

January 2026 | Crawford County, PA



**Karl Gerdon Park, Venango Borough | Photo Credit: Jessica Graf**  
*A DCNR C2P2 Grant Funded Park Improvement Project*

# Crawford County Peer Grant

Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Feasibility Study

Crawford

County



Eric Henry  
*Chairman*  
Scott T. Schell  
*Vice-Chairman*  
Christopher Seeley  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

Commissioners Office  
903 Diamond Park  
Courthouse  
Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

Brittany Johnston  
*Chief Clerk*  
Keith A. Button  
*Solicitor*

## RESOLUTION

1 of 2024

### A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CRAWFORD COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION COORDINATOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

**WHEREAS**, in August 2024, the Crawford County Board of Commissioners adopted *Crawford Inspired*, Crawford County's 2024 Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1968); and

**WHEREAS**, *Crawford Inspired* attempts to realize Crawford County's desire for the future by identifying a clear vision while promoting nine priorities, which can effectively be implemented using seven actionable bold moves, and can track the success of the plan through monitoring key outcomes across our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, one of *Crawford Inspired*'s bold moves recommends taking a holistic, countywide approach to coordinating and investing in the abundant outdoor recreational resources located throughout the county, enhancing the lives of its residents, and further contributing to the local and regional economies; and

**WHEREAS**, this holistic, countywide approach recommendation was supported by the majority of the *Crawford Inspired*'s 3,000 participants, who recognized that Crawford County's open space and recreational amenities are not being fully leveraged for social and economic benefits, and trails and outdoor recreation are important economic development assets that are beneficial to the health and well-being of existing and future county residents; and

**WHEREAS**, through their participation in the development of *Crawford Inspired*, Crawford County's employers and residents recommended that a centralized and coordinated investment in outdoor recreation and open spaces is a critical and necessary approach to help sustain and grow the county's rural economy and provide a high quality of life for its residents, workers, and visitors who collectively enjoy all that Crawford County has to offer; and

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of *Crawford Inspired*'s holistic, countywide approach recommendation and desire for its implementation, the Board of Commissioners obtained a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnerships Program

Crawford



County

Eric Henry  
*Chairman*  
Scott T. Schell  
*Vice-Chairman*  
Christopher Seeley  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

Commissioners Office  
903 Diamond Park  
Courthouse  
Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

Brittany Johnston  
*Chief Clerk*  
Keith A. Button  
*Solicitor*

(C2P2) Peer Program Grant and instructed the Crawford County Planning Office to conduct a feasibility study to determine the purpose, need, and means for creating a new countywide parks and recreation entity responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Crawford County Planning Office, with the technical assistance of its Peer Grant technical consultant, Michael Baker International, Inc., and in collaboration with an ad-hoc Steering Committee, conducted the feasibility study over a period of six months (July – December 2025) and concluded with the recommendation to establish a full-time Outdoor Recreation Coordinator position.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that on January 14, 2026, the Board of Commissioners of Crawford County, by this resolution, hereby adopts the Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Feasibility Study and commits to implementing its recommendations in collaboration with the Crawford County Planning Office, supported sustainably as funding permits.

CRAWFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Eric Henry, Chairman

Scott T. Schell, Vice-Chair

Christopher Seeley, Secretary/Treasurer



ATTEST:

  
Brittany Johnston, Chief Clerk

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Crawford County Board of Commissioners**

Eric Henry, Chairman

Scott T. Schell, Commissioner, Vice-Chairman

Christopher R. Seeley, Secretary/Treasurer

### **Crawford County Planning Department**

Zach Norwood, (former Planning Director)

Samantha Travis, Interim Planning Director

### **Steering Committee**

Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable  
Forests

Stephanie Thauer, Crawford County Planning  
Commission

Jessica Graf, Borough's Association

Mike Klink, Crawford County Planning  
Commission

Jill Dunlap, Township Association

Zach Norwood, Crawford County Planning  
Department

Maryann Menanno, City of Meadville

Samantha Travis, Crawford County Planning  
Department

Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy

### **Technical Consultant**

Michael Baker International, Inc.

**This study was financed in part by a Peer Program Grant from the Community Conservation  
Partnership Program and Keystone Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.**

# Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Feasibility Study

## Introduction

In August 2024, the Crawford County Board of Commissioners adopted [Crawford Inspired](#), Crawford County's 10-year Comprehensive Plan that outlines a clear vision for the county's future, defined by the nine community priorities and organized into three goal areas: People, Places, and Prosperity.

### People

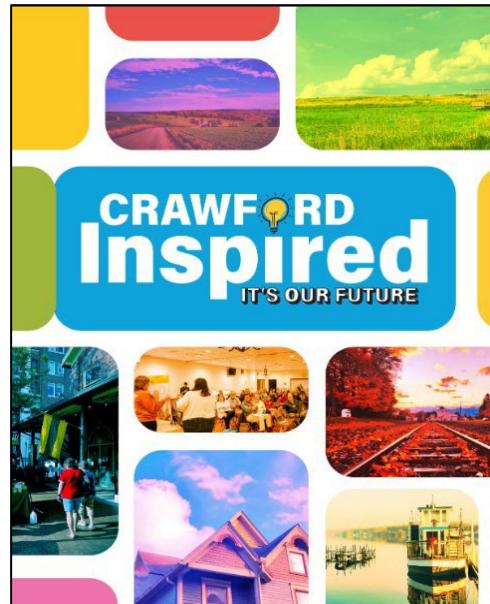
- Attract and Retain People
- Connect Careers and People
- Invest in Emergency Services

### Places

- Support Healthy Living
- Create Great Places
- Enhance Community Character

### Prosperity

- Create Consistent Government
- Invest in Infrastructure
- Maximize Recreational Opportunities



These goals and priorities are implemented through seven "bold moves," one of which recommends taking a holistic, countywide approach to coordinating and investing in the abundant outdoor recreational resources throughout the county, enhancing the lives of its residents and further contributing to local and regional economies. This recommendation was supported by the majority of the Comprehensive Plan's 3,000 participants, who recognized that Crawford County's open space and recreational amenities are not being fully leveraged for social and economic benefits, and that trails and outdoor recreation are important economic development assets that are beneficial to the health and well-being of existing and future county residents. To address this issue, employers and residents alike recommended that a centralized and coordinated investment in outdoor recreation and open spaces is a critical and necessary approach to help sustain and grow the county's rural economy and provide a high quality of life for its residents, workers, and visitors who collectively enjoy all that Crawford County has to offer.

Based on this recommendation and the county's commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the County Board of Commissioners directed the County Planning Department to proceed with conducting this feasibility study funded in part through a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Peer Program Grant.

# Planning Process

The feasibility study was spearheaded by the Crawford County Board of Commissioners, Crawford County Planning Department, and technical consultant Michael Baker International, Inc. (Michael Baker), and guided by an ad hoc Steering Committee representing diverse outdoor recreation economy interests throughout Crawford County (see Acknowledgements). The feasibility study was conducted over a six-month period from July – December 2025, and consisted of five in-person, monthly Steering Committee meetings in Meadville, PA, a stakeholder informational meeting held in October 2025, and a public survey. Summaries of the Steering Committee meetings are included in **Appendix A** to this report.

Given the study's focus, the Steering Committee meeting discussion agendas centered around addressing the following key feasibility questions. **Appendix B** details the questions and answers addressed by the Steering Committee and the following sections of this report confirm the key findings, outcomes, and recommendations related to these questions.

## 1. Assessment of Need

- a. What is the need/basis for a countywide parks and recreation entity and what is the community/stakeholder support for the proposed entity?
- b. Who is currently working to maintain a broad view of countywide parks and recreation?
- c. What is the legal authority for a proposed entity (i.e., Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act (53 Pa. C.S.A. Ch. 56))?
- d. What are the benefits to the county and what are the inherent risks (with or without a countywide entity)?

## 2. Market Analysis

- a. Who are the benefactors of the proposed entity, i.e., what recreation organizations will it coordinate with?
- b. Are there any existing comparable organizations that the proposed entity would conflict with, i.e., duplicate services, etc.?
- c. What other interested business and community stakeholders/partners would the countywide entity interact and engage with?

## 3. Comparable Organizations

- a. What comparable county or multi-municipal recreation authorities exist within Pennsylvania?
- b. What are their respective governance structures, responsibilities, professional staff, funding, etc.?

## 4. Governance Structure and Professional Staffing

- a. What is the governance structure of the proposed countywide entity?
- b. How is the organization professionally staffed and what are the staff's requisite qualifications and experience?

## 5. Organization Funding and Sustainability

- a. How will the proposed countywide entity be funded in the immediate (0-4 years) and long-term (Year 5 and beyond)?
- b. How will the countywide entity remain solvent and sustainable?
- c. How should performance be measured?

# Findings

## Assessment of Need

The Steering Committee expressed strong support for a countywide parks and recreation entity that would support, connect, and coordinate park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County.

Specifically, the Steering Committee identified the following roles and responsibilities that a countywide entity could spearhead:

- Help address local challenges pertaining to the maintenance, operations, funding/financing, marketing and promoting, and future planning of local parks, water trails, etc. (e.g., Titusville has seven parks, but only has 1-2 individuals that maintain the parks)
- Help communities prepare for and be well-positioned to capitalize on future growth and impacts related to the outdoor recreation economy, e.g., completing the connection of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail at Titusville.
- Help conduct a countywide evaluation of current park resources and determine where redundancies and gaps may exist to serve the existing and future populations.
- Help coordinate among existing programs/departments to provide internal peer-to-peer technical assistance.
- Help coordinate assets that cross municipal boundary lines and including leading larger, regional planning efforts like the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, Ernst Trail, etc.
- Help provide technical assistance with capital budgeting and planning, and applying for grants, etc. Also, help prioritize projects and reduce competition within the county for the same funding sources.
- Help reduce redundancy in efforts to plan, maintain, and operate park assets.
- Partner with the US Army Corps of Engineers to rehabilitate and restore Woodcock Lake Park (USACE Dam Lake) as a premier park facility.
- Provide a cohesive direction and vision to run, maintain, and sustainably fund the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC), a multi-purpose recreational facility that is managed by the Meadville Area Recreation Authority (MARA) and financed in part through the Meadville Area Recreation Foundation (MARF).
- Serve as an educator to outdoor recreation users, including the importance of caring for outdoor resources and respecting the rights of the property owners with whom the resources are adjoined.
- Serve as the higher-level advocate for the county's extensive outdoor recreation amenities and activities regardless of ownership (federal, state, local, etc.).

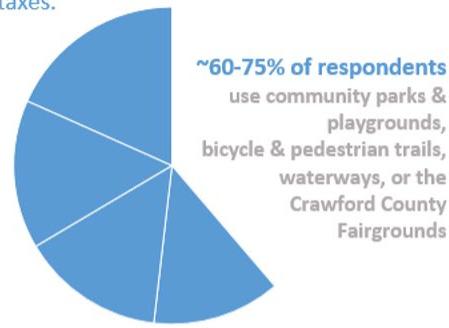
The Peer Study process solicited input from the public through a survey questionnaire where the majority 73% of the 48 respondents said there should be a countywide entity formed to: (1) prepare for the future growth and impacts of the outdoor recreation economy; (2) offer technical assistance with planning, budgeting, and grant writing, and coordinate recreation assets across different municipalities; (3) streamline the planning, maintenance, and operation of recreation facilities by reducing unnecessary duplication of services. The following infographic summarizes the overall results of the public survey.

Of 48 respondents, **73% (35 respondents)** support a countywide approach to parks and recreation.

**21** of those 35 respondents support **non-county government**, **11** support a **county-funded staff position**

**85% of supporters of a countywide approach also support use of county taxes.**

Respondents identified **technical assistance, recreation coordination, and preparing for future growth** as the top priorities for a countywide parks and recreation entity.



Respondents were nearly evenly divided on whether it is easy to learn about recreation amenities in Crawford County.

Most reported discovering these amenities through the **internet, print resources, Facebook, & word of mouth.**



Others suggested improving communication through similar avenues of **social media & a central website.**

Source: Crawford County Planning Office

Currently, no single organization is responsible for the countywide planning and coordination of parks and recreation amenities. However, the Crawford County Planning Office, which operates under the Crawford County Board of Commissioners, is responsible for coordinating long-term investments and community development in partnership with the Crawford County Planning Commission and local municipalities. The Planning Office staff, in support of and with the Planning Commission, provides solution-oriented services through community planning to facilitate the growth of the local economy, enhance the quality of life, and preserve the natural environment for current and future generations. In this capacity, the Planning Office provides countywide technical planning services to municipalities. It has occasionally helped coordinate among trail organizations, land conservancies, and other nature and outdoor recreation interests throughout the county and within the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission's (Northwest Commission) region. Most recently, the County Planning Office was involved in the Economic Progress Alliance's Ernst Trail Meadville Connection Action Plan and is currently spearheading this Peer Study effort.

Considering its core responsibilities and the efforts outlined in this report, the County Planning Office's staff capacity is limited. The Planning Office cannot dedicate an existing full-time staff member to lead the countywide parks and recreation planning and coordination effort that is needed to grow the county's outdoor recreation economy and help it reach its full potential.

In addition, the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau, which is the official destination marketing organization for Crawford County, "showcase[s] what makes [Crawford County] special, inspire[s] exploration, and support[s] economic growth through tourism."<sup>1</sup> A number of the county's outdoor recreation resources and attractions are promoted through the Visitors Bureau's website, in addition to many other destination tourism events and attractions located throughout the county.

As shown in the infographic, resource inventory, and map below, Crawford County has one of the most diverse collections of outdoor recreation amenities in the state. This inventory, compiled in collaboration with the Steering Committee and stakeholders, includes three federally owned and designated assets, a state park, state forest, and numerous state game lands, and many county, local, and conservancy-owned recreation facilities and open spaces. Additionally, Crawford County holds the distinction of having the most open-access recreational waters in the Commonwealth!

## Crawford County's Outdoor Spaces



### OUR OPEN SPACES

55 local parks,  
totaling 2,245  
acres

4 trail systems  
totaling 111  
miles

2 BicyclePA Bike  
Routes (A and Y)  
totaling 144  
miles

728 acres of  
publicly accessible  
conservancy lands

1 State Park totaling  
21,122 acres

1 State Forest totaling  
129 acres

13 State Game Lands  
totaling 35,711 acres

8,800-acre Erie  
National Wildlife Refuge,  
including 8.26 miles  
of trails

23,904 acres of the  
Oil Region National  
Heritage Area

333-acre U.S Army  
Corps of Engineers  
Woodcock Creek Lake

WATER RICH  
Over 13,375 acres  
of open access  
recreational waters; the  
largest in the state!

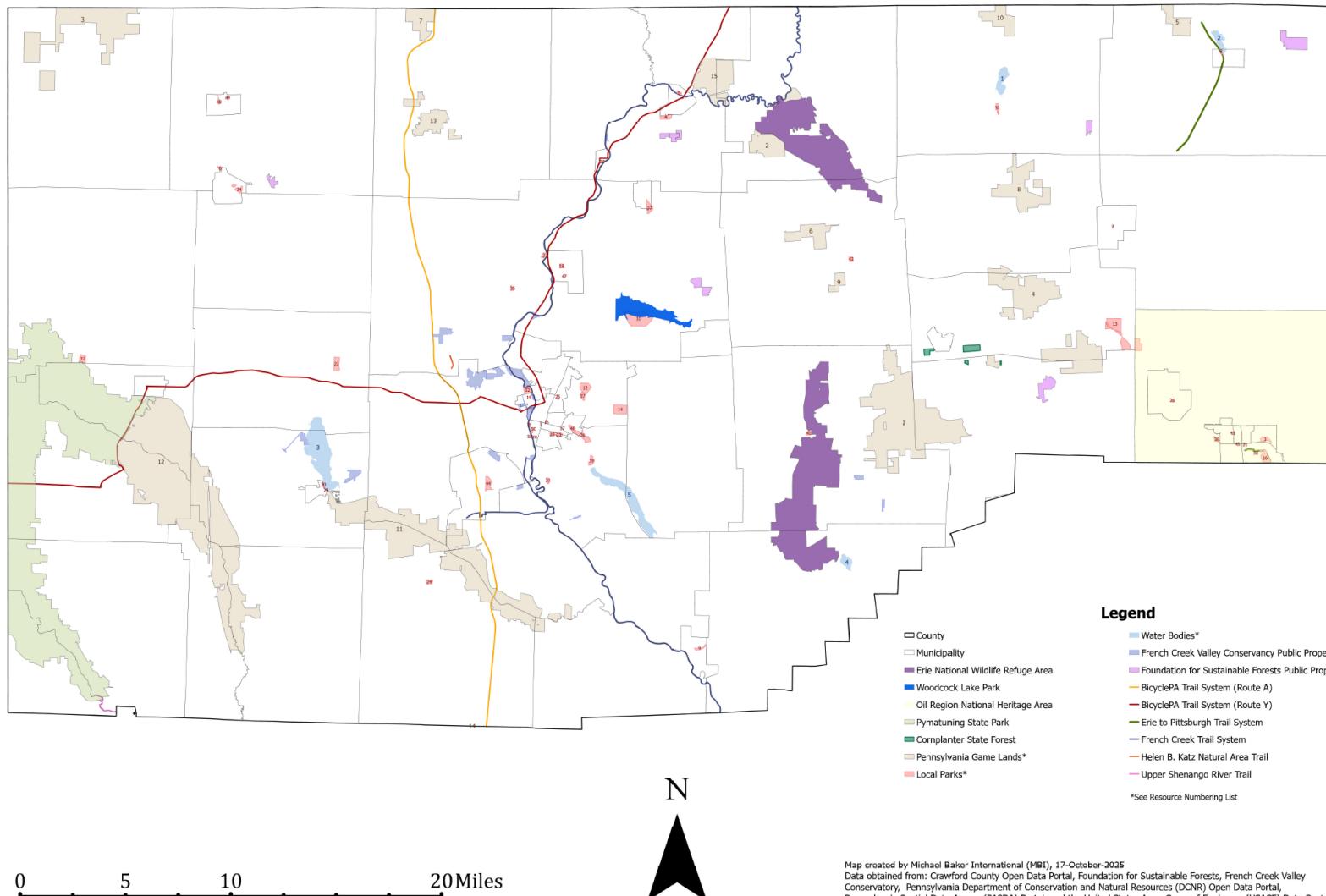


<sup>1</sup> Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau, <https://visitcrawford.org/about-us/>.

# Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Assets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Federal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Erie National Wildlife Refuge</li> <li>» Oil Region National Heritage Area</li> <li>» Woodcock Lake Park</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>State</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pymatuning State Park</li> <li>» Complanter State Forest – Ingraham Tract</li> <li>1. State Game Land 69</li> <li>2. State Game Land 85</li> <li>3. State Game Land 122</li> <li>4. State Game Land 144</li> <li>5. State Game Land 146</li> <li>6. State Game Land 152</li> <li>7. State Game Land 199</li> <li>8. State Game Land 200</li> <li>9. State Game Land 202</li> <li>10. State Game Land 213</li> <li>11. State Game Land 214</li> <li>12. State Game Land 269</li> <li>13. State Game Land 277</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal Parks &amp; Other Assets</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ARC Community Greenspace</li> <li>2. Bertram Park</li> <li>3. Bicentennial Park</li> <li>4. Burges Park</li> <li>5. Cambridge Springs Recreation Area</li> <li>6. <u>Canadohta Lake</u></li> <li>7. Canal Park</li> <li>8. Centerville Community Park</li> <li>9. Clear Lake Park</li> <li>10. Cochranton Lions Community Park</li> <li>11. Colonel Crawford Park</li> <li>12. Cora Clark Park</li> <li>13. Crawford County Fairgrounds</li> <li>14. Crawford County Youth Soccer Association</li> <li>15. Diamond Park</li> <li>16. Drake Well Park</li> <li>17. Ed Myer Complex</li> <li>18. Elizabeth Park</li> <li>19. Fifth Ward Playground</li> <li>20. Fireman's Beach Park</li> <li>21. Fleming Park</li> <li>22. George M. Humer County Forest</li> <li>23. Gibson Park</li> <li>24. Green Mountain Park</li> <li>25. Greenwood Township Park</li> <li>26. Hasbrouck Park Complex</li> <li>27. Heist Park</li> <li>28. H P Way Park</li> <li>29. <u>Huidekoper Park</u></li> <li>30. Ice House Park</li> <li>31. Jordan Park</li> <li>32. Karl Gerdon Park</li> <li>33. Kenneth A. Beers Jr. Bicentennial Park</li> <li>34. Lincoln Avenue Sports Complex</li> <li>35. Linesville Little League Association</li> <li>36. Longeway Park</li> <li>37. Lord Mason Memorial Park</li> <li>38. Meadow Area Recreation Complex</li> <li>39. Northwestern REC Community Forest</li> <li>40. O'Rourke Fields</li> <li>41. Oak Grove Park</li> <li>42. Pamona Park</li> <li>43. Randolph Recreation Complex</li> <li>44. Richmond Township Baseball Field</li> <li>45. Robert's Grove Park</li> <li>46. Roche Park</li> <li>47. Scheide Park</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>48. Shady Brook Park</li> <li>49. South St. Ballfield</li> <li>50. Sparta Sportsmen's Community Forest</li> <li>51. Spillway Trail</li> <li>52. Springboro Ballfield/Picnic Area</li> <li>53. Springboro Community Center and Softball Field</li> <li>54. Sunbeam Field</li> <li>55. Township of Bloomfield Ball Parks</li> </ul>
---	--	--

## Crawford County, PA Outdoor Recreation Resources



## Market Analysis

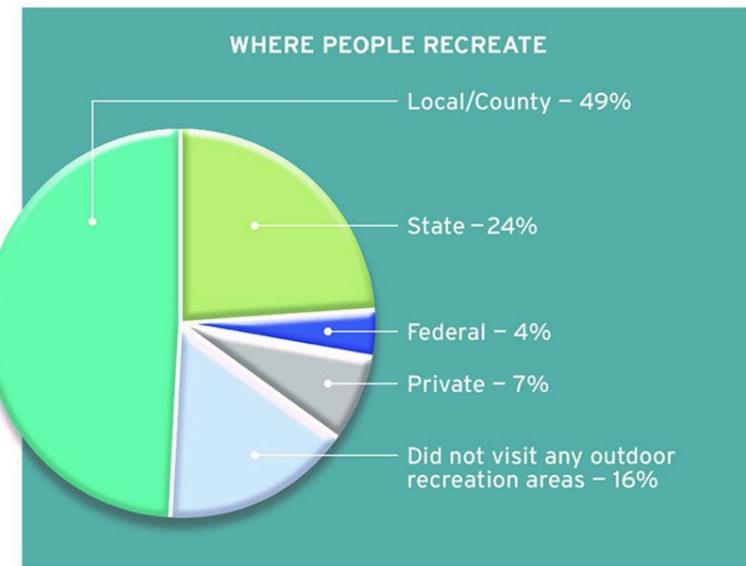
Research conducted by Michael Baker and presented to the Steering Committee confirmed that numerous counties throughout the Commonwealth have established organizations focused on tourism, outdoor recreation, and the development and maintenance of recreational trail assets (see **Appendix C**). Of the over 18 countywide organizations identified, the three organizations listed in the table below were selected by the Steering Committee as the most relevant comparable examples for Crawford County to consider when organizing its own countywide outdoor parks and recreation entity. Telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from each of the three organizations to learn more about their respective organization's history and evolution, purpose, mission and responsibilities, operating budgets, sources of revenue, staff sizes and positions, and key challenges. Appendix C includes the responses received from each entity.

Since these organizations operate solely within their respective county geographies, none of the listed organizations would serve as competition or provide supporting and/or duplicative services to Crawford County. It was noted that these organizations clearly demonstrate the need for and importance of having a designated countywide entity, and that their success has been based on sustained and flexible growth to meet their evolving county parks and recreation asset development, coordination, management, and operation needs.

Moreover, the existence of these countywide entities recognizes the importance of parks and recreation to their residents' quality of life, as demonstrated by the many collaborative partnerships each organization has formed to help fund, develop, maintain, and operate its respective outdoor recreation amenities.

Organization	Type of Entity and Year Formed	Purpose and Mission
Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority	Municipal Authority Year Formed: 1994	The Authority was created to: (1) address mine reclamation needs and work with DEP; and (2) create rail trails and other trails. Its mission is to acquire, construct, maintain, operate, and facilitate recreation and environmental remediation facilities in Cambria County and the surrounding region.
Indiana County Parks and Trails (originally formed as the Indiana County Parks Department.)	County Government Department Year Formed: 1967	Its purpose and mission is to maintain and operate the various sites that the County owns which includes regional parks, rail trails, historic sites, natural areas and four covered bridges.
Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation (originally, formed as the Westmoreland County Recreation Commission)	County Government Department Year Formed: 1957	The Bureau was created to enhance and ensure the quality of life of Westmoreland County residents by providing a diversity of safe; accessible; culturally based; family oriented; well maintained and protected; economically responsible; and strategically located park and recreation resources.

From an economic development perspective, Crawford County's Comprehensive Plan recognizes that parks and outdoor recreation are vital for sustaining the county's rural economy and providing a high quality of life for its residents, workers, and visitors. The plan also emphasizes how the county's inventory of federal, state, local, and publicly accessible conservation lands contributes to the Commonwealth's outdoor recreation economy. As illustrated in the following chart, the availability of and accessibility to local/county and state-owned recreation resources is evidently important to residents' quality of life and Crawford County's diverse inventory of recreation resources provide ample opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors!



Source: [PA SCORP 2020-2025](#)

Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation economy is an \$18.9 billion industry comprised of nearly 170,000 jobs and \$8.7 billion in annual wages. And it's growing fast! From 2020 to 2023, PA's outdoor recreation economy grew nearly 19 percent, more than three times faster than the U.S. economy as a whole!

### 2023—Pennsylvania

Value added [gross domestic product]		Employment		Compensation	
ORSA total	Share of state	ORSA total	Share of state	ORSA total	Share of state
\$18.9 billion	1.9%	168,322 jobs	2.7%	\$8.7 billion	1.7%

Value Added by Select ORSA Activity [Thousands of dollars]				
Activity	2021	2022	2023	State rank
Boating / fishing	678,123	751,351	844,039	17
RVing	675,724	726,647	703,081	10
Motorcycling / ATVing	463,548	514,201	617,516	5
Hunting / shooting / trapping	328,773	331,814	396,975	9
Bicycling	124,422	129,202	255,995	2
Climbing / hiking / tent camping	192,471	203,809	231,779	8
Equestrian	207,992	176,086	186,518	7
Snow activities	126,048	156,495	185,891	12
Recreational flying	30,147	47,667	46,371	13

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#).

## Governance Structure and Professional Staffing

The Steering Committee identified the following “hypothetical entities” that could be established and organized as the countywide outdoor recreation entity:

- “Crawford County Recreation Authority” established and organized under the Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act (e.g., Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority)
- “Crawford County Recreation Association” established as a private, not for profit 501(c)(3) under the PA Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988 (e.g., Mercer County Trails Association)
- “Crawford County Recreation Department” established and organized under the direction and authority of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners (e.g., Indiana County Parks and Trails)
- “Crawford County Recreation Advisory Board / Commission” established under the direction and authority of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners (e.g., Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation Citizens Advisory Board)
- “Crawford County Regional Council of Governments (COG)” formed and organized under the PA Intergovernmental Cooperation Law (Act 180 of 1972) (e.g., French Creek COG)

The majority (63.6%) of the 48 respondents to the Peer Study survey recommended that a non-profit entity separate from county government be organized to serve as the countywide entity.

Ongoing meeting discussions with the Steering Committee recognized that regardless of the legal basis through which it is formed (i.e., Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act, Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988), the challenges with starting a new countywide organization are not insignificant and include, but are not limited to: having the independent leadership and technical means to legally establish the entity; garnering the necessary operations and management financial capitalization; developing the management and technical staffing; and organizing the leadership oversight.

As an alternative, the Steering Committee recognized the County Planning Office's existing countywide planning expertise, spatial data management and mapping capabilities, and its role as the countywide planning entity and suggested that it – if given the necessary staff capacity – could serve as the countywide entity. In addition, the Steering Committee acknowledged the Visitors Bureau's important role with promoting outdoor recreation resources and attractions, and how it and the Planning Office could work even more collaboratively in the future.

Considering both the ongoing work of County Planning staff in coordinating park, trail, and outdoor recreation coordination activities, and the findings of this study, the Steering Committee ultimately recommended at its November 13, 2025, meeting that the Crawford County Planning Office should serve as the countywide organization responsible for leading and coordinating various aspects of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation planning and development within the county. This includes capital planning and management, grant writing technical assistance, and networking and collaboration. This recommendation is based on the need to create a new full-time “Outdoor Recreation Coordinator” position as described in **Appendix D**.

If the proposed “Outdoor Recreation Coordinator” position were to be ultimately housed within the County Planning Office, the position would be overseen by an Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee comprised of various public and private outdoor recreation producers, providers, and professionals, and appointed by the Crawford County Board of Commissioners, and would include a representative from the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Advisory Committee would assist the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator with formulating an annual work program (AWP) based on selected priority parks and outdoor recreation resource planning, development, operations, and maintenance initiatives, as well as key training and conference attendance needs. The AWP would be used by the Advisory Committee, Planning Office Director, and Board of Commissioners to help measure success and overall performance of the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator. In addition, the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator should work collaboratively with the Visitors Bureau to ensure the full breadth of the county’s outdoor recreation resources are promoted to inspire exploration and support economic growth through tourism.



*Photo Credit: Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy*

## Organization Funding and Sustainability

Crawford County intends to utilize a DCNR Circuit Rider grant, awarded through an application submitted by the Crawford County Board of Commissioners, to help fund the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator's position. The resolution adopting this study, executed by the Board of Commissioners and included at the beginning of this document, confirms the county's responsibilities in administering and using the Circuit Rider grant funds.

Administered through the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Circuit Rider grants are awarded to initiate new programs and services for county(ies), Council of Governments, and/or multi-municipal entities that individually do not have the financial resources to hire a professional full-time staff person. The Circuit Rider's purpose is to initiate new programs and services in the designated service area and to increase the grantee's ability to meet their recreation, park, greenway, open space and/or natural resource conservation needs more efficiently and effectively.

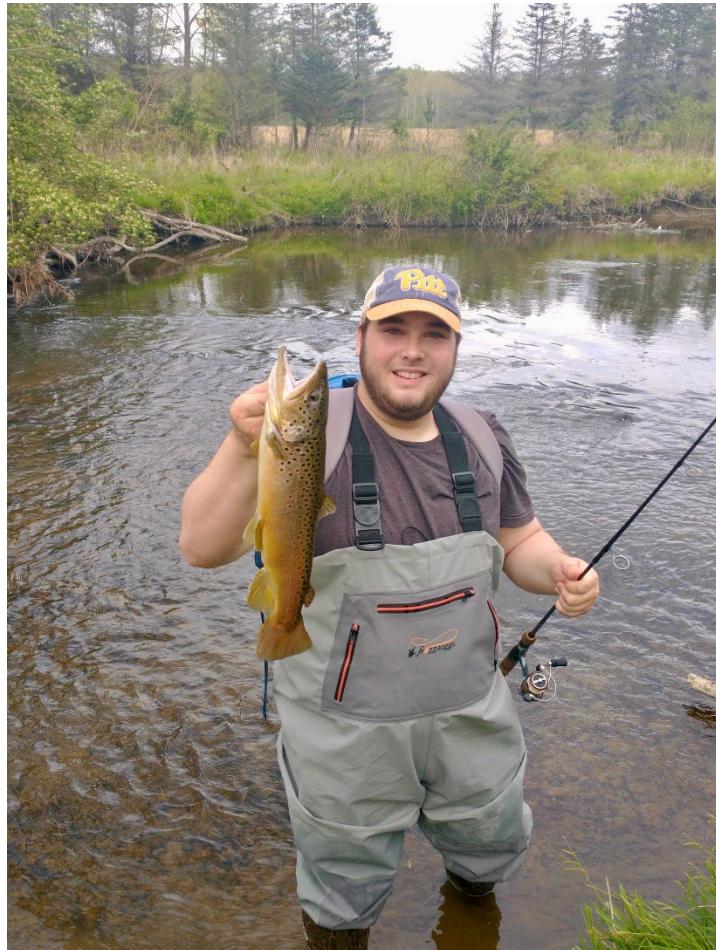
Circuit Rider grants cover position salaries and training/mentoring expenses for the first four years as follows:

- First year up to one hundred percent (100%) of gross salary.
- Second year up to seventy-five percent (75%) of gross salary.
- Third year up to fifty percent (50%) of gross salary.
- Fourth year up to twenty-five percent (25%) of gross salary.
- Training Expenses up to \$2,000 available for DCNR Bureau-approved training expenses over the four years of funding.
- Mentoring Expenses up to \$1,500 for a Bureau-approved mentor to assist a new circuit rider.

A 10-year pro forma analysis of the position's potential annual cost is presented in the table on the following page. The costs include the position's salary, assuming a \$0.60/hour yearly salary increase, plus fringe benefits and recurring training and mentoring expenses. As specified in the adopting resolution, Crawford County will be responsible for the long-term financial commitment and maintenance of this professional position beginning with funding the position's benefits (estimated to be at least 45% of the position's salary) starting in year 1 and the position's salary in year 2 at 25%, year 3 at 50%, year 4 at 75% and year 5 and beyond at 100%.

The need for the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator to demonstrate measurable success in performing their duties and responsibilities will be critical to securing both near-term and long-term funding commitments to sustain the position. One potential funding non-taxpayer derived source could be Crawford County's hotel rental tax. As the county's tourism economy grows and associated hotel stays and tax revenues increase, hotel room rental tax revenues could be allocated to help fund a position directly related to the county's recreational tourism promotion efforts. Somerset County, for example, increased its hotel tax rate to 5% in 2018 and uses a portion of the revenues to support trail development via the Somerset County Rails to Trails Association (SCRTA).

In addition, Crawford County's Act 13 Marcellus Shale revenue may be another non-taxpayer derived funding source that could potentially be used to help financially sustain the proposed position over the long-term. The Act 13 revenues are derived primarily from the unconventional gas well impact fee, which is distributed to local and state governments. In 2024, the county received \$56,291 in impact revenue, with a total of \$1,115,090 earned to date from three producing wells. The funds are currently used for a variety of purposes, including bridge repair, environmental initiatives, and covering local impacts of drilling. However, the total annual revenues received by the county have been dwindling from the \$104,226 received in 2022.



*Photo Credit: Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy*

Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Position Proforma										
	DCNR Circuit Rider Grant Period									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
<b>Total Compensation (Planner 2)</b>	<b>\$80,353.00</b>	<b>\$82,530.99</b>	<b>\$84,741.57</b>	<b>\$86,985.70</b>	<b>\$89,264.39</b>	<b>\$91,578.69</b>	<b>\$93,929.65</b>	<b>\$96,318.39</b>	<b>\$98,746.02</b>	<b>\$101,213.73</b>
Annual Salary (Assumes Annual \$0.60/hr. Increase)	\$44,153.20	\$45,245.20	\$46,337.20	\$47,429.20	\$48,521.20	\$49,613.20	\$50,705.20	\$51,797.20	\$52,889.20	\$53,981.20
Hourly Wage (35 hours/week)	\$24.26	\$24.86	\$25.46	\$26.06	\$26.66	\$27.26	\$27.86	\$28.46	\$29.06	\$29.66
Fringe Benefits (\$19.89/hour)	\$36,199.80	\$37,285.79	\$38,404.37	\$39,556.50	\$40,743.19	\$41,965.49	\$43,224.45	\$44,521.19	\$45,856.82	\$47,232.53
<b>Base Salary</b>										
DCNR Circuit Rider Grant	\$44,153.20	\$33,933.90	\$23,168.60	\$11,857.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Crawford County Funded	\$0.00	\$11,311.30	\$23,168.60	\$35,571.90	\$48,521.20	\$49,613.20	\$50,705.20	\$51,797.20	\$52,889.20	\$53,981.20
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$44,153.20</i>	<i>\$45,245.20</i>	<i>\$46,337.20</i>	<i>\$47,429.20</i>	<i>\$48,521.20</i>	<i>\$49,613.20</i>	<i>\$50,705.20</i>	<i>\$51,797.20</i>	<i>\$52,889.20</i>	<i>\$53,981.20</i>
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>										
DCNR Circuit Rider Grant	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Crawford County Funded	\$36,199.80	\$37,285.79	\$38,404.37	\$39,556.50	\$40,743.19	\$41,965.49	\$43,224.45	\$44,521.19	\$45,856.82	\$47,232.53
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$36,199.80</i>	<i>\$37,285.79</i>	<i>\$38,404.37</i>	<i>\$39,556.50</i>	<i>\$40,743.19</i>	<i>\$41,965.49</i>	<i>\$43,224.45</i>	<i>\$44,521.19</i>	<i>\$45,856.82</i>	<i>\$47,232.53</i>
<b>Total Compensation (Base Salary + Fringe Benefits)</b>										
DCNR Circuit Rider Grant	\$44,153.20	\$33,933.90	\$23,168.60	\$11,857.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Crawford County Funded	\$36,199.80	\$48,597.09	\$61,572.97	\$75,128.40	\$89,264.39	\$91,578.69	\$93,929.65	\$96,318.39	\$98,746.02	\$101,213.73
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$80,353.00</i>	<i>\$82,530.99</i>	<i>\$84,741.57</i>	<i>\$86,985.70</i>	<i>\$89,264.39</i>	<i>\$91,578.69</i>	<i>\$93,929.65</i>	<i>\$96,318.39</i>	<i>\$98,746.02</i>	<i>\$101,213.73</i>
<b>Expenses (Training &amp; Mentoring)*</b>										
DCNR Circuit Rider Grant	\$2,500.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Crawford County Funded			\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$2,500.00</i>	<i>\$1,000.00</i>	<i>\$500.00</i>							
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST</b>	<b>\$82,853.00</b>	<b>\$83,530.99</b>	<b>\$85,241.57</b>	<b>\$87,485.70</b>	<b>\$89,764.39</b>	<b>\$92,078.69</b>	<b>\$94,429.65</b>	<b>\$96,818.39</b>	<b>\$99,246.02</b>	<b>\$101,713.73</b>

Notes: Assumes DCNR Training and Mentoring Expenses for Years 1 - 4, and Annual Allocation of \$1,000 to cover ongoing training expenses to attend at least one annual conference (lodging, travel, etc.)

Training Expenses – Up to \$2,000 is available for Bureau approved training expenses over the four years of funding. Typically, \$1,000 is to be requested in years 1 and 2 and unspent funding carries over each year throughout the duration of the grant.

Mentoring Expenses – Up to \$1,500 is available for training or mentoring of the Circuit Rider, strategic planning and/or board development. This funding is typically made available in the first year and carries over through the duration of the grant.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

Based on the above study findings and outcomes, the Steering Committee recommends the following courses of action be taken to hire the full-time Outdoor Recreation Coordinator.

Recommendations	Actions	Timeframe
Amend the County Hotel Rental Tax Ordinance as appropriate to secure long-term funding for the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator position.	Board of Commissioners to evaluate Hotel Tax Rental Ordinance amendment requirements	January – March 2026
Prepare and submit a Circuit Rider grant application to the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation	Crawford County Planning Office (under the auspices of the County Board of Commissioners) to prepare and submit the Circuit Rider grant application to DCNR.	April – August 2026
Advertise and hire a qualified person to fill the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator position	Crawford County to finalize and post the job description, interview qualified candidates in collaboration with DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and select a qualified candidate for the County Board of Commissioners and DCNR's approval.	September – December 2026
Administer the Circuit Rider Grant	Crawford County Planning Department to complete the grant administration requirements pursuant to DCNR's. This includes completing the annual Circuit Rider Grant application for funding awards Year 2, 3, and 4.	Commence upon Circuit Rider Grant Award Agreement Execution

## Appendix A – Steering Committee Meeting Summaries

## MEETING SUMMARY

<b>Date:</b>	Monday, July 21, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Crawford County Courthouse, 903 Diamond Park, Meadville, PA 16335
<b>Meeting Name:</b>	DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Kick-off Meeting
<b>Materials:</b>	Meeting Agenda Key Discussion Questions PowerPoint Presentation
<b>Attendees:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable Forests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Graf, Borough's Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Dunlap, Township Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maryann Menanno, City of Meadville Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neil Fratus, City of Titusville Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Fischer, DCNR Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Thauer, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Klink, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zach Norwood, Crawford County Planning Department <input type="checkbox"/> Samantha (Sam) Travis, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Troy Truax, Michael Baker International, Inc (Michael Baker)

### Welcome and Introductions

- Zach N. opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for their attendance and participation in the County's DCNR Peer Study project.
- Zach N. introduced the County's Peer consultant, Troy T. of Michael Baker International, Inc., and asked each attendee to introduce themselves.
- Zach N. noted that several members of the Peer Study Steering Committee were unavailable to attend but will be participating in future scheduled committee meetings and events.
- Zach N. stated that the Peer Study, which is being funded in part, by a DCNR Peer Program Grant, is a key implementation effort of the County's newly adopted Comprehensive Plan, *Crawford Inspired: It's Our Future*. (see Slide 3 of the PowerPoint Presentation, Attachment #3)

### Purpose/Need

- Troy T. continued the meeting by stating that the DCNR Peer Study purpose is twofold:

- Determines the feasibility of creating a new countywide parks and recreation entity (e.g., municipal authority, county commission/committee, etc.) responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County, and
- Sets the stage for a DCNR Circuit Rider Grant that will be used to help fund a professional position for the first four years of the proposed entity's operations.
- Troy T. reiterated that the Peer Study is a key implementation step of the County Comprehensive Plan specifically addresses the plan's "Prosperity" Goal of "Maximizing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities". (see Slide 4 of the PowerPoint Presentation).
- Troy T. further stated that the Comprehensive Plan's key recommendation to address this goal is to "Create a county-wide Parks and Recreation Authority to support public recreation and trail amenities across the county." (see Slide 5 of the PowerPoint Presentation).
- Troy T. clarified that the Peer Study will objectively evaluate the feasibility of creating a new countywide entity, which could be both an existing or newly created entity to include consideration of an authority organized under the PA Municipal Authorities Act.

### **Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

- Troy T. reviewed and stressed the Steering Committee roles and responsibilities as follows and again, thanked the committee members for their time and participation in this effort (see Slide 7 of the PowerPoint Presentation)
  - Actively participate in monthly meetings
  - Share candid insights and perspectives on a countywide entity
  - Share information and data to support the study effort
  - Maintain an open dialogue between meetings
  - Champion the study outcomes

### **Scope of Work**

- Troy T. gave an overview of Michael Baker's scope of work, project deliverables, and schedule as follows (see Slides 8 – 9 of the PowerPoint Presentation, Attachment #3)
  - Task 1. Steering Committee Meetings (August – November)
    - Five scheduled monthly Steering Committee meetings (July – Nov)
    - Workshop discussion style focusing on addressing key questions
  - Task 2. Stakeholder Outreach (September)
    - One stakeholder outreach meeting
    - Public survey questionnaire
  - Task 3. Draft and Final Feasibility Study (November – December)
    - Concisely written Peer Study report per DCNR requirements
    - Supporting information (e.g., Cooperation Agreement, Bylaws, etc.)

### **Key Discussion Questions**

- Before reviewing/discussing the Key Discussion Questions provided in Attachment #2, Troy T. gave an overview of the numerous existing outdoor recreation assets in the county, plus

presented information highlighting the importance and significance of PA's outdoor recreation economy. (see Slides 10 – 17 of the PowerPoint Presentation).

- Troy T. also highlighted the "importance and value" of Crawford County's outdoor recreation spaces, assets, and amenities by citing quotations published by the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau. (see Slides 12 and 13 of the PowerPoint Presentation).
- Troy T. asked the Steering Committee to provide their initial feedback on the overall the Peer Study purpose/need and approach, and help identify additional outdoor recreation facilities, etc. that should be added to the comprehensive inventory.
  - o The Steering Committee attendees identified the additional outdoor recreation assets:
    - George M. Humer County Forest
    - Crawford County Fair Grounds
    - Meadville Area Recreation Complex (shared resource)
    - Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
    - Karl Gerdon Park
    - Hyde Kipper Parks
    - Bicentennial Park
    - Cora Clark Park
    - HP Way Park
    - Ed Meyer Complex
    - Roberts Grove Park
    - Longway Park
    - Spillway Trail
  - o Zach N. confirmed that the County Planning Department is currently compiling a comprehensive list of outdoor recreation resources that are pertinent to the Peer Study.
  - o The Committee also identified that the City of Meadville has a robust Public Works Dept. that it uses for parks O&M and has the internal capacity for capital improvements planning, grant writing, etc.
- Troy T. asked the Steering Committee to provide their feedback on the following Key Discussion Questions:

**Q: What is the need/basis for a countywide parks and recreation entity and what is the community/stakeholder support for the proposed entity?**

- o The Steering Committee expressed strong support and need for a countywide parks and recreation entity that would be responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County. Specifically, the entity could:
- o Help address local challenges pertaining to the maintenance, operations, funding/financing, marketing and promoting, and future planning of local parks,

water trails, etc. (e.g., Titusville has 7 parks, but only has 1-2 individuals that maintain the parks).

- Serve as an educator to outdoor recreation users to include the importance of caring for outdoor resources and respecting the rights of property owners of which the resources are adjoined.
- Help reduce redundancy in efforts to plan, maintain, and operate park assets.
- Help provide technical assistance with capital budgeting and planning, and applying for grants, etc. Also, could help prioritizing projects and reduce competition w/in the county for the same source of funds.
- Help coordinate among existing programs / departments to provide internal peer-to-peer technical assistance.
- Help conduct a countywide evaluation of current park resources and determine where redundancies and gaps may exist to serve the existing and future populations.
- Help communities prepare for and be well-positioned to capitalize on future growth and impacts related to the outdoor recreation economy, e.g., completing the connection of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail at Titusville.
- Help coordinate assets that cross municipal boundary lines and including leading larger, regional planning efforts like the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, Ernst Trail, etc.
- Serve as the higher-level advocate for the County's extensive outdoor recreation amenities and activities regardless of ownership (federal, state, local, etc.).
- Serve as the lead advocate for promoting Woodcock Park (USACE Dam Lake) to become a state park asset. Woodcock Park is a deteriorating one-of-a-kind gem to serve as a destination amenity for the entire state and beyond.
- Provide a cohesive direction and vision to run, maintain, and sustainably fund the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC); a multi-purpose recreational facility that is managed by the Meadville Area Recreation Authority (MARA) and financed in part through the Meadville Area Recreation Foundation (MARF).
  - MARC employs an Executive Director and two support staff (Office Asst. and Marketing Manager).
  - MARA oversees the MARC's programming, operations, management, and maintenance. MARA is governed by a twelve-person board whose members are appointed from the City of Meadville, West Mead Township, and Vernon Township. MARA's members have differing/conflicting opinions and perspective for MARC's future.
  - MARF is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that financially supports MARC's capital improvement needs.

- The Steering Committee also expressed concern that the county's more rural municipalities that don't have park facilities and have limited financial means may not be in support of having their resident's tax dollars devoted to a countywide organization that may not provide a direct benefit to their needs/interests. However, education is needed to define

Crawford County's outdoor recreation as including the rural areas that include many of the State Game Land areas that are used for hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and other passive outdoor recreation activities. To that end, the Steering Committee also stressed the need to hear from the county's outdoor sporting community (hunting, fishing, etc.) and business owners on their perspectives of the need and support for a countywide entity.

**Q: Who is currently working to maintain a broad view of countywide parks and recreation?**

- Among its many duties and responsibilities, the Crawford County Planning Department spends an ample amount of time and resources (e.g., GIS mapping, planning studies – Crawford County Greenways Plan (2009) –, etc.) focusing on countywide and local parks and recreation initiatives.
- In addition, the Steering Committee noted the following non-profit organizations that are working in Crawford County and beyond on various conservation initiatives and could be provide additional support to a countywide entity:
  - The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land trust and outreach organization dedicated to protecting the working forests of Pennsylvania, New York and beyond. As a land trust, the Foundation conserves forests that will be managed in perpetuity as sustainable working woodlands.
  - French Creek Valley Conservancy is a private 501(c)3 accredited non-profit land trust dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the exceptional water quality, natural habitat, biological diversity and recreational opportunities of the French Creek Watershed in Northwest Pennsylvania.
  - The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has been dedicated to protecting and restoring the region's exceptional natural places since 1932.
  - Clear Lake Authority is the lead entity responsible for acquiring rights-of-way and easements, and the development of the East Branch Trail in partnership with the Oil Creek Alliance.

**Q: What is the legal authority for a proposed entity (i.e., Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act (53 Pa. C.S.A. Ch. 56))?**

- The Steering Committee identified the following "hypothetical entities" that could be established and organized as the countywide outdoor recreation entity:
  - "Crawford County Recreation Authority" established and organized under the Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act.
  - "Crawford County Recreation Association" established as a private, not for profit 501(c)(3) (e.g., Mercer County Trails Association)
  - "Crawford County Recreation Department" established and organized under the direction and authority of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners (e.g., (e.g., Indiana County Parks and Recreation Department)

- “Crawford County Recreation Advisory Board / Commission” established under the direction and authority of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners (e.g., Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation Citizens Advisory Board).
- “Crawford County Regional Council of Governments (COG)” formed and organized under the PA Intergovernmental Cooperation Law (Act 180 of 1972) (e.g., French Creek COG)
- The Steering Committee expressed concern with establishing a COG. The French Creek COG, for example, includes 25 member entities including Crawford County, Crawford Central School District, and 23 municipalities. However, the organization is all volunteer based and is managed by a single municipal representative.
- The Steering Committee (Zach N.) also indicated that in some of the above examples, the County Planning Department could serve as the staff akin to how a number of other PA county planning departments provide staff capacity for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). For example, the Franklin County Planning Department serves as the staff for the Franklin County MPO and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission serves as the staff for the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study MPO.
- Troy T. said that the Steering Committee will continue addressing the other Key Discussion Questions focusing on Market Analysis, Comparable Organizations, Governance Structure and Professional Staffing, and Organization Funding and Sustainability beginning with the August meeting. Troy T. said that he will prepare a list of comparable countywide organizations to support the “market analysis” discussion questions.
- Zach N. said the Steering Committee will ultimately need to recommend a proposed countywide entity and confirm its purpose/mission to include considerations regarding ownership of real property, provision of technical assistance including grant writing and administration, operations and administration, etc. Also, the Steering Committee will need to recommend the necessary staffing that could be supported by a DCNR Circuit Rider Grant, which already has the full support of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners.

### Task 2. Stakeholder Outreach

- Troy T. said that the Steering Committee will need to provide direction on the study’s stakeholder outreach event that is anticipated to be held in September 2025. This will include identifying stakeholders that should be invited to participate, and the event’s date, time, and location.
- Troy T. also said that a survey questionnaire will also be prepared and administered in September to obtain the public’s input on and support for a countywide outdoor recreation entity. Troy T. said that he will need the Steering Committee’s input on the survey questions.

**Next Steps**

- Zach N. said that the dates for the upcoming Steering Committee meetings slated for August – November will need to be confirmed given that a number of members couldn't attend today's kick-off meeting. However, he did say that most of the committee members recommended the 9 AM meeting time here at the County Courthouse building's meeting room.

**Action Items**

Action	Responsibility
Prepare and distribute meeting summary	MBI
Develop a list of comparable countywide entities responsible for outdoor recreation, etc.	MBI
Confirm and schedule recurring Steering Committee meetings	CCPD
Countywide Outdoor Recreation Asset Inventory and Mapping	CCPD
Identification of stakeholder meeting event participants	CCPD and MBI, and to be confirmed by Steering Committee
Preparation of draft public survey questions	MBI and CCPD, and to be confirmed by the Steering Committee

## MEETING SUMMARY

<b>Date:</b>	Monday, August 18, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Crawford County Courthouse, 903 Diamond Park, Meadville, PA 16335
<b>Meeting Name:</b>	DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2
<b>Materials:</b>	Meeting Agenda Key Discussion Questions Comparable Outdoor Recreation Organizations PowerPoint Presentation
<b>Attendees:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable Forests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Graf, Borough's Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Dunlap, Township Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maryann Menanno, City of Meadville Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Neil Fratus, City of Titusville Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Fischer, DCNR Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Thauer, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Klink, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zach Norwood, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samantha (Sam) Travis, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Troy Truax, Michael Baker International, Inc (Michael Baker)

### Welcome and Introductions

- Zach N. opened the meeting by welcoming everyone back to the second meeting of the DCNR Peer Study Steering Committee and thanking them for their attendance and continued participation.
- Zach N. noted that the next three Steering Committee meetings will be held in a different location; to be confirmed and communicated to everyone.
- Zach N. introduced his colleague, Samantha (Sam) Travis, who is the Deputy Director of the Crawford County Planning Department, and then turned the meeting over to the County's Peer Consultant, Troy T.

### Recap of July 21, 2025, Kick-off Meeting

- Troy T. continued the meeting by providing reviewing the meeting agenda (PowerPoint Slide #2) and associated attachments, and provided an overview of the July 21, 2025, kick-off meeting summary as follows:

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

- Acknowledgement (PowerPoint Slide #4)
  - Troy T. stated that the project is being financed through a \$19,800 DCNR Peer Program Grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program and Keystone Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.
  - Troy T. reiterated that the project will determine the feasibility of creating a new countywide parks and recreation entity (e.g., municipal authority, county commission/committee, etc.) responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County. The project outcome sets the stage for a DCNR Circuit Rider Grant that will be used to help fund a professional position for the first four years of the proposed entity's operations.
- Purpose / Need (PowerPoint Slides #5 – 7)
  - Troy T. reiterated that the Peer Study is a key implementation step of the County Comprehensive Plan specifically addresses the plan's "Prosperity" Goal of "Maximizing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities".
  - Troy T. further stated that the Comprehensive Plan's key recommendation to address this goal is to "Create a county-wide Parks and Recreation Authority to support public recreation and trail amenities across the county."
- Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities (PowerPoint Slide #8)
  - Troy T. reiterated the Steering Committee's roles and responsibilities and again thanked everyone for their continued participation in the Peer Study process.
- Scope of Work (PowerPoint Slides #9-10)
  - Troy T. gave an overview of Michael Baker's scope of work, project deliverables, and schedule as follows:
    - Task 1. Steering Committee Meetings (August – November)
      - Five scheduled monthly Steering Committee meetings (July – Nov)
      - Workshop discussion style focusing on addressing key questions
    - Task 2. Stakeholder Outreach (September)
      - One stakeholder outreach meeting
      - Public survey questionnaire
    - Task 3. Draft and Final Feasibility Study (November – December)
      - Concisely written Peer Study report per DCNR requirements
      - Supporting information (e.g., Cooperation Agreement, Bylaws, etc.)
- PA's Outdoor Recreation Economy (PowerPoint Slide #11)
  - Troy T. highlighted the significance of PA's outdoor recreation economy stating that from 2020 to 2021, PA's outdoor recreation economy grew nearly 19 percent, more than three times faster than the U.S. economy.
- Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Assets (PowerPoint Slides #12-13)

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

- Troy T. stated that following last month's kick-off meeting discussion, he conducted additional research on the County's outdoor recreation assets and shared an expanded list of the State Game Lands located in the County and county, municipal, and other assets. He said the list demonstrates the wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities that Crawford County has to offer, and the various federal, state, county, municipal, and non-profit entities involved in their ownership and management. Collectively, these contribute to the Commonwealth's outdoor recreation economy.
  - The Steering Committee noted that the County Forest was listed twice, and the "George M. Humer County Forest" as listed should be kept and the "County Forest" listing be removed.
  - The Steering Committee also recommended that conservancy-owned properties be added to the inventory to show their value and importance to outdoor recreation assets and opportunities for additional conservation partnerships. The WeConservePA.com website provides an inventory and Zach N. stated that the Planning Department has added this inventory of outdoor recreation assets.
  - The Steering Committee also recommend adding the [George] Washington's Trail 1753 to the inventory.

### **Key Discussion Questions**

- Troy T. continued the meeting by facilitating a discussion of the Key Discussion Questions starting with a review of the following Assessment of Needs questions discussed at the July 21, 2025, kick-off meeting:
  - Q1. Assessment of Need
    - *1.a., What is the need/basis for a countywide parks and recreation entity and what is the community/stakeholder support for the proposed entity?*
      - Troy T reviewed the Steering Committee's responses to these questions at the July 21, 2025, kick-off meeting. He stated that the responses help confirm the purpose/need and roles/responsibilities of the proposed countywide entity.
      - Troy T. further stated that the Steering Committee's responses highlighted: (1) how the county's rural municipalities may have limited support / need for a countywide entity, but education is needed to highlight the abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities that the County's rural municipalities have to offer; and (2) that the County's outdoor sporting community needs to be engaged to confirm their support for a countywide entity.
    - *1.b., Who is currently working to maintain a broad view of countywide parks and recreation?*
      - The Steering Committee identified the County Planning Department, The Foundation for Sustainable Forests, French Creek Valley Conservancy, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy as

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

entities having a broad view of and various levels of involvement in countywide outdoor recreation.

- The Steering Committee also noted that the Oil Region Alliance provides the administrative oversight of the Clear Lake Authority's development of the East Branch Trail.
- *1.c., What is the legal authority for a proposed entity?*
  - The Steering Committee identified multiple approaches to forming a countywide entity including considering utilizing the existing Crawford County Planning Department (possibly in conjunction with a County Board of Commissioners appointed citizens' advisory board/commission), or forming a new municipal authority under the Pa. Municipal Authorities Act, or a new not-for-profit association, or a new council of governments under the Pa. Intergovernmental Cooperation Law.
- Troy T. continued by facilitating an open discussion of the following key discussion questions:
  - Q1. Assessment of Need
    - *1.d., What are the benefits to the county and what are the inherent risks (with or without a countywide entity)?*
      - The Steering Committee agreed that the following purposes discussed under Q1.a. would be the benefits of having a countywide entity:
        - Help address local challenges pertaining to the maintenance, operations, funding/financing, marketing and promoting, and future planning of local parks, water trails, etc. (e.g., Titusville has 7 parks, but only has 1-2 individuals that maintain the parks)
        - Serve as an educator to outdoor recreation users to include the importance of caring for outdoor resources and respecting the rights of property owners of which the resources are adjoined.
        - Help reduce redundancy in efforts to plan, maintain, and operate park assets.
        - Help provide technical assistance with capital budgeting and planning, and applying for grants, etc. Also, could help prioritizing projects and reduce competition w/in the county for the same source of funds.
        - Help coordinate among existing programs / departments to provide internal peer-to-peer technical assistance.
        - Help conduct a countywide evaluation of current park resources and determine where redundancies and gaps may exist to serve the existing and future populations.
        - Help communities prepare for and be well-positioned to capitalize on future growth and impacts related to the

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

- outdoor recreation economy, e.g., completing the connection of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail at Titusville.
- Help coordinate assets that cross municipal boundary lines and including leading larger, regional planning efforts like the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, Ernst Trail, etc.
- Serve as the higher-level advocate for the County's extensive outdoor recreation amenities and activities regardless of ownership (federal, state, local, etc.).
- Serve as the lead advocate for promoting Woodcock Park (USACE Dam Lake) to become a state park asset. Woodcock Park is a deteriorating one-of-a-kind gem to serve as a destination amenity for the entire state and beyond.
- Provide a cohesive direction and vision to run, maintain, and sustainably fund the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC); a multi-purpose recreational facility that is managed by the Meadville Area Recreation Authority (MARA) and financed in part through the Meadville Area Recreation Foundation (MARF).
- The Steering Committee also reiterated from the July 21, 2025, kick-off meeting that communities such as Meadville and Titusville that own and maintain their own parks and recreation programs (including facilities), have differing levels of needs/benefits for countywide entity.
  - The City of Meadville, for example, has a dedicated parks and recreation department, plus grant writing expertise, and therefore, may not need / require any additional technical assistance or support, so Meadville residents may question why they should support (via their tax dollars) both city and county level recreation services. However, the City Manager did acknowledge that the countywide entity could be beneficial to the City to coordinate and plan for a regional water trail.
  - Likewise, the City of Titusville, owns and maintains a number of parks and recreation facilities, but unlike Meadville, lacks the staff capacity to maintain its facilities. Therefore, Titusville could directly benefit from a countywide entity to help identify the resources needs to support its maintenance needs to include fostering peer community technical assistance from other municipal programs like Meadville.
- The Steering Committee recommended that a compare/contrast listing of the services / roles that both the municipality and the proposed countywide entity would provide would be beneficial to share with the municipalities, both urban and rural.
- The Steering Committee stated that one of the primary concerns of not having a countywide entity would be the impact to existing local

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

and regional organizations in the county that are experiencing a slowing or lack of activity due to their members aging out and not being replaced with new members or volunteer support. The Steering Committee also expressed concern that the same individuals are being relied upon across numerous organizations and their time capacity is limited due to their numerous roles and responsibilities. Hence, a countywide organization is therefore necessary to help identify the resources needed to fill these capacity gaps.

- Q2. Market Analysis

- *2.a., Who are the benefactors of the proposed entity, i.e., what recreation organizations will it coordinate with?*
  - The Steering Committee identified that various federal, state, and local owners/managers of the Countywide outdoor recreational assets inventoried in Slide #12 of the PowerPoint presentation (Attachment #4), plus the various entities identified under Question 1.b.
- *2.b., Are there any existing comparable organizations that the proposed entity would conflict with, i.e., duplicate services, etc.?*
  - The Steering Committee confirmed that other than the County Planning Department, there is no other countywide entity(ies) that has a role or involvement in outdoor recreation.
- *2.c., What other interested business and community stakeholders/partners would the countywide entity interact and engage with?*
  - In addition to the entities specified under the response to Question 2.a., the Steering Committee recommended that the proposed entity would be a needed partner to augment the Crawford County Visitors Bureau's efforts to further promote tourism (including outdoor recreation) as well as the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to help support and grow the local business economy. For example, large businesses would benefit from gaining a broader understanding of the quality of life benefits that outdoor recreation opportunities provide to existing and prospective workers, plus how local small businesses can leverage outdoor recreation to support their business growth opportunities (to include consideration of establishing “Trail Town” communities like Titusville).

- Q3. Comparable Organizations

- *3.a., What comparable county or multi-municipal recreation authorities exist within Pennsylvania?*
  - Troy T. shared and reviewed the inventory of comparable outdoor recreation organizations provided in Attachment #3.
- *3.b., What are their respective governance structures, responsibilities, professional staff, funding, etc.?*

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

- Of the numerous countywide organizations listed, the Steering Committee identified Indiana County Parks & Trails and Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority are most comparable to Crawford County and recommended having Troy T. obtain more information from each entity to determine their respective staff sizes, annual budgets, bylaws, and sources of funding and revenue to include confirming the percentage of their revenues generated from their respective “Friends” 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. In addition, the Steering Committee recommended further research on the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks & Recreation Department, which could serve as a potential “growth and expansion” model for Crawford County.
- The Steering Committee also noted the “Trails at Jakes Rocks” mountain biking trail in Warren County as an example of how a rural PA county is leveraging outdoor recreation to promote its local economy. The Warren County email contact will be provided to Troy T.
- Troy T. acknowledged the Steering Committee’s recommendations and stated that he will proceed with contacting each to obtain the additional information in advance of the Steering Committee’s September meeting.

○ Q4. Governance Structure and Professional Staffing

- *4.a., What is the governance structure of the proposed countywide entity?*
- The Steering Committee discussed the potential of having the Crawford County Planning Department (CCPD) serve as the countywide entity and cited the Bessemer Trail Project as an example where the CCPD played an instrumental role with its scoping, funding, and implementation. Specifically, the CCPD worked with other partners as follows:
  - French Creek Valley Conservancy – Landowner that dedicated the trail easement for the project and owns the trail.
  - Economic Progress Alliance – Lead the project scoping and funding strategy.
  - CCPD – Served as the eligible applicant and provided technical assistance to prepare and submit the grant application.
  - French Creek Recreation Trails – Provides trail management and maintenance.
- The Steering Committee further stated that Crawford County has numerous outdoor recreation / conservation organizations that have diminishing capacity to continue carrying out their roles and responsibilities, and that a county level entity (like the CCPD) could possibly help rebuild their capacities to ensure their efforts and assets

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

that they own/maintain remain viable in the future. Examples, cited include:

- Clear Lake Authority – participation in this organization is diminishing due to aging out and lack of new involvement; hence this org needs support from the County level to keep its mission going.
- French Creek Valley COG – another example where county-level support and leadership could be helpful.
- The Steering Committee noted that the current County Board of Commissioners are supportive of the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendation to establish a countywide entity responsible for outdoor recreation matters and could possibly support a recommendation to have the CCPD serve in this role. Having a county department entity serving in this role provides stability and consistent staff support dedicated to the work.
- Furthermore, the Steering Committee noted the county’s strong ethos of volunteerism and community involvement, and as an example ~190 non-profits participated in “Crawford Gives” campaign. Also, the Steering Committee cited the PA Outdoor Corps; a Meadville-based young adult corps of paid volunteer that needs to be involved in the countywide outdoor recreation efforts (DCNR pays them, and the local organization contribute to funding the resource for their needs via an application process)
- The Steering Committee agreed that further discussion and exploration of the CCPD serving in this role is important and discussed the need to determine what a full-time staff person (via the DCNR Circuit Rider grant opportunity) would cost over the first four years and beyond (i.e., years 5 - 10). Troy T. stated that he as a pro forma model developed for this analysis that he’ll prepare for discussion with the Steering Committee at this September meeting. Additionally, it was recommended that the County’s Hotel Tax be evaluated to determine the current tax rate and if there would be any opportunity to use some of the tax revenue to support the long-term funding of the staff position. As discussed, the hotel tax would be derived from hotel stays and not directly from Crawford County resident tax payments.

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

### Task 2. Stakeholder Outreach

- Troy T. next discussed the Task 2 Stakeholder Outreach activities that include conducting an in-person meeting with various outdoor recreation stakeholders and conducting a public survey questionnaire. The Steering Committee recommended conducting the public survey first and use the responses to help prepare for the Stakeholder meeting.
  - Public Survey:
    - The survey would be administered online (via SurveyMonkey) to allow for ease of access via a variety of computer and handheld devices.
    - The survey would include an introductory narrative explaining the context of the project and study (i.e., how we got here and what the potential benefits are of a countywide entity).
    - The survey should be promoted to high school students and younger adults.
    - The survey questions would ask the public to share the feedback and support of a countywide entity and also include their ranking of the potential benefits.
    - The survey should be administered over a three week period in September 2025.
  - Stakeholder Meeting:
    - The meeting invitees would represent federal, state, and local owners of outdoor recreation assets as well as applicable conservancies and other non-profits, business owners, the County Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
    - The Steering Committee agreed to each provide up to five stakeholder recommendations to CCPD and MBI in advance of the September Steering Committee meeting.
    - The stakeholder meeting will be scheduled for a time in late September / early October and the Steering Committee will discuss further in September. The stakeholder meeting should include both daytime and evening sessions.

### Discussion and Next Steps

- Zach N. and Troy T. closed the meeting by confirming the dates of the remaining three Steering Committee meetings as follows:
  - Wed., September 10, 2025
  - Wed., October 8, 2025
  - Wed. November 12, 2025
- Zach N. reiterated that the location for the next three meetings will be confirmed.

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #2

### Action Items

Action	Responsibility
Prepare and distribute meeting summary	MBI
Update countywide inventory of outdoor parks and recreation assets to include conservancy owned lands	MBI and CCPD
Conduct telephone interviews with Indiana County Parks & Trails, Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority, and Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks & Recreation Department	MBI
Prepare proforma analysis of potential CCPD staff person costs	MBI
Prepare draft public survey questionnaire	MBI, CCPD, and Steering Committee
Identify list of stakeholder meeting participants	Steering Committee, CCPD, and MBI

## MEETING SUMMARY

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, September 10, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Crawford County Courthouse, 903 Diamond Park, Meadville, PA 16335
<b>Meeting Name:</b>	DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #3
<b>Materials:</b>	Meeting Agenda Key Discussion Questions Comparable Outdoor Recreation Organizations Draft Public Survey Questionnaire PowerPoint Presentation
<b>Attendees:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable Forests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Graf, Borough's Association Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Jill Dunlap, Township Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maryann Menanno, City of Meadville Representative <input type="checkbox"/> (Vacant), Titusville Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Fischer, DCNR Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Thauer, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Klink, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zach Norwood, Crawford County Planning Department <input type="checkbox"/> Samantha (Sam) Travis, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Troy Truax, Michael Baker International, Inc (Michael Baker)

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Zach N. opened the meeting by welcoming everyone back to the third meeting of the DCNR Peer Study Steering Committee and thanking them for their attendance and continued participation.

### **Recap of August 18, 2025, Kick-off Meeting**

- Troy T. continued the meeting by providing a brief summary review of the August 18<sup>th</sup> meeting discussion and outcomes, and stated that in the essence of time, he would proceed with reviewing critical agenda discussion items beginning with completing the remaining Key Discussion Questions specified in Agenda Attachment #2.

### **Key Discussion Questions**

- Troy T. continued the meeting by facilitating a discussion of the Key Discussion Questions outlined in Agenda Attachment #2, starting with a review of the following Assessment of Needs questions discussed at the July 21, 2025, kick-off meeting:
  - o Q5. Organization Funding and Sustainability
    - *a. How will the proposed countywide entity be funded in the immediate (0-4 years) and long-term (Year 5 and beyond)?*
      - The Steering Committee recommended that the countywide entity should be a Crawford County government funded, full-time, dedicated staffed person responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County, and working with the County Maintenance Department on the ownership, maintenance, and stewardship of the County Fairgrounds and County Forest-owned properties.
      - The Steering Committee recommended that the full-time staff position should be housed within an existing county department (e.g., County Planning Department) as opposed to creating a new county department (e.g., Parks and Recreation Dept). An existing and well-established department provides a solid foundation and support network to ensure the staff person's success and growth in the new role. This also provides a "proof of concept" approach before a newly created county funded department may be considered in the future.
    - *b. How will the countywide entity remain solvent and sustainable?*
      - The Steering Committee discussed the opportunity for the County Commissioners to consider designating a portion of the County's 5% hotel occupancy tax revenue as a potential source to fund the position. This may be considered among other options that the Commissioners are currently evaluating. Currently, the hotel occupancy tax generates ~\$500k / year, and per Crawford County Ordinance No. 1-2020, the generated revenue (minus a 4% administration fee of the amount collected) is allocated to a Recognized Tourist Promotion Agency (i.e., Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau).
      - The Steering Committee also identified Act 13 Marcellus Shale funds as a potential source of funding consistent with those utilized by other comparable PA organizations do. However, Crawford County's Act 13 revenues are limited and have been dwindling year over year. For example, the county received \$120,000 in 2024, but only \$80,000 this year).
      - The Steering Committee also identified grants as another source of funding (used primarily for planning, design, and construction projects; not operations). On a statewide level, certain peer counties like Cambria and Indiana have annually received over \$1,000/capita through grants, and that the full-time Crawford County

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #3

staff position could help leverage more recreation and conservation grant funds for Crawford County and increase its capture share of available state funds.

- The Steering Committee recommended prioritizing the mission and vision of the full-time county staff person first and then focus on relevant sources of funding and grant dollars. Otherwise, sources of funding may begin to shape and inadvertently change the focus of the position.
- The Steering Committee also cited the need for the County to establish or utilize an existing a non-profit 501(c)(3) as a means to conduct fundraising campaigns and receive tax-exempt financial gifts. The Community Foundation of the Alleghenies was cited as an example of an existing non-profit.
- The Steering Committee also noted Allegheny College's Community Impact Hub program as a potential technical assistance means to augment the full-time position's efforts. Zach said the County Planning Department is readily familiar with the Community Impact Hub program and it works best when there is a clearly defined project identified instead of an open request for assistance. This program may be a good fit after the first year of the staff position's has been completed to help fill in needed capacity gaps.
- *c. How should performance be measured?*
  - The Steering Committee acknowledged that the new countywide outdoor recreation entity should begin with one full-time position and grow from there. The full-time staff position would report to an appointed Advisory Board, which would then help the staff position develop an annual work program and identify priority projects, measurable outcomes/deliverables, and sources of funding that should be achieved and pursued during performance year. Performance should be based on the outcomes/achievements to meeting the annual priorities and overall program objectives. For example, focusing on a few, impactful projects like Woodcock Park, Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC), etc. would be most beneficial.
  - The Steering Committee also discussed the County's DCNR C2P2 application to prepare a countywide parks and recreation master plan, which would be one of the staff position's priority projects to oversee and manage.

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #3

### Task 2. Stakeholder Outreach

- The Steering Committee brainstormed a list of stakeholders to be invited to the planned Stakeholder Committee meeting, which will be scheduled for a time in early to mid-October. The stakeholders identified included representatives from the 3 P's, i.e., "Producers", "Providers" and "Professionals".

### Discussion and Next Steps

- Due to time constraints, the Steering Committee was asked to review the draft public survey questionnaire and provide review comments on the questions by Friday, Sept. 12.
- The survey questionnaire will be published and administered through the County Planning Department's Monday.com survey system.
- The remaining two Steering Committee meeting dates are as follows:
  - Wed., October 8, 2025
  - Wed. November 12, 2025

### Action Items

Action	Responsibility
Prepare and distribute meeting summary	MBI
Finalize proforma analysis of potential CCPD staff person costs	MBI
Prepare and finalize draft public survey questionnaire	MBI, CCPD, and Steering Committee
Publish and administer public survey	MBI and CCPD
Finalize list of stakeholder meeting participants.	Steering Committee, CCPD, and MBI
Schedule distribute invitations to the stakeholder meeting	MBI and CCPD

## MEETING SUMMARY

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, October 8, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Crawford County Courthouse, 903 Diamond Park, Meadville, PA 16335
<b>Meeting Name:</b>	DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #4
<b>Materials:</b>	Meeting Agenda Key Discussion Questions Comparable Outdoor Recreation Organizations Draft Public Survey Questionnaire PowerPoint Presentation
<b>Attendees:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable Forests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Graf, Borough's Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Dunlap, Township Association Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Maryann Menanno, City of Meadville Representative <input type="checkbox"/> (Vacant), Titusville Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Fischer, DCNR Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Thauer, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Klink, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zach Norwood, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samantha (Sam) Travis, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Troy Truax, Michael Baker International, Inc (Michael Baker)

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Troy T. opened the meeting by welcoming everyone back to the fourth meeting of the DCNR Peer Study Steering Committee and thanking them for their attendance and continued participation.

### **Recap of September 10, 2025, Kick-off Meeting**

- Troy T. continued the meeting by providing a brief summary review of the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting discussion and outcomes and asked if anyone had any questions/comments on the summary. The Steering Committee members acknowledged receipt of the summary and confirmed they had no questions or comments.

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #4

### **Key Discussion Questions**

- Troy T. confirmed that all of the key discussion questions have been addressed following the September 10<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting and the Steering Committee responses are fully populated in Agenda Attachment #2, Key Discussion Questions matrix. Troy stated that these responses will be incorporated into the Peer Study report.

### **Task 2. Stakeholder Outreach**

- Troy T. continued the meeting by reviewing the proposed approach and agenda outlined in Attachment #3 for the October 21, 2025, Stakeholder Meeting. Troy stated that meeting will be structured to promote awareness of and stakeholder involvement in the PA Elevate initiative; a new business engagement initiative designed to strengthen Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry by engaging directly with the businesses that drive it. The [PA Elevate Communications Toolkit](#) will be integrated into the meeting discussion and presentation materials, along with supporting information pertaining to *Crawford Inspired* and the DCNR Peer Study effort. "Producers", "Providers" and "Professionals".
- Troy T. said that by using the Elevate model approach, this will help position Crawford County as contributor to the statewide outdoor recreation economy and establish a solid starting point for the proposed Circuit Rider countywide outdoor recreation coordinator position.
- Troy T. reviewed the proposed meeting agenda. The Steering Committee concurred with the proposed agenda outline with the following proposed modifications/additions:
  - o Welcome and Introductions – The Steering Committee recommended that at least one of the County Commissioners should be part of the welcome and introductions and suggested Commissioner Seeley may be ideal given that his wife works for DCNR. In addition, Zach N. would be included in the welcome and introductions.
  - o *Crawford Inspired* Comprehensive Plan – It was confirmed that Zach N. would follow the welcome and introductions by providing an overview of the newly adopted County Comprehensive Plan and its focus on promoting the county's outdoor recreation economy and the need to have a countywide coordination of the numerous outdoor recreation assets and amenities.
  - o Elevate Initiative – It was confirmed that "Resource Development" should be added to the key challenges. The Steering Committee also discussed the potential need to have a flexible approach to the breakout sessions based on the total number of attendees. Troy T. confirmed that the breakout groups will be self-facilitated, but he and members of the Steering Committee should be available to assist where necessary. Zach N. confirmed that the county will provide easels and flip charts, etc. for the breakout groups.
- Zach N. and Sam T. confirmed that the County will provide light refreshments for the Stakeholder meeting.
- The Steering Committee members were encouraged to help spread the word about the survey and Stakeholder Meeting event. Zach N. said that he would share the Excel spreadsheet containing the stakeholder list.
- Troy T. continued the discussion by sharing the current results from the public survey administered through the Planning Department's Monday.com subscription. Troy T. suggested that the survey period be extended until the end of October and that it be

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #4

promoted at the October 21<sup>st</sup> Stakeholder Meeting. The Steering Committee concurred and said that they would help further promote the survey through several upcoming municipal officials' annual meetings and through the COG.

- Troy T. said that he would have postcards with the survey link and QR code printed for distribution at the Stakeholder Meeting.
- Annie M. recommended that Woodcock Lake Park be added to the list of outdoor recreation selection options under survey question #1. The Steering Committee agreed and noted that since the survey is a public opinion survey this addition would not have a significant impact on the survey response outcomes.
- The Steering Committee had an open discussion on following items:
  - o There is a lack of an outdoor recreation culture in Crawford County.
  - o Crawford County residents don't fully embrace an outdoor recreation economy.
  - o There needs to be a comprehensive inventory of Crawford County's outdoor recreation assets and amenities using the inventory that has been developed by the Steering Committee and a single website that promotes and provides information about each asset. Currently, the Crawford County Visitors Bureau's website provides and promotes key outdoor recreation assets but it's not a comprehensive inventory. The proposed countywide outdoor recreation coordinator should coordinate with the Visitors Bureau to develop and publish this comprehensive inventory on a single website.
  - o Ohio Metroparks could serve as a model for Crawford County's promotion, coordination, and development of the numerous outdoor recreation assets located in the county.
  - o The following outdoor recreation assets were identified for addition to the Steering Committee's comprehensive inventory:
    - Federal - Oil Region National Heritage Area
    - State - Cornplanter State Forest – Ingraham Tract
    - Municipal - Jordan Park, which was incorrectly identified as the Erie Street Baseball/Softball Field
    - Municipal - Northwestern REC Community Forest
    - Conservation lands owned by the French Creek Conservancy and Foundation for Sustainable Forests (Annie M. and Brenda C. to confirm and provide their respective organization's conservation land property information via GIS shapefiles to Troy T.)
- Following the discussion, Troy T. confirmed the following checklist of items that will need to be prepared, and copies brought to the Stakeholder Meeting (printing will be completed by Crawford County Planning Department as part of its Peer Program Grant match):
  - o Sign-in Sheet
  - o Agenda
  - o Public survey postcards w/survey link and QR code
  - o 34 x 44 map displaying the location of the federal, state, municipal, and conservation-owned resources located in the county
  - o 11 x 17 of the PowerPoint slide listing the mapped assets
  - o Elevate Toolkit information
  - o PowerPoint Presentation (Troy T. to prepare and integrate Crawford County Planning Department slides to be provided to by Zach N./Sam T.)

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #4

### **Discussion and Next Steps**

- Troy T. thanked everyone for attending and confirmed the upcoming meeting dates:
  - Tues. October 21, 2025, Stakeholder Meeting
  - Wed. November 12, 2025, Steering Committee Meeting #5 (Final Meeting)

### **Action Items**

Action	Responsibility
Prepare and distribute meeting summary	MBI
Finalize proforma analysis of potential CCPD staff person costs	MBI
Prepare for the Oct 21 Stakeholder Meeting event	MBI and CCPD
Distribute stakeholder list to Steering Committee	CCPD

## MEETING SUMMARY

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, November 12, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
<b>Location:</b>	Crawford County Courthouse, 903 Diamond Park, Meadville, PA 16335
<b>Meeting Name:</b>	DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #5
<b>Materials:</b>	Meeting Agenda Draft Crawford County Peer Study Report
<b>Attendees:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable Forests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Graf, Borough's Association Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Dunlap, Township Association Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Maryann Menanno, City of Meadville Representative <input type="checkbox"/> (Vacant), Titusville Representative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brenda Costa, French Creek Valley Conservancy <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Fischer, DCNR Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Thauer, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Klink, Crawford County Planning Commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samantha (Sam) Travis, Crawford County Planning Department <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Troy Truax, Michael Baker International, Inc (Michael Baker)

### Welcome and Introductions

- Troy T. opened the meeting by welcoming everyone back to the fifth and final meeting of the DCNR Peer Study Steering Committee and thanking them for their attendance and continued participation.
- Troy T. stated that the meeting will focus on reviewing the Draft Crawford County Peer Study report and discussing the Steering Committee's review comments.

### Draft Crawford County Peer Study

- Troy T. continued the meeting by providing a summary overview of the Draft Peer Study document contents and facilitated a section-by-section review and discussion with the Steering Committee to identify and discuss their respective comments as follows:
  - o Cover: Specify that the Venango County Park Improvement Project photo was funded by a DCNR C2P2 Grant.
  - o Page 4 – Update public survey infographic (to be provided by the County Planning Office)
  - o Page 4 – Incorporate the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau to the narrative in addition to the Crawford County Planning Office.

## Meeting Summary – DCNR Peer Feasibility Study Steering Committee Meeting #5

- Page 5 – Double-check the miles of trails specified in the infographic to make sure PA Bike Routes are not included. Also, double-check the Cornplanter State Forest’s Ingraham Tract acreage. Should be 94 acres.
- Page 6 – Remove Meade Road Park; add Bicentennial Park; remove duplication of French Creek Water Trail; remove duplication of Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
- Page 11 – Add a discussion about the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the need for the proposed Outdoor Recreation Position to foster a collaborative and cooperative working relationship between the Visitors Bureau and Planning Office.
- Page 12 – Specify “\$0.60/hour” in the text.
- Page 12 – Add the Act 13 Marcellus Shale as an additional source of revenue that could be used to fund the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator position.
- Page 13 – Specify “\$0.60/hour” in the table.
- Page 13 – Increase the fringe benefit total by 3% annually.
- Page 14 – Specify “April – August 2026” and “September – December 2026” timeframes for the second and third recommendations, respectively.

### **Discussion and Next Steps**

- Troy T. confirmed that the Steering Committee’s comments would be addressed in the final draft of the Peer Study, which he anticipates having submitted to the County Planning Office within the next week.
- Sam T. confirmed that the proposed final Peer Study would be presented to the County Planning Commission at its November 2025 meeting and also submitted to DCNR for review and approval. The proposed final Peer Study will then be presented to the County Board of Commissioners at its December 2025 meeting for adoption. Sam encouraged members of the Steering Committee to consider attending the Board of Commissioners’ meeting to advocate for the Study’s approval and implementation.

### **Action Items**

Action	Responsibility
Prepare revised Draft Peer Study and submit to the Crawford County Planning Office	MBI
Submit revised Draft Peer Study to DCNR for review and approval	Crawford County Planning Office
Present Draft Peer Study to County Planning Commission	Crawford County Planning Office
Present Final Peer Study to the County Board of Commissioners	Crawford County Planning Office

## Appendix B – Steering Committee Feasibility Study Questions

## **Crawford County DCNR Peer Study Steering Committee**

### **Key Discussion Questions**

<b>1. Assessment of Need</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<p>a. What is the need/basis for a countywide parks and recreation entity and what is the community/stakeholder support for the proposed entity?</p>	<p>The Steering Committee expressed strong support and need for a countywide parks and recreation entity that would be responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County. Specifically, the entity could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help address local challenges pertaining to the maintenance, operations, funding/financing, marketing and promoting, and future planning of local parks, water trails, etc. (e.g., Titusville has 7 parks, but only has 1-2 individuals that maintain the parks)</li> <li>• Serve as an educator to outdoor recreation users to include the importance of caring for outdoor resources and respecting the rights of property owners of which the resources are adjoined.</li> <li>• Help reduce redundancy in efforts to plan, maintain, and operate park assets.</li> <li>• Help provide technical assistance with capital budgeting and planning, and applying for grants, etc. Also, could help prioritizing projects and reduce competition w/in the county for the same source of funds.</li> <li>• Help coordinate among existing programs / departments to provide internal peer-to-peer technical assistance.</li> <li>• Help conduct a countywide evaluation of current park resources and determine where redundancies and gaps may exist to serve the existing and future populations.</li> <li>• Help communities prepare for and be well-positioned to capitalize on future growth and impacts related to the outdoor recreation economy, e.g., completing the connection of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail at Titusville.</li> <li>• Help coordinate assets that cross municipal boundary lines and including leading larger, regional planning efforts like the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, Ernst Trail, etc.</li> <li>• Serve as the higher-level advocate for the County's extensive outdoor recreation amenities and activities regardless of ownership (federal, state, local, etc.).</li> <li>• Serve as the lead advocate for promoting Woodcock Park (USACE Dam Lake) to become a state park asset. Woodcock Park is a deteriorating one-of-a-kind gem to serve as a destination amenity for the entire state and beyond.</li> <li>• Provide a cohesive direction and vision to run, maintain, and sustainably fund the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC); a multi-purpose recreational facility that is managed by the Meadville Area Recreation Authority (MARA) and financed in part through the Meadville Area Recreation Foundation (MARF).</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee also expressed concern that the county's more rural municipalities that don't have park facilities and have limited financial means may not be in support of having their resident's tax dollars devoted to a countywide organization that may not provide a direct benefit to their needs/interests. However, education is needed to define Crawford County's outdoor recreation as including the rural areas that include many of the State Game Land areas that are used for hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and other passive outdoor recreation activities. To that end, the Steering Committee also stressed the need to hear from the county's outdoor sporting community (hunting, fishing, etc.) and business owners on their perspectives of the need and support for a countywide entity.</p>
<p>b. Who is currently working to maintain a broad view of countywide parks and recreation?</p>	<p>Among its many duties and responsibilities, the Crawford County Planning Department spends an ample amount of time and resources (e.g., GIS mapping, planning studies – Crawford County Greenways Plan (2009) –, etc.) focusing on countywide and local parks and recreation initiatives.</p> <p>In addition, the Steering Committee noted the following non-profit organizations that are working in Crawford County and beyond on various conservation initiatives and could be provide additional support to a countywide entity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land trust and outreach organization dedicated to protecting the working forests of Pennsylvania, New York and beyond. As a land trust, the Foundation conserves forests that will be managed in perpetuity as sustainable working woodlands.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French Creek Valley Conservancy is a private 501(c)3 accredited non-profit land trust dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the exceptional water quality, natural habitat, biological diversity and recreational opportunities of the French Creek Watershed in Northwest Pennsylvania.</li> <li>The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has been dedicated to protecting and restoring the region's exceptional natural places since 1932.</li> <li>Clear Lake Authority is the lead entity responsible for acquiring rights-of-way and easements, and the development of the East Branch Trail in partnership with the Oil Creek Alliance.</li> </ul>
c. What is the legal authority for a proposed entity (i.e., Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act (53 Pa. C.S.A. Ch. 56))?	<p>The Steering Committee identified the following "hypothetical entities" that could be established and organized as the countywide outdoor recreation entity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Crawford County Recreation Authority" established and organized under the Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act.</li> <li>"Crawford County Recreation Association" established as a private, not for profit 501(c)(3) (e.g., Mercer County Trails Association)</li> <li>"Crawford County Recreation Department" established and organized under the direction and authority of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners (e.g., (e.g., Indiana County Parks and Recreation Department)</li> <li>"Crawford County Recreation Advisory Board / Commission" established under the direction and authority of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners (e.g., Westmoreland County Parks &amp; Recreation Citizens Advisory Board).</li> <li>"Crawford County Regional Council of Governments (COG)" formed and organized under the PA Intergovernmental Cooperation Law (Act 180 of 1972) (e.g., French Creek COG)</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee expressed concern with establishing a COG. The French Creek COG, for example, includes 25 member entities including Crawford County, Crawford Central School District, and 23 municipalities. However, the organization is all volunteer based and is managed by a single municipal representative.</p> <p>The Steering Committee (Zach N.) also indicated that in some of the above examples, the County Planning Department could serve as the staff akin to how a number of other PA county planning departments provide staff capacity for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). For example, the Franklin County Planning Department serves as the staff for the Franklin County MPO and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission serves as the staff for the Harrisburg Area Transportation Study MPO.</p>
d. What are the benefits to the county and what are the inherent risks (with or without a countywide entity)?	<p>The Steering Committee agreed that the following purposes discussed under Q1.a. would be the benefits of having a countywide entity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help address local challenges pertaining to the maintenance, operations, funding/financing, marketing and promoting, and future planning of local parks, water trails, etc. (e.g., Titusville has 7 parks, but only has 1-2 individuals that maintain the parks)</li> <li>Serve as an educator to outdoor recreation users to include the importance of caring for outdoor resources and respecting the rights of property owners of which the resources are adjoined.</li> <li>Help reduce redundancy in efforts to plan, maintain, and operate park assets.</li> <li>Help provide technical assistance with capital budgeting and planning, and applying for grants, etc. Also, could help prioritizing projects and reduce competition w/in the county for the same source of funds.</li> <li>Help coordinate among existing programs / departments to provide internal peer-to-peer technical assistance.</li> <li>Help conduct a countywide evaluation of current park resources and determine where redundancies and gaps may exist to serve the existing and future populations.</li> <li>Help communities prepare for and be well-positioned to capitalize on future growth and impacts related to the outdoor recreation economy, e.g., completing the connection of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail at Titusville.</li> <li>Help coordinate assets that cross municipal boundary lines and including leading larger, regional planning efforts like the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, Ernst Trail, etc.</li> <li>Serve as the higher-level advocate for the County's extensive outdoor recreation amenities and activities regardless of ownership (federal, state, local, etc.).</li> <li>Serve as the lead advocate for promoting Woodcock Park (USACE Dam Lake) to become a state park asset. Woodcock Park is a deteriorating one-of-a-kind gem to serve as a destination amenity for the entire state and beyond.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a cohesive direction and vision to run, maintain, and sustainably fund the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC); a multi-purpose recreational facility that is managed by the Meadville Area Recreation Authority (MARA) and financed in part through the Meadville Area Recreation Foundation (MARF).</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee also reiterated from the July 21, 2025, kick-off meeting that communities such as Meadville and Titusville that own and maintain their own parks and recreation programs (including facilities), have differing levels of needs/benefits for countywide entity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City of Meadville, for example, has a dedicated parks and recreation department, plus grant writing expertise, and therefore, may not need / require any additional technical assistance or support, so Meadville residents may question why they should support (via their tax dollars) both city and county level recreation services. However, the City Manager did acknowledge that the countywide entity could be beneficial to the City to coordinate and plan for a regional water trail.</li> <li>Likewise, the City of Titusville, owns and maintains a number of parks and recreation facilities, but unlike Meadville, lacks the staff capacity to maintain its facilities. Therefore, Titusville could directly benefit from a countywide entity to help identify the resources needs to support its maintenance needs to include fostering peer community technical assistance from other municipal programs like Meadville.</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee recommended that a compare/contrast listing of the services / roles that both the municipality and the proposed countywide entity would provide would be beneficial to share with the municipalities, both urban and rural.</p> <p>The Steering Committee stated that one of the primary concerns of not having a countywide entity would be the impact to existing local and regional organizations in the county that are experiencing a slowing or lack of activity due to their members aging out and not being replaced with new members or volunteer support. The Steering Committee also expressed concern that the same individuals are being relied upon across numerous organizations and their time capacity is limited due to their numerous roles and responsibilities. Hence, a countywide organization is therefore necessary to help identify the resources needed to fill these capacity gaps.</p>
<b>2. Market Analysis</b>	<b>Responses</b>
a. Who are the benefactors of the proposed entity, i.e., what recreation organizations will it coordinate with?	The Steering Committee identified that various federal, state, and local owners/managers of the Countywide outdoor recreational assets inventoried in Slide #12 of the PowerPoint presentation (Attachment #4), plus the various entities identified under Question 1.b.
b. Are there any existing comparable organizations that the proposed entity would conflict with, i.e., duplicate services, etc.?	The Steering Committee confirmed that other than the County Planning Department, there is no other countywide entity(ies) that has a role or involvement in outdoor recreation.
c. What other interested business and community stakeholders/partners would the countywide entity interact and engage with?	In addition to the entities specified under the response to Question 2.a., the Steering Committee recommended that the proposed entity would be a needed partner to augment the Crawford County Visitors Bureau's efforts to further promote tourism (including outdoor recreation) as well as the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to help support and grow the local business economy. For example, large businesses would benefit from gaining a broader understanding of the quality of life benefits that outdoor recreation opportunities provide to existing and prospective workers, plus how local small businesses can leverage outdoor recreation to support their business growth opportunities (to include consideration of establishing "Trail Town" communities like Titusville).
<b>3. Comparable Organizations</b>	
a. What comparable county or multi-municipal recreation authorities exist within Pennsylvania?	MBI prepared and reviewed an inventory of comparable outdoor recreation organizations with the Steering Committee (Attachment #03).
b. What are their respective governance structures, responsibilities, professional staff, funding, etc.?	Of the numerous countywide organizations listed, the Steering Committee identified Indiana County Parks & Trails and Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority are most comparable to Crawford County and recommended having Troy T. obtain more information from each entity to determine their respective staff sizes, annual budgets, bylaws, and sources of funding and revenue to include confirming the percentage of their revenues generated from their respective "Friends" 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. In addition, the Steering Committee recommended further research on the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks & Recreation Department, which could serve as a potential "growth and expansion" model for Crawford County.

	<p>The Steering Committee also noted the “Trails at Jakes Rocks” mountain biking trail in Warren County as an example of how a rural PA county is leveraging outdoor recreation to promote its local economy. The Warren County email contact will be provided to MBI.</p>
<b>4. Governance Structure and Professional Staffing</b>	<b>Responses</b>
a. What is the governance structure of the proposed countywide entity?	<p>The Steering Committee also discussed the potential of having the Crawford County Planning Department (CCPD) serve as the countywide entity and cited the Bessemer Trail Project as an example where the CCPD played an instrumental role with its scoping, funding, and implementation. Specifically, the CCPD worked with other partners as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French Creek Valley Conservancy – Landowner that dedicated the trail easement for the project and owns the trail.</li> <li>• Economic Progress Alliance – Lead the project scoping and funding strategy.</li> <li>• CCPD – Served as the eligible applicant and provided technical assistance to prepare and submit the grant application.</li> <li>• French Creek Recreation Trails – Provides trail management and maintenance.</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee further stated that Crawford County has numerous outdoor recreation / conservation organizations that have diminishing capacity to continue carrying out their roles and responsibilities, and that a county level entity (like the CCPD) could possibly help rebuild their capacities to ensure their efforts and assets that they own/maintain remain viable in the future. Examples, cited include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear Lake Authority – participation in this organization is diminishing due to aging out and lack of new involvement; hence this org needs support from the County level to keep its mission going.</li> <li>• French Creek Valley COG – another example where county-level support and leadership could be helpful.</li> </ul> <p>The Steering Committee noted that the current County Board of Commissioners are supportive of the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendation to establish a countywide entity responsible for outdoor recreation matters and could possibly support a recommendation to have the CCPD serve in this role. Having a county department entity serving in this role provides stability and consistent staff support dedicated to the work. Furthermore, the Steering Committee noted the county’s strong ethos of volunteerism and community involvement, and as an example ~190 non-profits participated in “Crawford Gives” campaign. Also, the Steering Committee cited the PA Outdoor Corps; a Meadville-based young adult corps of paid volunteer that needs to be involved in the countywide outdoor recreation efforts (DCNR pays them and the local organization contribute to funding the resource for their needs via an application process)</p> <p>The Steering Committee agreed that further discussion and exploration of the CCPD serving in this role is important and discussed the need to determine what a full-time staff person (via the DCNR Circuit Rider grant opportunity) would cost over the first four years and beyond (i.e., years 5 - 10). Troy T. stated that he as a pro forma model developed for this analysis that he’ll prepare for discussion with the Steering Committee at this September meeting. Additionally, it was recommended that the County’s Hotel Tax be evaluated to determine the current tax rate and if there would be any opportunity to use some of the tax revenue to support the long-term funding of the staff position. As discussed, the hotel tax would be derived from hotel stays and not directly from Crawford County resident tax payments.</p>
b. How is the organization professionally staffed and what are the staff’s requisite qualifications and experience?	<p>Of the numerous countywide organizations listed, the Steering Committee identified Indiana County Parks &amp; Trails and Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority are most comparable to Crawford County and recommended having Troy T. obtain more information from each entity to determine their respective staff sizes, annual budgets, bylaws, and sources of funding and revenue to include confirming the percentage of their revenues generated from their respective “Friends” 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. In addition, the Steering Committee recommended further research on the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks &amp; Recreation Department, which could serve as a potential “growth and expansion” model for Crawford County.</p> <p>The Steering Committee also noted the “Trails at Jakes Rocks” mountain biking trail in Warren County as an example of how a rural PA county is leveraging outdoor recreation to promote its local economy. The Warren County email contact will be provided to Troy T.</p> <p>Troy T. acknowledged the Steering Committee’s recommendations and stated that he will proceed with contacting each to obtain the additional information in advance of the Steering Committee’s September meeting.</p> <p>The Steering Committee agreed that further discussion and exploration of the CCPD serving in this role is important and discussed the need to determine what a full-time staff person (via the DCNR Circuit Rider grant opportunity) would cost over the first four years and beyond (i.e.,</p>

	<p>years 5 - 10). Troy T. stated that he as a pro forma model developed for this analysis that he'll prepare for discussion with the Steering Committee at this September meeting. Additionally, it was recommended that the County's Hotel Tax funds be evaluated to determine the current tax rate and if there would be any opportunity to use some of the tax revenue to support the long-term funding of the staff position. As discussed, the hotel tax would be derived from hotel stays and not directly from Crawford County resident tax payments.</p>
<b>5. Organization Funding and Sustainability</b>	<b>Responses</b>
a. How will the proposed countywide entity be funded in the immediate (0-4 years) and long-term (Year 5 and beyond)?	<p>The Steering Committee recommended that the countywide entity should be a Crawford County government funded, full-time, dedicated staffed person responsible for supporting, connecting, and coordinating park, trail, and recreation initiatives throughout Crawford County, and working with the County Maintenance Department on the ownership, maintenance, and stewardship of the County Fairgrounds and County Forest-owned properties.</p> <p>The Steering Committee recommended that the full-time staff position should be housed within an existing county department (e.g., County Planning Department) as opposed to creating a new county department (e.g., Parks and Recreation Dept). An existing and well-established department provides a solid foundation and support network to ensure the staff person's success and growth in the new role. This also provides a "proof of concept" approach before a newly created county funded department may be considered in the future.</p>
b. How will the countywide entity remain solvent and sustainable?	<p>The Steering Committee discussed the opportunity for the County Commissioners to consider designating a portion of the County's 5% hotel occupancy tax revenue as a potential source to fund the position. This may be considered among other options that the Commissioners are currently evaluating. Currently, the hotel occupancy tax generates ~\$500k / year, and per Crawford County Ordinance No. 1-2020, the generated revenue (minus a 4% administration fee of the amount collected) is allocated to a Recognized Tourist Promotion Agency (i.e., Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau).</p> <p>The Steering Committee also identified Act 13 Marcellus Shale funds as a potential source of funding consistent with those utilized by other comparable PA organizations do. However, Crawford County's Act 13 revenues are limited and have been dwindling year over year. For example, the county received \$120,000 in 2024, but only \$80,000 this year).</p> <p>The Steering Committee also identified grants as another source of funding (used primarily for planning, design, and construction projects; not operations). On a statewide level, certain peer counties like Cambria and Indiana have annually received over \$1,000/capita through grants, and that the full-time Crawford County staff position could help leverage more recreation and conservation grant funds for Crawford County and increase its capture share of available state funds.</p> <p>The Steering Committee recommended prioritizing the mission and vision of the full-time county staff person first and then focus on relevant sources of funding and grant dollars. Otherwise, sources of funding may begin to shape and inadvertently change the focus of the position.</p> <p>The Steering Committee also cited the need for the County to establish or utilize an existing a non-profit 501(c)(3) as a means to conduct fundraising campaigns and receive tax-exempt financial gifts. The Community Foundation of the Alleghenies was cited as an example of an existing non-profit.</p> <p>The Steering Committee also noted Allegheny College's Community Impact Hub program as a potential technical assistance means to augment the full-time position's efforts.</p>
c. How should performance be measured?	<p>The Steering Committee acknowledged that the new countywide outdoor recreation entity should begin with one full-time position and grow from there. The full-time staff position would report to an appointed Advisory Board, which would then help the staff position develop an annual work program and identify priority projects, measurable outcomes/deliverables, and sources of funding that should be achieved and pursued during performance year. Performance should be based on the outcomes/achievements to meeting the annual priorities and overall program objectives. For example, focusing on a few, impactful projects like Woodcock Park, Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC), etc. would be most beneficial.</p> <p>The Steering Committee also discussed the County's DCNR C2P2 application to prepare a countywide parks and recreation master plan, which would be one of the staff position's priority projects to oversee and manage.</p>

## Appendix C – Comparable County Organizations

Organization	Mission / Purpose	Roles / Responsibilities	Ownership and Maintenance	Funding/Financing
<b>Allegheny County Department of Parks</b> County Government Department <a href="https://www.allegenycounty.us/Parks-and-Events/Parks">https://www.allegenycounty.us/Parks-and-Events/Parks</a>	To provide quality landscapes, facilities, programs, and special events that meet county-wide needs for leisure and recreation.	Acts as the manager of county-owned properties designed to be used as parkland. The department is charged by the County Executive to guarantee the integrity of park property through thoughtful planning and management, and promoting programs, activities, services, and facilities. Works with the Allegheny County Parks Foundation that commission and conduct surveys, plans and conducts ecological assessments of the county's individual parks and park system to guide the strategic development of improvements in all nine county parks.	12,000 acres spread across nine regional parks, the Allegheny County park system includes beautifully landscaped fields, rugged hiking trails and abundant recreational facilities.	County Government Annual Budget State and federal grants The Allegheny County Parks Foundation is the non-profit organization that partners with Allegheny County to improve, conserve and restore these nine county parks. The Foundation raises public and private funds from foundations, corporations, state and federal grant programs and individuals to design and implement projects in the county's 9 parks.
<b>Bedford County Development Association (BCDA)</b> Private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation Formed: 1995 <a href="https://www.bcda.org/">https://www.bcda.org/</a>	To improve the quality of life in Bedford County through economic development while preserving our heritage and natural resources. To promote and attract businesses to and for Bedford County Pennsylvania.	In addition to promoting economic and industrial development in Bedford County, BCDA has more recently led the county's efforts to promote outdoor recreation and recently completed a DCNR Peer Study that resulted in a DCNR Circuit Rider Grant to hire an Outdoor Recreation Coordinator.	N/A	Circuit Rider position to be funded in part through a 4-year DCNR Circuit Rider Grant coupled with BCDA funding. BCDA has entered into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement with the Bedford County Board of Commissioners.
<b>Blair County Trail, Park, and Recreation Authority</b> Municipal Authority Formed: 2025	To pursue trail, recreational ground and related projects and to work on such efforts with other organizations. To position the county to be part of a nationwide trail and recreation network.	The authority's powers will include acquiring, holding, constructing, financing, improving, maintaining and operating and owning and leasing property.	TBD	Newly organized municipal authority that will replace the County's Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
<b>Bucks County Department of Parks &amp; Recreation</b> County Government Department Formed: 1953 <a href="https://www.buckscounty.gov/162/Parks-Recreation">https://www.buckscounty.gov/162/Parks-Recreation</a>	Seeks in every endeavor to enrich the lives of Bucks County residents by providing well-maintained parks and recreational facilities, preserving open space and historic resources, and offering inclusive educational programs that invite people of all ages to engage with nature.	Provides well-maintained parks and recreational facilities, preserves open space and historic resources, and offers inclusive educational programs that invite people of all ages to engage with nature.	Manages parks, recreational facilities (including swimming pools), historic sites, and nature centers that make up the 9,000+ acre county park system.	County Government Annual Budget State and federal grants

Organization	Mission / Purpose	Roles / Responsibilities	Ownership and Maintenance	Funding/Financing
<b>Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority</b> Municipal Authority Formed: 1994 <a href="https://www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com/">https://www.cambriaconservationrecreation.com/</a>	The Mission of the Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority is to acquire, construct, maintain, operate, and facilitate recreation and environmental remediation facilities in Cambria County and the surrounding region. The Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority exists to create, enhance, and preserve great trail experiences in Cambria County. We strive to provide the residents of Cambria County sustainable recreational trail experiences that connect citizens with the region's assets to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle.	The Authority works closely with and utilizes staff of the Cambria County Conservation District for technical assistance on projects. In addition, volunteers help maintain trails in the following ways: trash pickup, brush trimming and removal, mowing/weeding along trails (equipment not provided). CCCRA provides gloves, vests and trash bags to the volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghost Town Trail – 49-miles</li> <li>• Path of the Flood 14-miles</li> <li>• Jim Mayer Riverswalk Trail – 3.1-miles</li> <li>• Rock Run Recreation Area – 140 miles (ATVs, UTVs, and dirt bikes)</li> </ul>	Friends of the CCRA is a 501c3 non-profit organization and tax-deductible membership donations include these standard benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticker(s) with Cambria County Trails logo</li> <li>• Discounted CCCRA Trail Race Series Registration fees</li> <li>• Annual e-newsletter with project updates</li> </ul> Tribute gift donations are available to those who wish to honor or memorialize a loved one by giving back to the trail through the Friends of the Trails program, which exists to enhance and expand the Cambria County Trails.
<b>Dauphin County Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> County Government Department <a href="https://www.dauphincounty.gov/government/support-services/parks-recreation">https://www.dauphincounty.gov/government/support-services/parks-recreation</a>	Elevates the region making it a better place to live, work, and play by preserving and protecting natural, cultural, and historic resources and recreation opportunities.	Park facility ownership and maintenance, special event programming. Uses community partnerships to cosponsor environmental, historical, arts, and other programs at the county's unique facilities.	Detweiler Park, Fort Hunter Park, Fort Hunter Conservancy, Henninger Farm Covered Bridge, Lykens Glen Park, Sassafras Island, Wiconisco Creek Park, and Wildwood Park.	County Government Annual Budget State and federal grants
<b>Delaware County Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> County Government Department <a href="https://delcopa.gov/departments/parks/index.html">https://delcopa.gov/departments/parks/index.html</a>	To be a source of pride and connection to the outdoors for all Delco residents.	Strives to create a pleasant environment for visitors to enjoy high quality recreation programs, facilities, and services.	Maintains almost a thousand acres of park land throughout the county, providing residents with scenic nature trails, picnic groves, playgrounds, cross country running, and athletic fields for multiple sports.	County Government Annual Budget State and federal grants
<b>Greene County Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> County Government Department <a href="https://greenecountypa.gov/department-parks-recreation">https://greenecountypa.gov/department-parks-recreation</a>	To develop and implement policies and procedures that will enhance the county's recreational staffing to better serve the residents of Greene County in a more timely fashion.	Charged with the direction and overall administration of the operation, planning, development and maintenance of all County parks and recreation facilities and programs. Provides adequate recreation facilities and programs that will create a variety of activities enabling the general public to	Greene County Airport Day Camps Fairgrounds Pools Tennis Courts Mon View Roller Rink Pavilion Rentals Greene River Trail	County Government Annual Budget State and federal grants

Organization	Mission / Purpose	Roles / Responsibilities	Ownership and Maintenance	Funding/Financing
<b>Indiana County Parks and Trails</b> County Government Department <a href="https://indianacountyparks.org/">https://indianacountyparks.org/</a>	A county department responsible for the management and operations of 2,700 acres of parks, natural areas and historic sites along with an extensive regional trail system in Indiana County, PA.	spend their leisure time within Greene County.	Promotion of outdoor recreation in Indiana County.	2,700 acres of parks, natural areas and historic sites along with an extensive regional trail system
<b>Lackawanna County Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> County Government Department <a href="https://www.lackawannacounty.org/government/departments/parks_and_recreation/index.php">https://www.lackawannacounty.org/government/departments/parks_and_recreation/index.php</a>	A county department responsible for the ownership, management, and operations of three county parks, the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour, and the North Pocono Trail System.	Promotion of outdoor recreation in Lackawanna County.	Manages McDade Park, Merlin-Sarnoski Park, Aylesworth Park, Covington Park, the Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour, the North Pocono Trail System, and any future recreational lands acquired, developed and overseen by the Parks Department.	County Government Annual Budget State and federal grants
<b>Lancaster County Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> County Government Department <a href="https://co.lancaster.pa.us/151/Parks-Recreation">https://co.lancaster.pa.us/151/Parks-Recreation</a>	Committed to improving the well-being of County residents by providing facilities and programs that encourage participation in outdoor activities and foster personal action for the conservation of natural resources.	Provide facilities and programs that encourage participation in outdoor activities and foster personal action for the conservation of natural resources.	Manages 19 region parks and three recreational trails, the department manages a total of 2,055 acres.	County Government Annual Budget County Capital Improvements Plan State and federal grants
<b>Lehigh County Parks and Recreation Bureau</b> County Government Department <a href="https://www.lehighcounty.org/departments/parks-and-recreation">https://www.lehighcounty.org/departments/parks-and-recreation</a>	To provide the citizens of Lehigh County with a well-managed network of parks that offer extensive leisure opportunities within an affordable budget.	Works with a network of valued partners to improve the environment, land preservation, programs, and usage of park lands and historic sites in Lehigh County and throughout the region.	Responsible for the development, management, and maintenance of over 4,000 acres of County park land and open space, and maintains four historical sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places.	County Government Annual Budget County Capital Improvements Plan State and federal grants
<b>Mercer County Trails Association</b> Private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation Formed: 2002 <a href="https://www.mctrails.org/">https://www.mctrails.org/</a>	A non-profit organization dedicated to developing and maintaining multipurpose trails in Mercer County, PA It's goals are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote health and fitness by providing a safe and pleasant setting for many recreational activities including biking, jogging, walking, cross-country skiing, in-line skating, and wheelchairs.</li></ul>	Formed with the primary purpose of developing and maintaining multipurpose trails in Mercer County for public use, exclusively for charitable purposes.	Trout Island Trail, Greenville-Jamestown Trail, Lake Wilhelm Trail, and Shenango River Trail (project underway)	Funding sources include contributions from private citizens, foundations, state and federal grants and membership dues.

Organization	Mission / Purpose	Roles / Responsibilities	Ownership and Maintenance	Funding/Financing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage tourism and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.</li> <li>• Help protect our environment and natural resources by making transportation links in our area that are not dependent on the automobile.</li> </ul>			
<b>Somerset County Recreation and Trails Association</b> Private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation Formed: 1991 <a href="https://www.scta.org/">https://www.scta.org/</a>	To convert abandoned railroad rights-of-way to recreational facilities and to promote the preservation and protection of the natural resources found along abandoned railroad rights-of-way. To enhance natural and recreation amenities of a public greenway circling rehabilitated Lake Somerset.	Stewards of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43 Miles of the Great Allegheny Passage</li> <li>• A Public Greenway at Lake Somerset</li> <li>• 9/11 Memorial Trail</li> </ul> Also, helps promote the County's five designated Trail Towns.	Partners with local and regional organizations and volunteers to help maintain the GAP trail, public greenway at Lake Somerset, and 9/11 Memorial Trail.	Funding sources include contributions from private citizens, foundations, state and federal grants, and membership dues.
<b>Union County Trail Authority</b> Municipal Authority Formed: 2018 <a href="https://unioncountytrails.org/">https://unioncountytrails.org/</a>	To develop greenways and trails in support of transportation and recreation in Tioga County and link them with other counties and states as appropriate.	Promotion, fundraising, and volunteer coordination	Owns and manages the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail and for the purpose of advancing future trail development. Adopt-A-Trail is a volunteer program that allows the public to be active participants in preserving the beauty and recreational value of the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail.	Funded by a portion of the county hotel tax in partnership with the Susquehanna River Valley Visitors Bureau and through natural gas impact fees the county receives from the state for purposes of greenways, trails, and open space.
<b>York County Parks and Recreation Department</b> County Government Department Formed: 1968 <a href="https://yorkcountypa.gov/568/Parks-Recreation">https://yorkcountypa.gov/568/Parks-Recreation</a>	To provide the community with a wide variety of activities and to acquire, develop, maintain and preserve lands for future generations to enjoy. Enhances the quality of community life acting as a steward for the environment. In this capacity, it acquires, conserves, and manages park lands and offers a variety of recreational and educational opportunities. Strives to be the County leader in environmental conservation, preservation, and education. Programs and projects in these areas reflect sound management	Creates customer-friendly environments Provides a diversity of natural areas to promote passive recreation Conserves and interprets the natural and historical aspects of park resources Listens and responds to park users Encourages safe and responsible use of park resources Strives to maintain the highest level of professionalism Enters into partnerships and pursues networking Promotes and honors volunteer participation	Maintain over 4,300 acres of parkland in 11 county-owned parks.	County annual budget, state and federal grants York County Parks Foundation Charitable Trust (Private, non-profit 501(c)(3), assists in the development, enhancement, and operating of the parks and park facilities)

Organization	Mission / Purpose	Roles / Responsibilities	Ownership and Maintenance	Funding/Financing
	and stewardship principles and a strong organizational commitment to innovation and public service.	Fosters innovation and creativity in fulfilling mission responsibilities Cultivates new sources of support and funding		
<b>York County Rail Trail Authority</b> Municipal Authority Formed: 1990 <a href="https://www.yorkcountytrails.org/">https://www.yorkcountytrails.org/</a>	To enrich York County communities and countryside through the development of a network of public trails.	Responsible for the development of a network of public trails in York County.	Owes and manages/maintains three trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanover Trolley Trail (HTT) – 8.64 miles</li> <li>• Heritage Rail Trail (HRT) (includes a tunnel) – 21.5 miles</li> <li>• HRT Extension – 5.7 miles</li> </ul>	Funding sources include contributions from private citizens, foundations, state and federal grants, and membership dues. Donations support the work of the Authority to acquire land, plan for new trails, engage engineers and consultants to design and permit new sections of trails, and finally hire contractors to build the trails. The Authority also sells merchandise.
<b>Westmoreland County Bureau Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> County Government Department <a href="https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/729/Parks-Trails">https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/729/Parks-Trails</a> <a href="https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/2321/Parks-and-Recreation-Alliance">https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/2321/Parks-and-Recreation-Alliance</a> <a href="https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/987/Citizens-Advisory-Board">https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/987/Citizens-Advisory-Board</a>	Owes, maintains, and operates county parks and recreation facilities. Supported by the Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Alliance and Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation Citizens Advisory Board.	Owes, maintains, and operates county parks and recreation facilities.	Owes, maintains, and operates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 county parks</li> <li>• 5 biking/walking/skiing trails</li> <li>• 55 outdoor pavilions</li> <li>• 3 indoor activity centers</li> </ul>	Includes the 501(c)(3) Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation Citizens Advisory Board, the purpose of which is to enhance and assure the quality of life of Westmoreland County residents and those who travel into the county by providing a diversity of safe, accessible, culturally based, family oriented, well maintained and protected, economically responsible and strategically located park and recreation resources.

**Other County Authorities as Current Actively Registered in the PA Department of State Business Registration Database, BUT No Readily Available Information (Physically Inactive):**

- Armstrong County Recreation Authority: Formed: 11/23/1979
- Carbon County Recreation Authority: Formed: 12/24/1963
- Clinton County Recreational Authority: Formed: 09/25/1984
- Lycoming County Recreation Authority (formerly named Williamsport-Lycoming County Recreation Authority): Formed 1963
- McKean Recreational Authority: Formed: 05/10/1976
- Montour County Recreation Authority: Formed: 10/17/1985

Question	Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority	Indiana County Parks and Recreation Department	Westmoreland County Bureau Parks & Recreation Department
<b>1. How long has your organization been in operation?</b>	Since 1994	The Indiana County Parks department was established in 1967. It's now known as Indiana County Parks & Trails.	On February 28, 1957, Westmoreland County establish the Westmoreland County Recreation Commission. The name was later changed to the Westmoreland County Park and Recreation Commission and then the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation.
<b>2. What was the need/purpose for its formation and how has that need/purpose changed over the years?</b>	<p>The Authority was created to: (1) address mine reclamation needs and work with DEP; and (2) create rail trails and other trails.</p> <p>The Authority acquired the non-profit NORCAM's rail line and began accepting rail banking and proceeded with rail trail development (now Northern Cambria Community Development Corp., NCCDC)</p> <p>This includes the Ghost Town Trail development with Indiana County Parks &amp; Trails.</p>	We have primarily always focused on maintaining parks and facilities that have been developed over the years.	The recreation commission was created to enhance and assure the quality of life of Westmoreland County residents by providing a diversity of safe; accessible; Culturally based; Family oriented; Well maintained and protected; Economically responsible; and strategically located park and recreation resources. Not much has changed from a "why were we created" standpoint. Our changes are usually with the times and what best serves our residents.
<b>3. What is your organization's current mission, roles, and responsibilities?</b>	<p>Mission is to acquire, construct, maintain, operate, and facilitate recreation and environmental remediation facilities in Cambria County and the surrounding region.</p> <p>Specific roles are working with DEP and other organizations for mine reclamation opportunities (grant writing, etc.), plus working with other organizations to make regional trail connections.</p>	Our mission is to maintain and operate our various sites which includes regional parks, rail trails, historic sites, natural areas and four covered bridges.	Our parks department's mission is to offer the very best in park and recreation facilities/programs to our residents. We are responsible for maintaining 12 parks/trails and all their associated amenities.
<b>4. What is the current staff size and annual budget of your organization?</b>	<p>2 full-time office staff (Cliff and Caylin) (optimal would be 3)</p> <p>2 full time seasonal maintenance staff (optimal would be 4 F/T maintenance)</p> <p>1 part time finance staff</p> <p>Overall, the Authority is understaffed to address the maintenance needs for its current 56 miles of trails and to have additional fundraising capacity. The need for additional staff grows as the miles of trails and other needs continue to grow.</p> <p>Also, own Rock Run ATV Park and involved in wind farm development</p> <p>County Commissioners have tasked the Authority with raising its own funds.</p> <p>\$218,000 from County; \$400k annual operating budget (Authority is responsible for raising the balance)</p>	<p>Staff includes a Director, Secretary, two Park Supervisors and five FT maintenance, and two seasonal maintenance. Our operating budget for 2025 is \$919,573 which includes \$150,000 for a grant project we are undertaking at Buttermilk Falls. 95% of our general operating budget is allocated for maintenance. We anticipate completing the year at least 15% under budget due to staff reduction and retirements. Overall, our budget is 1.7% of Indiana County's operating budget, a percentage that has decreased over the years from a high of 2.3%. As other county departments have grown in size our share of the county budget has decreased.</p>	<p>Westmoreland County Parks &amp; Recreation Department currently employs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 Full-Time maintenance workers (union positions)</li> <li>• 10 Professional Management Employees</li> <li>• 16 Temporary Summer Student Positions</li> <li>• 6 Part-Time Seasonal positions</li> </ul> <p>The Parks Department oversees an annual budget of approximately \$3 million</p>

Question	Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority	Indiana County Parks and Recreation Department	Westmoreland County Bureau Parks & Recreation Department
	Budget funds staff, equipment, materials, storage shed facility. Office space is provided by the County at no charge except phone line charge.		
<b>4a. What are the staff positions and their responsibilities?</b>	<p>See above.</p> <p>Viewed as a not typical of a county parks and recreation department given the various roles the Authority has (mine reclamation, trail development, ATV park, wind farm development, etc.). The staff's extensive experience and rural area has caused them to take on more responsibilities.</p> <p>Own Rock Run ATV Park with the non-profit</p>	<p>The Director oversees all park operations, the Secretary handles all park facility reservations and financial transactions, maintenance staff including Park Supervisors perform maintenance duties. We do not employ Park Rangers and rely on Sheriff Deputies and State Police for some limited patrolling of our various sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park Director – Oversees all aspects of the Department</li> <li>• Planning Coordinator – plans and implements large park projects</li> <li>• Communications Coordinator – Handles all Marketing and P.R. for the Department</li> <li>• Parks Program Coordinators (2) - Plans, coordinates and implements all park programming and events</li> <li>• Park Managers (5) – Oversee, plan and coordinate all maintenance within the parks</li> <li>• Maintenance Workers (23) – performs all maintenance tasks within the parks</li> <li>• Temporary Summer Students (16) – various positions within the department to assist with programs, maintenance and front office clerical work</li> <li>• Part Time Seasonal (6) – Maintenance assistance during peak season</li> </ul>
<b>4b. What are your organization's sources of funding and revenue?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioners' annual appropriation via 0.5 mil of parks and playgrounds tax (and possibly through Marcellus Shale allocation)</li> <li>• Fundraising (Friends of the Trails Program, Trail Series Events, Financial Gifts, Community Donations, Apparel Sales...considering capital campaign, but need additional capacity to take on this intensive fundraising effort)</li> <li>• Future from Windmill farm</li> <li>• Grant administration funds (varies depending on project and scope)</li> </ul> <p>The Authority has also advocated to receive up to 5% of the county's hotel tax revenue that the County's Visitors Bureau receives. Now may have an opportunity to provide up to 2% to an "economic development entity".</p> <p>Other potential sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also, considering requiring a registration use fee of trails for e-bikes"</li> <li>• Also, recommended using DCNR's that 20% of the awarded grant funds would also be awarded for perpetual maintenance of the capital investment.</li> </ul>	<p>Allocation from the county general tax revenue and we also receive funding from the county's Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund. We are also permitted to retain all facility revenue we generate which is placed into a Park Enterprise Fund. We use the facility rental fees mainly to maintain, repair and upgrade our rental facilities.</p>	<p>County dollars from taxes, grants and income from within the department such as Reservation fees, permit fees and events/programs. For Projects we seek multiple state and federal grants.</p>

Question	Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority	Indiana County Parks and Recreation Department	Westmoreland County Bureau Parks & Recreation Department
<b>4c. What percentages do these sources of funding and revenue comprise of your annual operating budget?</b>	Of our 400,000 budget 50% from the County 30% Fundraising	General county tax funds approx. 75%, Park Enterprise Fund 15% and Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund 10%. The % can vary depending on what the Marcellus Fund is each year. We use Marcellus funds primarily for capital improvements and equipment purchasing.	Covers all our annual budget.
<b>4d. Does your organization have a non-profit 501(c)(3) and if yes, what is its role/function?</b>	No, but partner with the Community Foundation of the Alleghenies, for example, to support (or be the applicant or recipient of funding).	Yes, we have a fund established with the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies called the Park Legacy Fund. The CFA administers the fund for us. Most donations we receive are primarily in support of our rail-trails.	Yes, we have a 501 c3 non-profit corporation, the Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Citizens Advisory Board (CAB). Initially created to assist with conceptualizing, reviewing and refining long-term planning initiatives and funding strategies. The CAB has helped secure funding from private funders that the County is not eligible to apply for as a government entity. They also do a great deal of fundraising for park projects and initiatives, as well as being a direct conduit to the citizens we provide recreational opportunities for.
<b>5. Does your organization have governing bylaws or an ordinance specifying its roles and responsibilities, etc.?</b>	We have a 15 Member Authority Board appointed by the commissioners and we have by-laws	Yes, we have an ordinance (badly outdated). We have a Park Advisory Board consisting of 7 members appointed by the County Commissioners. They serve strictly as advisors and do not have authority to expend funds or involvement in personnel hiring.	We have a Parks and Recreation Ordinance with all Rules and Regulations <a href="https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32/ordinances_westmoreland_county_parks?bId=">https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32/ordinances_westmoreland_county_parks?bId=</a>
<b>6. Does your organization own/manage parks and recreation resources? If so, please describe (if in addition to what's published on your website).</b>	We own and manage property associated with Trails and Mine Reclamation.	Our park system is a natural resource-based system, we do not manage ballfields or recreation centers or do recreation programming. We do work with an independent Friends of the Parks group that offers environmental education programs for us. We also lease park land from the PF&BC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.	Nothing outside of what would be on our website. <a href="https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/3275/Parks">https://www.westmorelandcountypa.gov/3275/Parks</a>
<b>7. If yes, how are the resources managed/maintained?</b>	With Staff and contractors for larger repairs.	We manage and maintain all of the sites we operate. We have in the past two years resorted to using a private contractor to do some mowing at two of our smaller park sites. Due to our limited staffing we have had to rely more and more on private contractors to perform construction of major repair work that in the past we performed ourselves.	N/
<b>8. What are your organization's biggest challenges?</b>	Staffing and Maintenance funds for our ever growing trail systems.	Current staffing is not adequate to operate a park system of this size, 2,700 acres at 14 sites spread out over 230 miles. We also have lost several experienced park maintenance employees in recent years, over 150 years of experience. The county does not pay enough to compete well in the labor market and we have had difficulty finding adequately skilled employees to serve as equipment operators and trades craft staff. The crew that we do have does an outstanding job maintaining our sites and our parks are regarded as being well-	Since COVID, it has been by far staffing. But in all, maintaining a high standard for park operations which include appearance and care of aging facilities and equipment, on a tight budget.

Question	Cambria County Conservation Recreation Authority	Indiana County Parks and Recreation Department	Westmoreland County Bureau Parks & Recreation Department
		<p>maintained. We operate under the guideline of "maintenance first of all". Keeping parks and trails well-maintained is one way that we have garnered public support for our park system. As a Class 6 county in PA we operate one of the more extensive county park systems in the State of PA.</p>	
<b>9. What is your organization's relationship (interactions with) the County Planning Department and County Board of Commissioners?</b>	<p>We constantly interact with the Board of Commissioners and work a lot with the County Planning Commission as trails are part of the Comprehensive Plan and as we are also a part of the MPO</p>	<p>The County Planning Office assists us with some of our grant preparation and administration of grants. We also use the county engineering firm, Gibson-Thomas Engineering, to write grants for us. The Rt. 22 Pedestrian Bridge project, currently in construction, is a \$5.3 million dollar project that received grant funding from several sources which the Planning Office successfully solicited funding from, including federal and state grants as well as private foundation funding. The County Commissioners are ultimately responsible for overseeing our department but they rely on the park staff to operate and manage the parks.</p>	<p>The Parks and Recreation Department is constantly interacting with both Planning and the Board of Commissioners.</p>
<b>10. What non-county organizations does your organization interact/collaborate with and for what purposes?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nation Park Service-Two National Parks Connected by our Path of the Flood Trail</li> <li>• C&amp;I Trail Council- Trail Development and Promotion</li> <li>• Pennsylvania Environmental Council – Trails</li> <li>• Trans Allegheny Trails – Trail Development</li> <li>• PA Game Commission – Hunting Access/Trail Patrols CO-OP</li> <li>• PA DEP – Grant, Land Acquisition, Mine Reclamation, ETC</li> <li>• DCNR – Grants and Trail Development</li> <li>• Legislators</li> <li>• Penn State Ext. – Various things mainly invasive plants</li> <li>• All Townships, Boroughs, and the City of Johnstown</li> <li>• Johnstown Regional Partnership</li> <li>• The Johnstown Airport</li> <li>• The Prison/using inmates for some maintenance</li> </ul> <p>The list is ever expanding.</p>	<p>The C&amp;I Trail Council assists with advocating for trails in the county, primarily rail-trails. We also work with some watershed groups and the county conservation district in support of mutual projects. We have an active Penn State Master Gardeners group that maintains an extensive garden for us. A group known as Plant Patrol works to remove invasive plant species from our parks. The Indiana County Tourist Bureau promotes our parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Westmoreland Conservation District – project planning</li> <li>• Regional Trail Corporation – Trail building and maintenance</li> <li>• Westmoreland Land Trust – Land acquisition and Conservation</li> <li>• PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Park planning and grant funding</li> <li>• Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection – Park management</li> <li>• Pennsylvania Game Commission – Regulation of park land that is overseen for hunting by the PAGC</li> <li>• PA Fish &amp; Boat Commission – govern the water bodies within the park for fishing and boating</li> <li>• Westmoreland County Parks &amp; Recreation Alliance – group of leaders from municipal park departments within the county</li> <li>• Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – park management</li> </ul>

## Appendix D – Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Position Description

# CRAWFORD COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION COORDINATOR

## ABOUT THE POSITION

The Crawford County Board of Commissioners is seeking a dynamic, highly motivated individual with a passion for the outdoors and being active to help lead, promote, and accelerate the growth and development of Crawford County's outdoor recreation economy.

The Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Coordinator is a new position that will be housed within the Crawford County Planning Office and will be responsible for leading a holistic, countywide approach to coordinating and investing in the abundant outdoor recreational resources located throughout the county and enhancing the lives of its residents and further contributing to the local and regional economies. A centralized and coordinated investment in outdoor recreation and open spaces is a critical and necessary approach to help sustain and grow the county's rural economy and provide a high quality of life for its residents, workers, and visitors alike who collectively enjoy all that Crawford County has to offer.

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES

The Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Coordinator will be responsible for leading and coordinating the following activities:

### Capital Planning and Management

- Provide capital planning and management technical assistance to municipal parks and recreation entities and pedestrian and bicycle trail organizations located throughout Crawford County.

### Funding Technical Assistance

- Identify and maintain information on applicable funding opportunities to support outdoor recreation assets and economic development.
- Coordinate and help prioritize outdoor recreation facility needs and applicable funding requests.

### Networking/Collaboration

- Collaborate with the Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau to identify and promote the County's outdoor recreation resources
- Attend and proactively participate in outdoor recreation conferences, seminars, and events to identify best practices and identify partnerships
- Communicate with existing outdoor related businesses to ensure their vitality and support of Crawford County's outdoor recreation economy.
- Develop and maintain contacts with outdoor recreation organizations, business, and property owners.
- Engage with Crawford County outdoor user groups to encourage collaboration, find shared project potential, and encourage trail and amenity management.
- Work collaboratively with the County Planning Office staff to communicate and implement

the strategic priorities of the County's Community Development and Outdoor Recreation agenda, including providing recommendations for appropriate actions.

In addition to the above essential duties, the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator position may be required to work a varied schedule that may include participating in in-person events occurring on weekends, holidays, and evenings.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Prospective candidates for the Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Coordinator position will be required to meet the following qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in community/urban planning, recreation, or environmental-related areas of study with two (2) years of related retail or marketing, outdoor recreation, or any equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite, including MS Word, MS Excel, and MS Access. Data analytics and management is a key skill set.
- Ability to accurately record and maintain records.
- Ability to build strategic relationships and foster a positive engagement from community members and volunteers.
- Ability to communicate effectively, verbally and in writing.
- Ability to establish lines of communication among all levels of organization, from executive to outdoor association members.
- Ability to follow verbal and/or written instructions.
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Ability to ride/walk/drive trails preferred.
- Ability to work under stress and handle stressful situations.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in the administration and coordination of volunteer groups and associations.
- Valid driver's license with acceptable driving record for the past three years.

## **TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT USED**

Computer, including Microsoft Word and Excel software; motor vehicle, bicycle, calculator, copy machine, telephone, and other applicable tools and equipment that may be necessary to successfully perform the job duties.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally required to stand, walk,

reach with hands and arms. The employee is frequently required to sit, talk, and hear. They may also be asked to bike, walk, or drive trails stretching numerous miles.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 50 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, and the ability to adjust focus.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Work is performed in an indoor office as well as outside settings, including area trails and paths. Outside settings will include exposure to extreme temperature and weather variations.

## **WE ARE AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

Crawford County is proud to be an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Crawford County provides equal employment opportunity for all persons, in all facets of employment, and maintains a drug-free workplace and performs pre-employment substance abuse testing and background checks. We encourage all qualified applicants to apply for any open position for which they feel they are qualified, and all will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship status, marital status, genetic information, disability, protected veteran status or any other legally protected status.