

## CHAPTER 21

### PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

#### INTRODUCTION

Parks, recreation programs and open space areas support the improvement in the quality of life in an area by preserving natural and cultural amenities for the enjoyment of all residents and providing active and passive recreational opportunities. They also provide opportunities for community residents to interact and thereby strengthen the sense of community. Leisure activities and the facilities required to maintain these activities are important components of a sound community.

Open space is important to area residents, as are parks and recreation. Background open space, such as agricultural lands, woodlands and stream valleys, is visible to area residents and perceived as open space by them. It helps establish the character of the community. As development occurs in the area, if the rural character is to be sustained, it is necessary to preserve this perceived open space. Growth must be planned and directed so that the basic open space and rural character is not lost.

Recreational activities are often associated with and can be enhanced by the natural features of a community. Some leisure activities, such as hiking, fishing and boating are directly dependent upon resources such as Neversink Mountain, the Thun Trail, the region's creeks, the Schuylkill River, facilities at the Daniel Boone Homestead and Monocacy Hill.

The cultural features of a community can also enhance recreational activities. For instance, the cultural heritage of the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity area is evident in the farmsteads, mills, churches, and numerous other historic resources in the area, which will be discussed later. These natural and cultural features can play an educational role for residents of the area as well as be incorporated into hiking and bicycle trails.

#### Existing Parks, Recreation and Open Space System

A number of major recreational facilities are available to serve residents in the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity area, in Berks and nearby counties. Some of these recreational facilities include:

- Blue Marsh Lake Recreational Area
- French Creek State Park
- Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center
- Tulpehocken Creek Park System

Antietam Lake  
Mount Penn Preserve  
Daniel Boone Homestead  
State Game lands  
The Appalachian Trail  
Kaercher Creek Park  
Kernsville Recreation Area  
Conrad Weiser Park  
County Youth Recreation Facility  
Allegheny Aqueduct  
Horseshoe Trail  
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary  
Neversink Mountain Preserve  
Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

Recreation resources within the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity area include:

Exeter Community Park – St. Lawrence  
Borough Playground – St. Lawrence  
Lorraine Hollow – Exeter Township  
Community Park – Exeter Township  
Mountain Park – Exeter Township  
Farming Ridge Park – Exeter Township  
Stonersville Little League Fields – Exeter Township  
Crestwood Park – Exeter Township  
Amity Community Park – Amity Township  
Old Farm Park – Exeter Township  
Greenbriar Open Space – Amity Township  
Shelbourne Park – Exeter Township  
Amity AC/Pool and Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Amity Gardens Pool – Amity Township  
Hill Road Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Schuylkill River Open Space – Exeter Township  
Cedar Mill Open Space – Amity Township  
Amity Park Road Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Daniel Boone Homestead – Exeter Township  
Pineland Park – Exeter Township  
Woods Edge Open Space – Amity Township  
Stony Creek Athletic Association – Exeter Township  
Hunter's Run Park – Exeter Township  
Schuylkill River Open Space – Amity Township  
Trout Run Recreation Area – Exeter Township  
River Bend Park – Exeter Township

Wheeler Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Conservancy Land – Exeter Township  
Antietam Valley Recreation and Community Center – Exeter Township  
Crestwood Swim Club – Exeter Township  
Lake Drive Park and Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Locust Grove Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Monocacy Hill Open Space Area – Amity Township  
Amityville Recreation Area – Amity Township  
Thun Trail – the Townships

In addition, recreation is available at the school facilities in the Region, including Exeter School District elementary schools and the High School – Junior High School complex and the Amity Primary and Intermediate Centers.

Golf courses include the Arrowhead Golf Course in Amity Township and Reading Country Club and Exeter Public Golf Course in Exeter Township. The Daniel Boone Rod and Gun Club, University Rifle Club, and South End Gun Club are located in Exeter Township.

### **Types of Recreation Facilities**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has prepared a classification scheme for use by municipalities in creating and evaluating a park and open space system. It is intended to serve as a planning guide and can be modified to address the recreational needs unique to each municipality. The NRPA classification scheme is divided into two categories: (1) park and open space areas that are considered to be "local" or "close-to-home" due to their smaller size and close proximity and (2) park and open space areas that are considered "regional" due to their larger size and broader service area. Within each category, there are various types of parks and open space areas that can be identified according to their specific characteristics, as described in Table R-1. Overall, the NRPA recommends that municipalities have between 6.25 and 10.5 acres of local parkland and open space per 1,000 residents. This land, considered the "core" of a municipal park and open space system, should be suitable for intense development and used primarily for active recreational purposes. In addition, municipalities should also have available between 15 and 20 acres per 1,000 residents of "regional" park and open space areas that can be used as open space, active or passive recreational areas. Sufficient regional park and open space is provided at the Daniel Boone Homestead and French Creek State Park, Blue Marsh Lake, Nolde Forest, Neversink Mountain-Mount Penn-Antietam Lake, and Tulpehocken Creek Park.

**TABLE 1**

**NRPA PARK; RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME  
 LOCAL/CLOSE-TO-HOME SPACE = TOTAL OF 6.25 TO 10.5 ACRES OF  
 DEVELOPED OPEN SPACE PER 1,000 PERSONS**

<b>Type of Park</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Desirable Site Size</b>	<b>Acres/1,000 Persons</b>
<p><b><i>Mini-Park</i></b>                      Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.</p>	<p>Less than ¼ -mile radius</p>	<p>1 acre or less</p>	<p>0.25 to 0.5 acres</p>
<p><b><i>Neighborhood Park/Playground</i></b>                      Area for intense recreational activities such as field sports, court games, crafts, playground activities, skating, picnicking, swimming, etc.</p>	<p>¼-mile to ½-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 persons (a neighborhood)</p>	<p>15+ acres</p>	<p>1.0 to 2.0 acres</p>
<p><b><i>Community Park</i></b>                      Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon the site suitability and community needs.</p>	<p>Several neighborhoods. 1 to 2-mile radius</p>	<p>25+ acres</p>	<p>5.0 to 8.0 acres</p>

Source: National Recreation and Park Association - Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines

TABLE 1- Continued

**NRPA PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME**  
**REGIONAL SPACE = TOTAL OF 15.0 TO 20.0 ACRES FOR 1,000 PERSONS**

Type of Park	Service Area	Desirable Site Size	Acres/1,000 Persons
<p><b><i>Regional/Metropolitan Park</i></b></p> <p>Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation (such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses) which may include play areas.</p>	<p>Several communities. 1-hour driving time</p>	<p>200+ acres</p>	<p>5.0 to 10.0 acres</p>
<p><b><i>Regional Park Preserve</i></b></p> <p>Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation (such as viewing/studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping and trail uses) which may include active play areas. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management, with less than 20% used for recreation development.</p>	<p>Several communities. 1- hour driving time</p>	<p>1,000+ acres or sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.</p>	<p>Variable</p>
<p><b><i>Community Park</i></b></p> <p>Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes and/or large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon the site suitability and community needs.</p>	<p>Several neighborhoods. 1 to 2-mile radius.</p>	<p>25+ acres</p>	<p>5.0 to 8.0 acres</p>

Source: National Recreation and Park Association - Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines

## **Parks, Recreation and Open Space System in the Region**

### **St. Lawrence Borough**

Currently, the Borough has one community park, a municipal playground and schools containing playing fields, a picnic area, tennis courts, basketball courts and a tot lot.

The Borough also has watershed lands in Exeter Township that contain un-improved trails that could be improved and linked to a regional trail network.

### **Exeter Township**

The Township currently has a number of community parks, the Exeter High School – Junior High School Complex and the elementary schools. Activities available include picnic areas, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, shuffleboard court, tot lot, and playing fields.

### **Amity Township**

The Township contains a number of community parks. The facilities provide areas for hiking, picnics, playgrounds, playfields, basketball court, hunting, nature study, and tot lots.

### **Recreation Acreage Needs Analysis**

The following table presents recreation acreage needs analysis for the region.

ST. LAWRENCE, EXETER, AMITY

RECREATION ACREAGE NEEDS ANALYSIS

	Projected Population		Local Recreation Requirements Applying NRPA Standards of 6.25 to 10.5 Acres per 1000 Population				Projected Public Acreage 2020	2000 Deficit in Acres	Projected 2020 Deficit in Acres
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2020				
St. Lawrence	1,812	2,078	2,344	11.3 to 19.0	12.9 to 21.8	14.6 to 24.6	53.7 <sup>1</sup>	0	0
Exeter	21,161	25,625	30,090	132.2 to 222.1	160.1 to 269.0	188.0 to 315.9	931.0 <sup>2</sup>	0	0
Amity	8,867	10,950	13,040	55.4 to 93.1	68.4 to 114.9	81.5 to 136.9	667.9 <sup>3</sup>	0	0

<sup>1</sup>Includes Exeter Community Park, Municipal Playground, Borough Open Space, Lausch Elementary School.

<sup>2</sup>Includes Lorane Hollow Park, Community Park, Mt. Park, Daniel Boone Homestead, Farming Ridge Park, Pineland Park, Exeter Twp. Jr. & Sr. High School, Hunter's Run Park, Lorane Elementary School, Old Farm Park, Trout Run Recreation Area, River Bend Park, Little League Fields, Butter Lane Park, Exeter Library/Dunn Community Center.

<sup>3</sup>Includes Lake Drive Park & Recreation Area, Locust Grove Park, Monocacy Hill Open Space Area, Amityville Park Road Recreation Area, Amity Primary Center, Hill Road Recreation Area, Myron S. Wheeler Recreation Area, Old Airport Road Open Space, Locust Grove Open Space, Cider Mill Open Space, Greenbriar Open Space, Open Space Adjacent to Sewage Treatment Plant, Open Space Along Schuykill River, Amity Community Park.

Although no acreage deficit is indicated, an issue for the region will be the continued demand for additional recreation facilities as the population in the area increases. Some of the demands could be for additional playing fields, specifically soccer fields. Recreation Committees will continue to work to provide recreation opportunities within their respective municipalities and monitor available sites for recreation. A regional trail network could link existing and future recreational opportunities.