

Introduction

Project Background

In 1989, Solebury Township adopted its first Parks and Recreation Plan. That plan was subsequently updated in 2000 and again in 2006 using data from the U.S. Census and community input. This 2013 update to the Parks and Recreation Plan utilized data from the 2010 U.S. Census, field use and scheduling information from Township wide sports organizations, and community input. This update will assist the Township in making decisions regarding Solebury Township parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Perspective

For perspective, the first Solebury Township Parks and Recreation Plan was completed in 1989. At the time, there was only one park (Pat Livezey Park), serving a population of approximately 5,998 residents. The Township now has approximately 8,692 residents, with three parks developed for passive and active recreation, Pat Livezey Park, Laurel Park and Canal Park; one park for active winter recreation, Magill's Hill Park, and two parcels of land, North Pointe Park and Solebury Park (Roeser Tract) designated for parks and recreation that have yet to be developed. Ingham Springs has also recently been acquired by the township; however, uses for the site remain to be determined. Today about 11,220 residents in both Solebury and New Hope utilize the Township parks and programs.

One of the long-term recommendations of the 2006 Plan Update was to acquire a 30 acre parcel of land to accommodate four (4) to six (6) multi-purpose fields that the Township needed for current use and future growth. Since that plan was completed, Solebury Township has acquired the Roeser Tract (July of 2006) and has designated 80 acres for Parks and Recreation use (Solebury Park). With this acquisition, the Parks and Recreation department now has 110 acres of land (North Pointe Park and Solebury Park) with which to meet its future active and passive recreation needs.

In the fall of 2012, the Comprehensive Planning Committee established by the Township Supervisors fielded a Township resident survey to gather public input on a number of long-term township issues, including feedback on Parks and Recreation enhancements. The survey generated a 42.8% response rate, which is very high by survey standards. The top three recreational enhancements listed were: 1) hiking trails/bike paths, 2) additional access to the canal/towpath and 3) sidewalks along roadways. These priorities are consistent with previous surveys. However, it concerned the Parks and Recreation board that there was no mention of enhancements to fields or programs for youth when these are the most frequent issues residents raise about parks and recreation facilities.

Upon further review of the survey results, it has become clear that the largest group of household respondents (40%) were senior citizens, while only 25% of the households responding had children in the home less than 20 years old. The results therefore give valuable feedback about what the senior population in the township views as important but little direction about what the youth population and their parents view as important. To capture the needs of the township's youth, the Parks and Recreation board established a subcommittee to meet with each of the sports groups to identify what they viewed as the needs of the youth who actively participate in parks and recreation active recreation. The recommendations that follow reflect the survey results and the subcommittee's work.

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Project Scope

This report is a review and update to the June 2006 Solebury Township Parks and Recreation Plan. All parks and recreation facilities within the Township were re-visited, inventoried and analyzed. A recreational needs assessment was formulated as a result of the information gathered during this process. Recommendations in this update include an implementation plan that supports and encourages appropriate recreation facilities and programs.

Project Methodology

Information contained in the 2006 Parks and Recreation Plan served as a basis for this 2012 Update. Solebury Township's Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plan were also utilized to provide valuable information. Meetings and discussions were held with local sports organizations to gather information on field use and event scheduling. Information was gathered from residents during public meetings and from the New Hope-Solebury school district Athletic Facilities Study and Campus Master Plan.

Goals

As stated in the 2000 and 2006 Solebury Township Park and Recreation Plans, the goals of the 2012 Update are as follows:

- Provide parks and recreation facilities that meet the needs of all residents of Solebury Township for active and passive leisure-time activities
- Coordinate parks and recreation planning with Solebury's land use planning program
- Manage and maintain all parks and recreation facilities in a manner that is attractive, clean, safe, secure and ADA compliant
- Provide the financial resources necessary to support the Solebury Township Parks and Recreation Program
- Create new partnerships and enhance existing ones to enrich parks and recreation facilities in Solebury Township
- Establish an ongoing program of communication with Township residents regarding parks, in order to gather and disseminate information on facilities and programs available in the parks.



Van Sant Covered Bridge Solebury Township

Public Participation Process

Public participation is a key ingredient in the success of any community project. Public meetings are designed to not only inform the public of the project status, but also as a means to receive input as to the types of recreation facilities desired. In addition, these meetings provide a forum to address any questions, comments or concerns relative to parks and recreation in Solebury Township.

The Board of Parks and Recreation meets regularly on the fourth Thursday of each month except during November and December, when those meetings occur on the third Thursday of the month. All meetings are held at the Township Municipal Building, 3092 North Sugan Road, beginning at 7:00 p.m. and the public is encouraged to attend and provide comments and input on parks and recreation issues.

In addition to these meetings, input from residents of Solebury Township is gathered from surveys and by email or letter sent to the administrative office. In the past, surveys have appeared in the Solebury Township newsletter, which is mailed to all households in the Township. A statistically-valid telephone survey was also conducted in August 2005.