yet to come. Please join me in this tour of Allegheny County's riverfronts.

Sincerely,

Dan Onorato
Allegheny County Executive



ALLEGHENY COUNTY RIVERFRONTS | ALIVE WITH ACTIVITY

With each passing year, more and more people are finding new and fun ways to enjoy Allegheny County's riverfronts.

It seems like everyone wants to get in, on or near the water...and for good reason! The connection to our rivers is a big part of the history and present-day vitality of Allegheny County. Whether it is the story of early Native Americans living along our rivers or the first Europeans who fought for access to our valuable rivers, they are central to the story of this region and the nation.

The Allegheny County Riverfronts Project, a partnership of Allegheny County, Friends of the Riverfront and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, celebrates this historical connection to our riverfronts. Together, we work with a variety of partners including local governments and non-profit organizations to implement projects along the riverfronts.

In 2009, we published the first *Allegheny's Riverfronts Progress Report*. This publication is the second in the series and a celebration of all things "riverfront" in Allegheny County. Much has been accomplished since the 2009 publication as communities continue to find new ways to connect to our rivers. There is also much more to be done to fulfill our vision.

Allegheny County riverfronts are destinations for its citizens and visitors. These riverfronts provide recreation, conservation, and access opportunities while maintaining their place as important drivers in the region's industrial, commercial and residential economies.

In this report, we'll be taking you to some new places to see new projects, and we'll also revisit some of the places that we visited in our last report. So join us as we take a tour of Allegheny County's riverfronts.

LOOKING AHEAD | PROJECT UPDATES

Important progress is being made at completing several projects that were highlighted in the 2009 *Allegheny Riverfront's* report. These projects will make it easier for people to get to and use Allegheny County's 80 miles of scenic riverfronts.



Community Trails Initiative

O'Hara Township and Friends of the Riverfront were awarded funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to conduct a trail feasibility study for 17 municipalities along the north shore of the Allegheny River connecting the City of Pittsburgh to Armstrong County. The feasibility study is well on its way with more than 20 public and stakeholder meetings held along the alignment. The report is expected to be finalized early in 2011 with specific focus on pilot projects to keep the momentum and interest in a trail connection moving. The report will be available at Friends of the Riverfront's website.

www.friendsoftheriverfront.org



Sycamore Island – Conservation Plan

The Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) acquired for permanent conservation Sycamore Island, which is a 14-acre and growing island in the Allegheny River near Blawnox. In September 2010, the ALT completed a property management plan for Sycamore Island, which included an inventory and assessment of the island, public outreach and recommendations for the island's use and stewardship. More information is available at its website.

www.alleghenylandtrust.org



Three Rivers Water Trail

In October 2010, the Three Rivers Water Trail celebrated the opening of a new water trail access point on the Ohio River at Westhall Street. This is directly in front of the State Correctional Institution and near the ALCOSAN plant on Pittsburgh's Northside. Friends of the Riverfront is working diligently with other municipalities to introduce more access points. The water trail was also designated by the National Park Service as a National Recreation Trail in 2010. This national designation brings increased attention to Allegheny's Riverfronts.

www.friendsoftheriverfront.org



Verona Boat House

In 2009 we celebrated the ribbon cutting for the Steel City Rowing Club's new boathouse in Verona. That project is close to completion as construction on the \$2.5 million, energy efficient facility comes to a close. This site already provides public access to the Allegheny River with a Three Rivers Water Trail public access point. Plans are also underway for a future trail connection through Verona.

www.steelcityrowing.org



NATIONAL RECOGNITION

During 2009-10, Allegheny County's rivers played host to several nationally recognized events. These events raised awareness of our region in some new and exciting ways. People who still hold outdated perceptions of our riverfronts have now gained a new understanding of what our region looks like today.

In September 2009, our region played host to leaders from all over the world at the G-20 Summit. While meeting at the David Lawrence Convention Center overlooking the Allegheny River, President Obama commented on the transformation of this region, much of which can be seen along Allegheny County Riverfronts...

"Last night during the dinner that I had with world leaders, so many of them commented on the fact that sometime in the past they had been to Pittsburgh – in some cases it was 20 or 25 or 30 years ago – and coming back they were so impressed with the revitalization of the city. A number of them remarked on the fact that it pointed to lessons that they could take away in revitalizing manufacturing towns in their home countries."

*–President Barack Obama
Closing Press Conference, Pittsburgh G-20 Summit 2009*



Forrest L. Wood Cup

July 29–August 2, 2009

The Forrest Wood Cup is the world’s richest bass-fishing championship. Widely considered the crown jewel of bass fishing, the Forrest Wood Cup was a three-day event held on the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers, and put the sport’s biggest names in competition with one another for a \$1 million top award.

Recently recognized as the largest convention in this region in 2009 by the Pittsburgh Business Times, the Forrest Wood Cup generated more than \$37 million in travel and tourism revenue for the region. The eyes of the sport fishing world were squarely on Pittsburgh for this event, which followed up on the successful CITGO Bassmaster Classic that took place in 2005.

The success and demonstrated popularity of bass fishing tournaments bodes well for Allegheny County and our three rivers as a proven venue and destination for future outdoor sporting events.



World Environment Day 2010

June 5, 2010

Heralded as the biggest, most widely celebrated global day for positive, environmental action, World Environment Day was brought to Pittsburgh by Bayer Corporation, sponsored by the United Nations and spearheaded by Sustainable Pittsburgh to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment and encourage political attention and action.

World Environment Day was the culmination of several weeks of events taking place between Earth Day in April and early June. The theme for this celebration was “Biodiversity – Ecosystems Management and the Green Economy.” World Environment Day was designed to:

- Give a human face to environmental issues
- Empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development
- Promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and
- Advocate partnership to ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

The capstone event was the *Water Matters!* Global Water Conference that took place overlooking the Allegheny River. During this conference, our region was at the center of a national debate about clean water and the importance of clean water for the future. The setting and context for this debate here in Allegheny County made a profound statement on dramatic environmental improvements and impact on the quality of life throughout the region.

ALIVE WITH ACTIVITY | REGIONAL EVENTS

Several regional events took place in 2010 that provided an opportunity for Allegheny County residents to have a river experience. Some of these are annual events and some were one-time events, but they all brought attention to our rivers.





Pittsburgh Triathlon and Adventure Race

July 2010

Nearly 1,000 athletes turned out for the 13th Annual Pittsburgh Triathlon and Adventure Race on Pittsburgh's North Shore. That's the highest number of participants in the history of the event. The event attracted participants nationally, but local athletes competed quite well. The Triathlon is an international distance event (1.5k swim, 40k bike, 10k run) that is sanctioned by USA Triathlon. The event also includes a sprint distance and adventure race course to appeal to a wide variety of athletes.

www.friendsoftheriverfront.org



Paddle at the Point

June 2010

On a very rainy Saturday in June, hundreds of intrepid boaters gathered at the Point to participate in a Guinness World Record-breaking attempt that was organized by Venture Outdoors. The goal of this event was to break the world record for the largest raft of canoes/kayaks. The previous record is held by Inlet, NY, with 1,104. There were more than 2,200 boats registered for the Paddle at the Point. Check the website to find out if we broke the record!

www.paddleatthepoint.com



That Dam Ride

September 2010

Every year on the weekend after Labor Day, a couple hundred bike riders take off from Boston, Pennsylvania along the Great Allegheny Passage, and ride to Confluence (Somerset County), spend the night and then ride back as part of That Dam Ride, organized by the Mon Yough Trail Council. The 2010 event had 350 participants who enjoyed the beautiful Youghiogheny River. Visitors to the riverfront in Boston are welcomed by volunteers at the Boston Visitor Center four days a week during the trail season.

www.thatdamride.org

COMPLETING CONNECTIONS | LAND TRAILS

Several important and very challenging trail segments were completed this year. As we make more and more connections, the benefits of our riverfront trails to local communities increase. We can see this with the economic impact of trails and also with the potential for alternate transportation to connect people to new places in a new way. Plus more places to recreate make for more livable communities. Ride, walk, hike on!



Three Rivers Heritage Trail

On the Allegheny River, Friends of the Riverfront (Friends) worked with PennDOT to complete an important connection between the City of Pittsburgh and Millvale Borough. The Route 28 trail connection is a boardwalk style trail that hugs the riverbank between Washington's Landing and Millvale Riverfront Park. If construction had not taken place in 2010, this connection would have been lost forever because of the reconstruction of Route 28 relocating railroad tracks closer to the riverbank. Friends raised more than \$2 million and worked with PennDOT to complete this trail segment before beginning the road reconstruction.

www.friendsoftheriverfront.org



Rivers Casino

The trail and riverfront park in front of the Rivers Casino was completed in 2009. This project greatly enhances the public space and trail connection on the Ohio River. This space is more than a trail connection as it also provides opportunities to enliven our riverfronts through larger gatherings and other events. Also part of Three Rivers Park and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, the trail incorporates innovative stormwater management into the design.

www.theriverscasino.com



Great Allegheny Passage

Several important segments of the Great Allegheny Passage are now complete or well on their way to completion. In October 2010, County Executive Onorato made the much anticipated announcement that an agreement was finalized with Sandcastle Waterpark for a trail through its property. This very difficult negotiation included CSX Transportation. Although there is still work to be done to finish the trail, this represents the final piece of property needed to complete the Great Allegheny Passage.

In July 2010, the Regional Trail Corporation (RTC) pulled off a major accomplishment of simultaneously placing two new trail bridges over Norfolk Southern mainline tracks in record time. The two new bridges are located in Duquesne and Whitaker. The RTC was given four short hours of track time to place the ramps. The project was complete within two hours! Connecting trail is currently being constructed to open this section of trail by early 2011.

In early 2010, County Executive Onorato, Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and representatives of Riverlife cut the ribbon on the Mon Wharf trail connection. This project turned part of a parking lot into a trail and park connection that will connect to Point State Park. Boat access is also part of the design. Riverlife is in the process of raising funds to construct a switchback ramp to connect the Mon Wharf trail to the Smithfield Street Bridge. Both projects are part of Three Rivers Park and the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

In September 2009, Allegheny County Executive Onorato, County Councilman Robert Macey, Mayor Phillip Krivacek and representatives of the Allegheny Trail Alliance and Steel Valley Trail Council cut the ribbon on a new trail tunnel in Duquesne. Allegheny County constructed the tunnel as part of the flyover ramp to the Duquesne City Center to assure a continuous trail through Duquesne. The flyover ramp opens up the former steel mill site for continued redevelopment. The connecting trail was constructed by the RTC.

In addition to new construction the Passage is constantly being improved and upgraded. The trail through McKeesport was greatly enhanced in 2010 with new trail from the 15th Street Bridge to McKees Point Park. Improvements include a dedicated trail and new trail parking at the Point. Trail users in Duquesne also have access to a free parking spot through a partnership with the Port Authority of Allegheny County to allow trail users to use the Park 'N Ride in Duquesne.

www.gaptrail.org



CREATING SPECIAL PLACES

In addition to larger gathering places, Allegheny County riverfronts also provide opportunities for reflection and places to experience the riverfront in a more individual way. Some special places are hidden and some are right in the middle of major developments.



Homestead Labyrinth

The Homestead Labyrinth was completed in June 2009 by local artist Lorraine Vullo. It follows the design of a medieval eleven-ring labyrinth. It is located on the Monongahela River, on the land where the Homestead Works once stood. In 1892, at the Pump House adjacent to this site, members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers clashed with Pinkerton agents hired by Carnegie Steel Company in the Battle of Homestead. Ten men lost their lives in this historic battle.

In place of the traditional lunations, or graphic icons drawn from the lunar calendar that sometimes border this style of labyrinth, there are three different sizes and colors of hand-made concrete triangles representing the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The name of a mill, foundry or furnace that stands, or once stood on that river, is engraved in each triangle. These lunations honor the lives of the men and women who came from all over the world to live and work here.



Harrison Hills Park

Harrison Hills Park is Allegheny County's smallest regional park and occupies 500 acres in Harrison Township. The park is located in the extreme northeast portion of Allegheny County and borders the Allegheny River. Visitors to the park find their way to the Watts Memorial Overlook, which is 400 feet above the Allegheny River. The overlook offers a magnificent view of the Allegheny River and four counties – Allegheny, Westmoreland, Butler and Armstrong.



Mister Rogers Sculpture

One of Pittsburgh's most beloved icons now has a fitting and permanent public memorial on Pittsburgh's North Shore riverfront, overlooking the three rivers.

A statue of children's television legend Fred Rogers was constructed in the former Manchester Bridge pier and sculpted by renowned artist Robert Berks. The project was funded by a permanent endowment from the Colcom Foundation to Family Communications, which in turn gave the statue to the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

Visitors to Mister Rogers' Pittsburgh "neighborhood" now have a new riverfront destination that will allow generations to pay tribute to this international symbol of Pittsburgh.

RIVERFRONT PARKS AND COMMUNITY PLACES

Many of the 73 riverfront municipalities have public parks along the rivers. These parks are great opportunities to provide public access and recreation. They are important both for residents within walking distance and also can be important connectors and stopping points on major trail systems. Municipally-owned community parks are perfect places for boat access points to provide access for people to get into the water.



McKees Point Park, McKeesport

McKees Point Park in McKeesport has prime river frontage at the confluence of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Rivers. It serves as a local walking trail with a playground for local residents and is an important part of the Great Allegheny Passage. This municipally-owned and operated park also has connections to private amenities like a marina and café.



Riverfront Park, Sewickley

There is a real gem of a riverfront park in Sewickley on the Ohio River. The park includes a H.K. Porter Locomotive (1897), P&LE Bobber Caboose (late 1800s), a WWII Merchant Marine Anchor and Memorial and a sundial made of large cut stones that is a functional piece of art. There is also a baseball field and picnic area for recreation. The site is fortunate to have two underpasses under active Norfolk Southern railroad tracks that provide access to the river, including an access point on the Three Rivers Water Trail. There is something for everyone in this community park.

For more information about the history of the park you can check out the website at <http://riverfrontpark.wordpress.com>.



Riverview Memorial Park, Tarentum

Like many communities, Tarentum experienced a business boom at the end of World War I. This era saw the establishment of Tarentum's Riverview Memorial Park. The move to purchase the riverfront property was a progressive step for the borough. Over the years, thousands have strolled there, had wedding pictures taken there, listened to band concerts, and played on cannons overlooking the river. It remains by far the only riverfront park its size in all of Allegheny County.



RIVER LIVING

More and more, people want to live near the rivers. There are numerous “River Avenues” or “River Roads” in riverfront communities throughout Allegheny County. Verona is a great example where people live next to canoe clubs and a rowing facility with beautiful views of the river. In Elizabeth Borough, people who live across from the riverfront park can hear concerts on warm summer evenings. There are several newer opportunities for people to be “River Livers.”

Edgewater

Work is well underway on Edgewater, the new riverfront neighborhood being developed in Oakmont on the banks of the Allegheny River on the former Edgewater Steel plant site. The \$125 million brownfield redevelopment project is approved, financed and under construction.



Edgewater promises to be one of the best new neighborhoods in the region. In the truest sense, it will be a walkable community. The design for the place and homes takes its direct cues from Oakmont where streets, parks and homes themselves share the unique architectural vernacular of the community. Approximately 240 homes will be built within Edgewater ranging from the high \$100,000's to more than \$700,000. The new neighborhood will be an extension of the existing fabric and street grid of Oakmont and will include shops and commercial spaces to make Edgewater a true mixed use community. Two of the signature features of the project will be the creation of a village green central to the neighborhood and the restoration of the riverfront into a park and walking trail system. These lands will be returned to their rightful owner, the public, to assure that these assets are to the benefit of the entire community indefinitely.

The project is being developed by The Kacin Companies and EQA Landmark Communities. Earth and site work are nearing completion and construction on homes will begin Spring 2011.

www.LiveatEdgewater.com





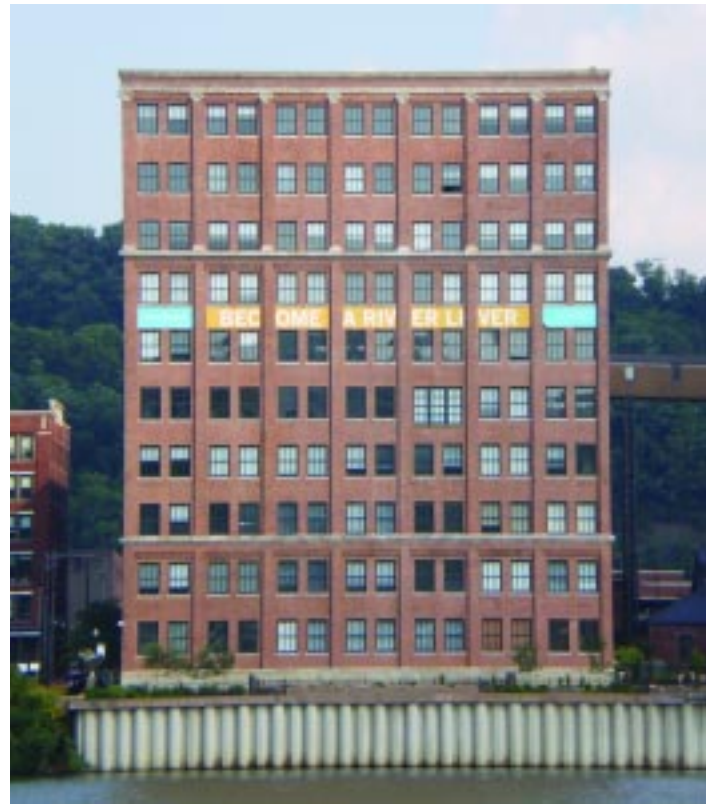
Armstrong Cork Factory

“The attraction of the river. The attitude of the Strip.”

The Armstrong Cork Factory was designed by the masterful Pittsburgh architect, Frederick Osterling in 1901, with an addition added in 1913. The factory has three sections, all constructed in red brick in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, a popular style for industrial buildings during the early 1900s. It stands as the physical legacy of Thomas Armstrong who purchased a small cork-cutting operation in 1860 on Smithfield and Diamond streets, in Downtown Pittsburgh. Forty years later, he built the massive factory, one of the largest cork processing facilities in the world. By 1930, it employed 1,300 people. Armstrong Cork Factory left Pittsburgh in 1974, when employment at the factory had dwindled to about 300.

In 2005, the Cork Factory was converted into nearly 300 urban lofts with 35 floor plans. In 1996, Mr. Hammel, who runs Pitt-Ohio Express in the Strip District, bought the factory. The project, which cost more than \$60 million, was completed using historic tax credits from the National Park Service. The developers sold those credits to Sherwin-Williams. The contractor also used that company’s paints during renovation. Amenities available for residents include a grocery store and restaurant in first floor commercial space, concierge service and a restored engine room for entertaining, taking river living to a whole new level.

www.thecorkfactory.com





STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

All communities throughout Allegheny County are impacted by stormwater runoff, which can lead to flooding, erosion, polluted waterways, economic loss and more. The last three floods in Allegheny County have accumulated damages of at least \$114 million. Combined sewer overflows (CSO) occur when extra stormwater causes combined sewer systems to overflow into our rivers. CSOs contribute more than 22 billion gallons of raw sewage into the county's main rivers, which also serve as major sources of drinking water in the region. Working at the watershed level is an effective way to address our stormwater problem.

Pine Creek, in northern Allegheny County, is impacted by excess stormwater. In 2009, a Pine Creek Watershed Implementation Plan was created that outlines projects to reduce pollution and excess stormwater in the creek, which is a tributary to the Allegheny River. Some of its recommendations include stabilizing streambanks, installing green infrastructure – especially in the highly urbanized Borough of Etna – and protecting steep slopes and natural areas. PEC has been working with Pine Creek communities and organizations have applied for funding to implement these recommendations.

One way to manage stormwater is to allow the water to infiltrate on site. The Allegheny County Health Department changed the plumbing code to allow for homeowners to disconnect their downspouts. Later that year, a grant from the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund was received to implement a downspout disconnection education program for county residents. Partners in the project include: Allegheny County, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, Etna Borough, Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, Penn State Center – Engaging Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. A guidance document is being developed to show homeowners how to safely disconnect their downspouts and what their options are for managing the water on site. Five workshops will be held throughout the county offering technical guidance to homeowners and municipal staff.

The Three Rivers Rain Garden Alliance, coordinated by the Audubon Society of Western PA (ASWP), is promoting and documenting the installation of rain gardens in the region. ASWP is also implementing a large scale rain garden installation effort in the Pine Creek watershed as part of the Pine Creek Watershed Implementation Plan.

www.raingardenalliance.org



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green Infrastructure is an approach to wet weather management that is cost-effective, sustainable and environmentally friendly. Green infrastructure is defined as natural or engineered systems that mimic nature to manage rainwater where it falls through infiltration, evapotranspiration or re-use.

A green infrastructure master plan has been proposed to manage the first inch of rain where it falls. The overall goal of the Allegheny County Green Infrastructure Master Plan is to identify aggregated areas to implement projects that will reduce combined sewer overflows and flooding. The process to implement the plan is through education, engagement and partnership.

- Over the last year, four green roof and green landscaping symposia were held as an introduction to green infrastructure concepts targeting building owners/operators, municipal officials and engineers. Approximately 165 people participated in the events.
- The Pittsburgh Pirates' "Go Bucs, Go Green" program passed out more than 1,500 tree seedlings with support from the Pennsylvania Game Commission at PNC Park on Earth Day. A fact sheet was also developed on green infrastructure retrofits that could be incorporated around the ballpark.
- Construction of the 8,400 square foot Allegheny County Office Building Green Roof was completed in June of 2010. The roof is designed as an education model to demonstrate the benefits of green roofs and green roof technology. Monitoring stations were installed to evaluate and educate on the roofs' stormwater and energy efficiency performance. During a particularly heavy rain event in August, the roof captured 60 percent of the runoff and is consistently showing energy savings within the building.
- The Green Infrastructure Network was formed as a partnership of more than 34 organizations, businesses, academia, authorities and government units who recognize the benefits of using green infrastructure in mitigating sewer overflows and reducing stormwater pollution and who encourage municipalities and sanitary authorities to prioritize the use of green infrastructure over gray infrastructure in the region's wet weather plan and municipal stormwater (MS4) programs. The Green Infrastructure Network promotes green infrastructure best management practices as the preferred approach to stormwater management through effective education and advocacy strategies.



ALLEGHENY RIVER TOWNS

River Communities Assessment and Planning Tool

The Allegheny County River Communities Project is a tool that will help communities evaluate their resources, infrastructure and land use practices in order to develop a unique action plan for community-specific revitalization priorities. By refocusing on the river as a resource, these communities will find more appealing, economically viable and sustainable solutions through the integration of these principles into their redevelopment strategies.

Six steps have been identified for this community-driven, self-help process:

- Identify a local facilitator to guide and manage the process;
- Establish a Steering Committee of local stakeholders;
- Follow the process as described in *The Allegheny County River Communities Handbook*;
- Complete *The Allegheny County River Communities Community Diagnostic* to help establish the community's readiness, identify key community assets, identify the community typology, and establish *The Allegheny County River Communities Indices*;
- Hold a *Community Workshop* to gather public input and build acceptance; and
- Use *The Allegheny County River Communities Model* to help identify and assess community actions.

Six communities along the Allegheny River are already well-along in this process. Blawnox, O'Hara, Aspinwall, Sharpsburg, Etna and Millvale have already held community meetings and "walk-about" to help identify community and regional projects. Sustainable community planning and asset-based planning is about more than numbers and figures – it's about getting things done and engaging the community in making where they live a better place. The Allegheny County River Communities Project helps puts things in perspective. There are indices and charts and other visual features, but its interactive analysis capabilities allow communities to see the big picture while taking into consideration the details that matter to help make informed decisions. Community leaders can evaluate existing conditions and potential actions, and understand the impacts of making changes that will influence what their community could be in the future.

In the end, there will be a series of focused and prioritized projects, guidelines and ordinances that will help the community meet its goals and achieve its vision. The strategies will build on the unique assets of the community and respond to the unique challenges that it faces.

UP OUR CREEKS

There is a lot of activity on the creeks and streams that flow into the major rivers in Allegheny County. This work typically involves watershed groups and local municipalities. Opportunities include new trail connections and access. There is a strong emphasis on the water quality of the tributaries and impacts of stormwater on local municipalities. Take a glimpse at some interesting things taking place around the county.



Pine Creek

Pine Creek flows into the Allegheny River in Etna Borough. Pine Creek is a major watershed in Allegheny County and one that regularly experiences flooding - often devastating several communities. The Pine Creek Watershed Coalition is a group of stakeholders committed to improving the health of the Pine Creek watershed. Coalition participants include members of environmental organizations and sportsmen's groups, as well as elected officials, municipal staff and volunteers. The objectives of the Coalition are to:

- Monitor the conditions of the watershed;
- Promote environmentally and economically sound land use transportation projects; and
- Educate watershed residents about the importance of a healthy Pine Creek.



Plum Creek

Plum Creek flows into the Allegheny River between Oakmont and Verona. Municipalities along the creek are starting to work together on trail access that could connect the Allegheny River to Boyce Park. This will enhance the riverfront trail system that is developing along the south shore of the Allegheny. It also increases the recreational areas available to local residents. Work in this area is just beginning, but holds a lot of promise to open up access to county riverfronts.



Nine Mile Run

Nine Mile Run flows into the Monongahela River in the Duck Hollow section of the City of Pittsburgh near the Glenwood Bridge. The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association has worked since 2001 to "ensure the restoration and protection of the Nine Mile Run Watershed through citizen engagement, demonstration projects and advocacy." In 2006, the Army Corps of Engineers completed the largest urban stream restoration in the United States at that time. The Watershed Association's Programs include:

- Green Links
- Rain Barrel Initiative
- Urban EcoStewards
- Regent Square Gateway

www.ninemilerun.org

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

There are several major riverfront projects that are still in the planning stages that hold great promise in the coming years.



Sports Legacy (Ohio River)

The Allegheny County Sports and Athletics Complex at Montour Junction is a 78-acre parcel of land in Coraopolis Borough, Moon Township and Robinson Township donated to Allegheny County by the Sports & Legacy Foundation. The project will include the development of nontraditional sports fields for amateur sporting activities, including soccer, rugby, lacrosse, field hockey, Gaelic football, cricket and ultimate Frisbee. Also included is a one-mile extension of the Montour Trail. The planned location of the trail will be along the Montour Run Stream and will end with a new trailhead at the Coraopolis Bridge.

The site was ultimately chosen because it is one of the few remaining flat tracts of land within the county. The parcel of land at Montour Junction is ideal for the development of a multi-field complex large enough to provide access for the growing number of school-aged children in the area playing nontraditional sports and to accommodate tournaments benefitting the local economy.



Carrie Furnace (Monongahela River)

The Carrie Furnace site is a 168-acre brownfield that spans Munhall, Rankin, Swissvale and Whitaker boroughs, and the City of Pittsburgh. The site once produced iron ore that was then transported to the Homestead Works across the Monongahela River, where the steelmaking process was completed. The Carrie blast furnaces were built in the early 1900s, and ceased operation in the early 1980s. The Park Corporation purchased the site in 1988 and sold the property to the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County for \$5.75 million dollars in August 2005. The remaining furnaces will be the future location of a proposed National Historic Park, while the majority of the site will be redeveloped for commercial, light industrial and residential use.

The furnaces were designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006, and Congressman Doyle recently introduced a bill to establish a Steel Industry National Historic Site in Allegheny County, which includes the Carrie Furnace complex.

The Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) has completed the installation of a stormwater line spanning the eastern portion of the site and has extended a new waterline to service the property. RAAC has also completed underground vault excavation and site remediation.

Allegheny County established a Carrie Furnace Master Plan Steering Committee, which includes local community and municipal leaders, to gain input on the future development of the site. In late 2010, RAAC released a Request for Development Proposals to outline the future development of the site, which will include residential housing, eco-industrial and flex-office space, a riverfront trail and trail connections, and a linkage to the East Busway in Rankin.

Ohio River Trail (Ohio River)

In September of 2010, a planning grant was awarded to the Friends of the Riverfront to begin an effort to connect the Three Rivers Heritage Trail from the City of Pittsburgh to Coraopolis. This eight-mile segment will traverse through the City of Pittsburgh, McKees Rocks, Stowe Township, Moon Township, Neville Township and Coraopolis.



This effort will compliment the work of the Ohio River Trail Council and Lawrence and Beaver Counties, which have completed trail feasibility work outside of Allegheny County. Once feasibility work from the City of Pittsburgh to Coraopolis is complete, we will have a good understanding of the opportunity for trail development along the Ohio River all the way to Ohio. In Ohio, groups are working to connect to our trail here in Pennsylvania. You will see a lot more activity along the Ohio River in 2011.

www.ohiorivertrail.org



Photo credits:

Allegheny County (1, 9, 10, 15)

Ben Petchel Photography (cover, 12)

Betsy Mandarino (7)

Brian Kerr (10)

Cara Rufenacht/Venture Outdoors (2)

Christopher Tracey (17)

Dennis Marsico (8)

FLW Outdoors (5)

Friends of the Riverfront (inside cover, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11)

Hugh Fox, Tarentum Borough (11)

PA Environmental Council (3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20)

PhotoSpin.com (3, 14)

Pine Creek Watershed Coalition (17)

Rivers of Steel (19)

Southwestern PA Commission (12-13)

Steel Valley Trail Council (9, 11)

Steve Franzos (7)



ALLEGHENY COUNTY



This report was funded in part by grants from the **Colcom Foundation** and the **Richard King Mellon Foundation**.

For more information, contact:

Pennsylvania Environmental Council

22 Terminal Way

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

412-481-9400

riverfronts@pecpa.org

www.pecpa.org