

Implementation and Funding Strategy

This Master Plan represents a long-term vision for the completion of park improvements within Sweet Arrow Lake County Park. The magnitude of costs to complete a full build out of the park requires that the County be aggressive in pursuing funding for the park and establishing dedicated funding for the maintenance and upkeep of park improvements.

To date, Schuylkill County has been very successful in procuring grants and funding to complete the Sweet Arrow Lake dam reconstruction, Clubhouse renovations, a Peer to Peer Study, and funding to complete the Sweet Arrow Lake Master Plan. The planned Army Corps of Engineers Lake Restoration Project provides a unique opportunity to use Federal funding as match for acquiring grant money to construct improvements at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park.

The Schuylkill County Peer to Peer study contains a comprehensive funding strategy for Sweet Arrow Lake which recommends the continued utilization of the Schuylkill County Grant Writer to research government grant opportunities and to author grant application packages. The Peer to Peer Study recommends the creation of a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization to aid with fundraising initiatives to further development of Sweet Arrow Lake County Park. The Peer to Peer Study also identifies foundations that invest charitable dollars within Schuylkill County.

The Recommended Project Phasing and Potential Funding Sources outline an initial strategy for park development. During the period of time over which the park will be implemented, potential funding sources along with other factors such as an increased demand for certain park facilities may affect implementation phases. The County must be flexible and adapt to these changes as it moves forward with the park's development.

The proposed phasing plan centers around park improvements that are independent of the work being done by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The primary focus of initial improvements are Clubhouse area improvements, followed by the improvements at the dam site, and improvements to the existing boat launch area. This focus corresponds to the suggested short term and long term goals for the construction of improvements within the park. The timing of the lake dredging and habitat restoration will control when the lakeside trail is constructed.

It is important to consider that this sequence may be modified to address any potential changes in opportunity or demands that may occur in the coming years as project funding becomes available. Different project components can be constructed concurrently, again dependant upon the available funding environment and dedication of County resources for maintenance and operations.

Chapter Five

Recommended Project Phasing

1. Entry Drive to Clubhouse
 - Drop off loop
 - Site Parking Improvements
 - Vehicular Access Gate
 - Handicap Parking Spaces
 - Clubhouse Improvements (Restrooms, ADA Access, Insulation)
 - Basic Site Lighting
 - Walkways
 - Fire Access/Standpipe
 - Buffer/Reforestation Planting
2. Pedestrian Bridge
 - Trail from Clubhouse to Bridge
 - Trail from Bridge to Below Dam Parking Area
 - Lighting
3. Clubhouse Road Improvements
4. Clubhouse Area Pavilions
 - New pavilion/pavilion with office & storage
 - Maintenance Building
 - Renovate existing pavilion
 - Volleyball Court
 - Planting
5. Clubhouse Playground
6. Clubhouse Outdoor Events Area
 - Seatwalls
 - Stage
 - Patio Area
 - Dock
 - Asphalt Walkways
 - Planting
7. Dam Area Entrance & Parking
8. Dam Area Picnic Areas
9. Dam Area Meadow/Gazebo
10. Boat Launch Site Amenities
11. Boat Launch Entrance/Parking

12. Controlled Access Boat Launch

13. Wolfes Road Area Parking Lot

14. Swimming Area

Improvements Dependent Upon US Army Corps of Engineers Lake Restoration Project:

- Trail from Clubhouse to Sweet Arrow Lake Road
- Trail from “The Beach” to Wolfes Road
- North Shore Trail (From Dam to “The Beach”)
- Parking Areas along Sweet Arrow Lake Road
- Fishing Island
- Shallow Ice Skating Area
- Beach/Swimming Area

Potential Funding Sources

The Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)

The State of Pennsylvania makes available grant money to municipal governments through this program to support greenway and park planning, design, and development. Applications for these grants are due in October of each year, and a 50 percent match is required from the local project sponsor. The amount of maximum award varies with the requested activity. Planning grants are typically awarded for \$50,000 or less. Land acquisition and construction grants range from \$150,000 to \$200,000.

PA Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program

Can be used to encourage the planting of trees in Pennsylvania communities. Municipal challenge grants provide 50 percent of the cost of the purchase and delivery of trees. Special grants are available for local volunteer groups, civic clubs, and municipalities to train and use volunteers for street tree inventories, and other projects in urban and community forestry. The program's total annual allotment varies but is generally around \$500,000.

The Recreational Trails Program (DCNR) - National Recreation Trails Fund Act (NRTFA) or Symms Act Grants. This source of funding is a subset of TEA-21, and is administered by DCNR. Funds from this program can be used for the acquisition of land and the construction of trailheads and trail facilities. Land acquisition will require a 50 percent match from the local sponsor. Construction projects will require a 20 percent match from the local sponsor. The typical maximum award has been \$150,000.

Chapter Five

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

DCED's mission includes four elements that each has a relationship to parks and greenways: economic development, travel and tourism, technical assistance, and community development. DCED's applicable funding programs are listed and described below:

- Community Revitalization Program - These grants, from \$5,000 to over \$50,000, support local initiatives aimed at improving a community's quality of life and improving business conditions.
- Small Communities Planning Assistance - This grant is awarded to municipalities having a population of 10,000 people or less. The grant offers a no-match funding source that can be used to support neighborhood revitalization, economic development, community conservation, and housing plans. Regardless of the project type, the grantee must demonstrate the project benefits low to moderate-income residents.
- Community Development Block Grants - This program provides financial and technical assistance to communities for infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitation, public services, and community facilities. The program targets local governments and 70% of each grant must be used for activities or projects that benefit low to moderate-income people.

All of the DCED programs are dependent on the active support of state legislators.

Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC)

The competition in this program is considerable for relatively small grant awards. Application and administration for these grants are time consuming and this should be considered when deciding whether to apply. Historic interpretation of the Union Canal or preservation of Berger's Dam may be aspects of Sweet Arrow Lake's history that qualify for funding.

Keystone Historic Preservation Grants

Local governments and non-profit groups may apply for this grant that ranges in value from \$5,000 to \$100,000. A 50% local match is required and funds may be used for preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic properties, buildings, structures, sites, or objects. Grants may be considered for historic interpretation at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park.

DEP Growing Greener

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history. Growing Greener funds can be used for farmland-preservation projects; preserving open space; cleanup of abandoned mines, watershed planning; recreational trails and parks; and help communities address land use concerns. Eligible applicants include non-profit groups, counties, and municipalities. A local match is encouraged, but not required. The Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association may be an applicant for projects at Sweet Arrow Lake.

Private Foundations

There are various corporations and foundations, which support public works such as park improvements. The competition for these funds has become brisk, but the opportunities should be researched. Funding must often be to non-profit organizations.

Schools

The local School Districts may also be of assistance in several ways. The student body might get involved with clubs, fundraising events, and park cleanup days. The faculty could incorporate the site into various curricula with students helping to develop and possibly maintain the park as part of a classroom assignment or after school club. While the amount of funds raised may be relatively small, this process builds constituents and support for the park, critical to its long-term success.

Friends-of-the-Park

Similar to participation by school groups, the establishment of a non-profit (501(C)3) Friends-of-the-Park group can help raise grass roots funding for the park and be a conduit for tax-deductible donations and foundation funding. The existing Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association group could become the foundation for a Friends-of group, with an expanded mission to include passive recreation, riparian buffer preservation, habitat restoration, and other environmental preservation concerns. The Peer to Peer study provides detailed guidelines for establishing a (501(C)3) non-profit charitable organization.

TEA-21 Enhancements

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) is a federal program that funds transportation related projects and is a direct successor to the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The bill allocated approximately \$217 billion nationwide over six years and includes funding for recreational trails and parks. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) administers several TEA-21 bicycle and pedestrian related programs.

Chapter Five

Currently, the reauthorization of TEA-21, or TEA-3 as it will be called, is being deliberated in Congress and is expected to be passed in the very near future. More information on this program and its reauthorization can be found on the website: <http://www.tea3.org/>.