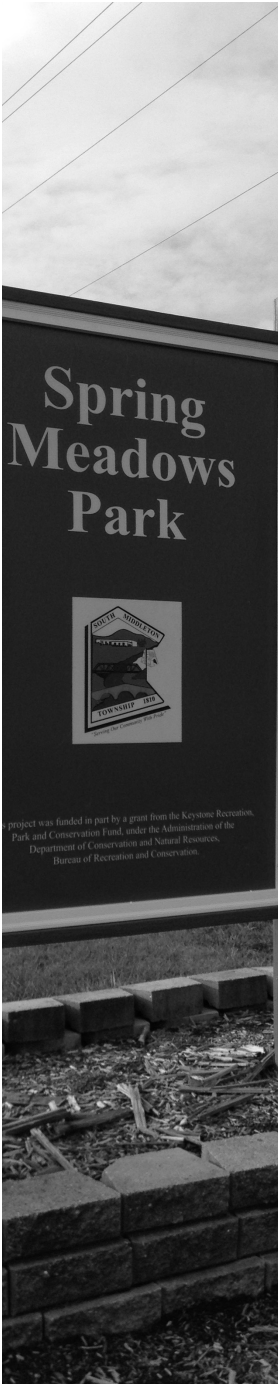


SPRING MEADOWS PARK

EXPANSION



Executive Summary

Prepared For:

South Middleton Township

520 Park Drive

Boiling Springs, PA 17007

February 2015

INTRODUCTION

Spring Meadows Park is a 90 - acre municipal park located along Rt. 174, just west of Boiling Springs in South Middleton Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. In response to a proposed single - family housing development with 159 homes built around South Middleton Township Authority's well #2, the Township leveraged DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park, & Conservation (Keystone) Funds to purchase a 49 - acre tract in 1996, and then the adjacent 41 - acre tract in 1997. Utilizing the same funding source in 1999, the Township completed Phase 1 of the park. Prior to embarking on Phase 1, a development plan for the entire park was produced, outlining the future development of the park in five phases. Phase 2 was completed in 2004-2005 utilizing funds from DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program (Federal LWCF).

These first two phases have developed approximately 40 acres of the park to include: four multi-purpose/football fields, two youth baseball fields, two gravel parking areas, three pavilions, and a trail system. In 2012, a perimeter trail around the site was completed to connect with the trails completed in the first two phases. Spring Meadows Park is connected to South Middleton Township Park by a ¾ - mile trail within easements through the adjacent agricultural fields. An underpass was constructed under state highway 2003 (Park Road) and a foot bridge over the Yellow Breeches Creek, funded through the TEA-21, to provide a safe connection between the parks.

Since the completion of the park development plan in 1999, the needs of the residents and various recreational programs in the Township have changed. This master plan focuses on the Township's goal of developing the remaining 50 acres in a sustainable manner to ensure that current recreation needs can be met while still maintaining a balance between active and passive recreational use of the park.

CURRENT SITUATION

South Middleton Township is approximately 51 square miles in size, with a population of 14,663. The Township contains a mixture of suburban and rural development. Spring Meadows Park serves as an important landmark in the Township and provides a strong sense of place for the community.

South Middleton Township relies on three public wells as the primary source of drinking water for its residents. According to the Wellhead Protection Plan prepared for the Township by Orth-Rodgers & Associates, these wells are considered among the best groundwater production wells in Pennsylvania with exceptional yields and excellent water quality. Within the heart of Spring Meadows Park lies one of these wells. During the master planning process it became very evident that the protection of this valuable resource needed to be considered in all aspects of the plan.

In an effort to protect this most important resource, park planning and development must be performed in a manner that is most protective of the underlying water supply aquifer, as well as in a manner that minimizes the potential for sinkhole occurrence and consequential damage to planned facilities. This parkland was purchased not only to provide open space and recreation facilities, but to also assure the wellhead area remains uncompromised.

The relationship between the Township and the school district is unique, as their boundaries are the same and the school district serves only the Township's residents. The current economic climate has caused the Township and the South

Middleton School District to examine closer collaboration to eliminate duplication of services provided by the municipal entities. As part of the planning process, further collaboration for the development of the remaining portion of the park was discussed between the two entities.

Park Vision Statement

In December of 2013 South Middleton Township commissioned JMT to lead the master planning process to develop a master plan for expansion of the 90 - acre tract known as Spring Meadows Park. The Master Plan Team consisted of the members of the Recreation Department, members from the Parks and Recreation Board, Toole Recreation Planning, JMT, and a citizen's advisory group known as the Spring Meadows Park Project Study Committee. It was the Master Plan Committee's responsibility to develop the vision and program for the park and define the intent of the Master Plan.

Spring Meadows Park conserves our community's unique, prized natural resource - the springs - while providing opportunities for citizens of all ages to experience enjoyment, fun, learning, relaxation, and wellness in a natural setting.

The Project Study Committee represented the multiple interests for increased usage, enhancements and expansion of the park by providing thorough and well balanced recommendations. The resulting Master Plan will provide

a framework for decisions that will be made to protect the existing wellhead and satisfy leisure, recreational, cultural and educational needs of this community.

Expansion and enhancement of Spring Meadows Park will create a balanced park design that offers both active and passive recreational opportunities. The park setting reflects the rich cultural heritage of the farming community and should be treated as an aesthetic, environmental, educational, and recreational treasure for this community. The park's natural resources shall be conserved, enhanced and protected from environmental or human abuse for current and future generations of users. Strategic planning for the expansion of the park considered park activities compatible with preservation of the natural resources. Development within the park shall be done carefully to ensure preservation of its naturally quiet and isolated setting by developing facilities that are in character with the surrounding landscape. This shall be achieved by using environmentally friendly building materials and technologies with pleasing, simple designs that are unobtrusive and strategically located to protect the long views across the site. All improvements should serve to strengthen the park's landscape and identity while providing:

- Active recreational facilities that are compatible for development at this park site
- Adequate convenient access and parking for cars as well as access by walkers and bikers
- Dedicated space within the park for unscheduled public use of open, wooded, wetland and memorial areas for the enjoyment of nature, scenery, wildlife, stargazing, or general family and community recreation.
- Park space reserved for areas of refuge for wildlife living in or passing through the park.
- Park space for a wide variety of programmed educational, passive recreational and cultural activities in a setting that encourages users to learn about, experience and appreciate nature.
- Park facilities for community organizations and groups to meet, socialize, play and learn together.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning process revealed the enhancements and improvements desired by the residents of the Township for the expansion of Spring Meadows Park. The Park Master Plan was developed in its final form after careful consideration of the site analysis, input from key person interviews and the project study committee, review of the conceptual alternatives and pre-final master plan, and consideration of comments provided by the public.

PARK DESIGN CONCEPT

The expansion of Spring Meadows Park seeks to balance the immediate need for active sports fields while highlighting and protecting the existing natural resources of the site and emphasizing preservation and stewardship. While the community's desire and need for additional sports fields were an initial driving force for expansion of the park, the project steering committee determined that a more balanced community park should be developed through the planning process. This determination was in response to the existing physical characteristics of the site as well as the numerous site limitations and constraints.

As shown in the Concept Diagram below the intent of the plan is to cluster the active recreational facilities in appropriate areas. A Community hub would be developed to serve as the centerpiece of the park linking the existing park with the expanded park area. The diagram delineates active and passive areas. Proposed fields have been sited where appropriate based on the existing topography and drainage patterns.

There are three primary areas for fields that respect the existing conditions. Placing fields in other locations will be significantly more costly and require additional mitigation measures for stormwater management.



Recognizing that the Park's most valuable asset is the existing wellhead and underlying aquifer, the design seeks to weave the concept of water resource protection and education into all aspects of the plan. The site will be transformed into a learning landscape for water resource protection measures, strategies, and management. The proposed improvements should be developed as demonstration facilities that provide opportunities for education and interpretation. The natural aspects of the site will be enhanced to provide environmental educational opportunities through interpretative signage, improved wildlife habitat and improvements to the natural ecosystem while providing an attractive setting for leisure activities. This approach offers expanded use of the park by wider age and interest groups without overdeveloping the site and compromising the delicate natural conditions. The following guiding principles were used to develop the park program, organize, and locate the proposed facilities.

PARK PLANNING PRINCIPLES

1. Recognize the site's resource limitations and identify conservation and development zones for expansion.
2. Develop site specific development and implementation strategies for expansion of the park facilities.
3. Promote development of facilities that are compatible with the overall vision of the park. Develop facilities that are in harmony with the site's natural features and resources by protecting and improving the environment and the scenic rural character of the community.
4. Incorporate environmental interpretation and education of the natural resources' ecosystems as unifying elements.
5. Integrate stormwater management into the planning process. Disperse stormwater runoff utilizing BMPs to minimize concentrated flows to closed depressions and maintain the existing drainage patterns.
6. Minimize site disturbance and impervious surfaces. Incorporate a "room" concept for development of existing areas.
7. Provide safe access to the park via walking and bicycling.
8. Help our citizens become healthier by proving an attractive destination where people can enjoy the great outdoors.
9. Implementation of social, environmental and fiscal practices that will help ensure long-term viability of this park and the park system as a whole.
10. Plan for success by addressing maintenance, innovation, organizational capacity, increasing park visitation through organized and self-directed recreation and educational opportunities, and financial strategies.

FINAL DESIGN



- 1. Multi-Purpose field
- 2. Field conversion
- 3. Meadow
- 4. Front Lawn
- 5. Picnic unit
- 6. Amphitheater
- 7. Community Building w/ Storage and Maintenance Area

- 8. Paved parking
 - West Lot - 91 spaces
 - East Lot - 130 spaces
- 9. Overflow stabilized parking - 130 spaces
- 10. Improved parking area - 180 spaces
- 11. Aquifer Playscape
 - Splashpad
 - Traditional playground
 - Natural playground
 - Rock plaza

- 12. Memorial grove
- 13. Restroom/Storage
- 14. Tot Lot
- 15. Wetlands Education Station
- 16. Trail Connection
- 17. Open Field
- 18. Interpretive Trail