Laurel Ridge
Comprehensive Interpretive Plan

Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape
Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape
Forbes State Forest
Kooser State Park
Laurel Hill State Park
Laurel Mountain State Park
Laurel Ridge State Park
Laurel Summit State Park
Linn Run State Park
Ohioyle State Park

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Laurel Ridge Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (the Plan) represents the combined efforts of DCNR and regional partners to develop a unified approach to connecting residents and visitors with the region’s resources. One of the anticipated outcomes of the Plan is enhanced stewardship of these natural, scenic, cultural and historic assets.

The Plan is part of the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI), an effort to protect, enhance and conserve the region’s exceptional natural and recreational assets for community revitalization and sustainable economic development. The Laurel Highlands CLI is one of seven designated Conservation Landscape Initiatives. These place-based initiatives are a strategy for natural resource stewardship and advocacy in key landscapes with strong natural assets and local readiness and support for land conservation, locally driven planning, and community revitalization efforts. The CLIs grew out of DCNR’s 2003/04 action planning process. This process helped to chart a new course for the Department, and identified the need to work collaboratively between our Bureaus, with the public, local government and non-profit conservation and recreation partners.

The Laurel Highlands is defined by the Allegheny Mountains’ Allegheny, Chestnut and Laurel Ridges. The Laurel Ridge has seven state parks and significant parcels of state forests and state game lands totaling over 100,000 acres. This concentration of public lands and associated natural resources creates a myriad of recreation opportunities including hiking, wildlife watching, biking, hunting, and fishing. In addition, the region is dotted with communities poised to capitalize on the tourism and recreational opportunities in the region. In addition to the Laurel Ridge, the other sub landscapes (or focus areas) in the CLI are the Chestnut Ridge, Stony Creek-Quemahoning, and the Great Allegheny Passage.

In 2007, DCNR commissioned Fermata, Inc. to study the opportunities in the Laurel Highlands and to make recommendations on where to focus efforts. A key recommendation was the development of a comprehensive interpretive plan for the resources on the Laurel Ridge. A work team led by Frances Stein, DCNR’s regional lead for the CLI along with 15 representatives from the DCNR Bureaus of State Parks, Forestry, Recreation and Conservation and the Topographic and Geologic Survey and key partners including the...
Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, California University, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council met over the last two years and developed the plan. The planning process, included meeting and visiting with the public land facilities and partners sites; working with the National Association for Interpretation on an interpretive planners workshop held in Ohiopyle State Park; a market analysis of current and potential visitors; and, an examination of local trends and issues.

The resulting Plan lays out a strategy for the Laurel Ridge to build upon its phenomenal resources and transform the region into the premiere outdoor recreation destination in the Northeastern United States. The recommendations in the Plan are visionary and ambitious, but also measurable and split into feasible implementation steps. DCNR will work with our partners to implement the Plan.
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DCNR Mission, Vision and Goals

The **Mission**: We conserve and sustain Pennsylvania’s natural resources for present and future generations’ use and enjoyment.

The **Vision**: As Pennsylvania’s leader and chief advocate for conservation and outdoor recreation, we will inspire citizens to value their natural resource, engage in conservation practices, and experience the outdoors.

The **Goals**:
1. Improve stewardship and management of state parks and forests
2. Promote statewide land conservation
3. Build and maintain sustainable and attractive communities
4. Create outdoor connections for citizens and visitors
Background, Purpose and Goals

_of the Laurel Ridge Comprehensive Interpretive Plan_

The Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Initiative is intended to use the expertise of DCNR and its assets to bring together a variety of regional interests (economic, conservation, recreational, social) to focus on long-term sustainable development and to address conservation challenges within the landscape. To better manage this endeavor, the Laurel Highlands region has been divided into four sub landscapes: Chestnut Ridge, Laurel Ridge, Stoney Creek-Quemahoning and Great Allegheny Passage. This interpretive plan is for the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape.

_The purpose is a statement that defines the reason and need for this plan and the goals state what interpretation will do for DCNR and the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape._

The _Purpose_ of this interpretive plan is to provide a unified approach to connecting residents, visitors and resources to promote stewardship of the cultural, scenic, natural and historic resources of the Laurel Ridge.

_Goals:_

_I. To promote a unified, seamless approach to the interpretive and recreational opportunities available on DCNR lands along the Laurel Ridge._

_II. To create connections for sharing of information and resources within the Laurel Ridge landscape in order to present a complete interpretive picture for residents, visitors, schools and partners._

_III. To foster awareness for the value of natural, cultural and historic resources along the Laurel Ridge for recreation and economic development._

_IV. To promote stewardship to residents and visitors through development of opportunities to become engaged in conservation issues._
V. To encourage sustainable tourism and travel within public lands, local attractions and local communities along the Laurel Ridge.

VI. To connect to the other sub landscapes, state parks, state forests and state heritage areas within the Laurel Highlands to promote consistent, sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities for the region.
Overview of the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape

The Laurel Hill Anticline known as the Laurel Ridge is a topographically prominent ridge spanning more than 70 miles. It is located within the western portion of the Allegheny Mountain Section of the Appalachian Plateau Province of southwestern Pennsylvania. The Laurel Ridge runs in a north-east to south-west direction and extends from Cambria County in the north-east to beyond Ohiopyle in the south. It is cut across by two major drainages, the Youghiogheny and Conemaugh Rivers. These river systems have carved scenic gorges through the ridge in the southern and northern terminus areas that are both similar in depth, length and beauty. The rocks that outcrop along the ridge are all of sedimentary origin and range from Devonian to Pennsylvanian Age spanning over 60 million years of geologic time. The geologic formations create unique ecosystems that are home to many rare, threatened and endangered flora and fauna. The hemlock and oak/maple forests along with stands of mountain laurel and numerous streams define the landscape and provide habitat for many species including deer, ruffed grouse and brook trout. The Laurel Ridge corridor supports a tremendous amount of biodiversity and also serves as an undisturbed travel route for wildlife and humans alike. Along the ridge, there is a mosaic of state land parcels that total well over 100,000 acres for public use and enjoyment. These parcels are composed of state game lands, state forest lands and seven state parks and are managed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Laurel Ridge is the spine of a five county region that has been branded as the Laurel Highlands which is a major tourist and outdoor recreation destination for millions of visitors annually.

A great deal of early American history took place in the Laurel Ridge region of western Pennsylvania, including the French and Indian War in the 1750s. In the late 1800s and early 1900s the Laurel Ridge and its abundant resources helped fuel the boom of the Industrial Revolution in our country. The logging and railroad industry in this area supported the burgeoning coal, iron and steel industries. Almost all merchantable timber was removed from the Laurel Ridge except in remote and inaccessible wilderness areas, leaving only small pockets of virgin timber that can be seen today. In the early 1900s, both the federal and state governments began purchasing sub-marginal agricultural and forest land to be converted to better use. These lands became our state park and forest lands.
Soon after, the Works Progress Administration, under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, worked cooperatively with the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters (now DCNR) to employ young men in the Civilian Conservation Corps to begin building roads, trails, bridges and recreational facilities for the public to enjoy. The CCC played a major role along the Laurel Ridge in reforesting and developing the recreational facilities that visitors enjoy today throughout the Laurel Highlands. Many of the post-industrial remnants are able to be seen today and serve as a link to our history and cultural heritage. They are celebrated throughout the region in the form of festivals, markets and gatherings. These events educate people about the past and allow for the opportunity to reconnect with our heritage.

The Laurel Ridge arguably provides the best assortment of year-round recreational opportunities in the mid-Atlantic Region. The proximity to several large metropolitan areas draws millions of visitors annually who are seeking outdoor experiences. The Laurel Ridge includes, among many other attractions, hiking the 70-mile long Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, bicycling through the Big Savage Tunnel along the Great Allegheny Passage and whitewater rafting on the Youghiogheny River. In addition, this region offers outstanding opportunities for cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, sledding and snowmobiling. Wildlife corridors created by the contiguous plots of public land provide exceptional areas for hunting and fishing. Canoeing and kayaking can be enjoyed by both beginner and advanced paddlers. Access to rock climbing, backpacking, mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking trails exist along the ridge. There are also many offerings for wildlife viewing, picnicking and camping. Pleasure driving, particularly during the fall foliage season, has always been and continues to be a popular tourist activity. The views and scenery throughout the Laurel Highlands are breathtaking and inspiring. They serve as a “refuge” and “escape” from the hustle and bustle of modern day life. Undoubtedly, one of the major reasons that make the Laurel Ridge a destination experience is the inherent natural scenic beauty that exists in the landscape.
**STATE PARK, STATE FOREST AND HERITAGE AREAS**

*on the Laurel Ridge*

**Pennsylvania State Parks**
The primary purpose of Pennsylvania State Parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

**Laurel Hill State Park**
Laurel Hill State Park consists of 3,935 acres of mountainous terrain including the 63-acre Laurel Hill Lake. The Civilian Conservation Corps history is a significant resource of the park. Two group camps built for workers and other camps built for the public remain in the park, making the largest collection of CCC architecture in Pennsylvania state parks. The Jones Mill Dam, built by the CCC, remains functional today and serves as a popular hiking destination.

The park has year-round recreational uses, with hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, swimming, snowmobiling, boating, hunting and overnight facilities. Laurel Hill Creek is a high quality cold water fishery providing year-round trout fishing opportunities, which are not readily available in other areas of the state. Within state parks along the ridge, Laurel Hill has the most diverse offerings of overnight facilities, with camping, cottages, organized group cabin camps, organized group tenting and the Laurel Hill Lodge. For trail users, a popular trail is the Hemlock Trail that runs through a stand of old growth hemlocks at least 350 years old. This stand of Pennsylvania's state tree contains the oldest trees on Laurel Ridge. Many trails connect to larger trail systems in Forbes State Forest.
Kooser State Park
Kooser State Park is a 250-acre mountain park with a rustic character featuring the high quality Kooser Run stream, native rhododendron, hemlock and mountain laurel. Due to its 2,600-foot elevation and topography, the park receives ample amounts of snow, providing for a broad spectrum of winter recreation opportunities for various skill levels. Cross-country skiing is a popular activity. In other months, hiking, swimming and picnicking are available. For overnight use, Kooser has camping and nine rustic cabins.

Like Laurel Hill, Kooser also has some original Civilian Conservation Corps architecture. The land area of the park is small, making it very accessible. Forbes State Forest borders the park in some areas, but Kooser also shares a boundary with private and commercial lands, such as Hidden Valley Ski Resort.

Laurel Summit State Park
This 6-acre park is located along the top of Laurel Ridge at 2,739 feet. It is a day-use area, with picnic tables, a pavilion, water and a restroom. The park is bordered on all sides by Forbes State Forest and provides trailheads to popular areas such as Spruce Flats Bog and Wolf Rocks. Spruce Flats Bog is a significant and ecologically important feature of Forbes State Forest and the parking area and trail of Laurel Summit are used by many visitors to the bog.

Laurel Mountain State Park
Laurel Mountain State Park is the site of one of Pennsylvania’s first ski resorts. Opened in 1939, Laurel Mountain was formerly owned and operated by General Richard King Mellon. The resort, started as a private facility as part of General Mellon’s Rolling Rock farms was opened to the public following World War II and became popularly known as the “Ski Capital of Pennsylvania.” It served thousands of skiers from the Pittsburgh region. In 1964, General Mellon gave the land to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with guidelines for its use as a skiing mountain.
The skiing at Laurel Mountain provides a unique experience for its visitors. Unlike most resorts, the lodge is located at the top of the ski slopes. Laurel Mountain boasts the steepest slope in Pennsylvania, the Lower Wild Cat. The skiing has been operated by a concessionaire in the past; however, skiing operations are not currently active at Laurel Mountain. Seven Springs Mountain Resort is working with DCNR to renovate the facilities and to operate the skiing concession at Laurel Mountain.

![Image of Laurel Mountain lodge and ski slope]

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**Linn Run State Park**

Linn Run State Park is comprised of 612 acres and borders Forbes State Forest. The varied topography and mixed hardwood and evergreen forest make this park a scenic place for picnicking, hiking and cabin rentals. The headwaters and entire watershed to Linn Run stream are in Forbes State Forest, making the stream a valuable resource in this park. Linn Run stream provides scenic beauty and recreational use, particularly trout fishing. Adams Falls, along Linn Run stream, is a popular hiking destination, as is Flat Rock, a large smooth rock in Linn Run stream. Many of the hiking trails in the park connect to larger trail systems in Forbes State Forest.

![Image of Linn Run waterfall and cabin]

A popular activity is gathering water from the spring located in the park. The park history includes lumbering and the conservation and land management that followed with the introduction of wildlife and the re-growth of the forest. The remains of the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad can be seen in the park and surrounding Forbes State Forest. Nine rustic cabins and one modern cabin are available for year round reservation.
Laurel Ridge State Park lands travel along the ridge top of Laurel Mountain and contain the 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. Its backcountry use and rugged nature makes it unique among state parks. The trail travels through state park, forest and game lands and other public and private lands. The northern terminus is located near Johnstown and the southern terminus is in Ohiopyle State Park. There are eight overnight shelter areas located about a day’s hike apart. The trail is open year-round and is popular for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter. A concessionaire manages a cross-country skiing operation with twenty miles of groomed trails of varying ability. The Pennsylvania Nordic Ski Championships are held at this site annually.

The designated snowmobile trails of Laurel Ridge connect to the larger trail system in Forbes State Forest and the park’s trailhead along Route 653 is a popular location to access the trails.

The Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail features rock outcrops and at least fifteen vistas along the trail. A significant attraction of the trail is the ‘rock city’ located near milepost 23, in which hikers travel through massive blocks of resistant rock. Laurel Ridge State Park contains the highest point along the Laurel Ridge, which nears 3,000 feet. Hikers along the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail reach the highest point on the trail near Seven Springs Resort at 2,950 feet. At the direction of the U.S. Congress in 1989, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. The trail is recognized as such in the National Park Service interpretive brochure for the National Scenic Trail.

Ohiopyle State Park
Located at the southern reaches of the Laurel Ridge, Ohiopyle State Park encompasses approximately 20,500 acres of rugged natural beauty and serves as the gateway to the Laurel Highlands. The focal point of the area is the more than 14 miles of the Youghiogheny River Gorge that passes through the heart of the park. The "Yough" provides some of the best whitewater boating in the Eastern U. S. as well as spectacular scenery. Surrounding Ohiopyle Falls is the Falls Day Use Area, the central point for the casual visitor.
Ohioopyle Borough, with less than 100 year-round residents, is surrounded by the park and contains the elements of community character and provides various amenities in Ohiopyle State Park. For the park visitor, the borough of Ohiopyle is part of the experience of Ohiopyle State Park.

The Yough River section of the Great Allegheny Passage rail trail runs for 27 miles through the park. This trail sees day-use and multiple-day bicyclists. The geology in Ohiopyle provides not only for the Falls, but for natural water slides in Meadow Run, a popular attraction. The park has 79 miles of additional hiking trails, including the southern terminus for the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, attracting day-use hikers and multiple-day backpackers. For overnight use, Ohiopyle has camping, cottages, yurts and organized group tenting.

**Pennsylvania State Forests**
The primary purpose of Pennsylvania State Forests is to ensure the long-term health, viability and productivity of the Commonwealth’s forests and to conserve native wild plants. State Forest Lands are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as a sustainable “green certified” forest and are managed for multiple use including recreation, timber, water, oil & gas, and wildlife.

**Forbes State Forest**
The Forbes State Forest contains over 20 separate tracts of state forest Land in Fayette, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties and encompasses over 50,000 acres. It is used for a wide range of recreational activities in all seasons. Mt. Davis, Pennsylvania’s highest point and a popular destination for many hikers and sightseers, rises 3,213 feet above sea level. Forbes State Forest offers many other vistas and scenic outlooks, many of them with resistant rocks that form outcrops. Some other frequently visited vistas include Wolf Rocks, Beams Rocks, Birch Rocks and Pine Knob.

More than 250 miles of trails and roads can be used for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. The winter weather at Forbes State Forest provides opportunities for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Hunting and fishing are also popular uses of this land.

Four special management areas within Forbes State Forest are recognized and protected for their unique biologic, geologic, scenic and historic features. These areas are Roaring Run Natural Area, Mt. Davis Natural Area, Spruce Flat Wildlife Management Area and Quebec Run Wild Area.
Forbes State Forest was protected early in the history of state forest land protection. Its conservation is now especially significant due to its proximity to large population centers. Purchased primarily from lumber companies that clear cut the old growth forest, the practice of sound resource management and early conservation efforts is a large part of Forbes history.

State and National Heritage Areas
Heritage Areas are large geographic regions or corridors of the Commonwealth that span two or more counties. These areas contain a multitude of historic, recreational, natural and scenic resources of state and national significance that collectively exemplify the heritage of Pennsylvania. Through regional partnerships and public grassroots planning strategies, these resources are identified, protected, enhanced and promoted to strengthen regional economies through increased tourism, creation of new jobs and stimulation of public and private partnerships for new investment opportunities. This holistic and bottom-up approach to planning ensures that the legacy of a region and the natural, educational and recreational values inherent to it are preserved for future generations. (PA Heritage Areas Program Manual, Jan 2009 edition)

Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor
The Lincoln Highway, which for the most part is US Route 30 through Pennsylvania, was the nation’s first coast-to-coast highway stretching from New York to San Francisco. It transects the Laurel Ridge in the northern tier, traveling through towns such as Laughtontown and Ligonier. Notable sites along the Lincoln Highway within the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape are Idlewild Park and Soak Zone, the third-oldest operating amusement park in the United States, the town of Ligonier and historic Fort Ligonier, and the Compass Inn.

The Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) oversees this heritage area and strives to identify, conserve, promote and interpret the cultural, historic, natural, recreation and economic resources along the Lincoln Highway. Although the LHHC corridor does not own sites, it partners with business, organizations and private land owners along the highway to achieve the mission. The LHHC created the 200-mile Lincoln Highway Roadside Museum
including murals, interpretive exhibits, vintage gas pump reproductions and “Picture Yourself” exhibits. Within the Laurel Ridge, the LHHC has eight exhibits, one gas pump and two “Picture Yourself” exhibits.

The LHHC is planning a visitor’s center to be located near Ligonier. It will serve as a stand-alone attraction for the Lincoln Highway and will also provide exhibit space to highlight DCNR and the opportunities available on public land in the Laurel Highlands.

**National Road Heritage Area**
The National Road was the first federally funded road in the United States and is aligned with US Route 40 in the Laurel Ridge. It crosses the southern portion of the Laurel Ridge, traveling by Fort Washington Tavern, Fort Necessity Battlefield, Braddock’s Grave and near Jumonville Glen, all parts of the Fort Necessity National Battlefield managed by the National Park Service. The National Road Heritage Corridor (NRHC) serves to preserve, protect and promote the physical aspects and the story of the National Road. This is achieved by working with businesses, organizations and private land owners along the National Road. Travelers along the National Road within the Laurel Ridge will see cast iron obelisk mile markers, installed in 1835 and restored as part of the National Road experience today.

**Allegheny Ridge Heritage Area**
The Allegheny Ridge Heritage Area is a 50-mile corridor from approximately Altoona to Johnstown. This area celebrates the region’s iron, steel and coal industries and is part of a federal heritage initiative called the Path of Progress, which centers on similar themes of industrial heritage. Johnstown, at the southern end of this heritage area, is located within the northern vicinity of the Laurel Ridge.

The Allegheny Ridge Corporation (ARCorp) manages this heritage area and exists to develop, interpret and restore the historic, cultural and natural resources of the Allegheny Ridge Heritage Area. A major initiative of the ARCorp is the Mainline Canal Greenway, a recreational path connecting Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, with portions in Johnstown. Other significant attractions and resources in Johnstown include the Johnstown Flood Museum, the Heritage Discovery Center and Children’s Museum and the Cambria Blacksmith Shop Restoration.
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
The National Scenic Trail network includes the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail and Great Allegheny Passage, as well as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath and other existing and planned routes between the mouth and the Potomac River and the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail; as of mid-2009, the network consists of 830 miles of planned and existing trails and routes. The National Park Service is responsible for administration of the federal interest in development and management of the Trail network, and has provided funds and technical assistance for interpretive planning and design projects along the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail and Great Allegheny Passage, as well as opportunities for coordination among management and marketing partners throughout the Trail network. The National Park Service Passport stamp for the Trail is available at the Ohiopyle Visitor Center and the Laurel Ridge State Park office.
Management Objectives

Management objectives align with the mission and goals to indicate how interpretation will be used as a management tool. They indicate what DCNR will do to meet the goals.

In the next 3 years…

1. Promote signature events at each of the DCNR sites to provide a seamless visitor experience on the Laurel Ridge through all electronic and printed media distributed in the Laurel Highlands each year.

2. Provide coordinated interpretive, educational and recreational programming between state parks, state forests and partner sites.

3. Improve way-finding and trail marking systems to better brand the Laurel Highlands experience to visitors using the resources on Laurel Ridge.

4. Identify and support regional conservation initiatives that promote public lands as a benefit to the residents and visitors of the region.

5. Establish partnerships with stakeholders within the private sector and other agencies that will enhance the visitor experience and increase the value of the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape.

6. Model sustainable use practices at all DCNR facilities along the ridge to provide education and to encourage visitor participation in conservation.

7. Support at least three community sponsored, annual events (sojourns, festivals, markets, gatherings) that focus on the theme and provide an authentic experience for visitors to the Laurel Highlands.

8. Partner with at least five communities to provide visitor services that benefit the resources of the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape.
CENTRAL THEME

The central theme is a statement that is the guiding principle for all interpretation within the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape. It defines the approach that interpretation will take. If this theme is correctly interpreted through a variety of media it is the message that visitors take home.

The theme is: The Laurel Ridge is a ridgeline corridor that connects public lands and traditional small communities around the natural resources and unique geology providing year-round recreational, historical and cultural experiences.

SUB-THEMES & STORYLINES

Sub-themes correlate to and further develop the theme and are the logical progression into development of storylines for personal and non-personal media (programs, exhibits, publications, etc.). Storylines include content details that will be developed into specific messages that are included in the recommendations for this plan.

Sub-theme A: The character of small, traditional communities provides opportunities to experience the history of local mountain culture and new innovation and progress.

(community)

Storyline A1: Modern day fairs and festivals provide a unique link to our cultural history.

Storyline A2: Traditional values of southwestern PA mountain culture are characteristic of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline A3: Unique businesses and products of the area showcase local culture and traditions.
Storyline A4: Individual characteristics of self-sufficiency, survival and ingenuity prevail here and have been passed between generations.

Storyline A5: Remnants of former settlements and industry serve as links to local history.

**Sub-theme B: Development of transportation routes to the region opened the land for access to resources for timbering, mining and settlement. (history)**

Storyline B1: Following Native American paths and river corridors, the development of transportation routes through rugged terrain for the movement of goods laid the groundwork for future westward expansion.

Storyline B2: Development of railroads and improved transportation corridors created access to the abundant natural resources and provided opportunities for settlement.

Storyline B3: In the post industrial revolution era, the evolution of modern transportation routes created access to the recreational opportunities in the Laurel Highlands region.

**Sub-theme C: The geology of the ridge influences the climate and natural resources of the region. (geology/natural resources)**

Storyline C1: Rock composition, geologic folding/tectonic movement (deformation) and weathering processes through time have led to mountainous terrain, winding rivers, significant geologic features and the natural scenic beauty of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline C2: The Laurel Ridge’s geologic composition and geographic profile influence the region’s water chemistry, flow, quantity and availability.

Storyline C3: The geodiversity in Laurel Ridge influences the ecological diversity, land use patterns and recreational pursuits.

Storyline C4: The topographic profile, composition and orientation of the Laurel Ridge have a major influence on local climate and weather.

Storyline C5: The forested ridge protects local watersheds, influences the kinds of plants and animals found there and provides an important habitat corridor for wildlife.
Sub-theme D: The accessibility to natural areas and wilderness settings provide year round recreation opportunities. (recreation)

Storyline D1: There are 100,000 acres of public land within close proximity to major urban areas.

Storyline D2: The diversity of public lands provide intimate front-country and secluded backcountry experiences.

Storyline D3: Year-round recreational opportunities result from the confluence of natural resources, visitor facilities and services.

Sub-theme E: Efforts to protect and restore the resources influenced conservation on these contiguous public lands whose future depends on the stewardship ethic of residents and visitors. (conservation/stewardship)

Storyline E1: The establishment and continuing support of these lands are a result of individual actions and large scale efforts of public and private entities to protect, restore and conserve the resources.

Storyline E2: The current visitor experience on these lands inspires and provides opportunities for continued efforts to meet modern challenges to conservation.
ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

to completing the recommendations in this plan

Scenic Views
The scenic views of the ridge are part of the experience of the region. The view-shed of the corridor needs to be protected. There is a need for zoning, community-design standards, easements, land acquisitions and/or other methods to protect the views. Current concerns include wind turbines, gas wells, and non-sustainable residential and commercial development.

Communities
Numerous small communities exist in the ridge area. Residents in these communities face continual pressure from development. If developed in an unsustainable way, the communities will lose the “small-town” community character they possess at this time. In turn, the ridge will lose some of its charm.

Infrastructure
There is a need to further develop or improve infrastructure on DCNR lands. Roads, restrooms, trailheads, trail systems, parking areas, access to potable water on the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, etc. need to be developed or improved and maintained. There is also a need for the addition of modern cabin accommodations along the ridge to complement existing overnight facilities. Consider development of small, multi-room, lodging facilities to provide another type of overnight accommodation for visitors.

Gateways/Transportation
Gateway communities are needed to enhance the visitor experience. These communities may wish to explore the potential of a shuttle system throughout the region. Currently, the Laurel Highlands is not promoted via signs along the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The addition of highway signs similar to the PA Wilds campaign provides an opportunity to attract visitors to the Laurel Ridge. Gateway communities should also be integrated into maps, signs and other information disseminated.
Need to Disperse Visitors
Throughout the ridge, a need to disperse use patterns is present. Some areas are overused while others are rarely used. Visitor conflict often occurs on some multiple-use trails due to overuse and damage to the resources. Gateway communities, visitor centers, access to information and possibly a shuttle system provide opportunities to disperse visitor use and relieve parking pressures. The ridge offers numerous year-round opportunities yet most visitations occur during the summer months. Therefore there is a need to disperse visitor use throughout the year.

Communications
Visitors to the ridge arrive expecting modern communication services to be available. There is currently a lack of high-speed internet connections and cell phone service throughout most of the ridge area affecting both residents and visitors.

Staffing
The current DCNR staff compliment for interpretive, recreation and environmental education programming is limited. Outside partners provide an opportunity to boost programming on the ridge. Maintenance needs are also anticipated to rise as a result of increased visitor use.

Resources/Stories
The Laurel Ridge is significant because of the vast resources it contains. The area is rich in culture, history, recreational opportunities and natural resources on both public and private lands. The vast resources in the Laurel Ridge area provide year-round opportunities to connect visitors to the resource through interpretive, recreational and educational messages. This provides an opportunity to share the history and stories of the area as well as the many different perspectives on how people use the land.

Partnerships
Many businesses and organizations exist in the ridge area. This provides an opportunity to package what DCNR offers with offerings from the private sector to provide visitors with a full-service, cohesive experience. Opportunities to work with other state agencies for funding and coordination are available.

Identity
Although DCNR manages a significant amount of land on the Laurel Ridge, many visitors and residents still do not recognize that DCNR manages these lands. DCNR needs to become recognized as a prominent leader in land management and conservation efforts.
Recreation Activities
Visitors to the Laurel Ridge participate in many year-round recreation opportunities on both public and private lands; however, most of the existing DCNR amenities are not open year-round. There is a definite need to develop complementary staffing, services and facilities on DCNR lands to support year-round visitation and enhance the visitor experience.

Management Strategy
Currently the DCNR lands are managed as separate “management units” divided between the Bureau of State Parks (seven state parks) and the Bureau of Forestry (one state forest divided into management units). In order to efficiently manage the DCNR lands of the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape a change in management philosophy and strategy is needed to ensure the unified, seamless approach to the interpretive and recreational programming. This may require the use of “roving staff” to ensure year-round and coordinated programming. In addition, to ensure a seamless experience and consistent services for visitors to the trail, consider the use of a dedicated maintenance staff for the Laurel Highland Hiking Trail at Laurel Ridge State Park instead of management by two separate parks.
CURRENT PROGRAMMING

Personal Services (staffed, guided services)
Personal programming throughout the Laurel Ridge is currently provided by public and private entities. This section focuses on the efforts of the public entities. Programming is currently provided by the following DCNR staff:

Ohiopyle State Park
  One full-time Environmental Education Specialist
  One 9-month Environmental Education Specialist
  One 3-month Environmental Interpretive Technician

Laurel Hill State Park Complex
  One 9-month Environmental Education Specialist

Linn Run Complex
  No programming staff

Forbes State Forest
  Various staff present programming throughout the year; however, no staff is specifically dedicated to providing programming.

Environmental education programs aligned with the Pennsylvania Department of Education standards are presented by Ohiopyle and Laurel Hill state parks to school and organized groups upon request. Program offerings include but are not limited to: watershed education, flora and fauna, sensory and investigative activities, animal adaptations and energy.

Interpretive programs aligned with the mission and goals of DCNR are presented to visitors using informal teaching styles. These programs are information and resource based. Programs are advertised on the state parks website calendar of events and throughout the park utilizing brochures and informational kiosks. Programs often include hands-on activities, guest speakers and live demonstrations.
Examples of program topics are: historical and cultural programs such as Civilian Conservation Corps, logging and lumbering, Native Americans, wool spinning, goat milking, homesteading, and ‘There’s Still Shine in Them Ther’ Hills’. Natural history programs focus on many topics including the Ferncliff Peninsula, astronomy, endangered and threatened species and Pennsylvania’s flora and fauna.

**Guided recreation (Get Outdoors Pennsylvania) programming** is offered to visitors to learn or develop an outdoor recreational skill while discovering the resource. These programs are advertised in the same manner as interpretive programs. Examples of recreation programming include: hiking aimed at various skill levels and topics, canoeing and kayaking, orienteering and biking. Special extended programs or eco-tours offering a grouping of thematic guided recreation and interpretive activities that typically include lodging/camping and meal provisions are also presented throughout the year. An example of such extended programming is Ohiopyle’s ‘Heels, Keels and Wheels’ program which includes hiking a state park trail, biking on the Great Allegheny Passage and kayaking on the Youghiogheny River.

Forbes State Forest provides additional recreation programming through its staff and various partners such as Venture Outdoors, Brier Hill Farms, Seven Springs, Outside Adventures and the Pine Springs Camp. Programs include Leave No Trace, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking and backpacking, snowmobile tours, the Women in the Outdoors series, rock climbing and rappelling, primitive camping, spelunking and mountain biking.

**Non-Personal Services (non-staffed, self-guided services)**

**DCNR Waysides and Kiosks**
See Appendix C

**DCNR Visitor Centers**

**Laurel Hill Visitor Center**
The Visitor Center at Laurel Hill State Park is currently housed in a 1900s era farmhouse that is located at the lower entrance to the park, situated just outside the campground. The two-story farm house consists of three rooms on the first floor and three rooms and a bath on the second floor. The second floor is reserved for staff use only.
The first floor contains exhibits pertaining to the hemlock natural area, logging camps, logging railroads, land preservation programs and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Exhibits feature CCC memorabilia, artifacts, photographs, publications, tools and clothing. Other displays include a working model of a Shay locomotive, maps and videos. In addition, a small gift shop is located on the first floor and is operated by the Friends of Laurel Hill volunteer group.

**Ohiopyle Visitor Center**

The visitor center, the old Western Maryland Train Station, is maintained as a historic structure. Included in the natural interpretation is a river otter mount with accompanying text relating to the reintroduction program on the Youghiogheny, a fisher, a porcupine, a rattlesnake, and a coyote mount, a variety of raptor silhouettes, and a number of seasonal exhibits. Numerous informational and visitor brochures are available for visitors during the summer and fall months. The office and library for the environmental education and interpretive staff are also located in this building. Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau uses half of the station as one of three official visitor centers for the Laurel Highlands. This location receives the highest visitation of the three Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau centers.

There is a need for a new visitor center/park office to better meet the needs of visitors and staff. Planning, design and development for the new “Falls Visitor Center” is currently underway with the construction set to begin in 2010.
Web Sites – DCNR and Heritage Areas

Allegheny Ridge Heritage Corridor
http://www.allegheynridge.org/
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/heritageparks/alleghenyridge.aspx

Forbes State Forest
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/stateforests/forbes.aspx

Kooser State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/kooser.aspx

Laurel Hill State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/laurelhill.aspx

Laurel Mountain State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/laurelmountain.aspx

Laurel Ridge State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/laurelridge.aspx

Laurel Summit State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/kooser.aspx

Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor
http://www.lhhc.org
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/heritageparks/lincolnhighway.aspx

Linn Run State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/linnrun.aspx

National Road Heritage Corridor
http://www.nationalroadpa.org
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/heritageparks/nationalroad.aspx

Ohiopyle State Park
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/ohiopyle.aspx

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
http://www.nps.gov/pohe
Publications

_Recreational Guide_ – DCNR: A brochure that includes a map of the park, locations of park facilities, recreational activities, concessions and park history. The following sites have recreational guides: Laurel Hill, Kooser, Laurel Ridge, Linn Run and Ohiopyle.

_Hemlock Self-Guiding Trail_ - DCNR: Geology, water quality, lumber history and differences between hemlock and hardwood forests are discussed in this four-fold brochure for the Hemlock Trail.


_Laurel Ridge State Park Cross-Country Ski Area Map_ – DCNR: A tri-fold brochure developed by the Pennsylvania Cross-Country Skiers Association, the park ski concessionaire and DCNR. The brochure provided to skiers at the Cross Country Ski Touring Area at Laurel Ridge contains hours of operation, directions and trail information.

_Ohiopyle State Park: Geologic Features Of Interest (Park Guide 7)_- Prepared by the Bureau of Topographic and Geologic survey, this brochure outlines the major geologic structures and formations within the park.

_Lower Yough River Guide Map-_ A map of the Lower Youghiogheny course and rapids. River safety information and a description of the rapids are also included.

_Youghiogheny River Water Trail Map and Guide_ – A map and guide published in two sections – the Southern Yough from Confluence to Connellsville and the Northern Yough from Connellsville to McKeesport, which includes access points, things to look for along the river, hazards and general boating safety information.

_Public use map for Forbes State Forest_ – DCNR: A brochure that includes a map of Forbes State Forest, locations of facilities, recreational activities, wild and natural areas, points of interest, resource management information and a history of Forbes State Forest.

_Laurel Highlands Trail System_ - DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing information on summer and winter recreation, a map, trail information/etiquette and camping information.

_Laurel Highlands Snowmobile Trail System_ – DCNR: Map and regulations of the snowmobile trail system of Forbes State Forest.
North Woods Trail System – DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing information on summer and winter recreation, a map, trail information/etiquette and camping information.

Mountain Streams Trail System – DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing trail descriptions and a map as well as information on camping, fishing and parking. A brief physical description and history of the Mountain Streams Area is provided.

Blue Hole Division - DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing trail descriptions, a map, camping and parking information. A brief physical description and history of the Blue Hole Division is provided.

Lick Hollow Area/Whitetail Trail- DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing a description of the Lick Hollow Picnic Area, a map and camping information as well as trail descriptions

Quebec Run Wild Area – DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing trail descriptions, a map, camping and parking information. A brief physical description and history of Quebec Run is provided.

Roaring Run Natural Area- DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing trail descriptions, a map and visitor information such as parking and activities prohibited. A brief history of Roaring Run is provided.

Spruce Flats Bog and Wildlife Area – DCNR: A four-fold brochure containing information about the bog including mysteries, rare plants, a bird list and parking info.

Special Events

Earth Day –The Friends of Laurel Hill State Park celebrate Earth Day on the Saturday before April 22nd. The day is filled with projects to promote stewardship within the park. Volunteers pick up litter, clean picnic pavilions, empty fire rings, plant trees, conduct trail maintenance and finish the day with a pot luck meal. Approximately 50 people attend this event.
Bluebird Celebration – The annual bluebird celebration is held on the first Saturday in July at Laurel Hill State Park. Families can build a bluebird box with help from the men who built Laurel Hill & Kooser State Parks, former CCC boys. An interpretive program and hike along the Bluebird Trail are offered after the boxes have been built. Approximately 200 people attend this event.

Laurel Hill Bluegrass Festival - This annual event is held on the next to last weekend in August and admission is free. Visitors can enjoy bluegrass music, re-enactors, artists, activities for children and families and food on Saturday and Sunday. Approximately 6,000 people attend this event.

Mountain Laurel 5K Run/Walk- This annual event is held on the Sunday of the Blue Grass Festival. The course takes participants right through the heart of the Laurel Hill State Park. Approximately 60 people attend this event.

National Public Lands Day - The Friends of Laurel Hill State Park celebrate National Public Lands Days on the last Saturday in September. The day is filled with projects to promote awareness of stewardship of public lands. The group focuses on trail maintenance, litter pick up, tree planting, tending to the herb garden and landscaped areas in the park. Approximately 60 people attend this event.
**Fayette County Envirothon**- This annual event is held during the second week in May at Ohiopyle State Park. Thirteen, five person teams from eight schools compete in this event. The following agencies provide support: Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, DCNR – Bureau of State Parks and Bureau of Forestry District 4, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection and the National Park Service. Approximately 100 people attend this event.

**Laurel Highlands Ultra Run** - Each year the race is run on the second Saturday in June at Laurel Ridge State Park. All races start in Ohiopyle, with the 70.5 mile individual and relay races running the entire length of the trail and the 50K race finishing at the 31-mile point near the intersection of route 31. Both races are point-to-point along the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. The average attendance is over 100 individual runners and over 20 five-person teams with approximately 100 people in attendance for this event.

**PA Nordic Championships** - This annual event sponsored by the Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers' Association, Bob Ruppel, Cross Country Ski Concessionaire and Laurel Ridge State Park. Participants enter to race in either a 5.5K classic, 8.5K Freestyle or a 17K Freestyle race. There is also a 2K children’s race. Approximately 50 people participate in the event while 100 people watch.

**Somerset County Envirothon** - This annual event is held during the first week in May at Kooser State Park. Fourteen, five-person teams compete from seven school districts. The following agencies provide support: Bureau of Forestry District 4, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Somerset County Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection. Approximately 100 people attend this event.
Winterfest - Ohiopyle State Park’s Winterfest is an opportunity to showcase Ohiopyle as a winter playground. Held the first Saturday in February at the Sugarloaf Sledding Area, this event features snow shoeing, sledding, cross-country skiing, dog sledding and winter survival demonstrations, guided hikes, sleigh rides, and a kid’s zone including birdseed snow angels, snowball catapults, a snow obstacle course, snow fort capture the flag and ice cube hunts. It is sponsored by Ohiopyle State Park and the Friends of Ohiopyle State Park (FOO). Attendance is approximately 1000 people.

Yough Xtreme Adventure Race - Ohiopyle State Park is the venue for this 10-12 hour adventure race. Individuals and teams will complete 25+ miles of mountain biking, 20 miles of trekking/orienteering, nine miles of kayaking, a 150’ rappel and an open swim during this timed race. It is a qualifier event for the USASA (United States Adventure Sports Association) national race. Last year, there were 134 race participants. The race is sponsored by American Adventure Sports.

Over the Falls Race - One day a year Ohiopyle State Park opens the main Ohiopyle Falls for expert boaters. This spectacle is held every August in the Main Falls Area of the Park. Several other non-profit groups are on hand that day to showcase water quality issues related to the Youghiogheny River. American Whitewater (AW) is the sponsor of this event. Attendance is approximately 8,000.

Lionheart Adventure Race - Ohiopyle State Park is the venue for this 26 hour adventure race. Individuals and teams will complete 40-50 miles of mountain biking, 30-35 miles of trekking/orienteering, 9-15 miles of kayaking, a 150’ rappel and a 150 meter open swim during this timed race. It is a qualifier event for the USASA (United States Adventure Sports Association) national race. Over 70 teams participate in this race sponsored by American Adventure Sports.
**Music in the Mountains** - Held the Saturday and Sunday of Labor Day weekend at Ohiopyle State Park, Music in the Mountains showcases the music and traditions of the Laurel Highlands area. For two days the Main Falls area is transformed with two entertainment areas, handmade crafts, environmental education programming and of course food. Music performances generally include folk, bluegrass and country music. Saturday evening ends with a spectacular fireworks show over the Youghiogheny River. This event is free to the public. Ohiopyle State Park and the Friends of Ohiopyle State Park (FOO) cooperate in providing this festival. Attendance is approximately 20,000 people.

**Homestead Day** - Homestead Day is generally held the third weekend of September at the Cucumber Picnic area at Ohiopyle State Park. The purpose of this festival is to highlight the hardships that early settlers to the Laurel Highlands endured just to survive. There are interpretive programs on cider making, log hewing, Native American cooking and lifestyles, pioneer games, goat milking, wool spinning, Dutch oven cooking and horse drawn wagon rides. This event is presented by the interpretive staff of Ohiopyle State Park. Attendance is approximately 500 people.

**Ohiopyle Buckwheat Supper** - For over 60 years the Borough of Ohiopyle has been transformed on the second full weekend of October into a family gathering place. Generations of local families gather at the Ohiopyle Stewart Community Center and Firehouse to sample buckwheat pancakes and reminisce with their families, neighbors and friends. The streets of Ohiopyle shut down as participants fill the streets to sample homemade foods and visit craft booths throughout town. This extravaganza is a fundraiser for the local fire company but it is legendary to all of those who participate. Approximately 10,000 people participate in this event.

**Pondfield Firetower Open-house** – Approximately 200 people attend this annual event. Visitors learn about forest fire protection and can also climb the fire tower to observe the surrounding area. The fire tower located on Skyline Drive in Farmington is one of the last fire towers open to the public in southwestern Pennsylvania.

**Ranger Open-House** – this occurs every fall usually in October, at the warming hut on Laurel Summit Road. The idea is to invite the public to stop by, ask questions, and learn more about all the activities occurring on the Forbes.
MARKET ANALYSIS

The efforts of this plan will help create outdoor connections for citizens and visitors to the lands of the Laurel Ridge. In order to succeed, current and potential audiences must be identified, taking into account demographic, geographic and socio-economic trends as well as the audiences' recreational use of lands on the Laurel Ridge.

The profile of the current audience will be shown by considering data from the state park reservation system, state and national surveys and interviews of park staff. The potential audience of the ridge will be presented considering the gaps in the visitor profile or user groups. The potential audience could be a visitor group that is not visiting the Laurel Ridge at all or one that is currently visiting but is underserved in some way by an absence of certain amenities, activities or services along the ridge. The overall focus of this audience analysis is to determine how DCNR lands along the Laurel Ridge will respond to or generate demand for visitation.

Current Audience

Demographic/ Socioeconomic
According to the Pennsylvania State Park Visitors Survey, completed in 2008 (Mowen et. al), visitors to Pennsylvania State Parks are most likely to be between the ages of 36-50, white and have some advanced education. The majority are married and have an income between $40,000-60,000 per year. Visitors have an average of three people in their household.

Over half (64%) of state park users are visiting the park for day use and 50% stay for three to four hours. 47% of visitors indicated that they did not visit any other state park in the last twelve months.

This is consistent with national trends found in the National Visitor Use Monitoring (USDA Forest Service, 2007), where the report showed that most visitors were white, with incomes between $25,000-74,999 per year.
The two highest age groups indicated in the national survey were 40-49 and under 16, indicating a possible family unit. Most visitors were day users, staying for less than three hours.

State and national surveys show that the majority of visitors to public lands are Caucasian. Staff observation is consistent with this finding. However, staff observations note that various socioeconomic trends coincide with specific activities, for example, those participating in fly fishing are typically middle- to high-income males over 40.

Geographic
Data from the DCNR Reserve PA System showed that the majority of reservations made for state parks in the Laurel Highlands were from residents of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maryland, generally in that order. Within Pennsylvania residents, the overwhelming majority of reservations were from residents of the southwestern region of the state (fig. 1). These findings are consistent with the National Forest Service Report which shows that the majority of visitors drive 25 miles or less to their national forest destination.

Southcentral was generally second in percentage of visitors and northwest and Philadelphia regions were generally third. The accessibility of the Laurel Ridge from the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) is likely to appeal to many of these visitors and it is reasonable to assume that many visitors utilize the Turnpike in their travel to the Laurel Ridge.
The northeast region generally showed the lowest percentage of reservations and visitors. This region would generally encompass the areas that are furthest from the Laurel Ridge. It should be noted that the Philadelphia metro area is comparable in distance; however, ease of travel on the turnpike from the Philadelphia area could be a possible explanation for the larger representation of the Philadelphia region.

The activities that brought the most geographically diverse sample of Pennsylvania visitors were whitewater hard-boating, organized group tenting and yurt rental. Interviews of park staff show that although the pavilion reservations are primarily from Pennsylvania residents, specifically those in the southwest region, the pavilion reservations also attract many out-of-state visitors for annual events such as family reunions.

Recreational Use
According to Reserve PA data, the cabin is the overnight unit in highest demand, with the highest number of days between the date the reservation is created and the date of arrival. Campsites have the lowest number of days between the date the reservation is created and the date of arrival.

Based on interviews with park and forest staff, the compilation of top recreational uses for each season is as follows:

Winter:
- Snowmobiling
- Cross-country skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Overnight use (where available)
- Scenic driving/ viewing natural features

Spring:
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Biking
- Overnight use (where available)
- Scenic driving/ viewing natural features
Summer:
Biking
Hiking
Boating- flat water and whitewater
Backpacking
Overnight use (where available)
Scenic driving/ viewing natural features

Fall:
Hunting
Hiking
Biking
Overnight use (where available)
Scenic driving/ viewing natural features

This is generally consistent with state and national surveys, where fishing, hiking and walking were popular active recreation. National surveys showed that passive recreation, such as pleasure driving or viewing natural features was a very popular activity. The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) notes that fishing, hiking and walking are among the primary activities of state park users (2009). The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment shows kayaking, rafting, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling with low percentages of participation. This could be due to equipment costs, need for instruction, safety concerns as well as the specific audiences these activities attract and the scarcity of ideal natural resources in which to participate in these activities. The Laurel Ridge provides an ideal environment for these specialized activities and is well known by these users for these resources.

Potential Audience

Demographic/ Socioeconomic
Non-family Groups
Non-family groups use the state forest and park lands within the Laurel Ridge when on organized trips with groups such as summer camps, adventure camps, scouts and religious groups. These audiences provide an ethnic and religious diversity not typically seen in visitors to public lands on the Laurel Ridge. There is an opportunity to offer services and interpretation to enhance this groups experience on public lands along the Laurel Ridge and promote return visits outside of the group setting.
International
Biking along the Great Allegheny Passage has increased the number of international visitors to the Laurel Ridge, along with the international audience that is drawn to the Frank Lloyd Wright sites.

Baby Boomers
Demographic trends nationwide show that the fastest increasing age group is the “baby boomer”, those born between 1946 and 1964. Over a quarter of Pennsylvania’s citizens fall into this category (SCORP, 2009). This age group is either currently retired or soon reaching retirement and about half express that one of their life goals is to travel (Focalist, 2007). The needs and preferences of this generation are markedly different from younger audiences. It is important to understand their needs, concerns and preferences when traveling in order to meet them. Baby boomers may seek more convenient overnight stays and although they seek adventure, safety is important (Focalist, 2007).

70% of the boomer population exhibit socially conscious attitudes and 54% exhibit environmentally conscious attitudes (Focalist, 2007). After seeking experiences that meet their comfort and security needs, many boomers will make travel decisions in line with their views, such as supporting local retailers, buying local and supporting organizations or companies that serve or give back to the environment (Focalist, 2007). By keeping baby boomer preferences and needs in mind, the visitation and support of this audience could grow and result in a mutually beneficial relationship with sites along the Laurel Ridge.

Geographic
Turnpike Corridor
Many of the visitors that do not live in southwestern Pennsylvania travel from southcentral and Philadelphia and the metro area, most likely because of the accessibility of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76). An increase in additional visitation and visitor use days could be achieved by additional directional and promotional materials along the turnpike.

Local Community
Many members of the local community use the public lands for recreation such as fishing, hiking and picnicking, but staff observations show that local community members often do not feel involved in the public lands. Although this audience is currently utilizing the public lands, a mutual relationship of involvement and concern could be formed by engaging and involving local citizens.
Recreational Use

Winter Sports Enthusiasts
Winter sports enthusiasts use the public lands of the Laurel Ridge because of their outstanding reputation for consistent snowfall and snow retention. It is a popular destination for snowmobilers, cross-country skiers and snowshoers. The public lands along the Laurel Ridge have an opportunity to meet the needs of the audience with amenities, facilities and overnight accommodations designed for winter use. Currently, winter sports enthusiasts are using amenities and overnight accommodations outside of the public lands they are recreating within.

Backpackers
Backpackers along the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail represent a specific group of outdoor enthusiasts. There is information for this user group along the trail and at the park office; however, there is very little personal interaction with this user group. There is potential to address this audience, while taking into consideration staff constraints, by using other forms of media.

Scenic drivers
Driving for pleasure and for scenery is currently a top activity in all seasons along the Laurel Ridge. This audience typically has very little contact with public lands’ staff, programs, media or messages. This is a user group that is currently utilizing the lands of the Laurel Ridge, but is likely receiving very few messages or services and forming very little connection with the mission of DCNR.

Researchers
Many researchers from local universities and other academia seek to use the public lands of the Laurel Ridge for data collection or observation. The geology, topography, hydrology, wildlife and unique plant species attracts researchers and the close proximity to several universities and the city of Pittsburgh provides convenient access. Typically, this audience is working in the natural resource field of academia and often cares deeply for conservation and stewardship of the land. Currently, this audience is using the public lands of the Laurel Ridge but typically has very little contact with DCNR staff, media or messages. A relationship with researchers could provide DCNR with valuable information that is beyond the scope of current land management while engaging and involving researchers.
INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES

Interpretive objectives are associated with a specific interpretive element. They indicate what the visitor will do to meet the goals. In other words what the outcome will be of visitor participation or interaction with an interpretive element.

1. At least 20% of visitors who participate in a guided interpretive or recreational program on a state park or forest on Laurel Ridge will visit at least two other state park or forest locations on Laurel Ridge.

2. At least 10% of the visitors to the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape will participate in a self-guided, thematic, interpretive experience.

3. At least 50% of visitors to the Laurel Ridge will be able to identify geology as the foundation that influences people’s activities within the region.

4. At least 25% of the visitors to the Laurel Ridge will be able to relate the role of the ridges in transportation and economy beginning in 1700s.

5. At least 40% of the visitors will be able to identify conservation efforts of the early 1900s that lead to the quality of the resources today.

6. At least 50% of visitors will identify state park and forest lands as a part of DCNR and recognize and support the value of these resources for present and future generations.

7. At least 10% of visitors to the region will recognize the impacts of extracting natural resources and the benefit of utilizing sustainable practices.

8. At least 30% of visitors will recognize that natural areas may possess hazards and will learn basic outdoor skills to protect the resource and increase their enjoyment of the outdoors.
9. At least 10% of visitors will actively participate in conservation efforts while visiting the region by recycling, volunteering at a state park, state forest or community conservation event or purchasing a local carbon offset.

10. At least 20% of visitors who participate in a guided interpretive or recreational program on a state park or forest on the Laurel Ridge will visit a local community historic, cultural or recreational attraction or event.

11. At least 50% of visitors to the Laurel Highlands will get information to plan their visit to the region by using the DCNR and Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau web sites within two years.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Personal Recommendations *(staffed, guided services)*:

1. Staffing
   Staff dedicated to providing a variety of year-round programming is needed for all park and forest sites along the ridge. The management and supervision of this programming staff will require a different type of management philosophy and structure to ensure that programming is coordinated and provided year round at all sites. This may require roving staff to cover all areas. Programming staff for both bureaus (parks, forestry) may include several job classifications (Environmental Education Specialist, Environmental Interpretive Technician, Natural Resource Specialist/Outdoor Recreation Specialist, Recreational Forester, DCNR Rangers). A total of 12 positions (seasonal and salaried) are recommended. Currently there is one salaried position and three seasonal positions, eight additional positions are needed with a minimum of four total salaried positions.
   GOALS: I, II, III, IV, V, VI
   STORYLINES: A1 thru E2

2. Interpretive programs
   Develop and present year-round signature programs that focus on resources unique to the Laurel Ridge. Topics to include: CCC, geology, Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset (PWS) Railroad, Spruce Flats Bog, French and Indian War, ecology, PA conservation history, community culture, logging, weather, watersheds, retreat camping history, forests, energy, river use, recreation history and habitat. In addition, a historical walking tour of Ohiopyle Borough to include history of park development and community is to be developed and presented to highlight this unique situation and the role of the Conservation Landscape.
   GOALS: I, III
   STORYLINES: A1 thru E2
3. **Recreational programs**
   Develop and present year-round signature programs that focus on recreation activities that rely on resources unique to the Laurel Ridge. Topics to include: scenic touring (points of interest), rock climbing, birding/wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, wilderness experience, whitewater, fishing, biking and cross-country skiing.
   Programs to be developed should follow the Visitor Experience model (from the National Association for Interpretation) and provide multi-dimensional opportunities and experiences. All recreational programs should include an interpretive element and provide skill development for best practices in the outdoors such as Leave No Trace ethics. Consider offering a “resident rate” or “free-program pass” for local program attendees.
   **GOALS:** I, III
   **STORYLINES:** A3, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D1, D2, D3, E2

4. **Environmental Education programs**
   Continue to provide environmental education programs to school groups that follow DCNR guidelines and meet the PA Department of Education standards. In addition, develop a program that models the Trail to Every Classroom program by the National Park Service for both the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage.
   **GOALS:** II, III, IV
   **STORYLINES:** A1 thru E2

5. **Laurel Highlands Natural History workshops**
   Provide one day and multi-day programs for adults and colleges that focus on the resources (natural, cultural, historical) of the Laurel Ridge. Consider offering a “resident rate” or “free-program pass” for local attendees to the workshop.
   **GOALS:** II, III, IV
   **STORYLINES:** B2, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2
6. Stewardship and Volunteer Opportunities
   Provide programs to educate visitors and residents on sustainable use, best practices and green technology. Incorporate DCNR’s “I Conserve” program and provide incentives and information for individuals to practice conservation and participate in volunteer opportunities. Explore stewardship options such as conservation easements, farmland preservation, tax credits for historic districts and carbon offset fees/purchases and present options to visitors and residents.
   GOALS: IV
   STORYLINES: E1, E2

7. Ecotours
   Develop and provide year-round signature ecotours that focus on resources, activities and experiences unique to the Laurel Ridge. Provide an immersion experience for participants through authentic experiences that connect the place with products such as inclusion of local artisans, local foods, resource-based recreation, interpretation and local community events. Creatively brand each ecotour to target specific audiences. Consider offering a “resident rate” or “free-program pass” for local ecotour participants.
   GOALS: V
   STORYLINES: A1, A3, C1, C3, D2, D3, E2

8. Partner Site Collaboration
   Schedule regular meetings (yearly, quarterly) of all partners to meet, share ideas and develop program opportunities with shared resources.
   GOALS: II, V, VI
   STORYLINES: N/A

9. Education Outreach
   Develop a consortium of educational institutions to determine educational, training and resources needs then match these needs with various entities to provide the services (such as multi-day teacher workshops, etc)
   GOALS: II
   STORYLINES: N/A
10. Host Training/Hospitality Training
   Work in partnership with the Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau to develop and provide Host Training/Hospitality Training for visitor center staffs, hotels, restaurants, store owners and local businesses.
   GOALS: II, V
   STORYLINES: N/A

11. Guide Certification Program
   Develop a certification program for guides who offer hunting, fishing, biking, boating or other outdoor recreational services. Work with other partners to develop and provide as a statewide or nationally recognized certification.
   GOALS: II, V
   STORYLINES: N/A

12. Community Connections
   A DCNR staff representative should attend local community meetings to keep residents informed about the Conservation Landscape and park/forest events and programs. Work with local communities to include local DCNR site information in local newsletters/papers/websites.
   GOALS: V
   STORYLINES: N/A

13. Community Events/Festivals
   Participate in community-based events that provide authentic experiences and connect the place with local products such as inclusion of local artisans, local foods and historic connection to area. Provide a booth, information and/or activities during the event. Utilize off-season events/festivals to promote year-round visitation for the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape.
   GOALS: III, V
   STORYLINES: A1, A3, D3

14. Shuttle Service Interpretation
   Provide on-board interpretive staff on shuttle bus/vans to provide programming to visitors that travel through the region. Work in partnership with shuttle operators to provide staff (DCNR, shuttle operators, volunteers, interns). Provide lesson plans and speaking points for shuttle bus/van operators.
   GOALS: II, V
   STORYLINES: A3, A5, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2
15. Research Opportunities
Numerous opportunities exist to do research on the ridge. Work with local universities, educational institutions and research centers to provide access to DCNR lands and to share research results. Consider offering a ‘research symposium” on an annual basis to share research presentations.
GOALS: II, III
STORYLINES: A1, C2, C5, D3, E1

Non-Personal Recommendations (non-staffed, self-guided services):
1. Falls Area Visitor Center
A new visitor center/park office is currently being designed for the falls area of Ohiopyle State Park. This building will serve as offices for park administrative staff as well as for visitor information and interpretation. Consider relocating the Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau from the Train Station to this location. In addition, this location will provide a boater permit and launch area. This LEED certified building will use green technology for building materials, energy efficiency, utilities, water/sewage and landscaping. A view of the falls will be highlighted and two areas in the building will house interpretive exhibits focusing on an overview of the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape and Ohiopyle State Park. In addition, interpretation on the building’s green technology will be interpreted where appropriate.
GOALS: I, II, III, IV, V, VI
STORYLINES: A1 thru E2

2. Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Exhibit for other sites
Work in partnership with other sites to provide input and resources to develop exhibits for other visitor centers. These exhibits should focus on the Conservation Landscape, DCNR parks and forest sites and visitor opportunities available. Exhibits should be individually designed to fit available space and compliment the existing exhibits within the building. Sites to consider for exhibits include the Lincoln Highway Visitor Center located on Rte 30 in Ligonier, which has a 13’ x 13’ exhibit space available and the Visitor Center planned at the Donegal Exit off of the Turnpike.
GOALS: II, V, VI
STORYLINES: A3, B3, C1, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2
3. Traveling Exhibit
Develop an exhibit to be used at airports, turnpike welcome centers and rest stops. Exhibit should be easily set up and be suitable for a small space. The exhibit will highlight the Conservation Landscape, DCNR parks and forest sites and visitor opportunities. Possibly include brochure holder for related maps and brochures/rack cards.
GOALS: II, V, VI
STORYLINES: A3, B3, C1, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2

4. Ohiopyle Train Station
Reuse the existing Train Station to serve the needs of cyclists on the Great Allegheny Passage and hikers on the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. Provide biking and hiking information. Specific amenities to include bike racks, bike washing station, air station to fill bike tires and possibly a storage area for daypacks/backpacks. Work with Amtrak to utilize train station as a shuttle stop. Train to provide space for bikes and backpacks as well as passengers. Revise current interior interpretive/photo panels focusing on history of train station and railroad history related to the B&O and Western Maryland Railroads. Consider relocating the Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau to the new Falls Visitor Center.
GOALS: I, V, VI
STORYLINES: B2, C1, C5, D3, E2

5. Meadow Run House (at Ohiopyle)
Reuse the stone house located at the confluence of Meadow Run and the Youghiogheny River to serve as offices for the environmental education and interpretive staff and as an education/classroom facility. Interpretation to focus on community, stewardship/conservation and include resident and visitor stories (similar to National Public Radio’s “story core” idea). Interpretation should compliment the culture/history information at the Community Center. Consider renaming the building the Lilian McCahan Learning Center or Lilian McCahan Resource Center in honor of a local early conservationist. In addition provide services for visitors to the Meadow Run Slides area by including bathroom and changing facilities and drink/snack vending area (may need to have a separate facility in this location). An introductory kiosk is to be located at Meadow Run Slides parking area to direct visitors to the amenities at the Meadow Run House. Connect slides area, Meadow Run House and new Falls Area Visitor Center with a path or trail. Other amenities at this location could include rocking chairs on porch, picnic tables, recycling/composting, public access to internet and a community garden.
This facility may have potential for public rental of classroom/kitchen space. Consider providing an office for the Friends of Ohiopyle depending on available space.
GOALS: II, III, IV
STORYLINES: A2, A4, B1, B2, E1, E2

6. Laurel Ridge Environmental Learning Center
Convert the Laurel Ridge Park Office into an Environmental Learning Classroom. This facility will serve as a classroom for school programs, interpretive programs and recreational programs with easy access to the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. There may be potential for public rental of the classroom/meeting room space.
GOALS: II, III
STORYLINES: B1, B3, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2

7. Spruce Flats Bog/Laurel Summit waysides and kiosk
Build an accessible boardwalk along/through the bog to provide visitors suitable access to this area while protecting potential damaging visitor access thru the bog. Develop four waysides along the boardwalk: what is a bog (geology, temporary environment), spruce flats history ( RR, mystery of bog existence, conservation), plants of the bog (unique plants, ID), birds/wildlife of the bog (what can be seen, importance of unique habitat). Develop a kiosk in parking area at Laurel Summit to include a panel for orientation to site (trails, bog) and bulletin case for seasonal visitor information. Follow DCNR Guidelines for design and materials of the waysides and kiosk.
GOALS: I, III
STORYLINES: B2, C2, C5, E1

8. Mount Davis High Point plaques and exhibit
Clean and restore the existing bronze plaques and repair and repaint the observation tower. Design and install a “highpoint visitor logbook” interactive exhibit at top of observation tower. Consider vandalism issues when designing the exhibit. Follow DCNR Guidelines for design and materials for the exhibit.
GOALS: I, III
STORYLINES: A5, B3, C1, C4, D2
9. Mount Davis Picnic Area kiosk
   Develop a kiosk in picnic area parking lot to include a panel for orientation to site, a
   panel for interpretation about Negro Mountain and a bulletin case for seasonal visitor
   information. Follow DCNR Guidelines for design and materials.
   GOALS: I, III
   STORYLINES: A5, B3, C1, C2, C4, D2

10. CCC History wayside
    Reproduce CCC introductory panel developed by state parks. Install one at former site
    of CCC camp located at the Mount Davis picnic area and install one at Linn Run State
    Park cabin colony area.
    GOALS: I, III
    STORYLINES: D1, D3, E1

11. Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail Trailhead kiosk - Ohiopyle /Ferncliff area
    Develop a kiosk to include one panel to interpret trails (Great Allegheny Passage and
    Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail), include Conservation Landscape information, Leave
    No Trace, boot brush information, one panel to include Ohiopyle Trail Town specific
    information and a bulletin case for seasonal visitor information. Follow DCNR
    Guidelines for design and materials of kiosk. Possibly include some outdoor brochure
    boxes for maps.
    GOALS: I, V, VI
    STORYLINES: A3, B2, B3, C2, D2, D3, E2

12. Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail Trailhead kiosk - Seward area
    Develop a kiosk to include one panel to interpret the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail,
    include Conservation Landscape information, Leave No Trace backcountry
    information, boot brush information, a second panel to include Johnstown specific
    information and a bulletin case for seasonal visitor information. Follow DCNR
    Guidelines for design and materials of kiosk.
    GOALS: I, V, VI
    STORYLINES: A3, B3, C1, D2, D3, E2
   Install bulletin cases to northern section of trail and refurbish bulletin boards along
   southern section of trail. Post information about the trail, Leave No Trace
   backcountry ethics, potable water, stewardship and trail use ethics -“doing a good
   turn” (example leaving dry wood at shelter) etc.
   GOALS: I, V
   STORYLINES: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D1, D2, D3

14. Conemaugh Gap Overlook wayside
   Develop as a cooperative project with the city of Johnstown (landowner) and Penn
   DOT (right-of-way) to develop and install a wayside. Also work with the volunteer
   who has been maintaining the area and has a fund for maintenance set up in
   Johnstown. Interpretation is to include the geology and natural features of the gap.
   Follow DCNR Guidelines for design and materials and consider vandalism concerns in
   the area.
   GOALS: III, V
   STORYLINES: B1, C1, C4

15. Retreat Camping wayside (at Linn Run)
   Develop a wayside to interpret early retreat camping in Pennsylvania and install at
   the Adams Falls area of Linn Run State Park.
   GOALS: III,
   STORYLINES: B3, C3, D2, D3

16. Grove Run Springs wayside (at Linn Run)
   Develop a wayside to interpret the spring, people’s use of water and water
   conservation. Install at spring location at Linn Run State Park.
   GOALS: III, IV
   STORYLINES: C2, C5, E2

17. Bluestone Quarry wayside (at Linn Run)
   Develop a wayside at the quarry site to interpret the geology, historic operations of
   the quarry and the use of the stone. Include current value as habitat and rookery
   site.
   GOALS: III
   STORYLINES: A5, C1, E2
18. 18th Century Cemetery wayside (at Laurel Hill)
   Develop a wayside to interpret the cemetery located near Group Camp #8 at Laurel
   Hill State Park.
   GOALS: III
   STORYLINES: A5

19. Jones Mill Run and Dam waysides (at Laurel Hill)
   Develop a wayside to interpret early logging railroad industry including the park’s
   Tram Road Trail that follows the trace of a logging railroad spur to the probable site
   of a logging camp located near the Jones Run Dam. In addition, interpret CCC
   construction of the Jones Mill Dam.
   GOALS: III
   STORYLINES: A5, B2, E1

20. Hemlock Trail waysides (at Laurel Hill)
   Replace the Hemlock Trail self-guided trail brochure with waysides. Interpretation
   to include old growth forests, importance of lumbering history, CCC and reclamation
   of natural resources. Include information on state park Natural Area designation.
   GOALS: III
   STORYLINES: B2, C5, E1

21. Cucumber Falls wayside (at Ohiopyle)
   Develop a wayside at Cucumber Falls to interpret the geology, history and natural
   resources of the area.
   GOALS: III
   STORYLINES: C1, C2, C5
22. Interactive Web Site

Work in partnership with the Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau since they currently have a website for the region to develop an interactive website. The site should list self-guided opportunities and include a downloadable version of the visitor friendly map of the Laurel Ridge area not mapped by administrative boundaries (shows trails, outdoor recreation, etc.). Include travel options with a “highway belt system” of travel routes, shuttle options, non auto trails (bike, hike), parking information, and directions. Develop downloadable pod trails, video guides, audio guides and GPS maps. Provide links to state parks and forests within the Laurel Highlands and links to local community websites. Develop and maintain a master calendar of events for the region.

GOALS: I, II, III, IV, V, VI
STORYLINES: N/A

23. Marketing

Work in partnership with the Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau to market to visitors prior to them arriving at their destination. Possibly develop a logo for easy recognition of the Laurel Highlands and to better promote the Conservation Landscape for consistency (like PA Wilds). Market the specific “must see” sites in the region such as highest point, deepest gorge, longest cave, etc.

GOALS: I, VI
STORYLINES: N/A

24. Self-Guided Tours/“Discovery Trails”

Develop an over-arching, multi-modal tour of the Laurel Highlands (The Laurel Highlands Discovery Trail) that is divided into single day, partial-day or multi-day itineraries for different audiences (families, adults...). This will be a pre-packaged plan with supporting materials (digital, printed, audio media) of what is available in parks and forests as well as in local communities. Also develop a series of thematic self-guided tours on topics of geology, history, scenic views, birding, and fall foliage that feature related park/forest points of interest. In addition, develop a self guided tour for the already popular scenic driving route through Forbes State Forest (Linn Run Road, Laurel Summit Road, Route 381, Route 30) featuring stops at the Spruce Flats Bog, Laurel Mountain, etc.

GOALS: I, III, V
STORYLINES: A2, A5, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2
25. Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape Map
   Develop a visitor friendly map not mapped by administrative boundaries that shows trails, outdoor recreation, etc. Include Conservation Landscape information and stewardship actions for visitors.
   GOALS: I
   STORYLINES: D1, D2, D3, E2

26. Park Guides
   Upgrade mini-map version of park recreational guides for Laurel Hill, Linn Run Complex, Kooser and Ohiopyle state parks to the larger format version (uni-grid format). Include more interpretive information and conservation landscape information.
   GOALS: I, II, III, IV, V, VI,
   STORYLINES: A2, A5, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2

27. Recreation Activity Guides
   Develop a separate guide for specific recreation activities that includes maps, recreational provider information, equipment information and stewardship messages about what visitors can do to lessen their impact on the area while participating in that specific recreation activity. Guides to be developed for: backpacking, biking, fishing, hiking, hunting, boating (flat water and whitewater), snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and camping. Include information about the Conservation Landscape.
   GOALS: I, VI
   STORYLINES: D1, D2, D3, E2

28. Spruce Flats Bog brochure
   Redesign the existing brochure with edited text and new photos/graphics. Follow DCNR Guidelines for design. Include Conservation Landscape information and stewardship messaging specific to the bog.
   GOALS: III
   STORYLINES: A5, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, E1, E2
29. Mount Davis brochure
   Redesign the existing brochure with edited text and new photos/graphics. Follow
DCNR Guidelines for design. Include Conservation Landscape information and
stewardship messaging specific to the landscape/ecosystem and the state’s highest
point.
GOALS: III
STORYLINES: A5, B1, C1, C2, C4, E1, E2

30. Ohiopyle Launch Permit
   Reprint launch permits with a water stewardship message. Laminate the permits so
they can be re-used.
GOALS: III, IV
STORYLINES: E2

31. Campground Permit/Parking Pass
   Reprint campground permit/parking pass with a camping stewardship message.
GOALS: III, IV
STORYLINES: E2

32. Passport Guide
   Develop a guidebook to the Laurel Highlands. Include information about the
Conservation Landscape, state parks and forests within the Laurel Highlands, partner
site information, tips for travel in the region, stewardship opportunities, checklists for
wildlife viewing and birding, and journal/note pages. Work in partnership with
Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau and include partner sites information. Consider
offering as a sale item.
GOALS: I, III, V, VI
STORYLINES: E2, D1, D2, D3

33. Communication Infrastructure
   Provide public internet/WiFi access at parks and forests office/visitor centers. Explore
availability options in campground and cabin areas. Work with local communities to
provide reliable cell phone service in those communities through community towers
and/or boosters/amplifiers.
GOALS: VI
STORYLINES: N/A
34. Shuttle Service
Explore the feasibility to develop shuttle service options such as busses, vans and train service. Use green technology and alternate energy for shuttle vehicles (bio-diesel, propane, hybrids, etc.). Vehicles should be equipped with racks for bikes, backpacks, boats, etc. Provide satellite parking areas with information kiosks for potential of continuous loop shuttle scheduling. Provide as a concession or in a partnership agreement.
GOALS: V
STORYLINES: E2

35. Electronic Kiosks
Install electronic kiosks for park and forest sites as well as for high visitation areas in Trail Towns and other gateway areas. Kiosks to provide visitor information about the region and can link to interactive web site.
GOALS: I, III, IV, VI
STORYLINES: N/A

36. Social Marketing
Set up pages and provide information on Facebook, Twitter and other social media to target specific audiences, provide information and gather feedback about DCNR resources, services and visitor experiences.
GOALS: II, IV
STORYLINES: N/A

37. Wayfinding Signs on Turnpike
Work with the Turnpike Commission to develop and provide signs to direct visitors to the Laurel Highlands and to state parks and forests within the region.
GOALS: I, VI
STORYLINES: N/A

38. Support Equipment
Purchase needed support equipment for interpretive and recreational programs. Equipment may include vans (for staff and participants) and Get Outdoors PA (GOPA) equipment such as kayaks, canoes, bikes, etc.
GOALS: I, II, III, IV, V, VI
STORYLINES: N/A
39. Former Pressley Ridge Tract

Develop a plan for the use of this recently acquired 1300-acre site that will be managed as a part of Ohiopyle State Park. Amenities include an 8,300 sq ft administration center, a maintenance compound, four houses, seven group camps, two shower houses, a high ropes course, climbing wall and constructed swimming pond. Consider options that provide interpretive and recreational visitor experiences that meet the goals of the conservation landscape. Options considered should enhance opportunities and amenities provided by state parks and forest lands along the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape.

GOALS: I, II, III, IV, V, VI

STORYLINES: B3, C3, D1, D2, D3, E1, E2
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The recommendations listed in this plan will be completed in phases over several years. Priority order of projects is dependant on staffing, time and funding. Members of the Interpretive Team as well as the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape Leadership Team will actively pursue opportunities to successfully implement these recommendations.

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<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Estimated Cost *</th>
<th>Funding Source *</th>
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<td>P1 Staffing (8 additional)</td>
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<td>Meadow Run House</td>
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* Actual costs and funding sources will be determined as recommendations are designed, developed and implemented.
SITE SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION

The seven state parks and one state forest of the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape are managed as separate “management units”. In order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of this plan, site specific information is provided for each “management unit”. The themes and goals are the same for the overall Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape however the related sub-themes, storylines and recommendations are site specific.
FORBES STATE FOREST

Theme:
The Laurel Ridge is a ridgeline corridor that connects public lands and traditional small communities around the natural resources and unique geology providing year-round recreational, historical and cultural experiences.

Goals:
I. To promote a unified, seamless approach to the interpretive and recreational opportunities available on DCNR lands along the Laurel Ridge.
II. To create connections for sharing of information and resources within the Laurel Ridge landscape in order to present a complete interpretive picture for residents, visitors, schools and partners.
III. To foster awareness for the value of natural, cultural and historic resources along the Laurel Ridge for recreation and economic development.
IV. To promote stewardship to residents and visitors through development of opportunities to become engaged in conservation issues.
V. To encourage sustainable tourism and travel within public lands, local attractions and local communities along the Laurel Ridge.
VI. To connect to the other sub landscapes, state parks, state forests and state heritage areas within the Laurel Highlands to promote consistent, sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities for the region.

Sub-themes and Storylines:

Sub-theme A: The character of small, traditional communities provides opportunities to experience the history of local mountain culture and new innovation and progress. (community)
Storyline A2: Traditional values of southwestern PA mountain culture are characteristic of the Laurel Highlands.
Storyline A5: Remnants of former settlements and industry serve as links to local history.
Sub-theme B: Development of transportation routes to the region opened the land for access to resources for timbering, mining and settlement. (history)

Storyline B1: Following Native American paths and river corridors, the development of transportation routes through rugged terrain for the movement of goods laid the groundwork for future westward expansion.

Storyline B2: Development of railroads and improved transportation corridors created access to the abundant natural resources and provided opportunities for settlement.

Storyline B3: In the post industrial revolution era, the evolution of modern transportation routes created access to the recreational opportunities in the Laurel Highlands region.

Sub-theme C: The geology of the ridge influences the climate and natural resources of the region. (geology/natural resources)

Storyline C1: Rock composition, geologic folding/tectonic movement (deformation) and weathering processes through time have led to mountainous terrain, winding rivers, significant geologic features and the natural scenic beauty of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline C2: The Laurel Ridge’s geologic composition and geographic profile influence the region’s water chemistry, flow, quantity and availability.

Storyline C3: The geodiversity in Laurel Ridge influences the ecological diversity, land use patterns and recreational pursuits.

Storyline C4: The topographic profile, composition and orientation of the Laurel Ridge have a major influence on local climate and weather.

Storyline C5: The forested ridge protects local watersheds, influences the kinds of plants and animals found there and provides an important habitat corridor for wildlife.

Sub-theme D: The accessibility to natural areas and wilderness settings provide year round recreation opportunities. (recreation)

Storyline D1: There are 100,000 acres of public land within close proximity to major urban areas.

Storyline D2: The diversity of public lands provide intimate front-country and secluded backcountry experiences.

Storyline D3: Year-round recreational opportunities result from the confluence of natural resources, visitor facilities and services.
Sub-theme E: Efforts to protect and restore the resources influenced conservation on these contiguous public lands whose future depends on the stewardship ethic residents and visitors. (conservation/stewardship)

Storyline E1: The establishment and continuing support of these lands are a result of individual actions and large scale efforts of public and private entities to protect, restore and conserve the resources.

Storyline E2: The current visitor experience on these lands inspires and provides opportunities for continued efforts to meet modern challenges to conservation.

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<th>Project Lead</th>
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**LAUREL HILL STATE PARK COMPLEX**

The Laurel Hill State Park Complex includes Laurel Hill State Park, Kooser State Park and the southern half of Laurel Ridge State Park.

**Theme:**
The Laurel Ridge is a ridgeline corridor that connects public lands and traditional small communities around the natural resources and unique geology providing year-round recreational, historical and cultural experiences.

**Goals:**
I. To promote a unified, seamless approach to the interpretive and recreational opportunities available on DCNR lands along the Laurel Ridge.
II. To create connections for sharing of information and resources within the Laurel Ridge landscape in order to present a complete interpretive picture for residents, visitors, schools and partners.
III. To foster awareness for the value of natural, cultural and historic resources along the Laurel Ridge for recreation and economic development.
IV. To promote stewardship to residents and visitors through development of opportunities to become engaged in conservation issues.
V. To encourage sustainable tourism and travel within public lands, local attractions and local communities along the Laurel Ridge.
VI. To connect to the other sub landscapes, state parks, state forests and state heritage areas within the Laurel Highlands to promote consistent, sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities for the region.

**Sub-themes and Storylines:**

Sub-theme A: The character of small, traditional communities provides opportunities to experience the history of local mountain culture and new innovation and progress.
(community)

Storyline A1: Modern day fairs and festivals provide a unique link to our cultural history.
Storyline A2: Traditional values of southwestern PA mountain culture are characteristic of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline A3: Unique businesses and products of the area showcase local culture and traditions.

Storyline A5: Remnants of former settlements and industry serve as links to local history.

Sub-theme B: Development of transportation routes to the region opened the land for access to resources for timbering, mining and settlement. (history)

Storyline B1: Following Native American paths and river corridors, the development of transportation routes through rugged terrain for the movement of goods laid the groundwork for future westward expansion.

Storyline B2: Development of railroads and improved transportation corridors created access to the abundant natural resources and provided opportunities for settlement.

Storyline B3: In the post industrial revolution era, the evolution of modern transportation routes created access to the recreational opportunities in the Laurel Highlands region.

Sub-theme C: The geology of the ridge influences the climate and natural resources of the region. (geology/natural resources)

Storyline C1: Rock composition, geologic folding/tectonic movement (deformation) and weathering processes through time have led to mountainous terrain, winding rivers, significant geologic features and the natural scenic beauty of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline C2: The Laurel Ridge’s geologic composition and geographic profile influence the region’s water chemistry, flow, quantity and availability.

Storyline C3: The geodiversity in Laurel Ridge influences the ecological diversity, land use patterns and recreational pursuits.

Storyline C4: The topographic profile, composition and orientation of the Laurel Ridge have a major influence on local climate and weather.

Storyline C5: The forested ridge protects local watersheds, influences the kinds of plants and animals found there and provides an important habitat corridor for wildlife.

Sub-theme D: The accessibility to natural areas and wilderness settings provide year round recreation opportunities. (recreation)

Storyline D1: There are 100,000 acres of public land within close proximity to major urban areas.

Storyline D2: The diversity of public lands provide intimate front-country and secluded backcountry experiences.
Storyline D3: Year-round recreational opportunities result from the confluence of natural resources, visitor facilities and services.

Sub-theme E: Efforts to protect and restore the resources influenced conservation on these contiguous public lands whose future depends on the stewardship ethic residents and visitors. (conservation/stewardship)

Storyline E1: The establishment and continuing support of these lands are a result of individual actions and large scale efforts of public and private entities to protect, restore and conserve the resources.

Storyline E2: The current visitor experience on these lands inspires and provides opportunities for continued efforts to meet modern challenges to conservation.

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Linn Run State Park Complex

The Linn Run State Park Complex includes Linn Run State Park, Laurel Summit State Park, Laurel Mountain State Park and the northern half of Laurel Ridge State Park.

Theme:
The Laurel Ridge is a ridgeline corridor that connects public lands and traditional small communities around the natural resources and unique geology providing year-round recreational, historical and cultural experiences.

Goals:
I. To promote a unified, seamless approach to the interpretive and recreational opportunities available on DCNR lands along the Laurel Ridge.
II. To create connections for sharing of information and resources within the Laurel Ridge landscape in order to present a complete interpretive picture for residents, visitors, schools and partners.
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V. To encourage sustainable tourism and travel within public lands, local attractions and local communities along the Laurel Ridge.
VI. To connect to the other sub landscapes, state parks, state forests and state heritage areas within the Laurel Highlands to promote consistent, sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities for the region.
Sub-themes and Storylines:

Sub-theme A: The character of small, traditional communities provides opportunities to experience the history of local mountain culture and new innovation and progress. (community)
Storyline A2: Traditional values of southwestern PA mountain culture are characteristic of the Laurel Highlands.
Storyline A5: Remnants of former settlements and industry serve as links to local history.

Sub-theme B: Development of transportation routes to the region opened the land for access to resources for timbering, mining and settlement. (history)
Storyline B1: Following Native American paths and river corridors, the development of transportation routes through rugged terrain for the movement of goods laid the groundwork for future westward expansion.
Storyline B2: Development of railroads and improved transportation corridors created access to the abundant natural resources and provided opportunities for settlement.
Storyline B3: In the post industrial revolution era, the evolution of modern transportation routes created access to the recreational opportunities in the Laurel Highlands region.

Sub-theme C: The geology of the ridge influences the climate and natural resources of the region. (geology/natural resources)
Storyline C1: Rock composition, geologic folding/tectonic movement (deformation) and weathering processes through time have led to mountainous terrain, winding rivers, significant geologic features and the natural scenic beauty of the Laurel Highlands.
Storyline C2: The Laurel Ridge’s geologic composition and geographic profile influence the region’s water chemistry, flow, quantity and availability.
Storyline C3: The geodiversity in Laurel Ridge influences the ecological diversity, land use patterns and recreational pursuits.
Storyline C4: The topographic profile, composition and orientation of the Laurel Ridge have a major influence on local climate and weather.
Storyline C5: The forested ridge protects local watersheds, influences the kinds of plants and animals found there and provides an important habitat corridor for wildlife.
Sub-theme D: The accessibility to natural areas and wilderness settings provide year round recreation opportunities. (recreation)

Storyline D1: There are 100,000 acres of public land within close proximity to major urban areas.

Storyline D2: The diversity of public lands provide intimate front-country and secluded backcountry experiences.

Storyline D3: Year-round recreational opportunities result from the confluence of natural resources, visitor facilities and services.

Sub-theme E: Efforts to protect and restore the resources influenced conservation on these contiguous public lands whose future depends on the stewardship ethic residents and visitors. (conservation/stewardship)

Storyline E1: The establishment and continuing support of these lands are a result of individual actions and large scale efforts of public and private entities to protect, restore and conserve the resources.

Storyline E2: The current visitor experience on these lands inspires and provides opportunities for continued efforts to meet modern challenges to conservation.

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**OHIOPYLE STATE PARK**

**Theme:**
The Laurel Ridge is a ridgeline corridor that connects public lands and traditional small communities around the natural resources and unique geology providing year-round recreational, historical and cultural experiences.

**Goals:**
I. To promote a unified, seamless approach to the interpretive and recreational opportunities available on DCNR lands along the Laurel Ridge.
II. To create connections for sharing of information and resources within the Laurel Ridge landscape in order to present a complete interpretive picture for residents, visitors, schools and partners.
III. To foster awareness for the value of natural, cultural and historic resources along the Laurel Ridge for recreation and economic development.
IV. To promote stewardship to residents and visitors through development of opportunities to become engaged in conservation issues.
V. To encourage sustainable tourism and travel within public lands, local attractions and local communities along the Laurel Ridge.
VI. To connect to the other sub landscapes, state parks, state forests and state heritage areas within the Laurel Highlands to promote consistent, sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities for the region.

**Sub-themes and Storylines:**

**Sub-theme A: The character of small, traditional communities provides opportunities to experience the history of local mountain culture and new innovation and progress.**

(community)

Storyline A1: Modern day fairs and festivals provide a unique link to our cultural history.

Storyline A2: Traditional values of southwestern PA mountain culture are characteristic of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline A3: Unique businesses and products of the area showcase local culture and traditions.
Storyline A4: Individual characteristics of self-sufficiency, survival and ingenuity prevail here and have been passed between generations.

Storyline A5: Remnants of former settlements and industry serve as links to local history.

Sub-theme B: Development of transportation routes to the region opened the land for access to resources for timbering, mining and settlement. (history)

Storyline B1: Following Native American paths and river corridors, the development of transportation routes through rugged terrain for the movement of goods laid the groundwork for future westward expansion.

Storyline B2: Development of railroads and improved transportation corridors created access to the abundant natural resources and provided opportunities for settlement.

Storyline B3: In the post industrial revolution era, the evolution of modern transportation routes created access to the recreational opportunities in the Laurel Highlands region.

Sub-theme C: The geology of the ridge influences the climate and natural resources of the region. (geology/natural resources)

Storyline C1: Rock composition, geologic folding/tectonic movement (deformation) and weathering processes through time have led to mountainous terrain, winding rivers, significant geologic features and the natural scenic beauty of the Laurel Highlands.

Storyline C2: The Laurel Ridge’s geologic composition and geographic profile influence the region’s water chemistry, flow, quantity and availability.

Storyline C3: The geodiversity in Laurel Ridge influences the ecological diversity, land use patterns and recreational pursuits.

Storyline C4: The topographic profile, composition and orientation of the Laurel Ridge have a major influence on local climate and weather.

Storyline C5: The forested ridge protects local watersheds, influences the kinds of plants and animals found there and provides an important habitat corridor for wildlife.

Sub-theme D: The accessibility to natural areas and wilderness settings provide year round recreation opportunities. (recreation)

Storyline D1: There are 100,000 acres of public land within close proximity to major urban areas.

Storyline D2: The diversity of public lands provide intimate front-country and secluded backcountry experiences.

Storyline D3: Year-round recreational opportunities result from the confluence of natural resources, visitor facilities and services.
Sub-theme E: Efforts to protect and restore the resources influenced conservation on these contiguous public lands whose future depends on the stewardship ethic residents and visitors. (conservation/stewardship)

Storyline E1: The establishment and continuing support of these lands are a result of individual actions and large scale efforts of public and private entities to protect, restore and conserve the resources.

Storyline E2: The current visitor experience on these lands inspires and provides opportunities for continued efforts to meet modern challenges to conservation.

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**IMPACT OBJECTIVES**

*Impact objectives define implementation and evaluation steps and reflect both process and product indicators. They show how DCNR or the resources (or partners) will benefit when the visitor meets the goals.*

1. Support for improvements of DCNR resources through private funding and volunteer efforts will increase each year over the next five years.

2. Visitor participation in interpretive programs will increase by at least 10% from baseline within three years.

3. Resident participation and support of state park and forests interpretive and recreation programs and events will increase from baseline within three years.

4. Participation in environmental issues and conservation actions on DCNR lands among residents and visitors will increase by 10% from baseline.

5. The maintenance hours and costs for damages to resources will be reduced by 10% within two years.

6. Businesses within local communities that provide visitor services will increase by 25% from baseline within three years.

7. Visitor use patterns will change to provide a more even distribution of visitors seasonally and year-round along the Laurel Ridge within five years.

8. Visitor injury and search and rescue costs will be reduced within three years.
EVALUATION STRATEGIES

These strategies include the methods that will be used to measure the outcomes and impacts identified in the objectives to determine the effectiveness of the recommendations.

To measure the effectiveness of the recommendations listed in this interpretive plan, the plan needs to be reviewed at regular intervals. Current management practices for state parks require a review and revision of park management plans (which include this interpretive plan) every three years. The current review and revision cycle for forestry is once every five years. It is recommended that these existing cycles continue to be used. Each state park or forest will evaluate the objectives and recommendations that are specific to that site. Any changes should then be proposed to the entire interpretive team for discussion.

Evaluation strategies to be used to measure each outcome and impact are:

Interpretive objectives (outcomes)

1. At least 20% of visitors who participate in a guided interpretive or recreational program on a state park or forest on Laurel Ridge will visit at least two other state park or forest locations on Laurel Ridge.
   **Evaluation Strategy:** Provide follow-up surveys to participants to determine what other sites they have visited and how they learned about the other sites. Compare results to previous years.

2. At least 10% of the visitors to the Laurel Ridge Sub Landscape will participate in a self-guided, thematic, interpretive experience.
   **Evaluation Strategy:** Compare the park and forest attendance figures with the number of participants that download self-guided tour information from web site and request self guided tour information from local tourist promotion agencies.
3. At least 50% of visitors to the Laurel Ridge will be able to identify geology as the foundation that influences people’s activities within the region.
   **Evaluation Strategies:** Park and forest program staff to access participant knowledge during and at conclusion of programs. Visitor surveys to be given periodically to access visitor knowledge about the area.

4. At least 25% of the visitors to the Laurel Ridge will be able to relate the role of the ridges in transportation and economy beginning in 1700s.
   **Evaluation Strategy:** Park and forest program staff to access participant knowledge during and at conclusion of programs. Visitor surveys to be given periodically to access visitor knowledge about the area.

5. At least 40% of the visitors will be able to identify conservation efforts of the early 1900s that lead to the quality of the resources today.
   **Evaluation Strategy:** Park and forest program staff to access participant knowledge during and at conclusion of programs. Visitor surveys to be given periodically to access visitor knowledge about the area.

6. At least 50% of visitors will identify state park and forest lands as a part of DCNR and recognize and support the value of these resources for present and future generations.
   **Evaluation Strategies:** Keep track of funding/donations and volunteer participation in DCNR sponsored projects. Track the number of “hits” to the DCNR website and question related to the parks and forests of the Laurel Highlands region from the Ask DCNR button.

7. At least 10% of visitors to the region will recognize the impacts of extracting natural resources and the benefit of utilizing sustainable practices.
   **Evaluation Strategies:** Park and forest program staff to access participant knowledge during and at conclusion of programs. Work with local contractors and home improvement suppliers to determine people’s demand for “greener” practices. Gather information from use of incentives for conservation.

8. At least 30% of visitors will recognize that natural areas may possess hazards and will learn basic outdoor skills to protect the resource and increase their enjoyment of the outdoors.
   **Evaluation Strategies:** Park and forest program staff to access participant knowledge during and at conclusion of programs. Review DCNR ranger and park ranger incident reports and compare number of incidents/accidents to previous year.
9. At least 10% of visitors will actively participate in conservation efforts while visiting the region by recycling, volunteering at a state park, state forest or community conservation event or purchasing a local carbon offset. 
   **Evaluation Strategies:** Track volunteer hours and projects completed. Review information from local trash hauler to look for increase in recycling participation. Keep track of carbon offset purchases. Gather information from use of incentives for conservation.

10. At least 20% of visitors who participate in a guided interpretive or recreational program on a state park or forest on the Laurel Ridge will visit a local community historic, cultural or recreational attraction or event. 
    **Evaluation Strategy:** Work with local community event organizers and local attractions to measure attendance and to track how attendees learned about the event/attraction.

11. At least 50% of visitors to the Laurel Highlands will get information to plan their visit to the region by using the DCNR and Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau web sites within two years.
    **Evaluation Strategy:** Track the number of “hits” that the websites receive and compare to the number of visitors to the region using both DCNR and visitor bureau attendance records.

**Impact objectives**

1. Support for improvements of DCNR resources through private funding and volunteer efforts will increase each year over the next five years.
   **Evaluation Strategies:** Keep track of funding/donations given for each year. Track volunteer hours and projects completed.

2. Visitor participation in interpretive programs will increase by at least 10% from baseline within three years.
   **Evaluation Strategy:** Review program attendance figures yearly and compare to previous year’s records.
3. Resident participation and support of state park and forests interpretive and recreation programs and events will increase from baseline within three years. **Evaluation Strategies:** Review participant program registration for local addresses and compare local participation to previous year program registration information. For non-registration programs, program leader should ask participant where they are from at the beginning of each program and tally information.

4. Participation in environmental issues and conservation actions on DCNR lands among residents and visitors will increase by 10% from baseline. **Evaluation Strategies:** Take attendance and log volunteer hours at park and forest sponsored conservation projects. Review local news reports/articles for public participation on issues related to DCNR lands and compare to previous year’s information. Track any local referendums for voters concerning environmental issues.

5. The maintenance hours and costs for damages to resources will be reduced by 10% within two years. **Evaluation Strategy:** Track budget allocations each year for man-hours and costs for damages.

6. Businesses within local communities that provide visitor services will increase by 25% from baseline within three years. **Evaluation Strategy:** Work with local businesses or tourism promotion agencies to keep track of number of businesses offering tourism-related services and compare results to previous years.

7. Visitor use patterns will change to provide a more even distribution of visitors seasonally and year-round along the Laurel Ridge within five years. **Evaluation Strategy:** Compare attendance records from each of the various locations along the ridge during each season and compare to previous year’s seasonal use.

8. Visitor injury and search and rescue costs will be reduced within three years. **Evaluation Strategy:** Review DCNR ranger and park ranger incident reports and compare number and costs of incidents to previous year.
The following chart aligns the Management Objectives (M) with the Interpretive/Outcome Objectives (O) and the Impact Objectives (I). Management Objectives can be found on page 13, Interpretive Objectives can be found on page 36, and Impact Objectives can be found on page 73.

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APPENDIX B - Partner Sites

1. Bear Run Nature Reserve (WPC)
2. Compass Inn
3. Duncan House/Polymath Park Resort
4. Fallingwater (WPC)
5. Fort Ligonier
6. Fort Necessity National Battlefield
7. Great Allegheny Passage
8. Hidden Valley Ski Resort
9. Idlewild and SoakZone
10. Johnstown Area Heritage Association
11. Kentuck Knob
12. Laurel Caverns Geological Park
13. Laurel Ridge AirGlow Observatory
14. Ligonier Valley Rail Road Museum
15. Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor
16. National Road Heritage Corridor
17. Nemacolin Woodlands Resort
18. Penn Scenic View
19. Pennsylvania Game Commission – State Game Lands 42 and 111
20. Powdermill Nature Reserve
21. Seven Springs Mountain Resort
22. Somerset Historical Center
23. Touch Stone Center for the Arts
1. Bear Run Nature Reserve (WPC)

Site Description
Bear Run Nature Reserve (BRNR) is the largest property owned by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. BRNR is managed to protect, conserve and restore land and water for the diversity of the region’s native plants, animals, and their ecosystems. Streams and watersheds, forests, and common and rare native species are the focus of management. BRNR is integral to biodiversity conservation in the Laurel Highlands and the mid-Appalachian region. The land is open for public recreation year round and offers camping and hiking. There are a number of historic sites on the property, including a historic barn that is used for offices and events.

Mission:
The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

Bear Run Nature Preserve is managed to protect, conserve and restore native plants, animals and their ecosystems.

Features:
- Significant biological and water resources
- 18th century dairy barn, renovated to silver LEED certified office and meeting space
- 20 miles of hiking trails and 5 campsites. The WPC is primarily a scientific organization; outdoor recreation and education are a secondary purpose of BRNP

Audience:
- Hikers
- Backpackers
- Attendees at events at the barn
2. Compass Inn

Site Description
Compass Inn Museum is an authentically restored 1799 stagecoach stop located along Route 30 in Laughlintown and listed on the National Register of Historic Places it is maintained by the Ligonier Valley Historical Society.

Mission:
Ligonier Valley Historical Society mission:
To discover, collect & preserve any material which will help to establish or illustrate the exploration, settlement, development and general history of the Ligonier Valley area. To disseminate historical information as a means of arousing interest in the past. To preserve historical buildings, monuments, markers (not cemetery markers) and other landmarks in Ligonier Valley for the education and enjoyment of present & future generations.

Compass Inn strives to preserve the Inn and tell the story of transportation and life in the 1800s by accurately depicting the history of the era, the valley and the people.

Features:
- Four acres of land
- House serving as a museum with tours available
- Five authentically reconstructed outbuildings including a barn, cookhouse, blacksmith, carpentry shop
- Authentic stagecoach.

Audience:
- Open to general public
- Elementary school groups
- Tour busses
3. Duncan House/ Polymath Park Resort

Site Description
The Duncan House, built by Frank Lloyd Wright, is located on Polymath Park Resort and is open to the public for tours and overnight accommodations. The house was originally built near Chicago, Illinois, and when threatened by development was purchased, disassembled and moved to its present location. The site is run as a non-profit corporation called Usonian Preservation Inc. By providing a usable space, the Duncan Houses give visitors a personal, up-close architectural experience.

Mission
To preserve, promote and maintain the legendary architecture that graces Polymath Park Resort.

Features
- Three houses on the property are available for tours or overnight stays- the Duncan House, and the Blum and Balter houses, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright apprentice Berndtson
- 125 acre property has two ponds and several hiking trails

Audience
- Educated
- Have ‘green’ interests
- Many are from out-of-state
4. Fallingwater (WPC)

Site Description
Frank Lloyd Wright, America’s most famous architect, designed the house, Fallingwater, over a waterfall, for his clients, the Kaufmann family. Fallingwater was built between 1936 and 1939. It instantly became famous, and today it is a National Historic Landmark.

Mission
To preserve, maintain and make available for public education and appreciation Frank Lloyd Wright’s masterpiece, “Fallingwater”. The connection between people, landscape and architecture is a major educational theme.
To conserve the land and watershed into which Fallingwater was designed to fit, as a continuing source of inspiration through a 4,600 acre nature reserve intended for both recreation and study.

Features
• 75-year-old Frank Lloyd Wright architecture, Fallingwater
• Collections of art, artifacts and architecture
• Natural area around the house is available for visitors to explore

Audience
• Mostly from Pennsylvania and surrounding states
• Educated
• Middle to upper incomes
• Seven percent of visitors are international
5. Fort Ligonier

Site Description
The site of Fort Ligonier holds a museum with five indoor galleries and the reconstructed 18th century fort.

Mission
Fort Ligonier is a private, nonprofit organization to collect, preserve, research, exhibit, interpret and advocate the history and material culture of the 1758-1766 British-American fort and settlement.

Features
- George Washington’s pistols and memoirs
- Art gallery of original art from the French and Indian War
- New exhibit focusing on the Seven Years War
- The grounds feature the reconstructed fort with buildings, displays, carts, wagons and artillery

Audience
- Open to the public
- Interested in history
- Local school field trips.
6. Fort Necessity National Battlefield

Site Description
The confrontation at Fort Necessity was the event that began the French and Indian War. The site is now owned and managed by the National Park Service as a National Battlefield and is the only NPS site that focuses on the French and Indian War. The site includes the reconstructed fort and a visitor center developed under a unique federal-state cooperative agreement that interprets both the fort and the National Road, which is a State Heritage Area. The adjacent Mount Washington Tavern, Braddock’s Grave and Jumonville Glen are also administered by Fort Necessity National Battlefield.

Mission
The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Features
- Reconstruction of the fort
- Jumonville Glen
- Braddock’s Trail Trace
- Braddock’s grave
- Mt. Washington Tavern
- Visitor’s center

Audience
- General public
- School groups participate in hands-on historical learning on field trips
7. Great Allegheny Passage

Site Description
The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) is a 150-mile system of biking and hiking trails that will connect Cumberland, MD and Pittsburgh, PA when completed. The connection to the C & O Canal Towpath in Cumberland, MD was made in 2006, creating a continuous non-motorized corridor, 318 miles long, from McKeesport, near Pittsburgh, to Washington, DC. Twenty-seven miles of the GAP is within Ohiopyle State Park.

Mission
Originally many of the groups of trails that now form the GAP were created simply for recreation and to help protect riparian areas. Now the GAP mission includes connectivity of communities, opportunities to tell historical and natural history through recreational opportunities and recreation-based tourism.

Features
- 150 miles of maintained bike trail
- Bathrooms along the trail
- Communities provide information kiosk with trail into and facilities in town
- Campgrounds supported by trail clubs and other public entities
- Waysides along the trail—cultural, historical and natural subjects
- Other facilities in trail towns

Audience
- Recreational bikers, walkers and joggers, either local users for short-term use or out-of-town users for short or long distance trips.
8. Hidden Valley Ski Resort

Site Description
Hidden Valley Ski Resort is a mountain resort that offers snow sports in the winter and golf, mountain biking and horseback riding in the summer. The resort has overnight accommodations and amenities on site.

Mission
Provide the best possible and most affordable family experience for visitors to Hidden Valley for downhill Skiing, snowboarding, snow sports, outdoor recreation, lodging and conferences.

Features
- 28 ski trails
- Overnight accommodations
- Fitness club, pool and spa
- Retail opportunities
- Four restaurants
- Mountain biking trails
- Golf course
- Hiking
- Bike rentals
- Mountain environment
- Five lakes
- Historic structure on site (Conference Center / Inn)

Audience
- Families
- Outdoor enthusiasts
9. Idlewild and SoakZone

Site Description
Idlewild and SoakZone is the oldest amusement park in Pennsylvania and third oldest in the country. Idlewild features classic amusement rides including two roller coasters and an antique carousel. It also offers Raccoon Lagoon, one of the largest “kiddieland” areas around, Jumpin’ Jungle, a large interactive play area and one-of-a-kind attractions like Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood and Story Book Forest. The SoakZone assures that there will be something for everyone to do to cool off. The park features waterslides, Captain Kidds’ Adventure Galley, Little Squirts Kiddie pool and a giant, glistening pool. All of the attractions are in a historic and tranquil setting among trees and the Loyalhanna Creek.

Mission
Family Fun and Entertainment

Features
• Rides
• Trains
• Water park
• Food
• Live entertainment
• Games
• Picnicking
• Historic Grand Pavilion, Original Carousel, and bridge over the Loyalhanna Creek.
• Voted "Second Best Kid's Park In The World" annually since 2004 and top 5 ranking for "Best Children's Area" in 2006 and 2007 by Amusement Today Magazine, ranked "#3 Favorite Park For Kids" in 2006 by Theme Parks Magazine and consistently ranked in the Top 5 for "Best Parks for Families" by the National Amusement Park Historical Association from 2000 to 2007.
• Recognized as "America's Most Beautiful Theme Park" by the Amusement Park Guidebook in 1987
• Idlewild is recognized as: the longest continuously operated amusement park in Pennsylvania, the third longest operating park in the United States and the eleventh longest operating park in the world

Audience
• Families
• Grandparents/ Grandchildren
10. Johnstown Area Heritage Association

Site Description
Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) is a non-profit that owns and manages museums and historical collections and facilitates special events, cultural and educational programming in the Johnstown area. The group seeks to preserve and enrich the area's significant cultural stories.

Mission
JAHA is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the nationally significant historic heritage of the Greater Johnstown Area through its museum facilities, historical collection, and education programs. JAHA operates as a clearinghouse and catalyst for revitalization efforts based on cultural tourism and historic preservation.

Features
- Johnstown Flood Museum
- Frank and Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center
- Wagner-Ritter House and Garden
- Johnstown Children’s Museum
- Johnstown Discovery Network that spans two National Historic Districts-Cambria City and downtown Johnstown, plus the Cambria Iron National Landmark. These historic zones contain museums and historical sites and will be connected by the Johnstown Greenway Trail (working with Allegheny Ridge Corp on trail)
- Festival Park, which houses the annual Flood City Music Festival (formerly FolkFest) and other events while serving as an urban trailhead

Audience
- General public
- Audience varies between sites- families, historic interests, children, recreation, etc.
11. Kentuck Knob

Site Description
Built by Frank Lloyd Wright at age 86, Kentuck Knob was one of the last pieces of architecture that he would design. The home was a private residence for the Hagan family and is now open for tours. The home is built into the knob of the mountain and does not have any ninety degree angles in any part of the construction.

Mission
To offer visitors the experience of viewing a Frank Lloyd Wright private residence that was built for a local family. To preserve the Kentuck Knob house and to introduce visitors to sculpture and the arts as well as architecture.

Features
- The Kentuck Knob/Hagan House,
- 79 acre grounds,
- Sculpture garden
- Gift shop
- Spectacular view of the Youghiogheny River Gorge
- Fossil collection

Audience
- General public
**12. Laurel Caverns Geological Park**

**Site Description**
Laurel Caverns Geologic Park features Pennsylvania’s largest cave in the setting of a 435 acre property. The site offers guided tours and educational programs, rappelling, climbing, scout badges and sightseeing. The cave also supports four species of bats with a total population of approximately 1800 bats.

**Mission**
To preserve the integrity of Laurel Caverns, which includes the geologic features as well as a bat population.

**Features**
- Visitor Center
- Cavern
- Campground
- Picnic pavilion
- Tours and interpretive programs
- Largest cave in PA
- Seven county view

**Audience**
- General public
13. Laurel Ridge AirGlow Observatory

Site Description
The AirGlow Observatory is a research observatory located in the Forbes State Forest and operated by the University of Pittsburgh Honors College. The site currently supports University research endeavors and student activities. Though the public is not currently able to schedule visits, public visits may be possible in the future. The site does not have an optical telescope.

Mission
To provide for post graduate science research in an off-site setting, promoting new and emerging technology. Currently the site functions as a Radio Transmission station for communications around the globe, as well as atmospheric and astronomical research.

Features

- Airglow Observatory
- Migrating bird monitoring devises
- Global Radio communications
- Weather Station
- Solar power

Audience
- Researchers
- Educators in advanced atmospheric and astronomical research
14. Ligonier Valley Rail Road Museum

Site Description
The LVRR Museum is an authentically restored 1896 Railroad station located off of Route 30 just west of Idlewild Park. It is maintained and operated by the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association.

Mission:
Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association mission:

- Preserve the legacy of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road
- Conserve the vestiges of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road
- Collect relics and memorabilia of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road
- Educate the public about the history of railroading in the Ligonier Valley

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association strives to preserve the building and tell the story of transportation and life in the 1880s through 1952 by accurately depicting the history of the era, the valley and the people and the impact of the Rail Road on the local area.

Features:
- Authentic 1905 "Bobber" caboose on display.
- Station serving as a museum with tours available.
- Information about the Pittsburgh, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad (PW&S).
- Exhibits, photographs, displays, maps and shows depicting the history of the LVRR.

Audience:
- Open to general public.
- Elementary school groups.
- Tour busses.
- Research facility for LVRR history.
15. Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor

Site Description
The Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC) oversees the Lincoln Highway in Pennsylvania. The Lincoln Highway, which is primarily US Route 30 through Pennsylvania, was the nation’s first coast-to-coast highway stretching from New York to San Francisco. It transects the Laurel Ridge in the northern tier, traveling through towns such as Laughlintown and Ligonier. Notable sites along the Lincoln Highway within the Laurel Ridge are Idlewild Park and Soak Zone, the third-oldest operating amusement park in the United States, the town of Ligonier and historic Fort Ligonier, and the Compass Inn.

Mission
The mission of the nonprofit Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor is to identify, conserve, promote and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreational and economic resources along the historic Lincoln Highway in Pennsylvania’s Westmoreland, Somerset, Bedford, Fulton, Franklin, and Adams counties.

Features
As a part of the ‘roadside museum’, the Laurel Ridge Region of the highway features:
- Eight exhibits
- One gas pump
- Two “Picture Yourself” exhibits.
- Future visitor center near Ligonier, to feature space for DCNR

Audience
- General public
16. National Road Heritage Corridor

Site Description
The National Road Heritage Corridor (NRHC) protects and promotes the National Road in Pennsylvania by working with businesses, organizations and private land owners along the corridor. The National Road was the first federally funded road in the United States and is aligned with US Route 40 in the Laurel Ridge. It crosses the southern portion of the Laurel Ridge, traveling by Fort Washington Tavern, Fort Necessity Battlefield, Braddock’s Grave and near Jumonville Glen.

Mission
To preserve, protect and promote the physical aspects and the story of the National Road.

Features
Within the Laurel Ridge region of the road:
- Fort Washington Tavern
- Fort Necessity Battlefield
- Braddock’s Grave
- Jumonville Glen
- Cast iron obelisk mile markers, installed in 1835

Audience
- General public
17. Nemacolin Woodlands Resort

Site Description
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort is a family and luxury vacation destination on 3,000 wooded acres. Nemacolin offers six lodging options from the luxurious AAA Five Diamond Falling Rock boutique hotel to RV camping.

Mission

Features
- Variety of overnight accommodations
- Dining
- Golf
- Spa
- Adventure activities, including shooting, fishing, rock climbing, ropes courses, disk golf, mountain biking, archery, volleyball and tennis

Audience
- Families
- Weddings
- Conferences and groups
- Destination travelers
18. Penn Scenic View

Site Description
Penn Scenic View operates overnight, meeting and conference facilities on a scenic property near Laurel Hill State Park. The property is owned and operated by the William Penn Association, a non-profit life insurance agency located in Pittsburgh.

Mission
To provide comfortable lodging, convenient location and an affordable retreat with a fantastic view of the Laurel Highlands.

Features
- Observation Tower to enjoy the natural beauty and serenity of the Laurel Highlands.
- Five overnight facilities that sleep 4 to 34.
- Lakeside Lodge accommodates up to 250 people for weddings, reunions or other events.
- Kohut Pavilion up to 200 people.
- 11-acre lake for catch and release fishing.
- Plantation of Christmas Trees for the public to cut their own.
- The view and scenic beauty.

Audience
- Mostly weekend attendance.
- Family groups and weddings.
19. Pennsylvania Game Commission- State Game Lands 42 and 111

Site Description
The Pennsylvania Game Commission’s Southwest Regional Office is located in Ligonier, Pennsylvania and manages State Game Lands 42 and 111. The lands owned and managed by the PGC are public lands that are intended for wildlife habitat and recreation.

Mission
Managing wildlife and its habitat for current and future generations.

Features
• 2 shooting ranges on SGL #42
• Trails with various designations (hiking, snowmobiling, etc)
• Parking lots
• Access roads/gates
• SGL #42 has two iron furnaces near New Florence
• Trout streams
• Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail

Audience
• Sportsmen and women interested in consumptive use
• Non-consumptive recreational audience- wildlife viewing, hiking, geocaching
20. Powdermill Nature Reserve

Site Description
Powdermill Nature Reserve is the biological research station of Carnegie Museum of Natural History, has operated for over 50 years. It is a place for scientists, for students, and for families who are interested in the natural world, and it is home to the one of the longest continually running bird banding stations in the United States. A wide variety of public education programs are regularly offered to children and adults at the headquarters building. Researchers from around the world conduct diverse long- and short-term scientific studies in herpetology, botany, invertebrate zoology, and ornithology at site.

Mission
To be a model for habitat management for wildlife species research, education and conservation

Features
- Meeting space, several rooms (green building)
- Exhibit areas, small gift shop
- GIS lab
- 2,200 acres
- Cabins- rental (limited use)
- Butterfly garden (in planning stage)
- Hiking trails – 2 ½ to 3 miles

Audience
- Kids via summer camp
- Audience for scientific research information- scientists, conservationists, etc.
21. Seven Springs Mountain Resort

Site Description
Seven Springs Mountain Resort offers a variety of adventure sports for all seasons, lodging and conference facilities and other resort amenities. Snow sports are offered in the winter months, with biking, fishing, clay shooting, concerts and mountain tours offered in the other months.

Mission

Features
- Pool
- Ski slope
- Historic lodge
- Historic buildings
- Overnight facilities
- Retail shops and restaurants
- Activity Center
- Mountain Biking
- Guided fly fishing

Audience
- Families
- Outdoor enthusiasts
22. Somerset Historical Center

Site Description
The Somerset Historical Center is operated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), the official historical agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its exhibits, workshops and educational programs focus on the history of life in rural southwestern Pennsylvania from the times of the region's first farmers to the present day. The Historical Center also serves as the headquarters of the Historical & Genealogical Society of Somerset County, the official county historical society.

Mission
The PHMC preserves the Commonwealth's memory as a teacher and champion of its heritage for citizens of Pennsylvania and the nation.

Features
- Permanent exhibits
- Changing exhibits - three to four times per year
- Recreated farmsteads representing the frontier era and the early era’s of mechanization
- Walter’s Mill
- Covered bridge
- Cider press
- Maple sugar shack
- Outbuildings with hands-on activities

Audience
- First through fourth graders via school programs
- Public audience on the weekends
23. Touch Stone Center for the Arts

Site Description
Touchstone is a unique three-season crafts school. Founded in 1972 as Pioneer Crafts Council, Touchstone's original mission was to foster interest in the preservation of traditional mountain crafts. Today, it has expanded to include contemporary and experimental techniques in addition to traditional and historic methods in disciplines such as blacksmithing, ceramics, metals, textiles, glass, oil and watercolor painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture. As Pennsylvania's only residential craft school, Touchstone offers beginner and seasoned artists more than one hundred week-long and weekend courses taught by some of North America's finest artists and artisans.

Mission To foster interest in the preservation of traditional mountain crafts and contemporary and experimental techniques in addition to traditional and historic methods in disciplines such as blacksmithing, ceramics, metals, textiles, glass, oil and watercolor painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture.

Features
- Classes on blacksmithing, ceramics, painting, glass blowing, metal work, photography and textiles
- On campus lodging
- On campus home-cooked meals
- Special events featuring music, arts and crafts

Audiences
- Artists of varying skill levels and interests
APPENDIX C - Waysides and Kiosks

Title: Welcome to Laurel Ridge State Park
Description: 36” x 48” high pressure laminate wall panel
Primary Audience: Casual Visitor, Backpackers
Subject Content: Agency/park identity, recreational opportunities, unique features, scenic vistas
Location: Park Office
Site: Laurel Ridge State Park

Title: Explore the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail
Description: Oversize high pressure laminate panel depicting Laurel Ridge State Park Map
Primary Audience: Backpackers, hikers, hunters, snowmobilers, skiers
Subject Content: LHHT and features, agency/park identity, Potomac Heritage Trail, local attractions on non-profit or public lands
Location: Park Office
Site: Laurel Ridge State Park
Title: Welcome to the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Agency/park identity, Potomac Heritage Trail, LHHT and features, local attractions on non-profit or public lands, Leave No Trace Principles

Location: LHHT Trailheads at:
Ohiopyle
Maple Summit Road
PA Route 653
PA Route 31
US Route 30
PA Route 271
PA Route 56

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park, Ohiopyle State Park

Title: Explore Hemlock and Mt. Laurel Groves

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, hunters, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: Maple Summit Road;
Gamlelands #111

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park
Title: Explore the Youghiogheny River Valley

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: Ohiopyle Parking Trailhead

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

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Title: Explore Pristine Waterways

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: PA 653

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park
Title: Explore Scenic Views

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: Route 31

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park

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Title: Explore Beams Rocks

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: Route 30

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park
Title: Explore Rock Crevices and Ferns

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: Route 271

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park

Title: Explore Conemaugh Gorge

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in upright kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers, backpackers, snowshoers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location: LHHT Trailhead at: Route 56

Site: Laurel Ridge State Park
Title: Hiking Ferncliff

Description:
#1 - One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in a 3-sided kiosk;

#2 – One high pressure laminate panel in upright frame

Primary Audience: General public, hikers, bikers

Subject Content: Map and orientation to trails

Location:
#1 Ferncliff Trailhead Kiosk

#2 Bottom of stairs on Ferncliff near bridge

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

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Title: The Nature of Ferncliff

Description: One of three 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panels in 3-sided kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers & bikers

Subject Content: Formation of the Ferncliff Peninsula & unique features

Location: Ferncliff trailhead kiosk

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: A Most Enchanting Resort

Description: One of three 36” x 48” high pressure laminate panels in 3-sided kiosk

Primary Audience: Hikers & bikers

Subject Content: History of Historical resort at Ferncliff

Location: Ferncliff trailhead Kiosk

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

Title: Welcome to Ferncliff

Description: 36” x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: Hikers

Subject Content: Intro to Ferncliff Peninsula

Location: trail fork near rock

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Tropical Pennsylvania

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: Hikers

Subject Content: Geologic History/Fossils

Location: Fossil Site to right of Ferncliff Trail

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

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Title: Water vs. Rock

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: General park user, hikers

Subject Content: Pottsville Sandstone, formation of Peninsula and Falls

Location:
#1 – Ferncliff Trail -across from waterfall but not visible from across river – to left of existing bench

#2 - Falls Overlook area -lower deck, left side

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Variety

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: Hikers

Subject Content: Botanical Diversity

Location: at bend in Ferncliff trail past lover’s leap

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

Title: Notice the Difference

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: Hikers

Subject Content: Ferncliff Hotel & forest succession

Location: hotel site facing ruins on Ferncliff Trail

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Welcome to Ohiopyle

Description: 36”x 48” high pressure laminate panel in upright base

Primary Audience: General park user

Subject Content: Park Orientation Map & Park Info

Location:
#1 – Ferncliff parking lot near trailhead and bike trail intersection;

#2 - Falls Overlook Area parking lot

#3 - Train Station main entrance

#4 - Ramcat – near bike trail below and to the right of restrooms

#5 - Campground – contact station

#6 – Park Office

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

Title: River Recreation

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base; rail mount

Primary Audience: General park users, bikers, hikers

Subject Content: Recreation activities on the Yough.

Location:
#1 - high bridge & concession stand deck- center of railing near stairs between restroom and concession

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Clean Water

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base; railing mount

Primary Audience: General park users, hikers, bikers

Subject Content: Recovery of the Yough

Location:
#1 - between high bridge and Pioneer wayside location on bike trail

#2 - gravel overlook – right side facing falls near location of new visitor center

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

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Title: Railroading

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base; rail mounted

Primary Audience: General park users, hikers, bikers

Subject Content: History of Western Maryland & B&O Rail Roads

Location:
#1 - near railroad ties site on bike trail

#2- train station facing bridge

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Otter Reintroduction

Description:  
#1 - 36"x 24" high pressure laminate panel in low profile base  

#2- railing mount  

Primary Audience: General park users, bikers  

Subject Content: Otter reintroduction  

Location:  
#1 - past islands near pull off/by steps South of Ramcat area  

#2 - gravel overlook near location of new visitor center – middle railing  

Site: Ohiopyle State Park  

---  

Title: Pioneers

Description: 36"x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base  

Primary Audience: Bikers  

Subject Content: 19th century settlers of the area.  

Location: near lower part of stone wall at Victoria Falls along bike trail  

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Coal Mining

Description: 36” x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: Bikers, rock climbers

Subject Content: History of coal mining in the area.

Location: in front of coal seam away from landslide danger along bike trail

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

Title: Ohiopyle

Description:
#1 - 36” x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

#2 - rail mount

Primary Audience: General park users

Subject Content: Historical info about borough of Ohiopyle

Location:
#1 - lower deck right side of trail – falls overlook area

#2 - Train Station facing bridge

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Avoid Injury

Description: 36” x 24” high pressure laminate panel in upright base

Primary Audience: General park users, Boaters

Subject Content: Boating Safety on the Yough

Location:
#1 – Right side of safety video kiosk
#2 - Ramcat – near path to river to the right of bike trail
#3 - 6 panels located at whitewater Outfitter sites

Site: Ohiopyle State Park

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Title: Eagle/Osprey

Description: 36” x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: General park users

Subject Content: ID of Eagle, Osprey, Turkey Vultures

Location: currently at Bauchman Rocks; to be relocated near Confluence/bike trail

Site: Ohiopyle State Park
Title: CCC Camps in Pennsylvania 1933-1942

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: General park user

Subject Content: Location of CCC camps in PA 1933-1942

Location:
# 1 Laurel Hill Visitor Center at CCC monument
#2 Kooser

Site:
#1 - Laurel Hill State Park Visitor Center
# 2 – Kooser State Park Office

Title: Northern Water Snake

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: General park user

Subject Content: Id and behavior of Northern Watersnake

Location:
#1 - not currently installed
#2 – not currently installed

Site:
#1 – Ohiopyle State Park
#2 - Linn Run State Park
Title: Born to Be Wild and Respected

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base
Primary Audience: Backpackers, hikers, mountain bikers

Subject Content: Unique features/scenic vistas of trail section, safety, orientation and registration information

Location:
#1 - TBD
#2 - TBD
#3 - Bidwell Shelters
#4 - TBD
#5 - TBD

Site:
# 1 - Ohiopyle State Park
# 2 - Linn Run State Park
# 3 - Laurel Ridge State Park
#4 - Laurel Summit State Park
#5 - Laurel Mountain State Park

Title: Deer Exclosure

Description: 24”x 48” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: Hikers

Subject Content: Deer Habitat and use of deer exclosures

Locations:
TBD

Site:
Ohiopyle State Park,
Laurel Summit State Park
Laurel Mountain State Park
Title: CCC wayside

Description: 24”x 48” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: General park user

Subject Content: CCC History

Location:
Monument at Laurel Hill Visitor Center;
Office at Kooser

Site: Linn Run State Park, Laurel Summit State Park, Laurel Hill State Park, Kooser State Park

Title: Monarch Wayside

Description: 36”x 24” high pressure laminate panel in low profile base

Primary Audience: General park users

Subject Content: Monarch life cycle

Location:
#1 Laurel Hill Visitor Center
#2 Tharp Knob

Site:
#1 Laurel Hill State Park
#2 Ohiopyle State Park
Title: Laurel Hill Park Office

Description: Park History Kiosk

Primary Audience: General park users; History buffs

Subject Content: CCC, Logging and Railroad history at Laurel Hill

Location: Park Office

Site: Laurel Hill State Park

Title: Roaring Run Natural Area

Description: Roaring Run Natural Area Sign

Primary Audience: Roaring Run Natural Area Users

Subject Content: Natural Area Uses

Location: Laurel Mountain Division -Roaring Run Natural Area

Site: Forbes State Forest, RRNA parking lots
Title: Improvement Cut

Description: Wooden sign designed at Penn Nursery

Primary Audience: State Forest users

Subject Content: Information on why an Improvement Cut was conducted along Laurel Summit Road

Location: Laurel Mountain Division – Laurel Summit Road near the Observatory

Site: Forbes State Forest

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Title: Deer Fence Exclosure

Description: Laminated Sign

Primary Audience: State Forest Users

Subject Content: The purpose of deer exclosures

Location: All fenced exclosures on the state forest

Site: Forbes State Forest

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Title: Recreational Management of the Barron Tract

Description: Laminated sign

Primary Audience: Barron Tract users

Subject Content: Information on future management of the Barron Tract

Location: BH Division – Barron Tract

Site: Forbes State Forest
Title: Managing Coniferous Cover

Description: Laminated Sign

Primary Audience: State Forest users

Subject Content: Information on tree cutting near Laurel Summit State Park

Location: Laurel Mountain Division –near LSSP

Site: Forbes State Forest

Title: Barton Cave Closure

Description: Laminated Sign

Primary Audience: State Forest users

Subject Content: Information on the closure of Barton Cave

Location: Pondfield Div – Quebec Road

Site: Forbes State Forest

Title: Fish Run Overlook

Description: 2 Commercially Produced Signs

Primary Audience: General Public

Subject Content: Historical Information on the PW& S Railroad

Location: Laurel Mountain Division -Fish Run Overlook

Site: Forbes State Forest
Title: Wharton Iron Furnace

Description: Two wooden routed signs

Primary Audience: General Public

Subject Content: Information on Wharton Furnace

Location: Pondfield Division – Wharton Furnace Rd

Site: Forbes State Forest

Title: Silviculture Demonstration Area

Description: Large and small metal signs

Primary Audience: General public, school groups, landowner groups

Subject Content:
#1 - Types of timber harvest systems and deer fences.
#2 – Explanation of types of harvest systems. Individual signs placed at each woodlot are titled: Crop Tree Release, Diameter-Limit Harvest, Improvement Thinning, Overstory Removal, & Shelterwood.

Location: Pondfield Division – Shepherd Road

Site: Forbes State Forest
Title: John Nelson Davis

Description: Bronze Plaque

Primary Audience: General public

Subject Content: Historical Info on Davis, early pioneer

Location: High Point - Negro Mountain Division

Title: High Point Tower

Description: Bronze interpretive map/sign

Primary Audience: General public

Subject Content: Location map

Location: High Point Tower - Negro Mountain Division

Title: High Point

Description: 10 bronze interpretive signs

Primary Audience: General public

Subject Content:

Location: High Point - Negro Mountain Division

Site: Forbes State Forest
Title: Mt. Davis Marker

Description: Metal Sign

Primary Audience: General public

Subject Content: History of the Area

Location: High Point – NM Division

Site: Forbes State Forest

Title: Relaxing Along the Lincoln Highway

Description: 24” x 36” high pressure laminate panel with text and embedded audio

Primary Audience: Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

Subject Content: The development of Idlewild Park and Soak Zone through increased access for city dwellers via railroad and later highways

Location: Timberlink Golf Course, Ligonier

Site: Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA
Title: Road Versus Rail

Description: 24” x 36” high pressure laminate panel

Primary Audience: Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

Subject Content: The rise and fall of the railroads and history of Ligonier Valley Railroad

Location: Ligonier Valley School District Building

Site: Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA

Title: Roadside Enterprise

Description: Commercially produced high pressure laminate panel

Primary Audience: Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

Subject Content: The introduction of automobile dealerships along the Lincoln Highway and A.J. McColly’s Ford Garage on the present site of the Ligonier Theater

Location: The Ligonier Theater

Site: Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA
Title: Highway Enterprise

Description: Commercially produced high pressure laminate panel

Primary Audience: Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

Subject Content: Ligonier as a refuge from the hustle and bustle of Pittsburgh; the history of the Ligonier Tavern from Ligonier’s first home with indoor plumbing in 1895 to the transformation of the home to the Lincoln Hotel and Restaurant (a restaurant, bar and lodging facility for weekend visitors) in 1927.

Location: The Ligonier Tavern

Site: Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA

Title: Building the Highway

Description: 24” x 36” high pressure laminate panel with text and embedded audio

Primary Audience: Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

Subject Content: The installation of 3,000 cement markers along the Lincoln Highway from New York to San Francisco and the concrete paving of the final 18’ of the Ligonier main street

Location: Ligonier Town Hall

Site: Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA
**Title:** Finding Your Way

**Description:** 24” x 36” high pressure laminate panel

**Primary Audience:** Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

**Subject Content:** The construction of two temporary arches on the Diamond in Ligonier for the town’s Old Home Week and the celebration of the Lincoln Highway reaching Ligonier in 1919

**Location:** St. Clair Park

**Site:** Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA

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**Title:** Amusements and Attractions

**Description:** Commercially produced high pressure laminate panel

**Primary Audience:** Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

**Subject Content:** The opening of Ligonier Beach on July 4, 1925. Ligonier Beach contains one of the largest pools in Pennsylvania and a sand beach to give the illusion of being at the ocean. Dean Martin also performed at the pavilion onsite. 1998 renovations made to the site.

**Location:** Ligonier Beach

**Site:** Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Ligonier, PA
Title: Stagecoach Travel

Description: 24” x 36” high pressure laminate panel

Primary Audience: Lincoln Highway travelers; visitors to Ligonier; history enthusiast

Subject Content: Life on the road in the early 19th century. The history of the Compass Inn from an upscale stagecoach stop to private residence to its preservation by the Ligonier Valley Historical Society beginning in 1966.

Location: Compass Inn Museum

Site: Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Westmoreland County - Laughlintown, PA
State Park Reservation System & EE&I Data 2007

Data by States

- Cabin
- Camping Cottage
- Campsite
- Hard Boating
- Inflatable Boating
- Backpacking Shelter
- Group Camp Unit
- Group Tenting
- Pavilion
- Walled Tent
- Yurt

Pennsylvania Only Data by Regions

- Cabin
- Camping Cottage
- Campsite
- Hard Boating
- Inflatable Boating
- Backpacking Shelter
- Group Camp Unit
- Group Tenting
- Pavilion
- Walled Tent
- Yurt

Environmental Education, Interpretation and Recreation Programming
Cabin Users by State

Kooser, Laurel Hill, Linn Run State Parks
2007

*Other: Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Wisconsin & Ontario
Camping Cottage
Users by State

Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

Pennsylvania 70%
Ohio 9%
Maryland 8%
Illinois, Indiana & Michigan 3%
Virginia 2%
DC, Delaware, New Jersey 3%
New York 1%
Other* 4%

*Other: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and International. All values individually under 1%
Campsites - Users by State
Kooser, Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks - 2007

Pennsylvania 52%
Ohio 14%
Maryland 10%
Virginia 5%
West Virginia 2%
Other 6%

Mid-West - North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas
New England - Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island
Mid-South - Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina
South - Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas
West - Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Alaska

New York 1%
Mid-West 1%
New England 1%
Mid-South 1%
International 1%
West 1%
South 1%
Whitewater Hard Boating
Users by State

Ohiopyle State Park
2007

- Pennsylvania: 32%
- Ohio: 22%
- Maryland: 14%
- Washington DC, Delaware & New Jersey: 11%
- Virginia: 10%
- Illinois, Indiana & Michigan: 6%
- Other: 2%
- West Virginia: 2%
- North Carolina: 1%
Whitewater Inflatable Boating
Users by State

Ohiopyle State Park
2007

Pennsylvania 52%
Ohio 19%
Maryland 13%
Washington DC, Delaware & New Jersey 4%
Illinois, Indiana & Michigan 3%
Virginia 5%
West Virginia 2%
Other 2%
Backpacking Shelter and Campsite
Users by State

Laurel Ridge State Park
2007

Pennsylvania 79%
Ohio 16%
Other 4%

* Other: Alabama, California, Washington DC, Indiana, Kentucky, New York and Wisconsin
Organized Group Camp Unit

Laurel Hill State Park
2007

Reservations by State

Pennsylvania 95%
Maryland 5%

Pennsylvania Reservations by Region

South West 71%
South Central 10%
Philadelphia 12%
North West 7%
North East 0%
Organized Group Tenting
Reservations by State

Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

*Other: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Missouri, Rhode Island & West Virginia. All values individually under 1%
Pavilion
Number of Reservations by State

Kooser, Laurel Hill, Laurel Ridge, Laurel Summit, Linn Run & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

Pennsylvania, 136, 94%

Other

Maryland, 1, 1%
California, 2, 1.5%
New York, 1, 1%
Ohio, 2, 1.5%
Michigan, 1, 1%
Virginia, 1, 1%
Walled Tent
Users by State

Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

Pennsylvania 63%
Ohio 19%
Indiana, Illinois & Michigan 2%
Virginia 3%
Other 6%
Maryland 7%

Other includes: California, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin & West Virginia
Yurt
Users by State

Ohiopyle State Park
2007

*Other: California & Massachusetts
Cabin
Pennsylvania Users by Region
Kooser, Laurel Hill, Linn Run State Parks
2007

North West 5%
North East 1%
Philadelphia 3%
South Central 8%
South West 83%
Camping Cottage
Pennsylvania Use by Region
Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

North West
7%

North East
< 1/2 %

Philadelphia
4%

South Central
17%

South West
72%

Philadelphia & Metro Area
Camping
Pennsylvania Users by Region

Kooser, Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007
Whitewater Hard Boating
Pennsylvania Users by Region

Ohioopyle State Park
2007

North West 6%
North East 8%
South West 41%
Philadelphia 20%
South Central 25%

[Map showing the regions: North West, North East, South West, South Central, Philadelphia & Metro Area]
Whitewater Inflatable Boating
Pennsylvania Users by Region

Ohioopyle State Park
2007

Diagram showing the percentage of users by region:
- South West: 64%
- South Central: 18%
- Philadelphia: 8%
- North West: 8%
- North East: 2%

Map of Pennsylvania showing the regions.
Backpacking Shelter and Campsite
Pennsylvania Users by Region

Laurel Ridge State Park
2007

South West 85%
North West 9%
South Central 4%
Philadelphia 2%
North East <1/2 %
Organized Group Camp Unit

Laurel Hill State Park
2007

Reservations by State

Pennsylvania 95%
Maryland 5%

Pennsylvania Reservations by Region

South West 71%
South Central 10%
Philadelphia 12%
North West 7%
North East 0%
Organized Group Tenting
Pennsylvania Reservations by Region

Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

North East 2%
North West 12%
Philadelphia 16%
South Central 26%
South West 44%
Pavilion
Number of Pennsylvania Reservations by Region

Kooser, Laurel Hill, Laurel Ridge, Laurel Summit, Linn Run & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

North West: 3%
North East: 0%
Philadelphia: 1%
South Central: 1%
South West: 95%
Walled Tent
Pennsylvania Users by Region
Laurel Hill & Ohiopyle State Parks
2007

North West: 4%
North East: 1%
Philadelphia: 4%
South Central: 14%
South West: 77%
Yurt
Pennsylvania Users by Region

Ohiopyle State Park
2007

- South West: 55%
- South Central: 15%
- North West: 17%
- North East: 6%
- Philadelphia: 7%
Laurel Hill EE&I Programs
2007

Environmental Education Programs
Interpretive Programs
Outdoor Recreation Programs

*No data available for February and December
During 2007, due to seasonal staffing, there is no data for Jan-May, Nov, and Dec.