



# **CLARION RIVER ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW**

November 12, 2024

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan was put together with the assistance of the project Steering Committee, Clarion County staff, and the County's elected and appointed officials. This plan reflects a significant contribution of time, expertise, advice, and feedback from the following individuals along with input and feedback from a variety of stakeholders that live, work, or otherwise have a vested interest in the community. This plan would not have been possible without their valuable participation.

This project is partially funded by a grant (BRC-RCP-26-88) from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (Bureau).

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This plan was prepared with assistance from HRG.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Clarion River Access Management Plan will give Clarion County and its partner organizations insight on how to better utilize the segment of the River between the Piney Creek Dam and Cooksburg as a recreational asset for all. With input from the project Steering Committee, County staff, the public, and key stakeholders, several potential improvements have been identified within this Plan to enhance existing river access points as well as create new access points to increase River usage.

Improvements to existing access points and the establishment of new access areas are the heart of the Plan and were each assessed through the lens of the following areas:

- **Recreation Opportunities** - What types of recreational opportunities are present in the region? What activities are members of the public already engaging in and what activities would they like to see in the future? How can cross-team collaboration be utilized to realize these future opportunities?
- **River Access** - How can we get more users to the River? What barriers are preventing more users from accessing the River? How can we make access points more accessible for individuals of all ages and abilities?
- **Connections** - How can we connect existing recreational assets to each other and to future river access points? How can we facilitate sight navigation and travel information to these access points?
- **Habitat Management** - What best practices are required to ensure the management of the region's natural resources while mitigating harmful effects



The Clarion riverbank from the Piney Dam river access area

that may be caused by increases in human activity? What types of flooding or pollution management opportunities exist?

- **Communications and Connectivity** - How can we improve broadband access within the region? What can we do to improve emergency services and respond efficiently to emergency situations?

These focus areas will help to guide the proposed site improvements throughout this Plan. During the 9-month planning process, public input was solicited through a number of methods. These methods included an online survey, web mapping tool, and key stakeholder focus group meetings.

Based on the public input received, Steering Committee comments and feedback, and input from County staff, the following existing and potential future sites were identified for improvements:



The Frank Walls Memorial Bridge, spanning the Clarion River

- A. **Mays Estate** - Acquiring this property adjacent to the Clarion Mall may offer the opportunity for both public river access and potential recreation tourism development.
- B. **Rapp Run Falls Overlook** – Rapp Run Falls, an existing scenic area in State Game Lands 72, could enhance the Clarion River recreation experience with an improved parking area.
- C. **The Rock Overlook** – The Rock, a well-known landmark on the Clarion River, should be enhanced with safe pedestrian access.
- D. **Toby Boat Launch** – Extensive improvements are recommended for safety, emergency access, accessibility, circulation, and user experience. Long-term multi-phase site master planning is needed to ensure this heavily-used access point remains viable for the next ten years and beyond.
- E. **Eagle Overlook** – Accessible overlook amenities and a connection to existing trails are recommended to link residents and students with the Clarion River experience.
- F. **Water Company Landing** – Adaptive launch amenities are recommended to accommodate

paddlers of all abilities, and as an alternate access point to the congested Toby Boat Launch.

- G. **Millcreek Road** – Through a partnership with the landowner, enhance existing boat ramp and infrastructure to provide public river access on the north bank of the River and boost cellular signals to serve the existing and popular Mill Creek Launch.
- H. **Mill Creek Launch** – Improve safety and user experience with a Small Cell Network pilot project.
- I. **Highland Drive** – With minor modifications, this existing public trail access parking area near Slater's Crossing can reduce the distance between canoe/kayak launches from 8.5 to 5.9 river miles.
- J. **Gravel Lick Launch** – Improved directional signage and a stabilized ramp could improve this site for use by a greater number of canoe and kayak users. Assess the nearby spring for swimming or wading.
- K. **Gravel Lick Bridge** – Provide amenities to encourage safe and ecologically responsible use of the unimproved site that is popular with paddlers.
- L. **Sawmill Dam Landing** – Provide a small paddle-in and -out landing upstream of Henry Run/Sawmill Dam/Hemlock Island cultural features to allow walk-in viewing and reduce impact to the Sawmill Dam site as well as private landowners.

Recommended improvements and enhancements to these sites will be discussed throughout this Plan and in depth in the Design Considerations Chapter.

The overarching theme of this Plan was to improve access to the River and use of the River as a recreational asset for people of all ages and abilities. The many projects and recommendations included in this Plan, if and when implemented, will lead to increased usage and enjoyment of the beautiful and scenic Clarion River for residents and visitors of Clarion County.

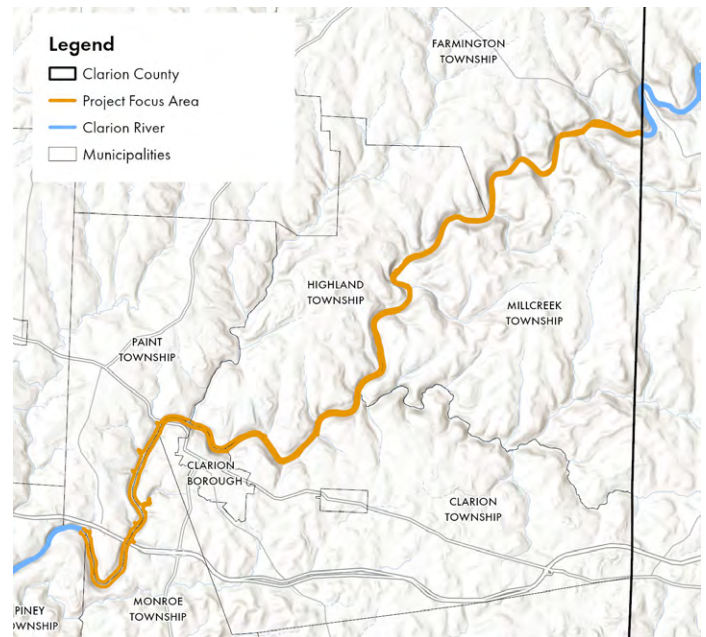


# INTRODUCTION

## Project Overview

The Clarion River-- officially designated a National Wild and Scenic River-- is approximately 110 miles long and is a tributary of the Allegheny River. The Clarion River is a popular destination for many forms of recreation from floating, to boating, to canoeing, to swimming, to paddleboarding, to fishing, and much more. This Plan focuses on a segment of the Clarion River from the Piney Creek Dam to Cooksburg. The purpose of the Clarion River Access Management Plan is to produce concepts, initiatives, and best practices for the County to implement that will benefit the region's recreation-based tourism as well as enhance and improve access to the River. The Plan analyzes existing access points, identifies future potential access areas, and makes recommendations for improvements to regional infrastructure like broadband to support future recreation demands in the region.

Throughout the collaborative planning process, several site concepts were explored with the intention of strengthening the Clarion River region through social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability. Certain subject areas that were taken into consideration and analyzed included recreation opportunities, connections, habitat management, access to the River, and communications and wireless connectivity. The ultimate goal of the Plan is to identify ways to enhance River access and increase recreational opportunities for both active and passive users, identify potential areas and projects that will better connect residents and visitors with existing recreation areas and assets, create sustainable tactics to manage the natural resources in the Clarion River Corridor and mitigate the harmful effects of climate change, and increase wireless and broadband capacity with a focus on communication for emergency



service providers along the River. This Plan is divided into the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Background Information & Report
- The Public Engagement & Input Process
- Design Considerations
- Action Strategies & Implementation
- Appendix

## Background Information & Report

As a part of the Plan's process, consultants from HRG conducted a background report to assess the existing conditions within the Study Area. This section of the Plan reviews the existing conditions and background of the Study Area, including historical and cultural resources as





Henry Run Sawmill Dam River Access

well as land use findings from surrounding municipalities including Paint Township, Clarion Borough, Clarion Township, Monroe Township, Piney Township, Highland Township, Millcreek Township, and Farmington Township. The majority of land uses surrounding the Clarion River Study Area are wooded, natural areas with scenic landscapes that are somewhat secluded from the County's towns and more developed areas.

The project Study Area contains numerous privately-owned parcels and homes. Many of these properties have access to the River via private docks and many have dock holder lease agreements with Brookfield Renewable Energy, an energy and power company that owns a large portion of the study area's riverfront. There are two main public access points for the River, the Toby Boat Launch and the Millcreek Boat Launch. In addition, the Gravel Lick Canoe Launch is also a public access point but is a restricted hand-carry launch only.

There are various historical and cultural resources within and surrounding the study area including but not limited

to Toby Bridge, Asbury Church, Old Spring Reservoir, Old Fellows Hall, Kuhn's Farm, Helen Furnace School, Piney Station Hydroelectric Plant, and the Pittsburg and Shawmut Railroad Tunnel. Connecting patrons of the Clarion River with the abundance of historical, cultural, and ecological resources in the surrounding areas will help to preserve the heritage and history of the area, develop a sense of cultural identity and pride, facilitate cultural exchange and dialogue, foster social cohesion, boost tourism, and educate visitors on different time periods and cultural practices, all while promoting economic development.

Existing conditions and natural resources are also explored in this chapter. Watershed, soil slippage, best fishing waters, hydrologic soil groups, slopes, and State Forest Game Lands are all essential in determining the safest and most useful areas for new access points and development. There are several areas that may be preferable for light development. For example, a portion of the land near Maxwell Run, a tributary to the Clarion River, has Grade A hydrologic soil making the





Toby Creek Bridge

land suitable for light development. In addition, this land is located in Clear Creek State Forest and connects to high-quality fishing waters for Smallmouth Bass.

Utilities like water, electricity, and internet access all play a major role in supporting recreational activities. Understanding the current extent of these utilities within the Plan will help to identify deficits in infrastructure that may inhibit future recreational access within the region.

## Public Engagement & Input Process

This chapter of the Plan provides a summary of the various public engagement and input activities that took place as the Clarion River Access Management Plan was developed. Public engagement is an essential part of any public project or plan. Throughout the course of the project, HRG staff met regularly with steering committee members to keep them updated on field work and other project related progress.

Another part of the public engagement process was meeting with key stakeholders regarding the Plan to hear their thoughts and feedback regarding the Plan, specifically related to new and existing access points, property ownership, and other important information regarding the history of improvements along the River. Stakeholders provided recommendations for new access points, potential connections, and different ways that the River could be accessed and used.

There was also a public survey available for those who wanted to voice their thoughts and feedback for the Plan. The survey was available from May 1, 2024 to July 19, 2024, and was reopened from September 11, 2024 to October 11, 2024. A total of 234 responses were received. The survey covered various topics from participant demographics to usage, recreational activities, and potential access points.

## Design Considerations

This chapter of the Plan reviews the existing three main access areas for the River in the Study Area – the Toby Boat Launch, the Millcreek Boat Launch, and the Gravel Lick Canoe Launch and provides a summary of what is provided at each access point and highlights some potential improvements and upgrades to these three areas. In addition, this section of the Plan also discusses several proposed new access points and provides detailed designs for three potential new access points.

For the existing access points and new access points, compliance guidelines with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are discussed. Outdoor recreation access is governed by guidelines developed by the U.S. Access Board that are considered enforceable under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA), rather than by rules under the 2010 ADA. No existing access points along the Clarion River in the study area are fully ADA-accessible. Toby Creek Boat Launch has had some





Official river access south of the Toby Dam used primarily for fishing

minor improvements made by Clarion Borough but are still missing some accessibility features and need maintenance. Mill Creek Boat Launch does not have any current accessibility features but has a level topography enabling several improvement opportunities. Gravel Lick Canoe Launch also does not have ADA improvements but may be exempt due to topography limitations.

In addition to recommended improvements at existing access points, this Plan also explores potential new access areas on properties located along the River, including the Mays property just off of Interstate 80 and State Route 68 in Monroe Township and the Eagle Overlook in Clarion Borough, which is owned by the Clarion University Foundation.

## Action Strategies & Implementation

This Clarion River Access Management Plan is a path forward that includes several new ideas, proposed projects, and other improvements to improve access and use of the beautiful and scenic Clarion River. The most important part of any plan is not only the projects that are noted within it but the additional information provided that helps to make the Plan a reality. This final Chapter of the Plan focuses on action strategies and implementation. An implementation matrix is provided that highlights potential partners and funding sources for the proposed improvements to existing and new access points and also provides timeframes for completion based on prioritization results of the various strategies.

# BACKGROUND REPORT

The Clarion River Access Management Plan will explore ways to enhance and improve access to the beautiful and scenic Clarion River in Clarion County. The Plan will focus on the specific segment of the Clarion River from Piney Creek Dam to Cooksburg, referred herein as the “study area”, and will offer recommendations on how to best utilize this section of the River moving forward to improve access to the many recreational opportunities that the River has to offer.

This chapter will summarize some of the significant findings from the full Background Inventory Analysis Report. The report covers current land uses, existing conditions, environmental and land resources, access points to highways and trails, cultural and historic resources, circulation and access patterns, natural resources and features, existing water access points, biological resources, available utilities and infrastructure, and other assets and features in the Clarion River study area. The full Report can be found in Appendix A of this report.

## Historical and Cultural Resources

In addition to the plethora of outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resources found in Clarion County, the County is also home to several historic and cultural resources. Within the study area alone, there are several historic buildings, bridges, churches, and markers as well as numerous cultural resources, including the Ross Memorial Library, many of the buildings that are found at Pennsylvania Western University Clarion, the buildings and businesses that comprise the downtown Clarion Borough central business district, and more.



The Clarion Free Library

### *Historic Markers, Sites, Resources, and Buildings*

There are two historic markers in the area, one that notes the Clarion County Courthouse and another for the Helen Furnace.

The Clarion County marker is located in front of the Courthouse in Clarion Borough, along Main Street between North 5th Avenue and North Jefferson Place. Categories that coincide with this County Courthouse historic marker include Business and Industry, Coal, Government and Politics, Government and Politics 19th Century, and Iron and Steel.

The other historic marker in the Study area is for Helen Furnace. This marker is located in Highland Township, along Miola Road at White Oak Drive. Categories that coincide with this marker include Coal, Business and Industry, Furnaces, and Iron and Steel.

Some of the significant historical resources identified in the full Analysis Report include the following:

- Toby Bridge in Clarion Township and Highland Township



- Gravel Lick Bridge in Farmington Township
- Piney Station Hydroelectric Plant in Paint Township

The Clarion River Water Trail has points of historical interest that do not appear in the National Register, but are noted by the Fish and Boat Commission in the Water Trail Recreation Guide.

Blyson Run, a tributary to the Clarion River in Millcreek Township, is listed as a Cut Stone Raft Historic Site. According the PAFBC, '[i]n the past, timber was floated on rafts down the Clarion River to market. Rivermen used to tie up at Blyson's Run Cut Stone. You can still see the pole where they tied their rafts.'

Upstream from the historic Gravel Lick bridge, log rafts and boats were built on Hemlock Island in the Clarion River channel during the mid to late 1800's.

To the north of the island in Farmington Township, a historic sawmill dam on Henry Run creates a scenic waterfall that can be accessed via trail from Cook Forest.

Historic Cook Forest Fire Tower and Seneca Point are accessible via trails from the Henry Run sawmill dam. The 87-foot #9 Fire Tower, built in 1929, gave firefighters a 15-20 mile view of the area. A superb view of many of the old growth forests at Cook Forest State Park can be observed from this location. Seneca Point offers a scenic view of the Clarion River.

### **Natural Heritage Areas**

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are sites that have been identified as areas that support rare plants or animals, exemplary ecological communities, and Pennsylvania's native species' biodiversity. The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) inventories and reports the critical biological resources found within each NHA and throughout each county in Pennsylvania.



Tom's Run Fishing Area, image courtesy of Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Region

There are two NHAs within the Clarion River project study area municipalities. These include the following:

- Clarion River at Maxwell Run, in Millcreek Township
- Clarion River at Tom's Run, in Farmington Township

Clarion River at Maxwell Run in Millcreek Township is a large riverine site that supports a total of nine Pennsylvania species of concern. The majority of the species found in the Clarion River at Maxwell Run are odonates, or dragonflies and damselflies. This section of the River also supports populations of the mountain brook lamprey, which is a state imperiled fish. All of the species of concern in the Maxwell Run NHA need access to cool, clean, and fast flowing water.

Clarion River at Tom's Run in Farmington Township is another large riverine site within the project study area. The Tom's Run NHA supports a total of 13 Pennsylvania listed species. And almost all of these species share one habitat need, and it is clean, cool, clear, and fast flowing water. Just like Maxwell Run, the majority of the species found at Tom's Run NHA are odonates, or dragonflies and damselflies. Populations of meadow willow are also known from this site.

According to the Natural Heritage Inventory fact sheets for the Clarion River at Maxwell Run NHA and the Clarion





The Toby Boat Launch on the Clarion River in Clarion Borough

River at Tom's Run NHA, repairing and maintaining the forested riparian buffer in the upstream portion of the Clarion River watershed is critical to maintaining the water quality that supports its unique species. Mitigation of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) impacts will be a critical component of maintaining water quality at these sites over the long run. In addition, it is noted that development within the 100-year floodplain should be prohibited to preserve the flow characteristics of the river, maintain the forested riparian buffer, and prevent the loss of property and life during flooding events.

### ***Land Use Findings***

The study area of the Clarion River for this Access Management Plan includes a section of the River and surrounding lands in Piney Township, Monroe Township, Paint Township, Clarion Township, Clarion Borough, Highland Township, Millcreek Township, and Farmington Township. The majority of land uses surrounding the Clarion River study area are wooded, natural areas with scenic landscapes that are somewhat secluded from the County's towns and more developed

areas. The Background Report in the Appendix provides a complete overview of the current land uses present by municipality in the study area, with focus along the River but also within the municipality as a whole in terms of local and regional destination points.

Much of the land along the Clarion River within the project study area is owned privately and consists of wooded lands and tree covered areas with private homes. Many of the private homes have access to the River via their own private docks. There are several local and regional destinations not just along and near the River but in the surrounding study area as a whole that may attract those frequently utilizing the Clarion River into towns for various activities.

The two main public access points are the Toby Boat Launch in Clarion Borough and the Millcreek Boat Launch in Clarion Township. There is also the Gravel Lick Canoe Launch in Millcreek Township, which is a hand-carry launch only.

The analysis of the existing land uses along and surrounding the project area shows us that there are

ample opportunities for possible increased connections to regional destinations. In addition, there are also several locations where additional public river access can be explored to enhance the public's access to the beautiful and scenic Clarion River for all users, from motorized boaters to floaters to swimmers to fishermen to paddle boaters and more.

## **Existing Conditions and Natural Resources**

As a part of the Clarion River Access Management Plan, the following maps were made to illustrate important characteristics of the study area for the purposes of potential future development, connectivity, and accessibility. Understanding these characteristics is crucial as the County looks to identify the best places for additional development, new public access, and other connections to popular destinations along and near the River. This section will primarily focus on abiotic land factors, which are the non-living land factors that have an impact on the surrounding environment. This includes geologic land features-- characteristics of the land's shape or topographical characteristics-- and hydrologic features-- characteristics of the waterbodies in the environment (rivers, lakes, ponds, creeks, etc.).

### **Soil Slippage**

Soil slippage ranking involves the potential hazard that an area of soil will slip when vegetation is removed, soil is almost or completely saturated, or any other natural practices applied. Slippage is an important consideration for engineering practices, such as constructing roads and buildings, and for forestry practices. Soil slippage potential classes are estimated by observing attributes like slope, lithology, strike and dip, surface drainage patterns, and occurrences of such features as slip scars and slumps. Slippage rankings are important in terms of development because they can help illustrate where the

safest places for development are when deciding where to place new access points in the future.

According to the map on the following page, soils with high slippage ratings are mainly seen closest to the Clarion River. The map on the following page indicates that the further away from the water, the lower the soil slippage rating. Towards the River's bend closest to Piney Dam Road, there is an area east with a low rating of soil slippage and may be a good area for accessibility and development to the River. Similarly, north of Berg Lane is another area with low slippage ratings. However this area is surrounded by soil with high slippage ratings and may be prone to neighboring soil slippage. Across the River from Blyson Run as well as across from Maxwell Run may be other development opportunities with low soil slippage ratings.

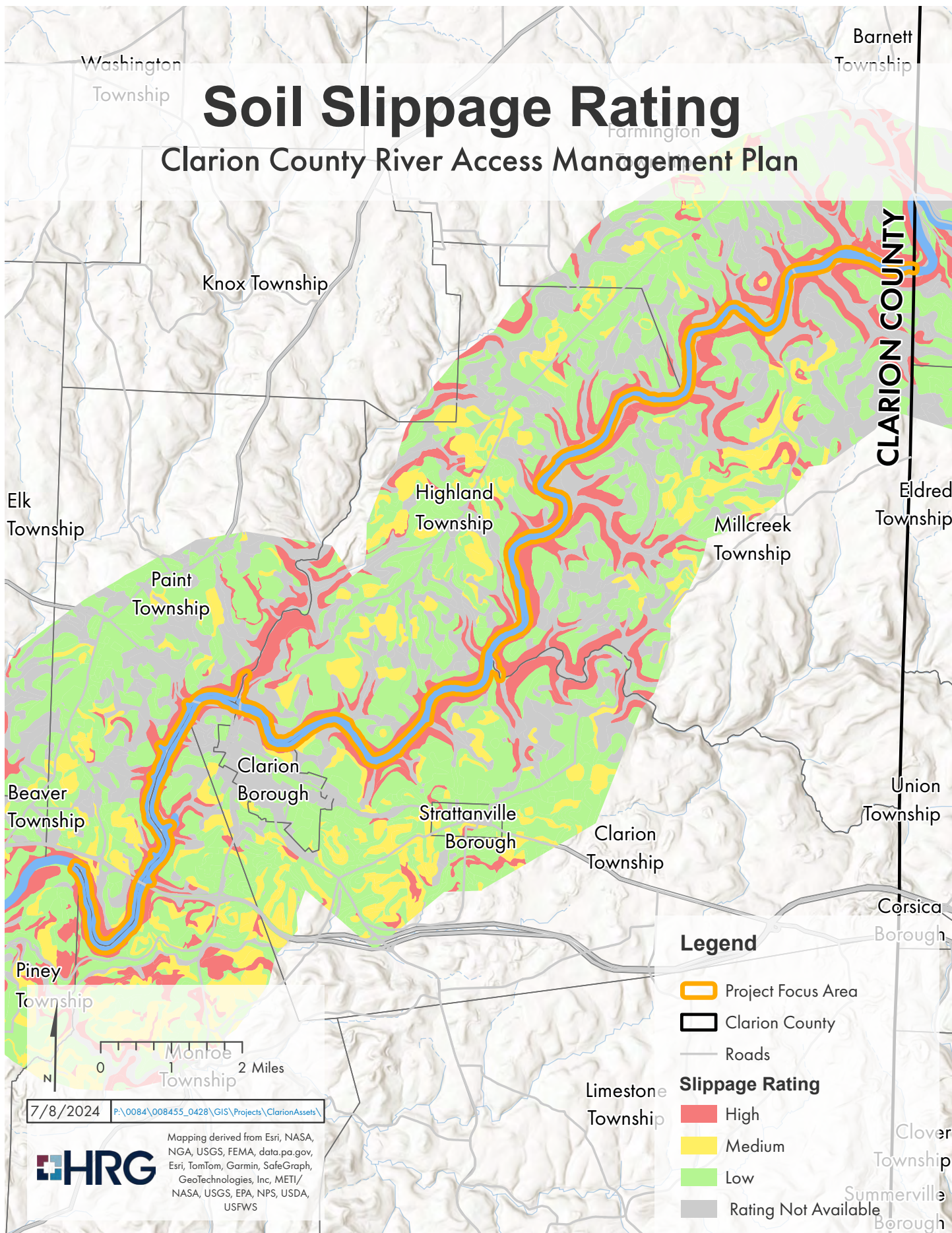
### **Best Fishing Waters**

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's mission is: "to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities." With this mission in mind, the PA FBC keeps track of important information regarding major waterbodies, their conditions, and their wildlife. The northern region of Clarion River (just north of Mill Creek Boat Launch) is considered a high-quality river segment for fishing Smallmouth Bass according to the PA FBC. This is relevant considering the popularity of fishing as a recreational activity within the study area. Additionally, areas with high-quality fish should be prioritized for future access points.

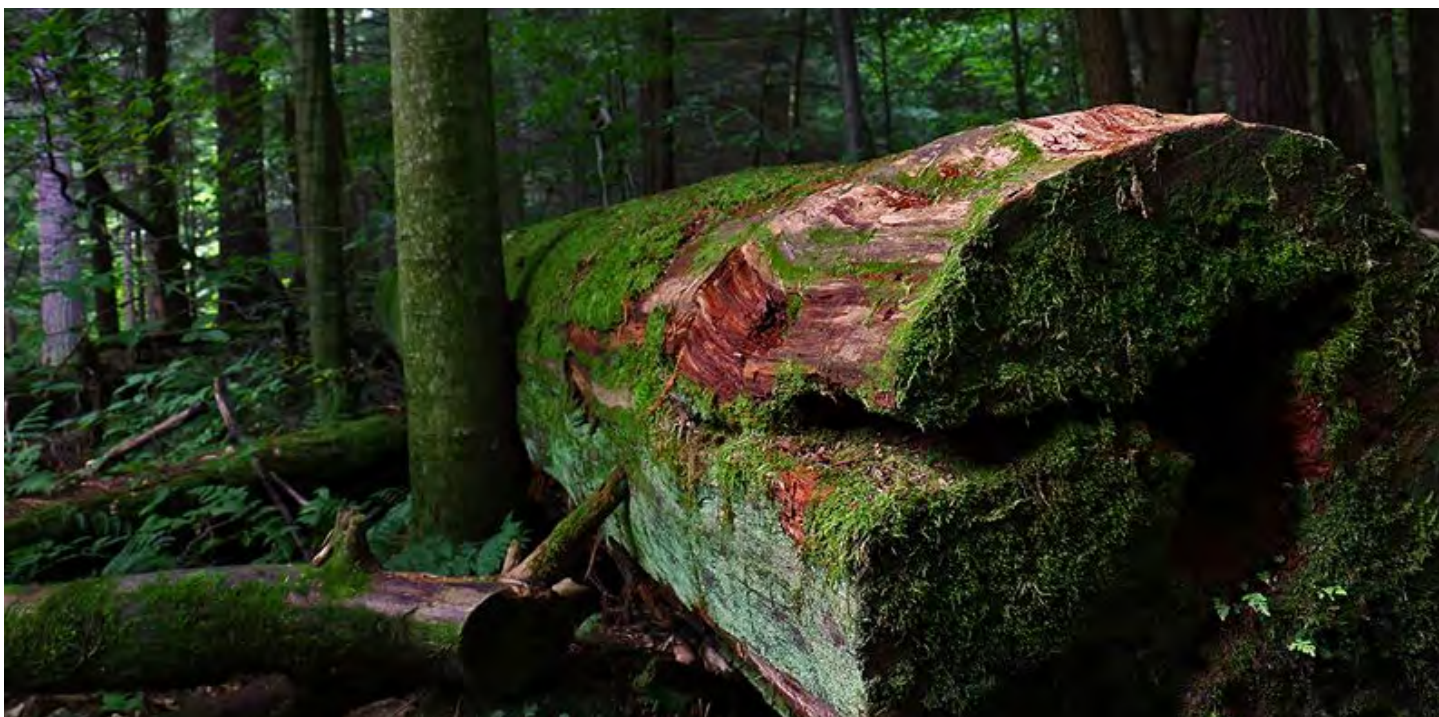
### **Slopes**

When considering areas for development, the most ideal areas have a low slope change percentage. It is important to note that the data has been based off of index contours for processing purposes, meaning extremities may not be indicated. The slope change









Cook Forest State Park in Farmington Township, image courtesy of Callihan Images

percentage around the River is generally higher due to the lateral and vertical erosion of riverbank soils. Percentage of slope change around the southern region of the River is more often 15% to 25%, this slope range is fit for cautionary development. The best areas for development in the southern region of the River would be near Cutty's Timberwolf Lodge and east of T-575. The northern area of the River has a higher average slope percentage change. Across the river, west of Maxwell Run, north of Blyson Run, and along Callihan Run would be best fit for cautionary development.

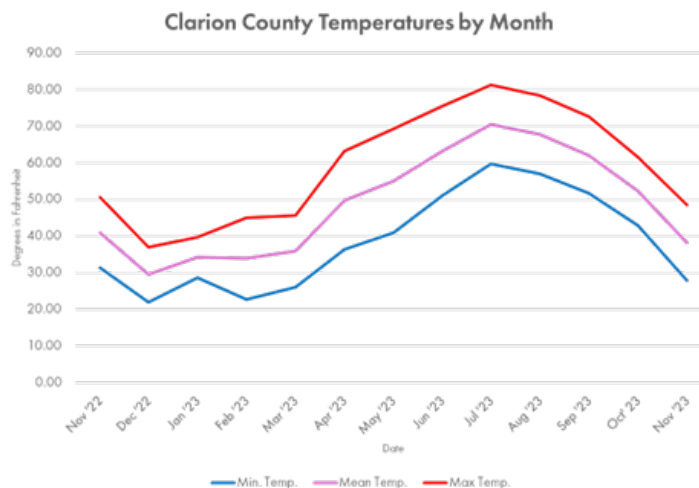
### **State Forests and Game Lands**

There is only one state forest within the study area, Clear Creek State Forest. This state forest includes 16,716 acres of land in Jefferson, Clarion, Venango, Forest, and Mercer Counties. Clear Creek State Forest is a popular destination for various outdoor activities like fishing, camping, and hiking and is also home to preserved old-growth forests. It is also located north of State Game Land 074 and is west of State Game Land 283. There are two other state game lands located within the study

area, State Game Lands 063 and 072. These lands are meant to manage wildlife habitats and are dedicated to legal opportunities for hunting and trapping. These areas are crucial when determining where new access points should be placed. Since these areas already have frequent users, it may be beneficial to create more access points, so users of these lands also have easy accessibility to the Clarion River.

### **Climate**

Clarion County has a humid continental climate, characterized by warm summers and cold to very cold, snowy winters. This climate type generally experiences precipitation throughout the year, with the highest precipitation in the summer months. This is consistent with the temperatures and precipitation observed between November of 2022 and November of 2023 in Clarion County. During this period, temperatures ranged from a low of 21.9°F in December 2022 to a high of 81.20°F in July 2023. Minimum, maximum, and mean temperatures can be seen in the chart on the following page.



Observed precipitation was also consistent with the humid continental climate. The highest total monthly rainfall documented during the observed period was in July of 2023, with a total of nine (9) inches that month. While the greatest rainfall was during the summer, there is precipitation observed throughout the year. In Clarion County, snowfall is common from October to April.

## Forests

Over 60 percent of Pennsylvania is covered by forests, which provide unique landscapes, valuable natural ecosystems, a variety of ecosystem services, and a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities. This means that the ability to utilize these areas for recreation and potential economic value must be balanced with their preservation. Consideration for additional access to the Clarion River should factor in the potential to leverage existing interest in forest recreation, while ensuring conservation of these important resources.

Pennsylvania is divided into twenty forest districts, each responsible for protecting the encompassed forest land from fire, destructive insects, and disease. Clarion County is part of District 8, which houses Clear Creek State Forest, the primary state forest within the study area, highlighted by the green outline in the map. Clear

Creek State Forest covers 16,716 acres surrounding the Clarion and Allegheny Rivers. The forest spans Clarion, Jefferson, Venango, Forest, and Mercer Counties. Red oak, white oak, red maple, birch, beech, and tulip poplar trees are all present throughout Clear Creek, along with a host of other plant and animal species.

In addition to flora and fauna, Clear Creek State Forest is home to a variety of recreation activities. Hiking, hunting, bird watching, and fishing are all common. Clear Creek is also a working forest, meaning that active sustainable timber harvesting, gypsy moth spraying, stream buffering, and wildlife and wild character conservation efforts may be happening in the forest at any given time.

Aside from the large, active ecosystems that make up state forests, specific tree stands may symbolize unique natural character in an area. Also shown in the map, mature oak stands (highlighted by brown polygons), young aspen stands (highlighted by yellow polygons), and old growth forests (identified with pine tree icons) are present around the study area. A diversity of young and mature tree stands means that there is also a diversity of habitat. An aspen stand is considered young when it is between one and twenty years old. During this time frame, the stand will have a uniquely high density, greater than any other forest type in Pennsylvania. This provides great coverage and food supply for many animals, like deer, elk, and rabbits. Meanwhile, older tree stands, like the mature oak stands and old growth forests, also provide great habitat, in addition to a host of other natural services, like greater carbon sequestration, and enhanced soil productivity and erosion protection. Two old growth forests are present near the study area, Forest Cathedral Natural Area and the Swamp Natural Area. These forests are located in Cook Forest State Park, which overlaps Clear Creek State Park, continuing northeast into Jefferson and Forest County.





The soaring ancient oak trees of Cook Forest State Park, image courtesy of David and Brittany Witoslawski

### **Bioresources**

The full Background Report included analysis of a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Report for the project area. The DCNR Report indicated Big Bluestem – Indiangrass Floodplain Grassland and Hemlock Palustrine Forest as special concern resources, which means that these plant species are classified as, "...rare, tentatively undetermined or candidate as well as other taxa of conservation concern, significant natural communities, special concern populations (plants or animals) and unique geologic features." While DCNR noted these plant species, no additional action is required during the permitting process, only additional consideration during the implementation or construction phase to help mitigate any impact on these plants. In general, reducing project footprints or creating designs that provide vegetative buffers between the project and these species may be beneficial in reducing potential impacts. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission noted an endangered species and a special concern species within the study area between Gravel Lick Road and Cook Forest State Park. The specific species are not revealed for their protection. Further review of this project by the Fish and Boat Commission may be necessary for any project in this section. Finally, the United States Fish

and Wildlife Service noted proximity to a bald eagle nest within this section. Under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, an additional permit may be required for projects in this area. Once a specific project has been identified, the PNDI may be rerun to determine if further action is needed to protect the endangered or special concern species potentially present, or to determine the specific measures needed to help protect Bald and Golden Eagles.

Downstream of this area, no species of concern were identified. The Fish and Boat Commission advises caution in this area due to the presence of venomous timber rattlesnakes.

## **Infrastructure, Circulation & Access Patterns**

Utilities and infrastructure are crucial when creating new river access areas as they ensure safety, accessibility, and functionality. Reliable utilities like water, electricity, and internet access are essential for maintaining cleanliness and supporting recreational activities. Proper planning of these elements promotes environmental sustainability and enhances the overall user experience, making the river access area a valuable community asset.

### **Broadband Access**

Broadband access is an assessment of a region's wide bandwidth data transmission over a high-speed internet connection. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), broadband internet is considered internet service with a minimum download speed of 25 mbps and a minimum upload speed of 3 mbps. Broadband access is typically organized into three categories:

- Served – speeds greater than or equal to 100/20 mbps

- Underserved – speeds less than 100/20 mbps but greater than or equal to 25/3 mbps
- Unserved – speeds less than 25/3 or not low-latency

The broadband map in the Appendix shows the number of Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSL) in a H3 Resolution-8 area that have been assessed as either underserved or unserved in terms of broadband access. The map indicates a higher rate of underserved/unserved regions north of the Clarion Riverbank across the Study area. Municipalities that have generally poorer broadband access include Paint Township, Highland Township, and Farmington Township. While broadband access does not include cellular service availability, understanding the access to broadband regionally may indicate that residential areas with poorer broadband access may not have appropriate internet access at home that provides information on current public access points for the River. Therefore, there may be a large percentage of the population north of the Riverbank that are unaware of updates and the status of vital access points.

### Outdoor Recreation Access

In a project led by the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Pennsylvania has established an online mapping tool that allows recreation providers to measure the level of access versus needs in their service areas.

Clarion County has an abundance of natural and recreational resources. However, much of the County is classified as a “high” or “medium” need when evaluated based on the ability to walk to a recreation area within ten minutes. The level of need is based on three factors—population density, youth population density, and low-income population density.

The project area, identified in bold on the following map, is classified as high to medium need in the southwestern half near Clarion Borough where population density is higher. The northeastern portion of the project area is generally classified as low need, likely due to lower population density and the area’s proximity to Cook Forest. Higher incomes may also affect the classification, as people with higher income have more access to transportation and private recreation options.

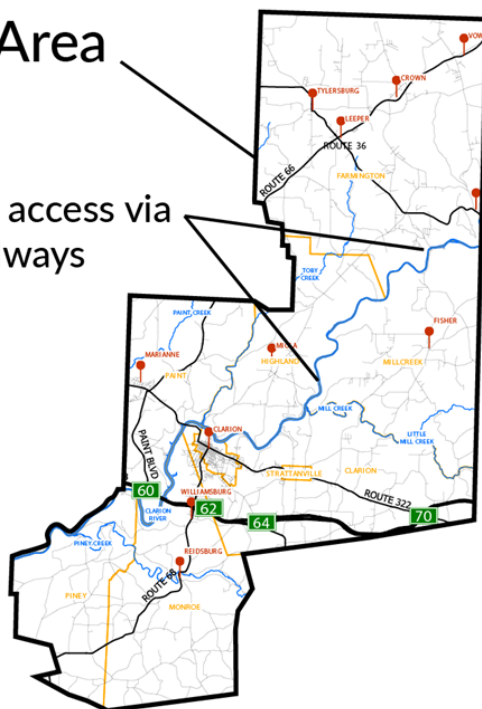
When evaluating Clarion County’s residents’ access to water recreation, all of the identified public water access points are considered. “Access” is identified as being within a ten-minute drive of a water access point.

Countywide, data shows that Clarion County compares well with water recreation access statewide. Clarion County provides particularly well for populations identified as minorities (78%), linguistically isolated (83%), and households without vehicles (69%). The least-served population identified is people that have less than a high school education (55%).

	Statewide	Clarion County		Clarion Comparison
<b>Population Served:</b>	61%	61.91%	+	0.91%
<b>Kids Served:</b>	60%	62.39%	+	2.39%
<b>Low-Income Served:</b>	64%	63.67%	-	-0.33%
<b>Minorities Served:</b>	68%	78.48%	+	10.48%

## Project Area

Less access via roadways



Source: Clarion County; Notes by HRG

Most of the project area is considered to have sufficient access to water recreation. Much of Monroe Township's population has medium need, while in Paint and Clarion Townships there are pockets of high need. Along the Clarion River, one notable high-need area is located in Highland and Clarion Townships between the Toby Boat Launch and the Mill Creek Launch. Between the Mill Creek and Gravel Lick access points, areas are identified as having access; however, there is no public launch available in this area. Where Clear Creek State Forest abuts the Clarion River, it is likely that the mapping algorithm indicates access regardless of whether such access is practical. There are no improved access areas between Mill Creek and Gravel Lick.

Access can also be limited by local conditions such as the number and type of roadways present. A map of County roads in the Appendix indicates that throughout Clear Creek State Forest between Mill Creek and Gravel Lick, the density of roadways in the vicinity of the

Clarion River is very low (below), limiting the options for practical water access.

Additional considerations affecting river recreation access includes access for people with disabilities. Compliance with the ABA is challenging at both existing and potential access points due to the steep terrain of the Clarion River's banks. Variations also exist in regulatory requirements at existing access sites. All sites owned by PAFBC require watercraft registration or a use permit, while other access sites are unregulated.

While high-level mapping and data analysis indicates that access is sufficient in much of the project area, the planning team identified a need for improved access points, improved roadway access, and an improved wayfinding system even where public water access is deemed to be provided.

## Conclusions

The Clarion River, and more specifically the study area that is part of the Access Management Plan (AMP), is home to a plethora of resources and assets. The ultimate goal of the AMP is to enhance and improve access to the River for Clarion County residents and visitors. The River has potential to increase access for many recreational activities, including fishing, canoeing, boating, swimming, floating, wading, kayaking, paddle boarding, and other activities.

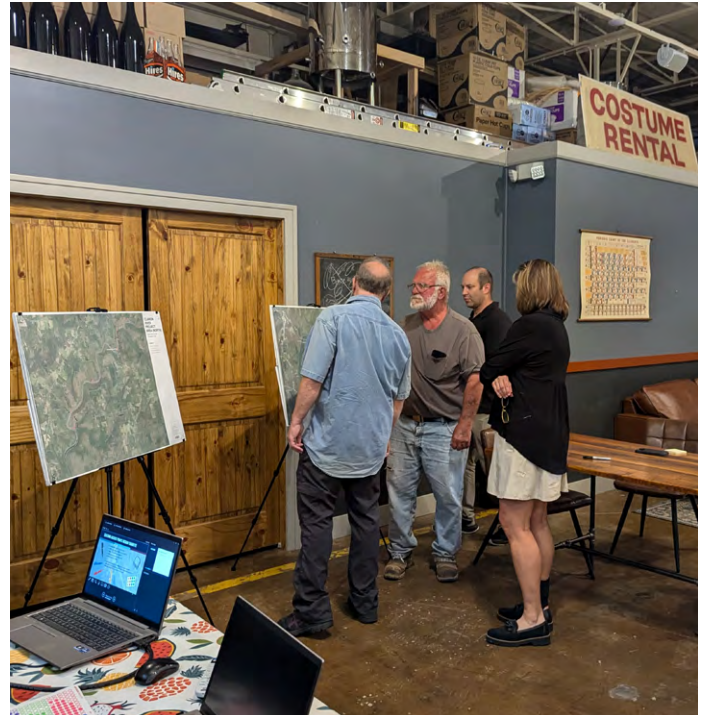
# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & INPUT

## The Planning Process

The planning process for the Clarion River Access Management Plan started in March 2024, when Herbert, Rowland and Grubic Inc. (HRG), the planning consultant, held a kickoff meeting to discuss the project and its goals with Clarion County staff and key members of the project Steering Committee. From there, the County, Steering Committee, and HRG worked through the proposed schedule and tasks that took approximately nine months to ultimately develop the Plan and its key elements and recommendations. The following page represents the schedule of the overall planning process.

## Project Steering Committee

As part of the planning process, Clarion County relied heavily on input from the Plan's Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was made up of several stakeholders within the community and Committee members were selected by Clarion County staff and the Board of Commissioners. Regular meetings were held with the Steering Committee throughout the planning process and specific topics and issues were discussed at each meeting. Overall, the Steering Committee met four (4) times throughout the course of the project as the Plan was developed, specifically in April, July, October, and December. Members of the Steering Committee played an integral role in the development of the Plan and helped to create many of the initial recommendations for access along the River and provided feedback and input along the way. For additional details on the Steering Committee meetings, notes from each meeting can be found in Appendix C.



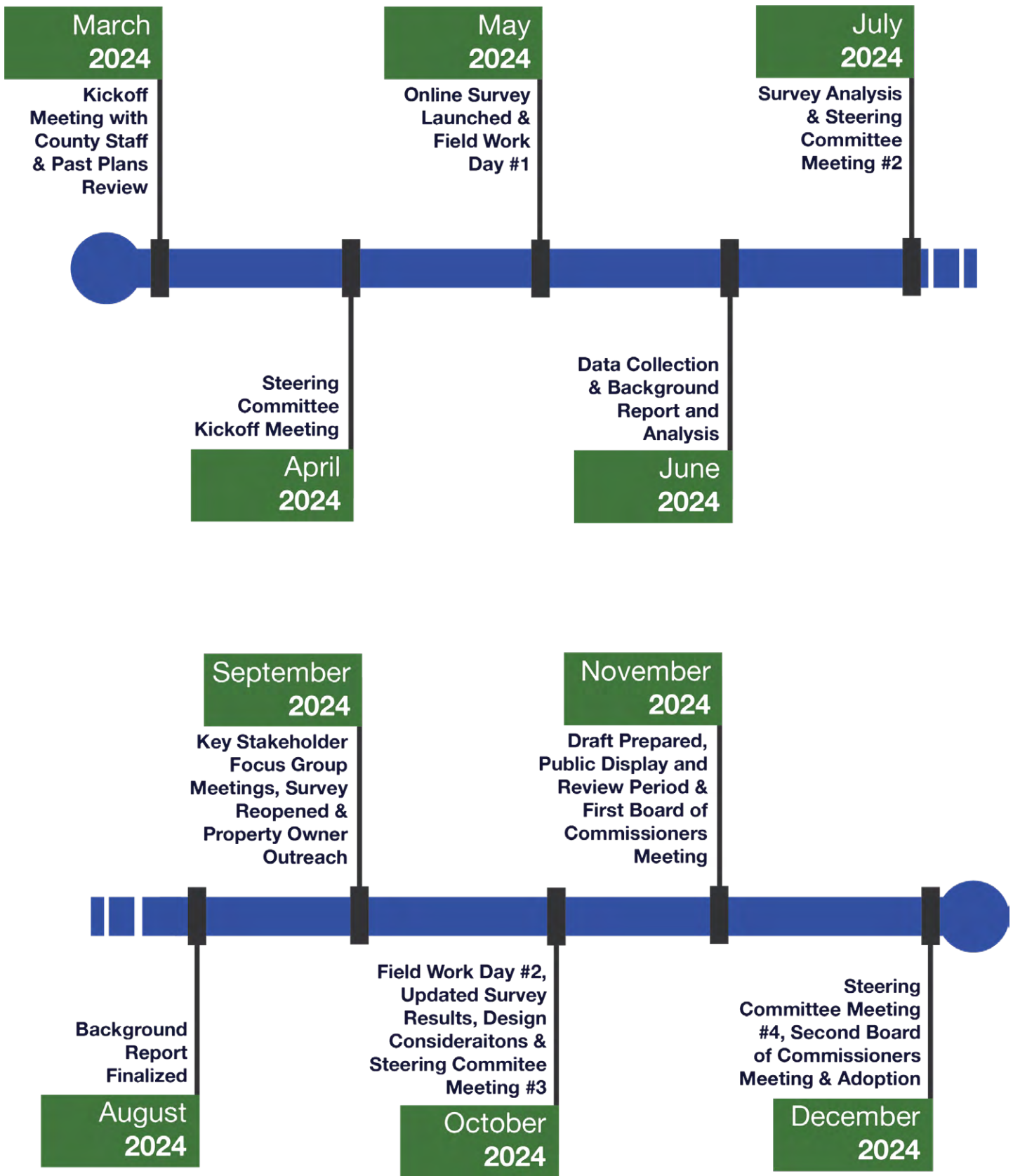
Key Stakeholders discussing future River access points at the Key Stakeholder Meetings

## Key Stakeholder Outreach

In addition to regular meetings with the Steering Committee, HRG also conducted a day of public outreach with key stakeholders. The Key Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings were held on September 11, 2024. A total of three meetings were held over the course of the day and a total of roughly 14 key stakeholders attended. Mapping exercises were completed with the key stakeholders to generate ideas for potential new access points along the River in the Study Area, additional properties to investigate, and to identify additional improvements needed at current existing access points. More information from the Key Stakeholder Meetings can be found in Appendix D.



# THE PLANNING PROCESS





Besides the key stakeholder meetings, several one-on-one meetings were conducted either virtually or via phone with property owners along the River in the Study Area, including PA American Water, Brookfield Renewable Energy, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the PA Game Commission, the Clarion University Foundation, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission. Input received from these specific property owners were considered in the recommendations of this Plan and specifically some of the design considerations for existing and new access points along the River.

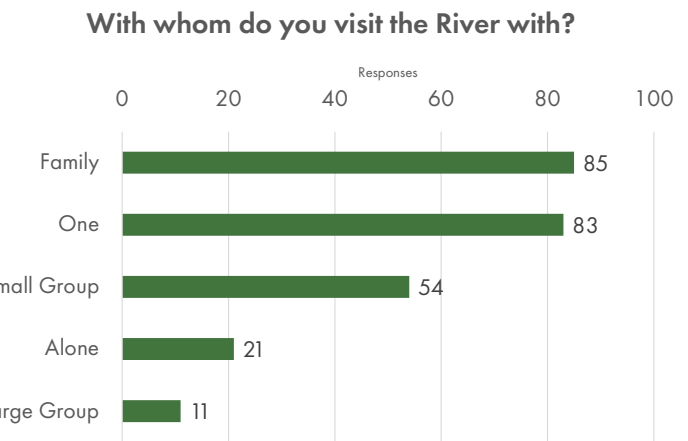
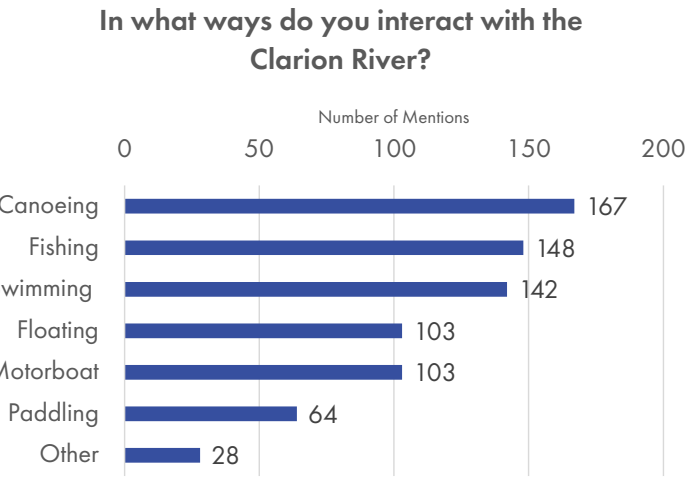
## Online Survey

An online survey was made available via Survey Monkey for residents, business owners, and stakeholders to complete regarding access to and use of the Clarion River and other basic demographics of the survey participants. The survey was available initially from May 1, 2024 through July 19, 2024. As a result of the key stakeholder focus group meetings, the survey was reopened from September 11, 2024 until October 11, 2024 so that Brookfield Renewable Energy had the opportunity to share the survey link via email with its dock lease holders. Between the two time periods that the survey was open, a total of 234 responses were received.

The survey asked a variety of questions, including basic demographic information like age, race, and gender. Specific questions related to recreational use along the River and access to the River were also included in the survey. Maps were provided as part of the survey and asked participants to note in what locations they typically access the River. There were also questions concerning what time of year they access the River and how much time they generally spend during each visit and how often they use the River throughout the year.

The map on the following page shows the results to the mapping question that asked participants to locate the areas where they typically access the Clarion River. The lightest points on the map are locations where as few as one respondent identified the area as an access point. The darker areas are the more commonly used access areas as noted by more respondents.

A few graphics and charts below highlight some of the results for specific questions asked in the online survey. A full summary and analysis of the results of the online survey can be found in Appendix D.





Sawmill Dam River access

## Public Display & Review Period

A draft of the Clarion River Access Management Plan officially went on public display on Tuesday, November 12, 2024. The Plan was available for download on the County's website via the following link: [https://www.co.clarion.pa.us/T31\\_R187.php](https://www.co.clarion.pa.us/T31_R187.php). An advertisement was also placed in The Clarion News.

An online comment form was offered through Survey Monkey during the public review period via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ClarionRiverAMP>

The Public Meeting with the Clarion County Board of Commissioners discussed the draft of the Clarion River Access Management Plan at Board meetings held on

Wednesday, November 27, 2024 and December 10, 2024.

Additional information on comments received via the online comment form and during the Board meetings will be included in the final draft.



# DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

## Existing Access Points in the Study Area

There are three existing public access points to the Clarion River within the study area. These include the Toby Boat Launch in Clarion Borough, the Mill Creek Boat Launch in Clarion Township, and the Gravel Lick Canoe Launch in Millcreek Township. Regular patrons and users of the River that do not have their own private dock access typically use at least one of these three main access points. The following section reviews the conditions at each of the three existing access areas as well as some potential improvements that could be made to enhance and update the access areas and make them safer, more user-friendly, and accessible to all. More detailed information regarding proposed improvements can be found in the next section of this Chapter, Site Improvements.

### ***Toby Boat Launch***

The Toby Boat Launch, located in Clarion Borough, is leased by the Borough from Brookfield Renewable Energy (Brookfield). The most common recreation types at the Toby Boat Launch area of the Clarion River include motorized boats, nonmotorized boats, and bank fishing. The launch does not require a permit to use. Posted signs prohibit swimming or fishing from the boat dock. Although the launch is located within walking distance of Clarion Borough's population center, there is no designated sidewalk or trail.

The recreation area is laid out in three tiers, all accessible to vehicles and separated by steep grades with a mix of native and invasive vegetation. The wooded slopes in some places exceed a 2:1 slope (50% grade). All recreation activities are on the lowest tier, where no



Toby Boat Launch



Mill Creek Boat Launch



Gravel Lick Boat Launch

parking is available. The middle tier offers parking, a restroom, and a canoe and kayak rental cage; these amenities are clustered along the sides of a through-road, Firemans Road, which is a dead-end public road and the only way to access several residences located beyond the launch. The upper tier of the site is a gravel lot for trailer parking. Overall the site is shady, natural, and pleasant, but staff report that it gets congested and is difficult to navigate during high-use periods. Congestion is compounded by people parking at the Toby Launch to cross the Toby Bridge and visit a nearby landmark known as the Rock.

Due to the overall site layout at the Toby Boat Launch, vehicle and pedestrian circulation is confusing, particularly for new users of the River that may be accessing the River here for the first time. There are no designated pedestrian areas and, while there are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant amenities on site, an accessible path does not currently exist between the amenities. A variety of signage is posted, including a sign facing the river indicating to boaters that amenities are available. There is no signage system directing vehicles as they enter the site. A no-outlet sign at the entrance and one-way sign on the upper tier are somewhat confusing. There is limited signage directing vehicles entering the site on where or where not to park.

Utilities are available at or near the site. Electricity and lighting are provided. While the launch is considered within the designated public water and sewer service areas, service lines to Firemans Road are not installed. One ADA accessible portable toilet is available in season. Staff report that users have issues with restroom cleanliness, particularly when some people use it as a fish cleaning station. Cell phone voice and data are available at the launch.

A third-party kayak rental cage is stored on-site. It is locked when not in use and monitored with a security



Existing floating dock at Toby Boat Launch



Boat rental and restroom alongside handicapped parking

camera. There are no other buildings, shelters, or storage facilities at the launch. Safety equipment, such as a flotation device with rope, was not observed.

At the time of this report, the Borough has applied for a Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) grant to fund necessary improvements to restroom accessibility and to stabilize the riverbank near the fishing area. However, the steep nature of the site limits the scope of improvements possible without a large-scale redesign. In addition to issues addressed by the pending grant application, congestion, pedestrian safety, resident and emergency services access, vehicle circulation and parking, erosion and stormwater management remain long-term concerns at the Toby Launch.



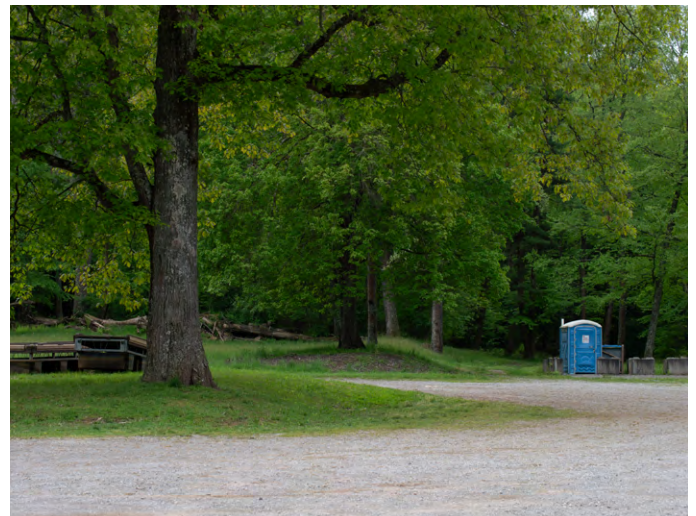


Gravel Lick parking lot and boat launch ramp (right)

### ***Mill Creek Boat Launch***

Located in Clarion Township, the Mill Creek Boat Launch is located on a small peninsula at the confluence of Mill Creek and the Clarion River. It is within the FERC permitted boundary of the Piney Dam and is managed jointly by the Fish and Boat Commission, Game Commission, and Brookfield. A PAFBC day permit or boat registration is required to use the launch. Its main recreation amenities include a launch for motorized and nonmotorized boats as well as bank fishing. Site users report that the Mill Creek tributary is used seasonally for whitewater paddling, but launching flotation devices is prohibited by PAFBC signage.

There are two main access routes that are used to get to the Mill Creek Launch: Millcreek Drive and T572, a single lane bridge that also provides ATV access. Neither route has signage directing users to the launch, which is problematic because there is no cellular service available. A map is provided on site, although it is due for replacement due to fading.



Minimal access infrastructure including a port-a-john and benches

The Mill Creek Boat Launch offers a large aggregate parking lot with ample room for turnarounds and trailer parking, but no designated ADA parking spaces. In addition, the concrete boat ramp is in good condition. There are no utilities present, but two portable toilets are provided and maintained. An old stone block bridge abutment is used as an overlook. The opposing abutment can be seen on the opposite shore of the river, along with private leased docks.





Gravel Lick parking lot and boat launch ramp (right)

### **Gravel Lick Road Bridge & Gravel Lick Canoe Launch**

The Gravel Lick Canoe Launch, located in Millcreek Township, is available for nonmotorized boat use and bank fishing. It is managed by the Fish and Boat Commission, which requires a day use permit or boat registration to use the launch. This particular access area is remote, difficult to find, and the existing signage is not oriented to the road. A representative from PAFBC reported recently having installed river-facing signage due to issues caused by paddlers coming from Cook Forest launches and mistakenly bypassing Gravel Lick. This is particularly concerning as the next downstream public landing, the Mill Creek Launch, is nearly 8.5 river miles away.

There is a level aggregate parking area provided, which is in good condition, that has adequate space for a trailer turnaround. Access to the Clarion River from Gravel Lick is steep and narrow. The earth surface, according to public input, is subject to erosion and accumulation of mud and sediment near the bottom. No utilities were observed during field work, there is no cellular service, and there are no parking or improvements for ADA accessibility.



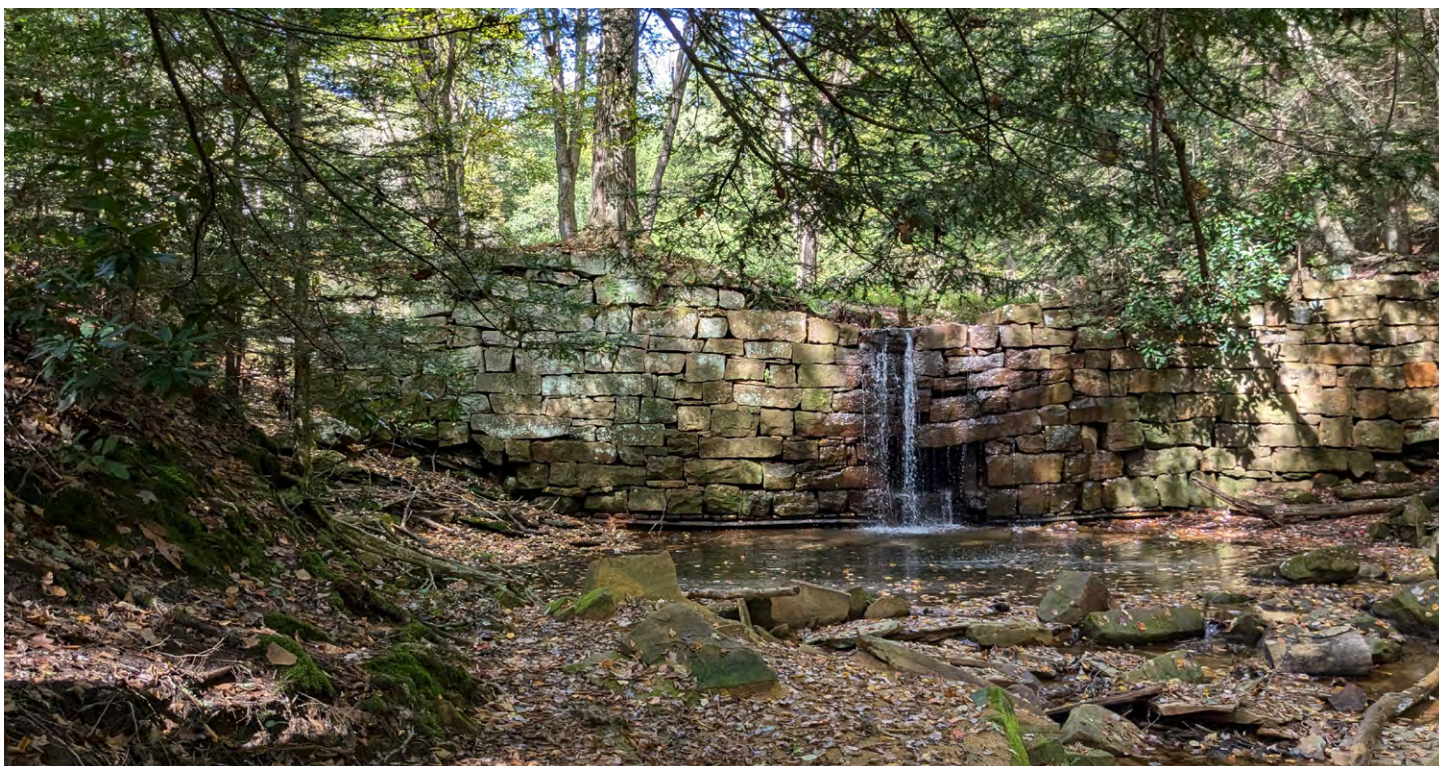
Old US 322 south shore spring

### **Other Access Points**

In addition to the main current and existing access points--Toby, Mill Creek, and Gravel Lick-- several other access points were reviewed as part of the background analysis and site assessments. These other areas that were reviewed include the North Country Trailhead/ Old US 322 River Access on the North Shore, Old US 322 River Access on the South Shore, and the Piney Dam River Access area.

- **North Country Trailhead/Old US 322 River Access on the North Shore of the River** – This access currently has no signage but is located off of the North Country Trail crossing. Both recent and older private recreation improvements were present at this site. The site provides very steep access with stairs and a paved retaining wall/terrace. The main recreation type at this access point is fishing.
- **Old US 322 River Access on the South Shore of the River** – The access on the south shore of the river does not have any signage. In addition, the access is very steep with stairs and a paved retaining wall/terrace on this side as well. There are several provided docks and fishing areas that are accessed from this area and are signed as "private" or "no





The Henry Run Sawmill Dam in the northeast portion of the study area

trespassing.” The main recreation type in this area is fishing and recent and older improvements were evident.

- **Piney Dam River Access Area** – Bank fishing is the primary recreation type at the Piney Dam River Access Area. Signage does exist on site, but it is not very clear. A map is provided that labels routes “A, B, and C” but no signs are placed on any of the exact routes, and it is unclear where the boundaries are between the public areas and the restricted areas. Overall, this area is not ADA accessible and the access to the water is via a steep dirt trail with a cable barrier that is signed “No vehicles beyond this point.”

## Improvements Plan

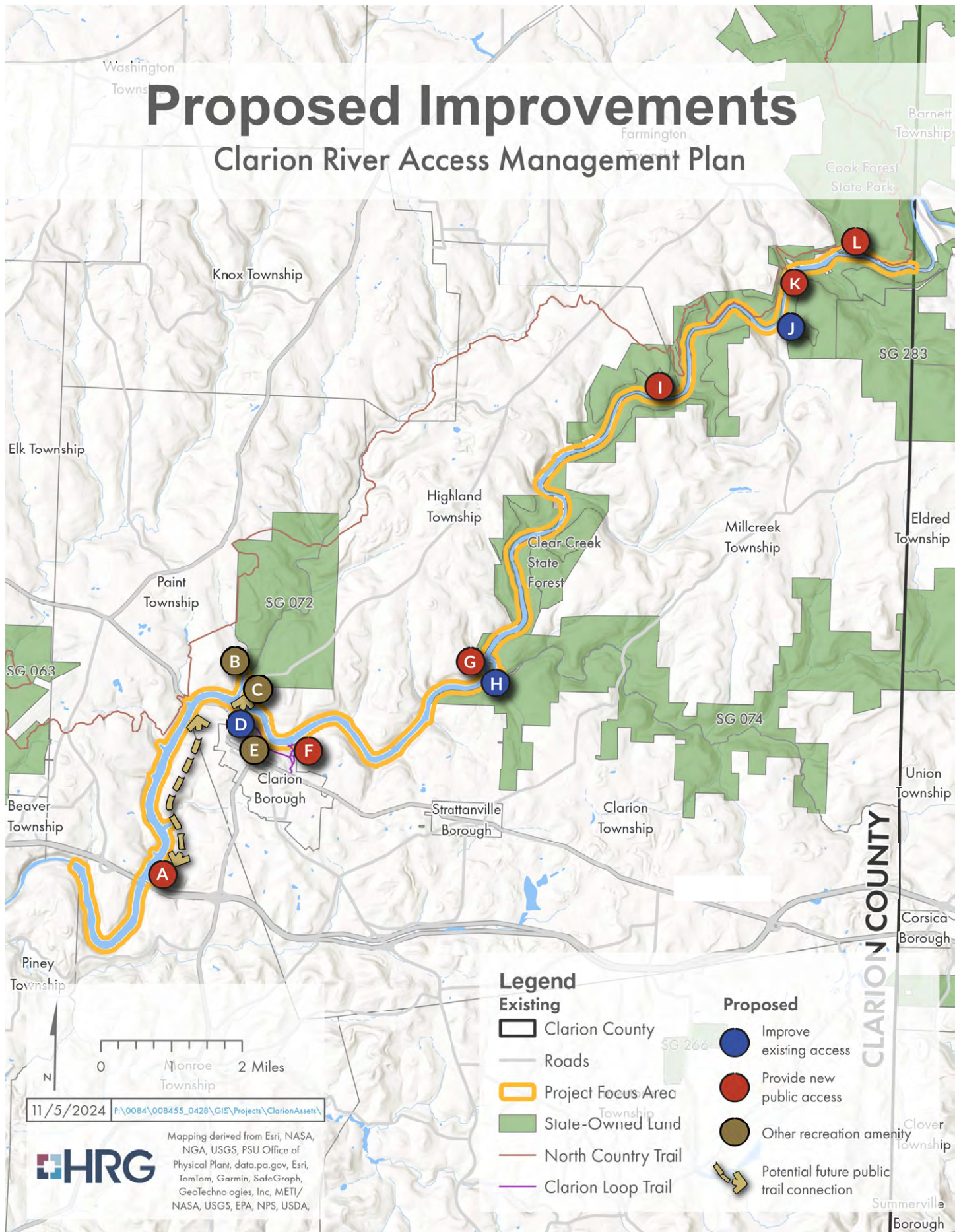
The following recommendations include improvements to existing public access sites and proposed new public access sites. Improvements are discussed in order from downstream to upstream and are not in priority order.

For all recommendations and site selections, the planning and design team weighed several design considerations in addition to those addressed by the Background Report, including:

- Ability to build on or connect to existing recreation amenities in the area to maximize benefits while minimizing investment in new infrastructure
- Ability to provide more than one recreation activity at a site
- Proximity to the most populated or most underserved areas
- Impact to private landowners, including landowners on the opposite bank
- Availability of partnerships or funding sources to implement the proposed improvement

The map and key on the following pages show the rough geographic locations of the discussed access points as well as some high-level details about improvements recommended for the site.





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

A

## **Acquisition: Mays Estate**

Acquiring this property adjacent to the Clarion Mall may offer the opportunity for both public river access and potential recreation tourism development.

B

## **Waterfall Overlook**

Rapp Run Falls, an existing scenic area in State Game Lands 72, could enhance the Clarion River recreation experience with an improved parking area.

C

## **The Rock Overlook**

The Rock, a well-known landmark on the Clarion River, should be enhanced with safe pedestrian access.

D

## **Toby Boat Launch**

Extensive improvements are recommended for safety, emergency access, accessibility, circulation, and user experience. Long-term multi-phase site master planning is needed to ensure this heavily used access point remains viable for the next ten years and beyond.

E

## **Eagle Overlook**

Accessible overlook amenities and a connection to existing trails are recommended to link residents and students with the Clarion River experience.

F

## **Water Company Launch**

Adaptive launch amenities are recommended to accommodate paddlers of all abilities, and as an alternate access point to the congested Toby Boat Ramp.

G

## **Millcreek Road**

Through a partnership with the land owner, enhance existing boat ramp and infrastructure to provide public river access on the north bank of the River and boost cellular signals to serve the existing popular Mill Creek Launch.

H

## **Mill Creek Launch**

Improve safety and user experience with a Small Cell Network pilot project.

I

## **Highland Drive**

With minor modification, this existing public trail access parking area near Slater's Crossing can reduce the distance between canoe/kayak launches from 8.5 to 5.9 river miles.

J

## **Gravel Lick Launch**

Improved directional signage and a stabilized ramp could improve this site for use by a greater number of canoe and kayak users. Assess the nearby spring for swimming or wading.

K

## **Gravel Lick Bridge**

Provide amenities to encourage safe and ecologically responsible use of this unimproved site that is popular with paddlers.

L

## **Sawmill Dam Landing**

Provide a small paddle-in and -out landing upstream of Henry Run/ Sawmill Dam/ Hemlock Island cultural features to allow walk-in viewing and reduce impact to the Sawmill Dam site as well as private landowners.



## **A ACQUISITION: MAYS ESTATE**

### ***Recreation Activities***

Canoe and Kayak Launch, Fishing, Walking Trails, Tourism and Attractions such as an Amphitheater, Event Grounds, Rental Facilities, or Campground

### ***Design Considerations***

The Mays property refers to a 143.0-acre parcel listed for sale at the time of this Plan. It is located between the Clarion River and the Clarion Mall and Hospital; however, the parcel for sale does not include waterfront property. Interstate 80 (I-80) runs parallel to the southern border of the property. Due to its proximity to I-80 and the adjacent development, this property is advantageous for recreation tourism development. Thus, providing road infrastructure and utilities to the site will be a key part of any recreation project recommended for this property.



Courtley Run

The Clarion River in the vicinity of the Mays Property is within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) boundary for the Piney Dam. Therefore, if waterfront access were to be included in the Mays Acquisition, the land along the river would be retained by Brookfield Renewables and could only be developed through a lease agreement with Brookfield. Swimming is prohibited on all Brookfield property.

An existing gravel road provides access to the center and southern end of the property. The majority of level land closest to the Clarion Mall and Hospital has been cleared and surface mined and is now a mix of grassland and pioneer vegetation. Design considerations for this area include potential contamination of unknown type, unsuitability for vegetation establishment, and potential for subsidence.

The land at the site slopes steeply down to the Clarion River, and to Courtley Run, a tributary to the River. The slopes investigated by the planning team include some logging-type roads, which are covered with largely intact hemlock forest. On the south-facing slopes, traffic noise from I-80 is detectable and sometimes significant.

### ***Recommendations***

Acquisition: There are several benefits to acquiring the 143.0-acre Mays property. The proximity to existing commercial development and transportation make it advantageous for economic development and tourism. However, in terms of the Clarion River Access Management Plan, existing boundaries offer neither water access nor the best available overlook views on the larger Mays property holdings. Negotiate with the landowner to acquire or subdivide additional parcels to provide water access. Consider the probability and amount of additional funding that may be available if river recreation and/or watershed restoration are a part of the acquisition.



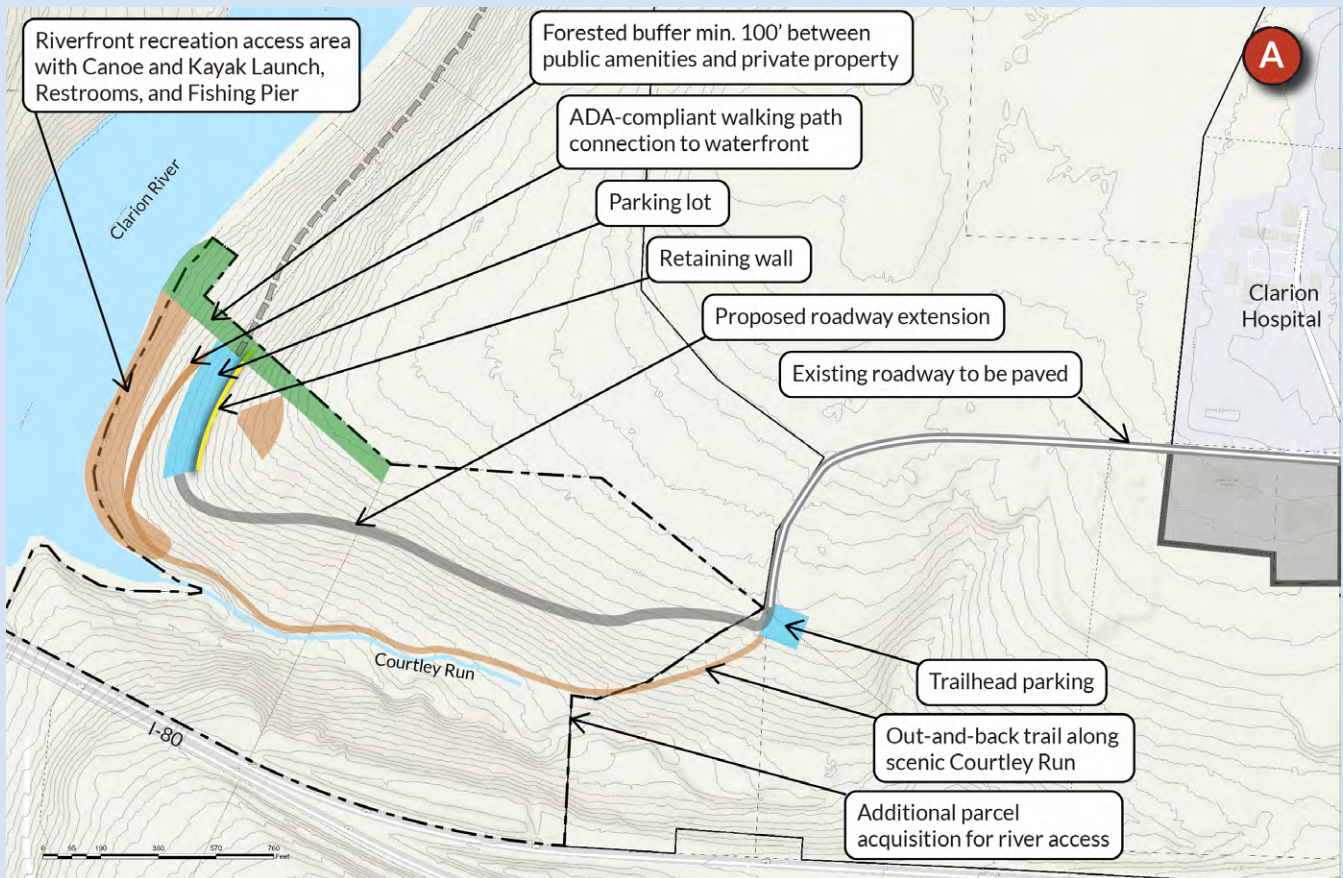
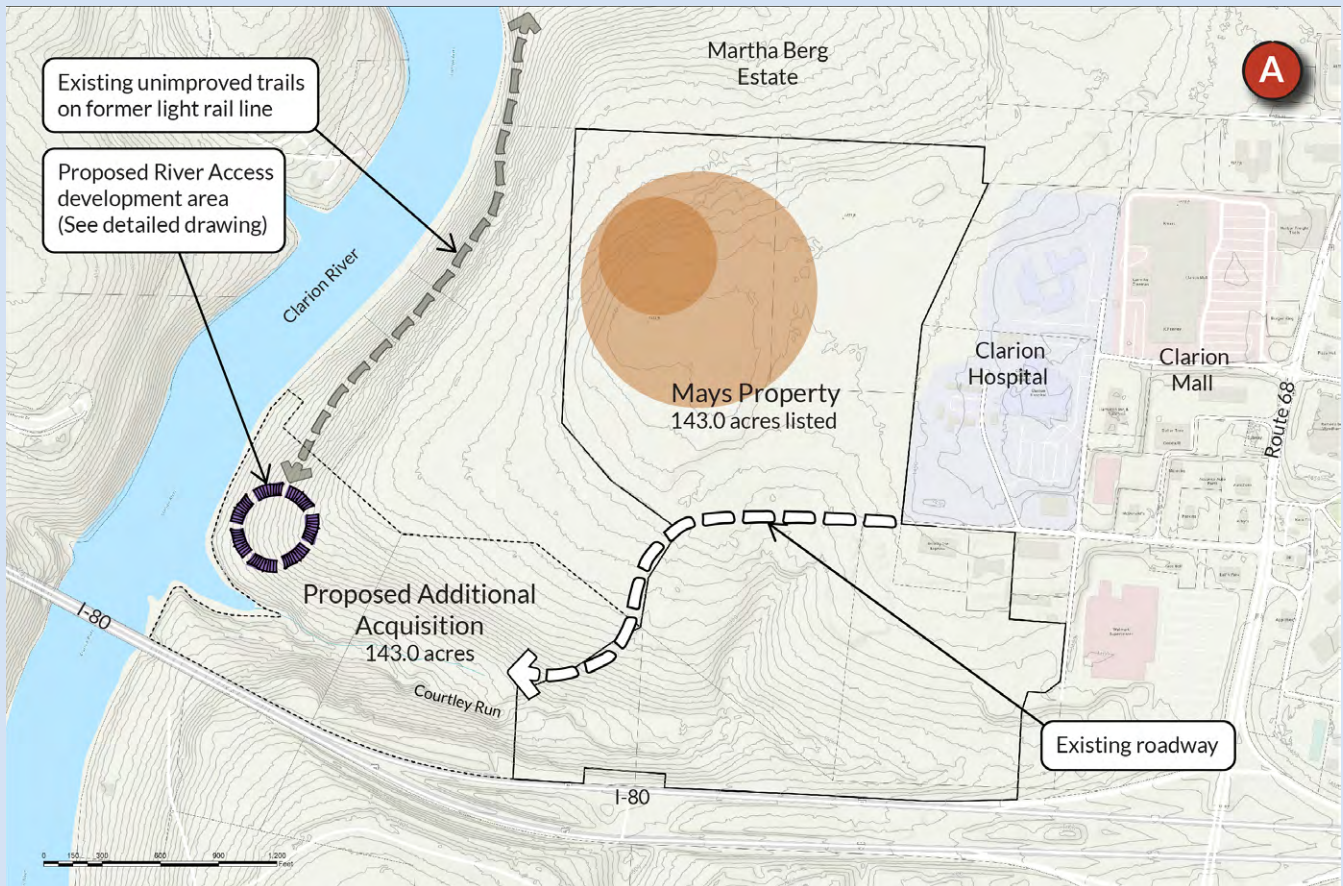
Plans and Studies: Create a Preliminary Site Master Plan. Depending on the type of facilities proposed (public outdoor recreation, privately operated recreation facilities, large scale event grounds, and/or commercial land development) additional studies may be needed. These may include feasibility studies, environmental studies, and market research. The Preliminary Site Master Plan should focus on feasibility considerations, such as:

- What is the type and level of contamination? Are there secondary contaminants, e.g. buried fuel tanks?
- What funding sources are available for mitigation? Do they apply to this property?
- How will previous surface mining affect future land use? Is there danger of subsidence? Is encapsulation required and will it limit the ability to construct foundations or occupied structures?
- Are the adjacent uses appropriate for the proposed facilities? While proximity to infrastructure makes the site accessible, can it also make it less desirable for some types of outdoor recreation? Do people want to enter the site through the mall? Do they want to camp next to the interstate?
- Can existing infrastructure (roads, traffic control, and utilities) support the proposed facilities, and the additional traffic that may be drawn to the site?
- Does the site need to be secured, and if so, how? Consult local Fire and EMS as well as State Police due to proximity to I-80.
- Are proposed developments allowable under the Piney Project FERC license? Will Brookfield grant a lease to the County to use the waterfront, and what is the cost of the lease? Are proposed connections to adjacent properties feasible, and are additional agreements or easements needed?



Existing roadways on the southern end of the Mays property







## **B** WATERFALL OVERLOOK

### **Recreation Activities**

Overlook, Picnic

### **Design Considerations**

Rapp Run Falls is an existing scenic area near Bigley Road within State Game Lands 72. Rapp Run, a tributary to Toby Creek, forms a cascade-type waterfall through a wooded area with little understory. It is fairly easy to access via existing natural trails, and makes a picturesque location for photography, picnicking, or other passive activities. It is nearby to River access points and a nice point of interest for general outdoors tourism.

There is a small and level, unmarked area next to Bigley Road that allows one car to pull over. Visitors can then walk along the curve of the road to access the trails to the falls. While Bigley is not a high-traffic road, visibility on the curve is poor.

### **Recommendations**

Infrastructure: To improve safety and enhance user experience, clear a small area for parking off Bigley Road closer to the trails leading to the falls. Install a small sign indicating a scenic area to assist visitors in finding the waterfall.







Bigley Road waterfall



Route from existing parking along Bigley Road to Rapp Run



## THE ROCK OVERLOOK

### *Recreation Activities*

Overlook, Walking Trail, Picnic

### *Design Considerations*

The Rock is a well-known Clarion area landmark, particularly among students of PennWest University, Clarion Campus. The Rock is a large, partially submerged boulder at the mouth of Toby Creek where it enters the Clarion River.

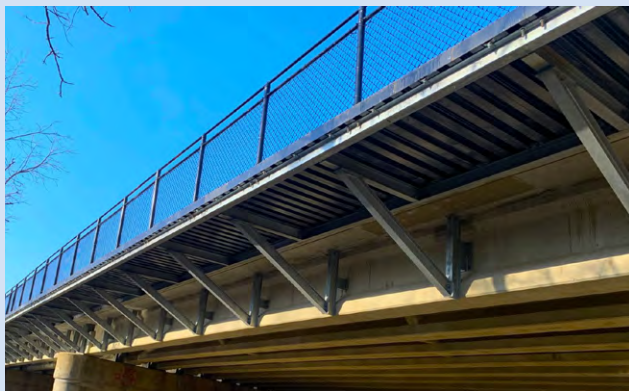
The land around the Toby Bridge abutment is owned by Clarion County, and the shoreline is the property of Brookfield Renewables. Because it is within the FERC boundary and owned by Brookfield, swimming is prohibited at this site. To the north, the steep slope above the Toby Creek is a part of Game Lands 72. State Game Lands are available to all users for activities in addition to hunting such as fishing, hiking, birdwatching, and nature study. These resources are only about a 1,000-foot walk from the Toby Boat Launch.

The site is accessed on foot because no parking is available, with the majority of visitors using the Toby Bridge to cross the Clarion River to the Rock. There is no pedestrian path on the bridge and crossing on foot is unsafe.

### *Recommendations*

#### Pedestrian Bridge

- To improve safety and accessibility, add pedestrian facilities to the Toby Bridge. A separate pedestrian path will not only improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians, but it will create a better user experience for people crossing the bridge for recreation purposes. A safe, separate sidewalk will be a recreation amenity in itself, allowing users to access the Rock but also to pause for sightseeing, wildlife viewing, photography, etc.
- A fiber reinforced polymer (FRP) cantilevered sidewalk with aluminum railing is recommended. Lightweight vacuum-infusion FRP deck panels can be added to an existing bridge with a negligible increase in weight. Vacuum-infusion panels can accommodate many design features such as cross-slope, curbs, and widths in excess of ten feet. Ensure that panels, railings, and approaches to the bridge are ADA-compliant.



Courtesy of Creative Composites Group: A cantilever sidewalk structure attached to existing bridge



Courtesy of Creative Composites Group: A cantilever sidewalk with aluminum rail



## Site Amenities and Future Connection to Game Lands

- The addition of a pedestrian walkway to the Toby Bridge has the potential to open additional recreation opportunities to the people of Clarion Borough, including a potential future trail extension into Game Lands 72.
- Explore the possibility of a trail or elevated walkway into the Game Lands. Composite FRP panels used for the bridge could create a boardwalk or small deck, transforming the steep slopes above Toby Creek into a recreation amenity such as an overlook with picnic facilities.

## Signage

- Post signage at the Rock indicating that swimming is prohibited. In addition, provide a rescue flotation device at this site for use in the case of a person accidentally entering the water and needing emergency assistance.
- For all improvements, consult Brookfield Renewables and conduct a boundary survey as an initial first step of preliminary design.



Credit: Google



Small FRP picnic deck in a California State Park







## **D TOBY BOAT LAUNCH**

### **Recreation Activities**

Motorized Boat, Canoe and Kayak, Bank Fishing, Walking Trail

### **Design Considerations**

The Toby Boat Launch is a high-value amenity offering several outdoor recreation opportunities close to the population center of Clarion Borough and PennWest University's Clarion Campus. However, the site is severely restricted by steep slopes. Issues to be addressed include congestion and obstruction of the through-road, lack of safe pedestrian access, erosion of slopes and riverbanks, stormwater management, and limited ADA access.

While the launch and amenities have been repaired and maintained fairly regularly by lessor Brookfield Renewables and lessee Clarion Borough, the original site layout is somewhat restrictive and its fundamental issues can only be minimally improved by repeated patching. The last major redesign was completed more than a decade ago. As the lifespan of a Master Plan is generally considered to be about ten years, a new Site Master Plan is recommended.

A further detailed description of this existing water access site is available on page 27 and 28 of the Design Considerations Chapter.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Site Master Plan**

- Complete a Master Site Plan for the Toby Boat Launch, subject to joint agreement by Brookfield Renewables and Clarion Borough, in advance of the Piney Dam FERC relicensing (NOI due 8/31/2029). Incorporate the following improvements:
  - Add retaining wall to increase level use area at the launch and mitigate erosion of slopes.
  - Buffer Firemans Road from parking, vehicle maneuvering, and other amenities that could restrict through traffic during congested, high-use times.
  - Designate pedestrian areas separated from general launch traffic, to include walkways to parking areas and designated picnic or seating areas.
  - Install precast ADA accessible restroom structures with separate designated fish cleaning stations.



Existing site circulation



Delivery vehicle using launch ramp rather than Firemans Road to access residential area



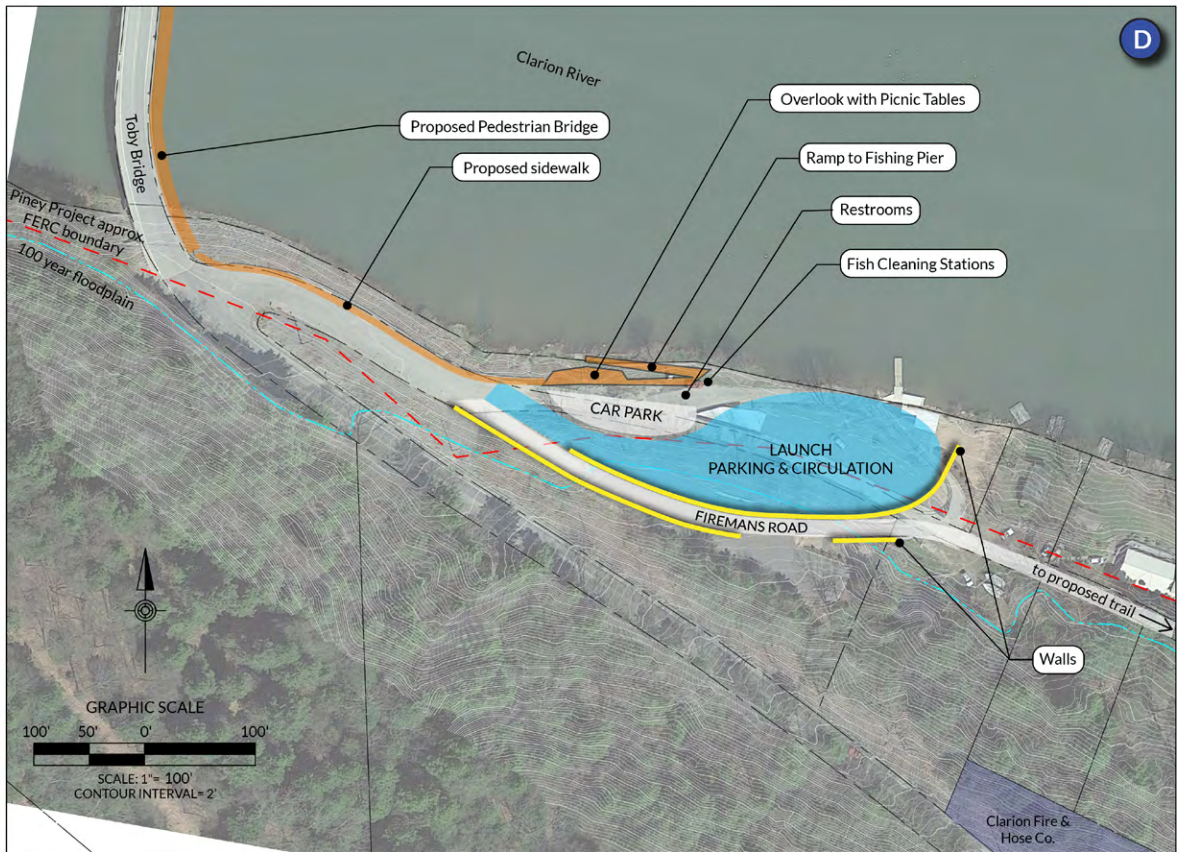
Vehicle maneuvering in tight spaces plus eroding steep slopes combine to exacerbate stormwater concerns

- Create a consistent and clear directional signage system to assist vehicle maneuvering and parking. Incorporate all required regulatory signage in an organized manner.
- Ensure no proposed improvements negatively impact the floodplain
- Facilitate removal of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed which exacerbates erosion; prevent reestablishment of invasives with native riparian plantings
- Two examples of a preliminary site sketch plan, a precursor to a Site Master Plan, are shown. A complete master planning process is needed prior to design in order to consult with stakeholders in addition to the Borough and Brookfield including Go Paddle PA, the Army Corps of Engineers, Clarion River Water Trail, and other launch users.

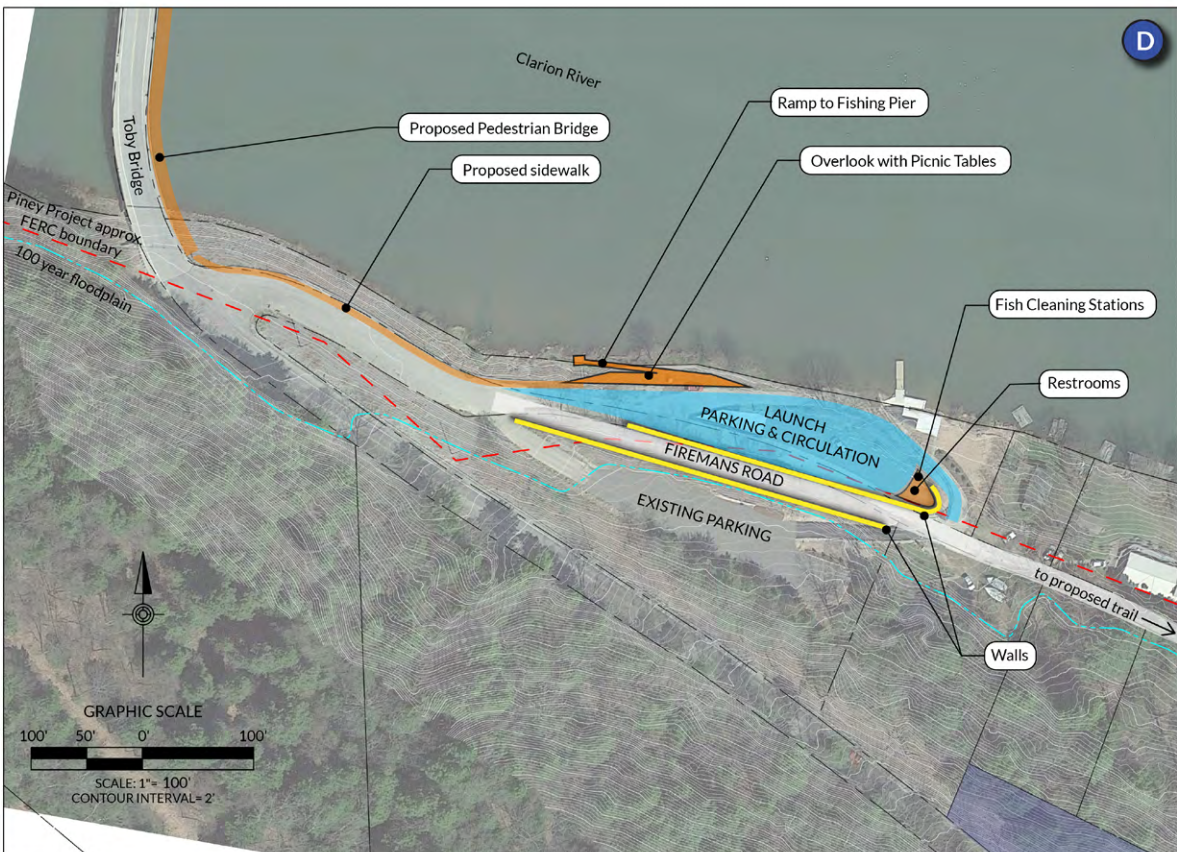
#### Pedestrian Access from Clarion Borough

- People walking to the Toby Boat Launch from Clarion Borough's residential areas walk on the shoulder of steep, curving 5th Avenue, which is about four feet wide from the edge stripe to the guard rail. Steep, wooded land on both sides leaves no room for pedestrian refuge, including no room for a sidewalk. A path known as the "Blue Trail" extends from the Clarion University Loop Trail to the Toby Launch, and serves people in the western half of the Borough. For people living in the eastern side of the Borough, a trail from North 5th Avenue would greatly improve pedestrian safety and improve River access for people who do not use cars.
- The Clarion Fire and Hose Company owns the parcel highlighted in lavender on the map on page 41. It is recommended to partner with the landowner to provide a trail segment that allows people to walk from the intersection of North 3rd Avenue and North 5th Avenue to Firemans Road. It is recommended to use the existing Blue Trail alignment where possible. A crossing should be painted at the road intersection to allow pedestrians to cross safely to the trail.





PRELIMINARY SKETCH - FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



PRELIMINARY SKETCH - FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



## **E EAGLE OVERLOOK**

### ***Recreation Activities***

Overlook, Walking Trail, Mountain Bike Trail

### ***Design Considerations***

The Eagle Overlook is a proposed river overlook site at the end of 6th Avenue in Clarion Borough. It is within easy walking distance of commercial areas, including restaurants and stores that are tourist attractions. It is close to the PennWest University Clarion Campus and connected by the Blue Trail spur to the Clarion University Loop Trail.

The proposed amenities are located on forested land owned by the Clarion University Foundation. This land is maintained by the Foundation for the benefit of students attending the University. The University Foundation land is level along the northern edge of Clarion Borough, then drops steeply to the banks of the Clarion River, creating an ideal location for a scenic overlook and rest area to enhance the existing walking trail network.

While the proposed overlook and related walkways will greatly enhance the Clarion University trail network, it is important to ensure that conflicts are avoided. In particular, no structure or amenity may restrict hikers or prevent the Clarion University Foundation from accessing its property. The Foundation currently accesses its property via 7th Avenue. The Overlook design should be limited to only necessary construction. Early and frequent coordination with the Foundation is essential.

In the area around the proposed overlook, a group known as Mountain Bike Clarion has proposed a network of mountain biking trails. Design considerations include deconflicting mountain biking and hiking routes, properly signing the two separate trail networks, and ensuring that adequate space is reserved for both uses. In addition, coordinating construction with the mountain bike trail could result in efficiencies in terms of mobilization, contracting, and scheduling.

### ***Recommendations***

Install a new walking trail extending from the end of 6th Avenue to the top of the bank as indicated on the map. Install an overlook at the top of the bank to provide a good view requiring minimum clearing of vegetation. Extend the walking trail from the Overlook to tie in with the Blue Trail spur of the Clarion University Loop Trail.

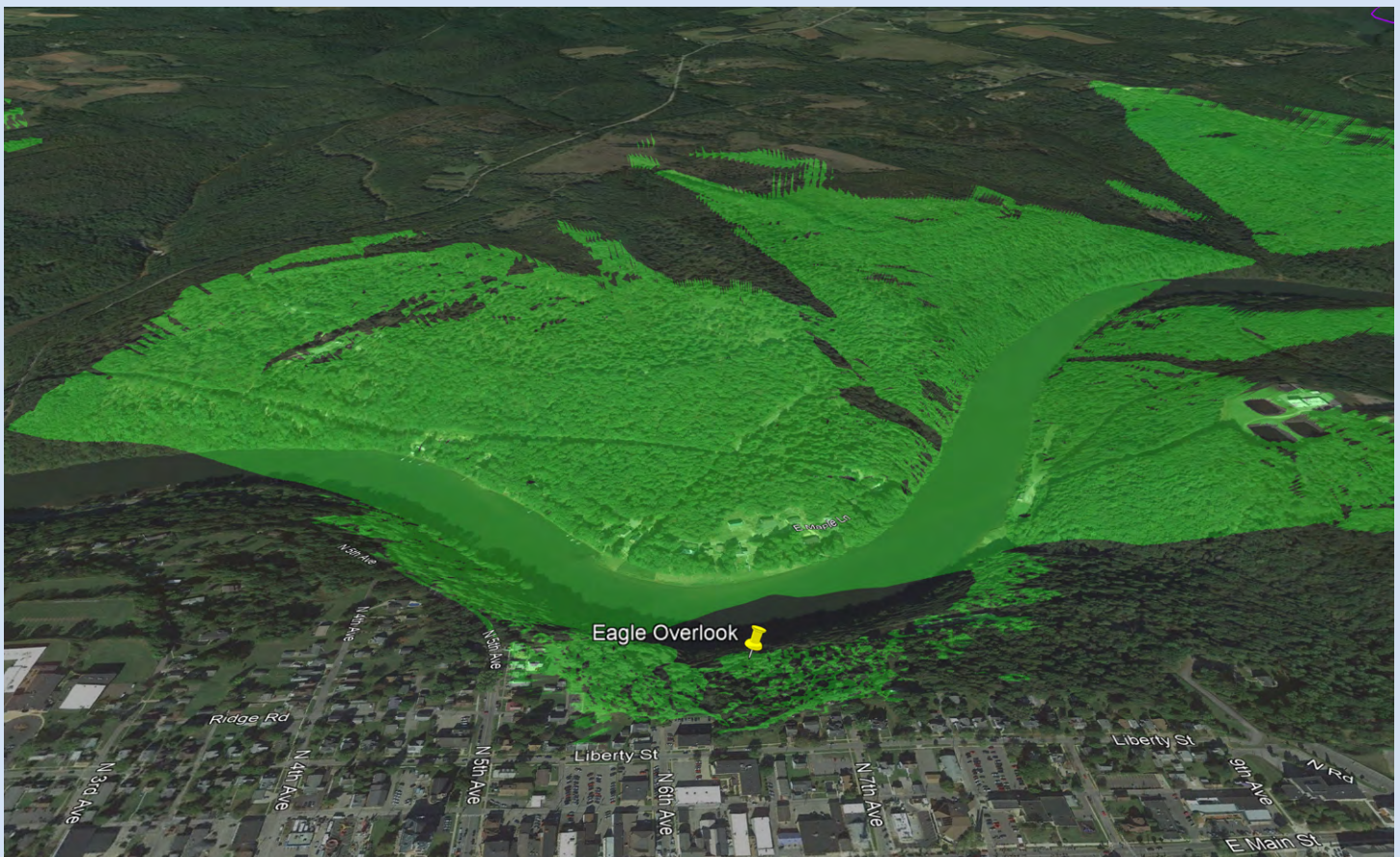


Trailhead area at 6th Avenue, located south of the proposed Overlook



At the end of 6th Avenue, coordination may be needed with adjacent landowners who are currently utilizing the Right of Way for services to their properties





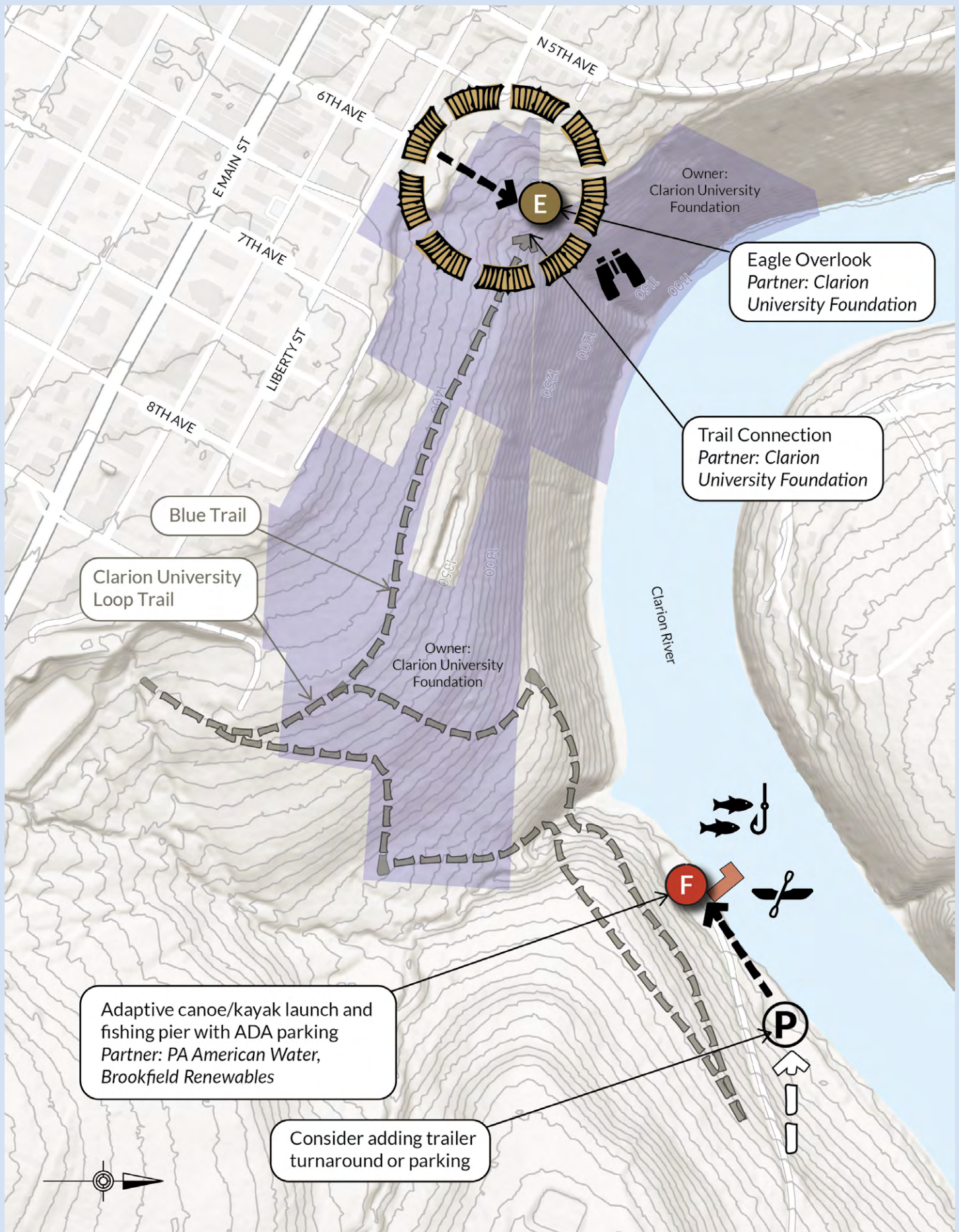
The viewshed from the Eagle Overlook

All amenities should have a firm, stable, and slip resistant surface. From 6th Avenue to the Overlook, install a trail that complies with ADA standards to the maximum extent practicable. Beyond the Overlook, use ABA Outdoor Recreation Access guidelines and, at a minimum, match the conditions and accessibility of the existing Blue Trail.

The proposed overlook should include ADA compliant seating. In addition, directional signage should be installed from the 6th Avenue trailhead through the connection with the Blue Trail; ensure any intersections with proposed mountain bike trails are appropriately marked with blazes or other navigational aid.

Consider installing an interpretive sign at the Overlook describing the historical significance of the Clarion River at Clarion. Developing the style of the overlook with a stone wall to mirror the shape and materials of the bridge abutment at Mill Creek Launch (pictured below) or the stone at Ebenezer Spring (pictured below) could begin to establish a consistent style across river access sites.





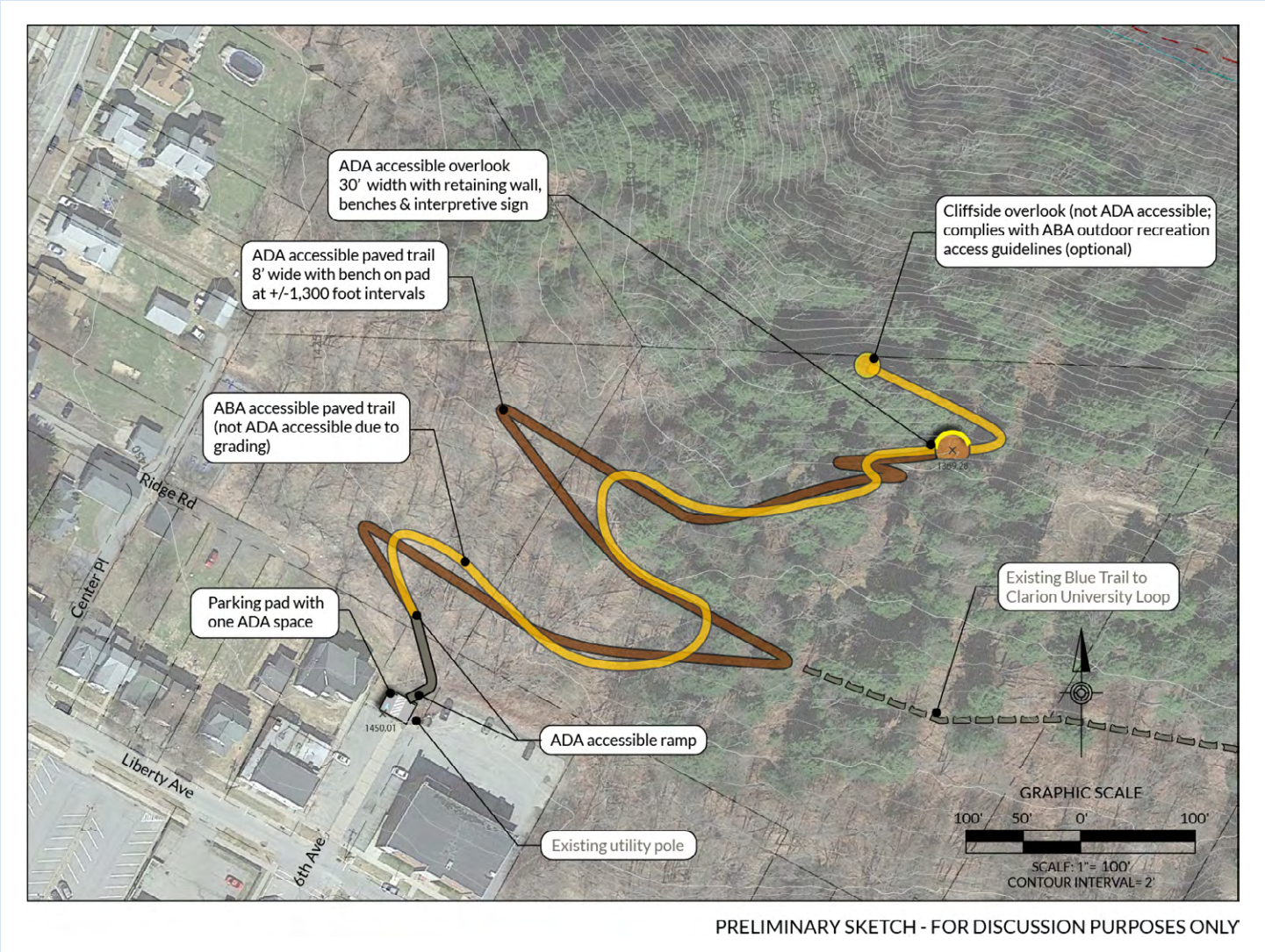




Example of a simple overlook design - Raystown Lake Hawn Overlook  
(Credit: nab.usace.army.mil)



Example of a stone wall overlook design – Raystown Lake





# **F** WATER COMPANY LANDING

## ***Recreation Activities***

Canoe and Kayak Launch, Fishing, Trail Access

## ***Design Considerations***

While canoes and kayaks may use the Toby Boat Launch, stakeholders report that the launch becomes congested during peak times such as summer weekends. Canoes and kayaks have different launching requirements than motorized boats, as motorized boats primarily require vehicles and trailers to pull up directly to the launch. People launching canoes and kayaks may not be visible to drivers attempting to maneuver trailers, and the two activities commonly conflict at busy launches.

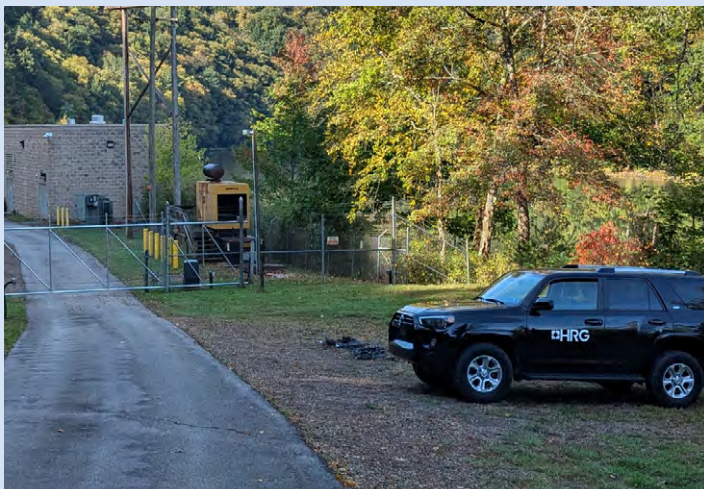
In addition, paddling is becoming a more popular activity among people with disabilities. People who have physical limitations may require more time, space, or equipment to launch their watercraft. Some people with disabilities are prone to sensory overload and cannot enjoy places that are crowded or noisy. To deconflict recreation activities at the Toby Launch and to better provide for paddlers and for people with disabilities in particular, an alternate canoe and kayak launch is proposed.

The proposed Water Company Landing is located on the site of the pump station for Pennsylvania American Water's treatment plant. The land is owned by Pennsylvania American Water and the riverfront is owned by Brookfield Renewables. The proposed launch is located less than one mile upstream from the Toby Boat Launch.

The site is accessed by a paved, one-lane Water Company Road. There is a gate at the top of the road that was open during the planning team's site visit. Design considerations include avoiding disruption to water treatment plant operations, providing access outside of business hours, and mitigating impacts to utility site security.

## ***Recommendations***

Install an adaptive floating canoe and kayak launch with a small pier on the downstream side that can be used for fishing. Ensure the decking material and pier rails are ADA compliant and the launch is anchored to the bank with a



Area proposed for development is adjacent to the secured pump station site



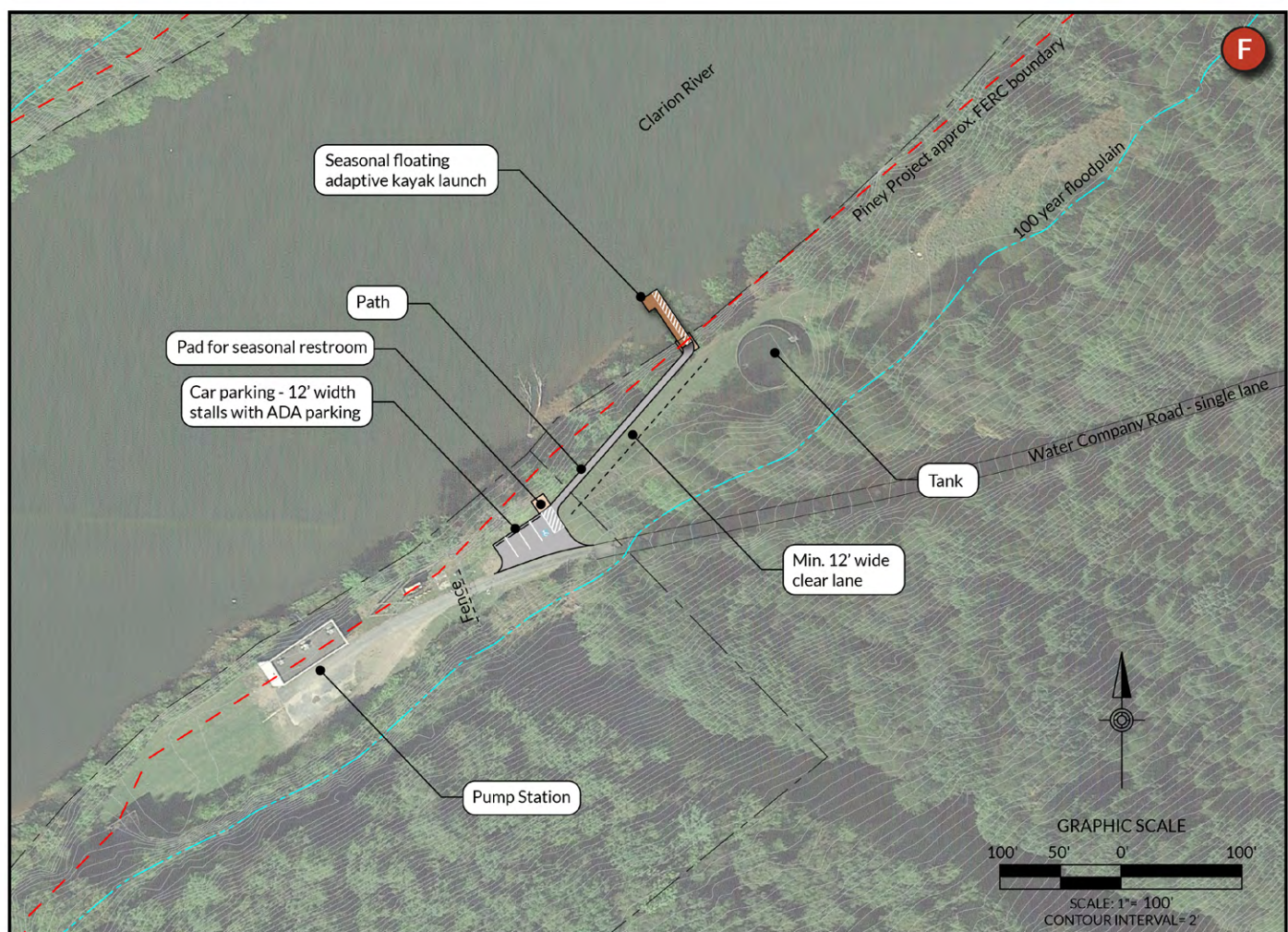
Road access to the proposed site location



concrete abutment. Coordinate closely with Brookfield Renewables' Piney Dam to ensure that the abutment is installed at the correct height to allow access at various water levels. Use manufacturer's recommendations for the specific product selected to ensure the launch meets the water at the angle for which it is designed.

The adaptive launch shall be served by an accessible route including ADA complaint parking and pathway. Minimal parking is available on-site, and no trailer parking can be accommodated in the available clear area. Work with PA American to determine whether there is room to provide an additional parking area or one-way trailer turnaround from Water Company Road. Include a restroom if feasible. Install signage.

A preliminary draft site sketch (see image) has been submitted by the planning team to Pennsylvania American Water for review by the security team, a first step to evaluating the potential for further design development of a public river access site at this location. This sketch may not meet all the needs for access at this site and should be developed further in cooperation with Brookfield, the Army Corps, and PA American once initial security clearance has been granted by the utility. For example, no trailer parking or turnaround is shown on this sketch. See the map for a proposed location for trailer turnaround or parking.



PRELIMINARY SKETCH - FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

## **MILLCREEK ROAD**

### ***Recreation Activities***

Motorized Boat, Canoe and Kayak

### ***Design Considerations***

There are no existing public launches or other water access sites on the north/west bank of the river. Millcreek Road is close to a small rural residential cluster, and close to some tourist attractions such as the Cook Forest Scenic Trailride, Dude Ranch, and Campground as well as Helen Furnace..



Existing concrete boat ramp as seen from the Mill Creek Launch

At the end of Millcreek Road in Highland Township, this privately owned site consists of several private lease dock facilities including a concrete boat ramp, a very small parking area, and the stone bridge abutment from the former Millcreek Bridge. To the northeast is a portion of State Game Lands 74; however, there is no vehicle access from Millcreek Road, and the waterfront is steep. According to the Game Commission, this land is not used and is being considered for transfer to a different managing agency, so existing public land is not a good candidate for public river access improvements.

Because it is within the FERC boundary and the shoreline is owned by Brookfield, swimming is prohibited at this site. Swimming at this location is particularly dangerous because motorized boats are common in this area, and may be maneuvering to use the Mill Creek Launch. Swimmers may not be visible to motorized boats and swimming across the river channel should be strongly discouraged.

The access road from McCleary Road is paved in packed gravel and is in good condition. Because the site is not open to the public, there is no existing directional or destination signage. Electricity is available nearby, but no other utilities are currently available. While there is no cell service at the waterfront, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) data indicate that there is a signal on the upper slopes of either bank. The closest, strongest signal to the Mill Creek Launch appears to be on the north/west bank, indicated by the purple color on the FCC data map, meaning the Millcreek Road project may present the best opportunity to provide enhanced cellular service to both the private landowner and users of the Mill Creek Launch.

Small cellular networks are a way to boost and extend signals from an existing cell tower. Today's 5G service is provided by using a higher-frequency signal compared to old 4G and below, and this type of signal is more easily blocked by obstacles. Small cell networks can help relay the signal past such obstacles such as steep slopes, using low power mini base stations at intervals. Access points are often licensed and managed by telecom providers, but owners can also install private networks; for example, some businesses and school campuses use Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS), a trending type of privately owned system. Access points are small, about the size of a suitcase, and can be mounted to existing utility poles.



Highland Township is a federally designated Disadvantaged Community under the Justice40 Environmental Justice Initiative, established under Executive Orders 14008 and 14096. This means it qualifies for federal investment under several programs to improve climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. For a list of federal agencies providing covered programs, see <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>.

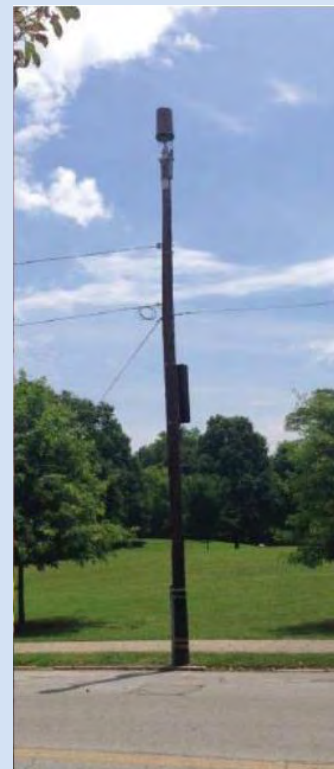
### **Recommendations**

Work with the private landowner to reach a mutually beneficial agreement for public water access off Millcreek Road. Propose using the existing concrete launch and a small expansion and improvement of the existing parking area. Consider improvements, particularly a small cellular network to provide cell service at the waterfront, that will benefit the landowner, dock lease holders, and the public.

Post signs facing both the shore and the River indicating that swimming is prohibited. Supply a rescue flotation device at this site for use in the case that a person accidentally enters the water and needs assistance getting out of the main channel.



Stone bridge abutment as seen from the Mill Creek Launch



Example of Small Cell Network equipment mounted on top of an existing utility pole

## **H** MILL CREEK LAUNCH

### ***Recreation Activities***

Motorized Boat, Canoe and Kayak, Bank Fishing

### ***Design Considerations***

The existing Mill Creek Launch is owned and operated by the Fish and Boat Commission on land owned by the Game Commission, with the shoreline owned by Brookfield Renewables. A watercraft registration or day use permit from the Fish and Boat Commission is required to use the launch. Because it is within the FERC boundary and owned by Brookfield, swimming is prohibited at this site.

This site is well developed and relatively well used. However, it is somewhat difficult to find because cell phone signals are absent, and there is no directional signage leading to the launch. The map posted at the Launch is faded, approaching illegibility.

A further detailed description of this existing water access site is available on page 29 of the Design Considerations Chapter.

### ***Recommendations***

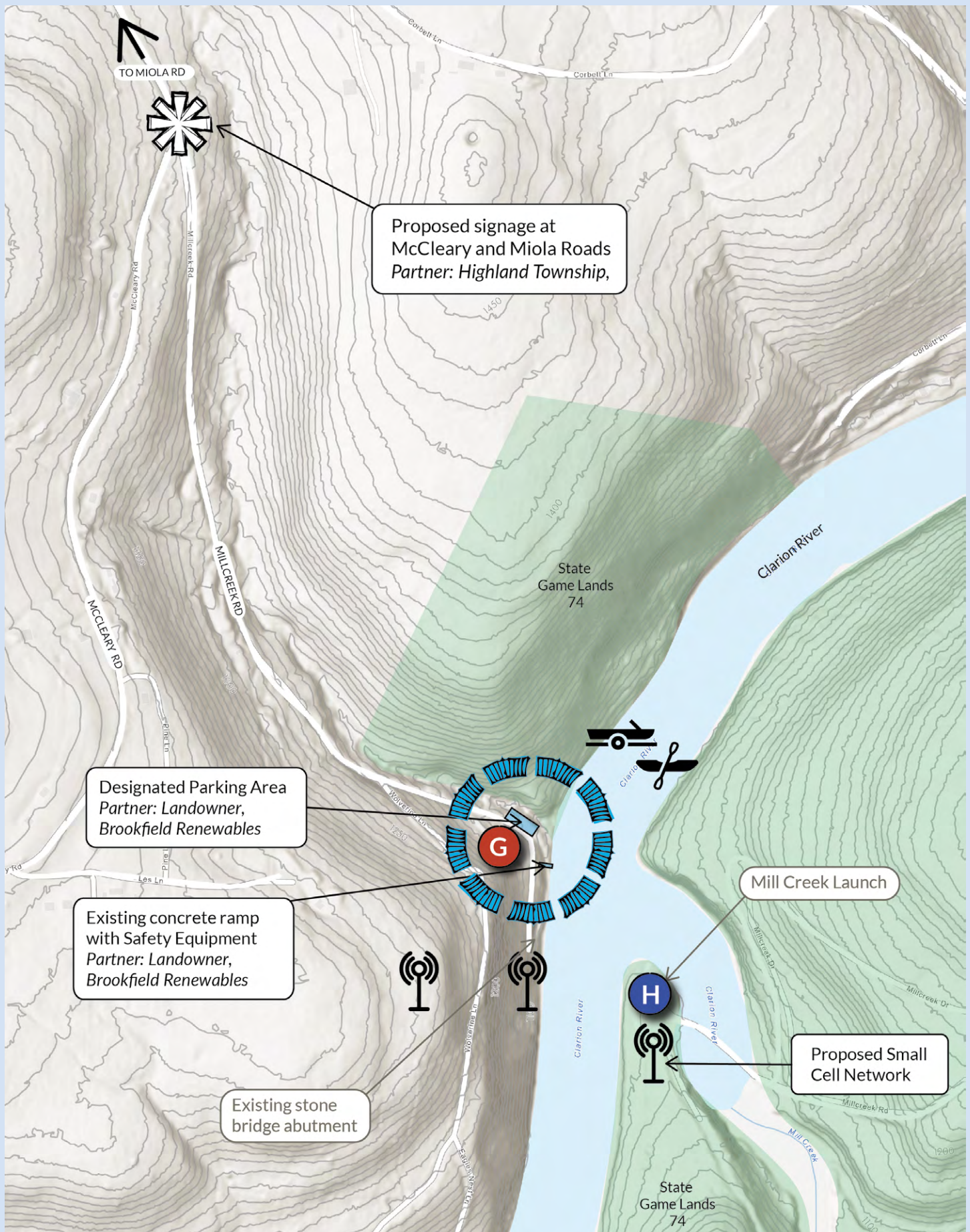
Improve directional signage along both routes to Mill Creek Launch. On the kiosk where regulatory signage is posted, including a sign prohibiting the launching of flotation devices, post signage stating that swimming is prohibited. In addition, provide a rescue flotation device at this site for use in the case of emergencies.

Enhance cell phone signals using a small cellular network involving multiple base stations relaying tower signals down the steep riverbanks to the launch. The shortest distance from a strong signal may be on the opposite bank of the River. Evaluate of the best locations for small cell equipment with the assistance of service providers.



Route to Mill Creek Launch lacks directional signage on T572 in Millcreek Township







## **I HIGHLAND DRIVE**

### ***Recreation Activities***

Canoe and Kayak Launch, Bank Fishing, Hiking Trail access

### ***Design Considerations***

Highland Drive is an existing recreation access route on state owned land managed by the DCNR Bureau of Forestry (Cook Forest State Park/Clear Creek State Forest). It is on the north/west bank of the Clarion River between the Mill Creek and Gravel Lick public launches. This area is outside of the FERC licensing boundary for the Piney Project, and the shoreline is not owned by Brookfield.



Existing signage and road condition on Highland Drive within State lands

Highland Drive has the potential to fill a gap in water recreation access, particularly for canoe and kayak access. Highland Drive is close to some tourist attractions such as Kalyumet Campground and Helen Furnace. There are no existing public launches or other water access sites on the north/west bank of the river. Additionally the distance between the Gravel Lick and Mill Creek Launches is 8.5 river miles, greater than the generally recognized preferred distance of 5.0 river miles or less (approximately two hour trip). Highland Drive is closer to the upstream Gravel Lick Launch. Thus, placing a canoe and kayak access at Highland would split the distance into 2.6 and 5.9 river miles, respectively.

Highland Drive does not directly access the riverfront, and existing recreation activities along Highland Drive consist of several hiking trails and a nearby drop-in camping shelter, known as Highland Shelter, located along the North Country Trail. Highland Drive is unpaved and only one lane wide within Bureau of Forestry Lands. It has a few small parking areas, and ends in an unpaved lot approximately 500 feet from the Clarion River. Stakeholders report that mud and erosion are periodically problematic on Highland Drive, and no winter maintenance is provided by the Bureau of Forestry.

The character of the existing amenities is rustic and appropriate for a remote-access area. This access area provides a different experience from those in more populated areas. Proposed improvements should be implemented with care, and balance any increase in access or amenities with context-sensitive design to retain the scenic landscape and remote site experience. Improvements must comply at a minimum with ABA Outdoor Access Routes guidelines, and should be fully ADA accessible wherever practicable while retaining existing character.

There is no directional signage outside the boundaries of State park/forest lands indicating that Highland Drive provides public recreation access.

Highland Township is a federally designated Disadvantaged Community under the Justice40 Environmental Justice Initiative, established under Executive Orders 14008 and 14096. This means it qualifies for federal investment under





Walking approximately 500 feet downhill from the end of Highland Drive through woodlands, visitors can find a rustic bench and easy access to the water in this quiet, remote site

several programs to improve climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. For a list of federal agencies providing covered programs, see <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>.

### **Recommendations**

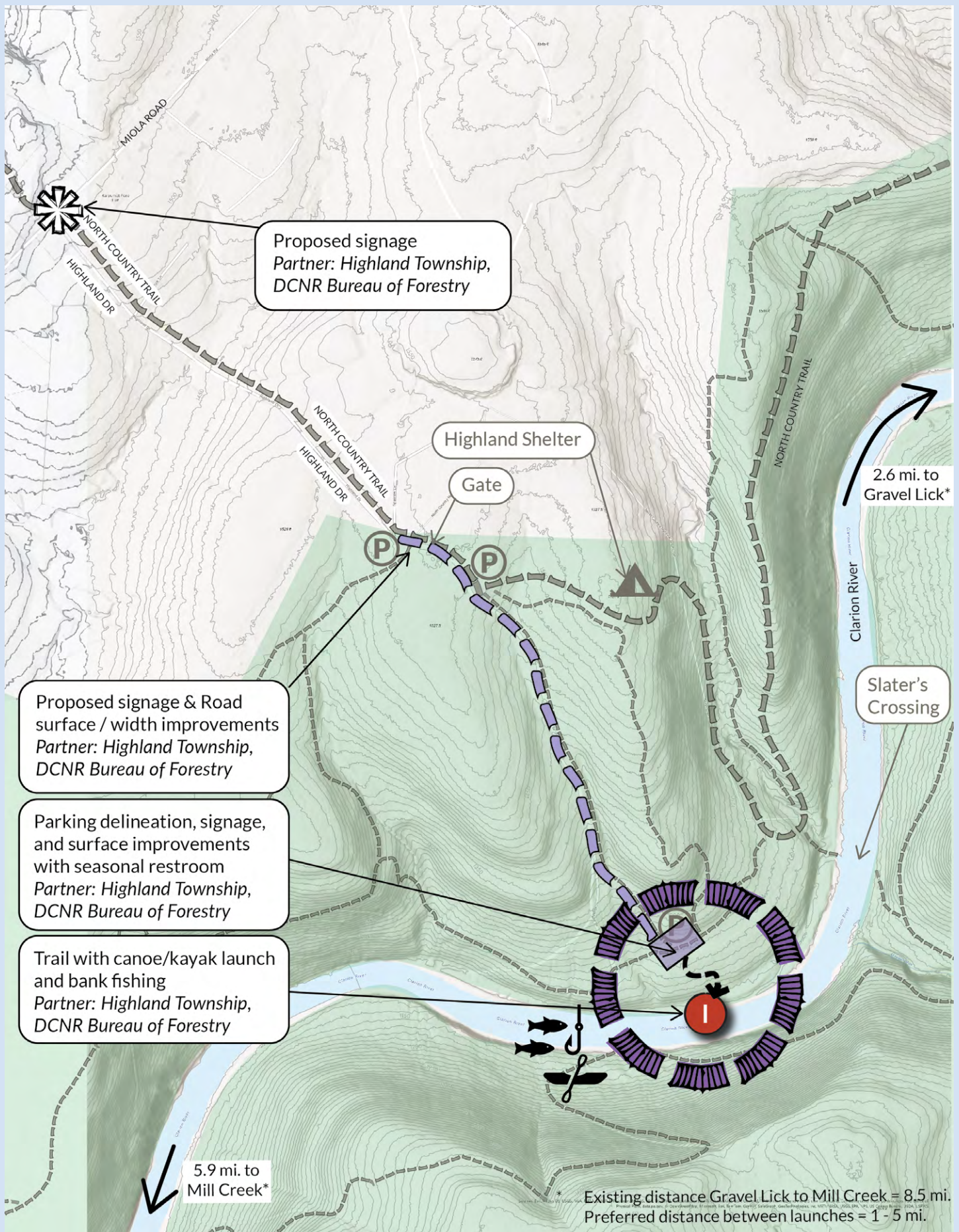
Highland Drive's existing public recreation amenities, with minor modifications, provide an opportunity for excellent water access fulfilling multiple recreation needs.

Improve the surface and width of Highland Drive. Minor context sensitive improvements should be made, such as installing a gravel surface on level areas and geogrid or articulating block mats on steeper slopes. Rather than clearing vegetation to widen the entire length of the road to two lanes, consider providing passing areas. At the parking area, extend parking in the direction of the River to accommodate small trailer turnaround. Provide a firm, stable and slip-resistant parking area surface. Evaluate the feasibility of providing seasonal restrooms to help mitigate any impacts of a small increase in visitorship.

From the parking area, clear and mark a path that can be navigated by people carrying a canoe or kayak. Minor modifications to the riverbank may be needed to facilitate launching of canoes and kayaks; reevaluate the need for grading or stabilization after the Piney Dam drawdown is complete. Observed conditions were sufficient for extensive bank fishing access at the time of this report; reevaluate this recommendation at completion of drawdown.

Install signage at Miola Road indicating the route to the river access point. Mark the extents of the designated parking area and install a sign or blazes marking the proposed water access path. Install river-facing signage at the designated launch area.







## GRAVEL LICK LAUNCH

### ***Recreation Activities***

Canoe and Kayak Launch, Wading

### ***Design Considerations***

The existing Gravel Lick Launch is managed by the Fish and Boat Commission on Bureau of Forestry lands. A watercraft registration or day use permit from the Fish and Boat Commission is required to use the launch. This area is outside the FERC licensing boundary for the Piney Project, and the shoreline is not owned by Brookfield.

The launch is located on Gravel Lick Road on the south/east shore of the Clarion River and close to the Gravel Lick Bridge. Gravel Lick Road is fairly easy to follow to the launch, but due to the distance and unreliable cell phone signal it can seem difficult to find. The launch is small and easy to pass by both the road and the river. While PA Fish and Boat staff reported installing river-facing signage after paddlers reported getting lost, it would be prudent to check with Cooksburg liveries to verify that river-facing signage is sufficient for paddlers. If someone passes the launch, it is another 8.5 river miles before they can take out at a public launch again. Concerns include paddlers' safety and impact to private property owners and dock lease holders upstream of Mill Creek Launch.

The steep, narrow slope of the launch was reported by stakeholders to become muddy and slippery with heavy sediment at the bottom.

Stakeholders report that there is a natural spring immediately upstream from the Gravel Lick Launch, and that this location is good for swimming or wading. The Clarion River Water Trail Map produced in partnership between DCNR, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission indicates a deep water ledge drowning hazard approximately ½ mile upstream of the Gravel Lick Launch.

Further detailed description of this existing water access site is available on page 30 of the Design Considerations Chapter.

### ***Recommendations***

Add destination signage on Gravel Lick Road opposite the launch entrance, add directional signage at Miola Road, Fisher Sigel Road, and Gravel Lick Bridge. Evaluate efficacy of recently installed river-facing signage.

If proposed improvements at the Gravel Lick Bridge (see item K on map) are not installed, consider hardening the existing Gravel Lick Launch canoe and kayak ramp using articulated concrete block mat or comparable material. This will make the launch navigable in a greater variety of weather conditions for a wider range of user ages, experience levels, and physical abilities.

Evaluate the feasibility and safety of publicizing and improving the existing wading and/or swimming area upstream from the launch. Should a safe and viable swimming area be identified, various additional improvements will be needed, beginning with a trail and restroom facility. For any swimming area, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health regarding a bathing places permit.

# GRAVEL LICK BRIDGE

## ***Recreation Activities***

Canoe and Kayak

## ***Design Considerations***

The Gravel Lick Bridge crosses the Clarion River on Gravel Lick Road (State Road 1001) on Bureau of Forestry property. On the south side of the bridge at the border of Millcreek Township and Farmington Township, paddlers report using the cleared bank downstream of the bridge to put in and take out watercraft. During a site visit, wear to the grass on the bank could be seen from multiple users accessing the Clarion River here. On Gravel Lick Road, “No Parking” signs at the shoulder indicate that a parking area is desired, but not provided. Gravel Lick Bridge is part of the Baker Trail, which joins the North Country Trail just north of the Clarion River.

The reasons vary for using this unimproved site located less than one river mile upstream of the designated Gravel Lick Launch. Some users do not want to (or forget to) obtain a Fish and Boat launch permit. Others do not like the amenities at the Gravel Lick Launch, and find the slope too steep, long, and difficult to navigate when wet. Others prefer that it’s closer and easier to find from the water when paddling from Cooksburg. For a variety of reasons, demand for a launch at Gravel Lick Bridge exists.

The planning team spoke with staff from the PA Fish and Boat and Bureau of Forestry. Neither the operator of the existing Gravel Lick Launch nor the landowner at Gravel Lick Bridge had concerns about developing a small launch facility here. Although the proposed launch is outside of the Right of Way, PennDOT should be consulted in addition to DEP and the Army Corps.

The launch area is relatively level and should comply with 2010 ADA standards.



Shoulder of Gravel Lick Road





Proposed Launch area with Gravel Lick Bridge and guardrail

Some respondents to public input reported swimming at the Gravel Lick Bridge. While this is not explicitly prohibited, the Clarion River Water Trail Map produced in partnership between DCNR, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and PA Fish and Boat Commission indicates a deep water ledge drowning hazard approximately ½ mile downstream of the Gravel Lick Bridge.

### **Recommendations**

Install and provide a directional sign to a graveled parking area along the Baker Trail at Cathers Drive near its intersection with Gravel Lick Road (parking area is indicated on Clear Creek State Forest maps, but was not identified during site visit). Provide a pedestrian path to the Clarion River, including a marked crossing of Gravel Lick Road at the end of the existing guardrail. Consider providing a seasonal restroom at the parking area.

The condition of the existing bank is good and does not need improvement unless erosion is observed. Remove the small cluster of pines nearest the Gravel Lick Bridge and stabilize the bank to allow for staging of multiple canoes or kayaks. Consider installing a small floodproof picnic facility. Install a river facing sign at the launch. Install warning signs regarding wading or swimming and the downstream deep water ledge drowning hazard.







## **L** SAWMILL DAM LANDING

### ***Recreation Activities***

Canoe and Kayak

### ***Design Considerations***

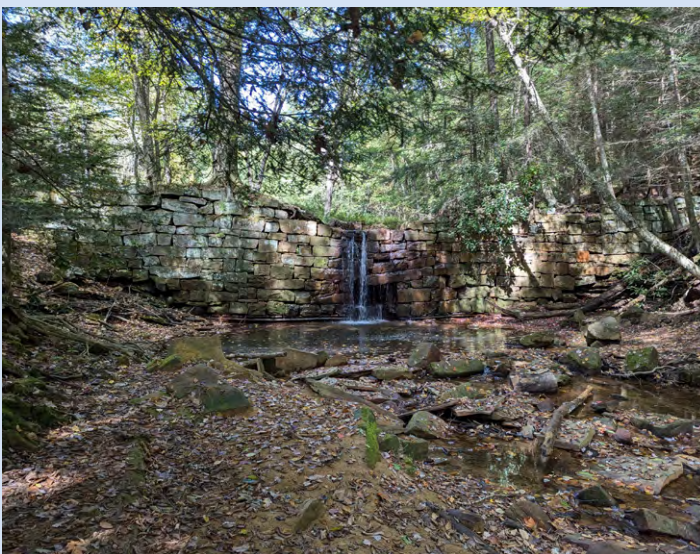
Sawmill Dam is located on Henry Run in Cook Forest State Park in Farmington Township. It is a historic stone block dam and a scenic view accessible only via the Clarion River or the Baker/North Country Trail. Immediately opposite the dam is Hemlock Island, another point of cultural interest in the Clarion River.

Stakeholders report that many people who rent canoes and kayaks at the Cooksburg liveries do so intending to visit these sites. It is difficult to navigate the mouth of Henry Run (impossible during low water) and there is no place to land and visit Sawmill Dam. Additionally, groups of paddlers pulling into this very small scenic area may disturb hikers who have walked to see the dam. Finally, installing this amenity may help prevent paddlers from landing at the private properties downstream of Henry Run, where recently conflict between landowners and visitors has increased according to stakeholders.

### ***Recommendations***

Clear a small section of the north bank of the Clarion River to provide a small landing, not more than 1,000 feet upstream of Henry Run. Install a foot path to connect the launch to the Baker/North Country Trail so paddlers can leave their boats and visit the dam. This is a proposed water access only site with no parking or vehicle access. Therefore no amenities should be installed that require regular monitoring or maintenance.

Install river-facing signage at the landing, and a directional sign at the Baker/North Country Trail indicating the direction to Sawmill Dam.



The Sawmill Dam



Hemlock Island, another point of interest accessible only via the Clarion River at Henry Run



Tionesta Borough wayfinding signage, consistent with the PA WILds Design Guide

## General Recommendations

### Signage and Branding

When designing multiple interrelated sites, for example a park system or a trail network, it is typically recommended to establish a consistent design style. This helps not only with branding and identity but also can be functional and help recreation site users identify locations where they can access resources and explore the area. With the wide variety of owners and stakeholders involved at both existing and proposed Clarion River access sites, it can be difficult and costly to try to establish consistent visual or other design standards. In addition, the juxtaposition of private and public access at sites like Old 322 can result in a chaotic mix of signs that are required by the federal government to welcome the public to a site plastered in “No Trespassing” posters.

One consistent recommendation across every access site addressed in this plan is improved directional signage. This is needed for wayfinding at remote sites where there is no cell signal, and for traffic control at more congested sites. While every access site stakeholder has its own unique signage type (Bureau of Forestry, PA Fish and Boat, Piney Project, Clarion Borough, etc.) that must remain to designate the site, to post regulations, etc.,

filling in the gaps where additional signage is needed offers an opportunity to provide consistency in branding and identity, which are key to attracting visitors and promoting tourism.

A good wayfinding system has a variety of sign types that can be applied to meet different needs or solve problems. From a small logo placard to identify a public access site to a directional sign pointing users to multiple nearby access locations, there are a variety of ways to both enhance functional wayfinding at an individual site and to improve legibility of the river access system as a whole.

It is recommended that the County consider the benefits to developing a river access signage system. Consider the extents of a desirable and functional system; does it stop at County borders? Ensure that any proposed signage initiative reserves ample time and funds to collaborate with the wide variety of stakeholders and landowners involved in river access in Clarion County. Consult with PennDOT for any proposal to install signage on a state road (Miola, Gravel Lick, Fisher Sigel, etc.).





Emergency rescue flotation device with rope accessible to the public at McConnell's Mill State Park (Courtesy of Live Storms Media)

### Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Public

At all locations where improvements have been made that invite the public to engage with the Clarion River, the health, safety, and welfare of the public must be the primary design consideration.

For this reason, it is recommended that emergency rescue flotation devices be provided at all river access locations, both existing and proposed, discussed in this report. While it is true that the Fish and Boat Commission requires boaters to comply with rules regarding personal flotation devices (life jackets), people using non-FBC access points or people using FBC-owned access points for activities other than boating may not be using personal flotation devices.

An example of rescue equipment available to the general public is McConnell's Mill State Park in Portersville, PA, where flotation devices with rope are provided at known access points to Slippery Rock Creek. Any equipment provided to the public shall meet US Coast Guard standards.

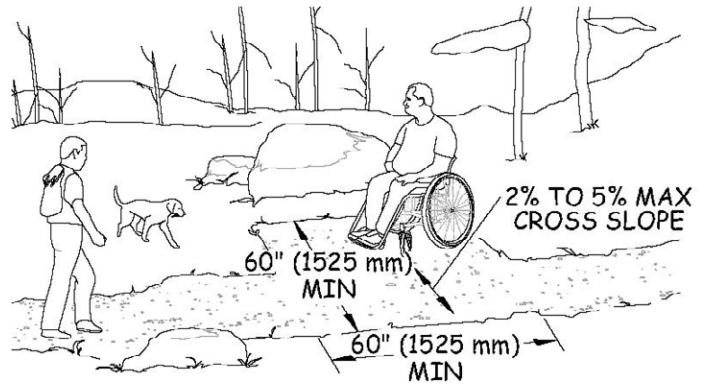


Figure 4—Minimum dimensions for a passing space.

An example of design guidance for outdoor recreation access provided by the Access Board at [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

### ADA Compliance Standards

While it is always best to follow the 2010 ADA standards to the greatest extent possible, there are cases where this may not be recommended for access to the Clarion River. In 2013 the Access Board issued guidelines for outdoor recreation access that are not included in the 2010 ADA Standards. These guidelines provide four "conditions for exceptions" to ADA standards, based on the constraints and limitations of the outdoor recreation environment:

- Compliance is not practicable due to terrain
- Compliance cannot be accomplished with prevailing construction practices
- Compliance would fundamentally alter the function or purpose of the facility or the setting
- Compliance is precluded by environmental or historic preservation laws

For more information on these conditions and their application, refer to Access Board guidance at <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/>

# ACTION STRATEGIES & IMPLEMENTATION

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## Overview

Throughout this Clarion River Access Management Plan, background information has been provided for the project Study Area as a whole, the segment of the River in Clarion County from Piney Dam to Cooksburg, and the many land uses, amenities, and resources within the Study Area. In addition, several potential recommendations have been provided to improve existing access points to the River and to create new access areas. The overall goal of this Plan is to increase access and use of the River for outdoor recreation. Moving forward, it will be important to focus on the implementation of the recommendations and improvements outlined in the Plan in order to fulfill the overarching goal of improving access and use of the Clarion River.

Implementation of the various goals, strategies, and improvements outlined in this Plan cannot happen overnight and will require time and patience of not only staff and officials from Clarion County but also of area stakeholders, property owners, and partner organizations. Furthermore, the implementation of the Plan will require the coordination of resources, the development of funding and financing strategies for specific projects, and the organization of multiple stakeholders, including representatives from County, State, and Federal agencies as well as private property owners and developers.

The goals and strategies for improving access to the Clarion River that are included in this Plan will take several years to implement. Some of the strategies and improvements will be easier and quicker to achieve than others. Some will require more planning and additional stakeholders at the table to build consensus and support

for the project or improvement. Successful projects and initiatives that result from this Plan will involve public private partnerships between the County and its many partner organizations and individual property owners. The most impactful partnerships that end up producing results are usually rooted in public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships have become increasingly important and more common over the last two decades throughout Pennsylvania. Many times, the reason that projects like the ones included in this Plan get implemented is due to the mix of funding sources and the group of partners involved that work together to make it happen.

## Funding

There are many ways that the identified projects and improvements mentioned throughout this Plan can be funded. For example, there are several public funding sources like grants and low-interest loans available through State agencies like the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and the Commonwealth Finance Authority (CFA). In addition, there are regional financing solutions and funds available through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Northwest Regional Planning and Development Commission (Northwest Commission) and federal programs from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), donations from private individuals and



companies, as well as potential sponsorships from area businesses, are also possible solutions to fund some of the projects and improvements in this Plan.

## Implementation Matrix

Implementation of the recommendations in this Plan will require the cooperation and collaboration of County staff and the Board of Commissioners, along with many public and private sector entities, including staff and elected officials of the municipalities within the Study Area, Brookfield Renewable Energy, DCNR, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the PA Game Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Clarion County Economic

Development Corporation, developers, property owners, the business community, and other utility and service providers, to name a few. In terms of implementing the recommendations that are outlined throughout this Plan, the County will utilize a phasing plan with phases categorized as follows:

- Immediate (1-2 years)
- Short-term (2-5 years)
- Long-term (5-10 years)
- Ongoing

The following table provides a list of acronyms used in the Implementation Matrix.

Organization, Entity, or Funding Source	Acronym
American Association of Retired Persons	AARP
American Rescue Plan Act	ARPA
Appalachian Regional Commission	ARC
Army Corps of Engineers	ACE
Clarion County Board of Commissioners	CCBC
Clarion County Staff	CCS
Clarion County Economic Development Corporation	CCEDC
Clarion University Foundation	CUF
Commonwealth Finance Authority	CFA
Economic Development Administration	EDA
Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds	FPW
Northwest Regional Planning and Development Commission	NWPC
PA American Water Company	PAW
PA Department of Community and Economic Development	DCED
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	DCNR
PA Department of Environmental Protection	DEP
PA Department of Transportation	PennDOT
PA Fish and Boat Commission	FBC
PA Game Commission	GC
PA Organization for Watersheds and Rivers	POWR
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	NFWF
US Department of Transportation	USDOT
US Environmental Protection Agency	EPA

The funding levels included in the Implementation Matrix that correspond to the estimated cost provided in the table are as follows:

- \$: \$0-\$250,000
- \$\$: \$250,001-\$1,000,000
- \$\$\$: \$1,000,001-\$2,000,000
- \$\$\$\$: \$2,000,001 or more



It is important to note that more detailed cost estimates are provided in Appendix E for the proposed improvements to the Toby Boat Launch in Clarion Borough, the improvements to the Eagle Overlook in Clarion Borough, and the proposed improvements at the Mays Property in Monroe Township.

The following Implementation Matrix highlights the various goals, actions, and strategies detailed throughout this Plan and identifies potential key partners, ballpark costs, potential funding sources, and time frames for completion of each strategy or action.

## Next Steps/Moving Forward

Moving forward, the Implementation Matrix provides a framework for Clarion County staff and officials and partner stakeholder organizations to work on projects to improve existing and future access to the River and connect the River to the many amenities and resources around it, including trails, town centers, and cultural attractions. County staff and officials, along with partner organizations and other area stakeholders, will need to champion key projects identified in the Plan to see them through to fruition.

For all of the identified projects, more detailed funding plans will need to be prepared. In addition, grant applications will need to be completed and submitted. In some cases, depending on the project, an engineer or a third-party consultant may be needed to provide



Views of the Clarion River from I-80



Bigley Road Bridge

support, including more detailed construction drawings for access improvements, site design, trails, connections, retaining walls, etc. As the County moves forward into implementation, staff and officials will need to further prioritize the most important needs and projects and look for additional resources, both in regard to money and time, to achieve the many goals outlined in this Plan. The County can place advertisements for requests for qualifications and proposals to assist with the various projects as needed.



# COUNTY-WIDE GOALS

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
1	Consider a coordinated and recognizable wayfinding signage system for the River access areas and other related amenities throughout the County	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, FBC, PGC, NWPC, PennDOT, Municipal governments	\$	Immediate 1-2 years	DCED Marketing to Attract Tourists Program; CFA Statewide Local Share Account (LSA) Program; DCED Main Street Matters Program
2	Select a liaison from this project Steering Committee for Piney's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing in 2029	CCBC, CCS	Brookfield Renewables	Minimal	Immediate 1-2 years and Ongoing	Staff time
3	Establish a small cell network to extend cellular signals, starting with the Millcreek Road/Mill Creek Launch as pilot project	CCBC, CCS	Broadband and wireless service providers, NWPC, CCEDC	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCED Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program; ARPA Broadband Infrastructure Program
4	Promote tourism with river access as one component of outdoor recreation and entertainment to attract visitors	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	NWPC	Minimal	Ongoing	Staff time
5	Provide additional access points on the north shore of the Clarion River near existing outdoor recreation tourism activities	CCBC, CCS	Brookfield Renewables, PGC, NWPC, Paint Township, Highland Township, Farmington Township	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR C2P2 Grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP); County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARC POWER Grant; FPW
6	Provide additional canoe and kayak launches where the distance between public launches exceeds five river miles.	CCBC, CCS	PFB, Brookfield Renewables, PGC, DCNR	\$	Ongoing	DCNR C2P2 Grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP); ARC POWER Grant; WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program; FPW
7	Improve the variety, capacity, and connections of River access sites near the population center of Clarion Borough	CCBC, CCS	Brookfield Renewables, CCEDC, WPC, DCNR, Clarion Borough, Clarion Township, Monroe Township, Paint Township	\$-\$-\$	Ongoing	DCNR C2P2 Grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP); County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal; ARC POWER Grant; DCED PA SITES Program; FPW
8	Provide a safe place for families to swim	CCBC, CCS	DCNR, DCED, CCEDC	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant

## A. MAYS ESTATE

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
A.1.	Acquire property with the addition of parcels or subdivision of property to gain riverfront access	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, NWPC	\$\$\$	Immediate 1-2 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program; DCED PA Mixed-Use Housing Development (MHD) Pilot Program; EPA Multipurpose, Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup (MARC) Program ; DEP Growing Greener; R.K. Mellon Foundation; DCNR C2P2 Acquisition Grants; LWCF; DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Funds Statewide
A.2.	Conduct additional feasibility study, market research, and master site planning for the property	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, DEP, NWPC	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program; DCNR C2P2 Grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP); County CDBG; DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Funds Statewide; ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal; ARC POWER Grant; DCED PA SITES Program

## B. WATERFALL OVERLOOK

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
B.1.	Clear small area for parking off of Bigley Road leading to the falls	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, FBC, NWPC	\$\$	Immediate 1-2 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant
B.2.	Install a small sign to assist visitors in finding the waterfall	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, FBC, NWPC	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCED Marketing to Attract Tourists Program; CFA Statewide Local Share Account (LSA) Program; DCED Main Street Matters Program
B.3.	Install a small ADA accessible picnic area overlooking the falls to allow all users to enjoy the scenery	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, FBC, NWPC	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	AARP Community Challenge Grant



## C. THE ROCK OVERLOOK

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
C.1.	Add pedestrian facilities to the Toby Bridge	CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough, Paint Township, Highland Township	PennDOT, DCNR, DCED, Brookfield Renewables, ACE	\$\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal; DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Funds Statewide
C.2.	Add a designated pedestrian walkway connecting the Toby Boat Launch and the Toby Bridge	CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough, Clarion Township	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, FBC, NWPC	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	County CDBG, PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal; DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Funds Statewide
C.3.	Explore the possibility of a trail or elevated walkway into the Game Lands with picnic facilities	CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough, Paint Township, Highland Township	PGC, Brookfield Renewables	\$\$	Long-term 5-10 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant; DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Funds Statewide
C.4.	Post signage at the Rock to indicate swimming is prohibited and provide rescue equipment	CCBC, CCS	Brookfield Renewables	\$	Immediate 1-2 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant

## D. TOBY BOAT LAUNCH

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
D.1.	Complete a Master Site Plan for the Toby Boat Launch	CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough	CCEDC, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, Local Fire & EMS, Go Paddle PA, ACE	\$	Immediate 1-2 years	DCNR C2P2 Planning Grants; NFWF Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program; National Wild and Scenic Rivers Relationship building and Planning Awards
D.2.	Install a system of directional signage to improve site circulation	CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough	CCEDC, Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS, Go Paddle PA	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCED Marketing to Attract Tourists Program; CFA Statewide Local Share Account (LSA) Program; DCED Main Street Matters Program
D.3.	Explore the feasibility of adding a trail segment from the intersection of North 3rd Avenue and North 5th Avenue to Firemans Road to allow increased pedestrian access to the launch area	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough	CCEDC, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, Local EMS and Clarion Fire and Hose Company, CUF	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP) PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal; R.K. Mellon Foundation
D.4.	Provide a permanent restroom facility and separate fish cleaning station	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS, Clarion Borough	CCEDC, Brookfield Renewables, DCNR, Local Fire & EMS	\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program



## E. EAGLE OVERLOOK

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
E.1.	Install a new ADA compliant walking trail and signage extending from 6th Avenue to the top of the bank	CUF, CCBC, CCS	Clarion Borough, PennWest University, Mountain Bike Clarion	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	AARP Community Challenge Grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP) PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal
E.2.	Install an overlook at the top of the bank with ADA compliant seating	CUF, CCBC, CCS	Clarion Borough, PennWest University	\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	AARP Community Challenge Grant; DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP); DCED Local Share Account (LSA) Funds Statewide; Governor's Office of the Budget Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program
E.3.	Extend the walking trail from the Overlook to tie in with the Blue Trail spur of the Clarion University Loop Trail	CUF, CCBC, CCS	Clarion Borough, PennWest University, Mountain Bike Clarion	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund; DCED Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP) PennDOT Multi-Modal Transportation Funds; PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TAP); ARPA Infrastructure Funds; CFA Multi-Modal
E.4.	Install interpretive signage at the Overlook to describe the historical significance of the River	CUF, CCBC, CCS	Clarion Borough, PennWest University	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCED Marketing to Attract Tourists Program; CFA Statewide Local Share Account (LSA) Program; DCED Main Street Matters Program

## F. WATER COMPANY LANDING

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
F.1.	Install an adaptive floating canoe and kayak launch with a small pier on the downstream side that can be used for fishing	PA American Water, CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS, Go Paddle PA, DEP, ACE	\$	Long-term 5-10 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program; WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program
F.2.	Install accessible route to adaptive launch including ADA compliant parking and pathway	PA American Water, CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS, Go Paddle PA, DEP, ACE	\$	Long-term 5-10 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant
F.3.	Install wayfinding signage	PA American Water, CCEDC, CCBC, CCS	Local Fire & EMS, Go Paddle PA, Clarion Township	\$	Long-term 5-10 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant

## G. MILLCREEK ROAD

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
G.1.	Work with the landowner to improve the existing canoe and kayak launch for public use	CCBC, CCS, Private Landowner	Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program
G.2.	Provide site amenities for public use, specifically an improved parking area and signage	CCBC, CCS, Private Landowner	Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant
G.3.	Post signage stating that swimming is prohibited and provide rescue equipment	CCBC, CCS, Private Landowner	Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant



## H. MILL CREEK LAUNCH

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
H.1.	Install a small cellular network pilot project to provide cell service at the launch	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS, PFB, PGC	Broadband and wireless service providers, NWPC, CCEDC	\$\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCED Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program; ARPA Broadband Infrastructure Program; National Wild & Scenic Rivers Relationship Building and Planning Grants
H.2.	Install directional signage to aid visitors in finding the launch	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS, PFB, PGC	Property Owners, Brookfield Renewables, FBC, PGC, PennDOT, Clarion Township	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	National Wild & Scenic Rivers Relationship Building and Planning Grants
H.3.	Post signage stating that swimming is prohibited and provide rescue equipment	CCBC, CCS, PFB, PGC	Brookfield Renewables, Local Fire & EMS	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	National Wild & Scenic Rivers Relationship Building and Planning Grants

## I. HIGHLAND DRIVE

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
I.1	Improve existing road, parking, and signage to existing Slater's Crossing/North Country Trail trailheads	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	North Country Trail, Local Fire & EMS, PennDOT, Private landowners, Highland Township	\$\$\$	Long-term 5-10 years	National Wild & Scenic Rivers Relationship Building and Planning Grants
I.2.	Extend access from existing parking area to the River with a clear marked walking path compliant with ABA guidelines	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Highland Township, Local Fire & EMS	\$	Long-term 5-10 years	National Wild & Scenic Rivers Relationship Building and Planning Grants
I.3.	Designate a canoe and kayak launch and install river-facing signage	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Highland Township, Local Fire & EMS	\$\$	Long-term 5-10 years	WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program; National Wild & Scenic Rivers Relationship Building and Planning Grants

## J. GRAVEL LICK LAUNCH

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
J.1.	Add destination and directional signage; evaluate effectiveness of recently installed river-facing signage during the 2025 recreation season	CCEDC, CCBC, CCS, PFB	Property Owners, DCNR, PennDOT, Millcreek Township	\$	Immediate 1-2 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant
J.2.	If proposed improvements at Gravel Lick Bridge are not installed, consider armoring the existing canoe and kayak ramp to improve safety and accessibility	PFB, CCBC, CCS	DCNR, Millcreek Township	\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program
J.3.	Evaluate the feasibility and safety of providing a designated public wading or swimming area with amenities at the natural spring upstream of the Launch	PFB, CCBC, CCS	DCNR, Millcreek Township, Local Fire & EMS	\$	Ongoing	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant

## J. GRAVEL LICK BRIDGE

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
K.1.	Improve the Baker Trail parking area at Cathers Drive to accommodate trailer parking; install destination and directional signage	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Millcreek Township	\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant
K.2.	Provide a clearly marked path from parking to the River, including a marked crossing of Gravel Lick Road and ADA compliant surface	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Millcreek Township, Local Fire & EMS, PennDOT	\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	DCNR C2P2 Development Grant
K.3.	Designate a canoe and kayak launch downstream of Gravel Lick bridge with river-facing signage and amenities	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Millcreek Township, Local Fire & EMS	\$\$	Short-term 2-5 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program; WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program



## L. SAWMILL DAM LANDING

Goal No.	Recommendations/Action Strategies	Lead Organizations	Partners	Cost Estimate	Timeframe for Implementation	Potential Funding Sources
L.1	Clear and designate a small water-access-only landing upstream of Sawmill Dam	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Farmington Township, Local Fire & EMS, North Country Trail	\$	Long-term 5-10 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program; WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program
L.2.	Connect paddlers with Sawmill Dam landmark via the North Country Trail; install necessary paths and river-facing or trail signage	DCNR, CCBC, CCS	Farmington Township, Local Fire & EMS, North Country Trail	\$	Long-term 5-10 years	PA Fish and Boat Commission Boating Facility Grant Program; WPC Canoe Access Development Fund; POWR Statewide Waterway Access Mini Grant Program

# APPENDICES

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