



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2019

STATE VISIT SPELLS BIG THINGS FOR FAYETTE COUNTY RECREATION

Uniontown, PA – State officials' recent visit to Jacobs Creek Park means good things for Fayette County.

Cindy Adams Dunn, secretary of the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, toured the park with Fayette County commissioners Dave Lohr, Angela Zimmerlink and Chairman Vince Vicites, and study committee members to discuss the ongoing site plan project and county infrastructure.

Fayette County Community Development Specialist Sue Martin said Dunn spoke with study committee member Annie Quinn about the Jacobs Creek Park Master Site Development and Trail Feasibility Study, which is nearing completion.

"It has only minor changes to be completed by the consultant and then will be sent for final approval by DCNR," Martin said. "Secretary Dunn was shown the plan and we discussed the plans for the playground and security lighting going in this year."

Additionally, Martin said, Dunn spoke about how state Gov. Tom Wolf's RESTORE Pennsylvania legislation can benefit county parks, trails and green projects through additional funding.

"It will also assist the broadband initiative to have every Pennsylvanian connected to high-speed internet and will be used to protect communities from severe flooding," Martin said. "If passed, (RESTORE) will benefit all the (aforementioned) county projects that we are planning for the future."

Funded through a commonsense severance tax, RESTORE Pennsylvania is a statewide plan to aggressively address the commonwealth's vital infrastructure needs, according to state officials.

Dunn said Fayette County "has done the leg work" and "outlined a plan to make Jacobs Creek Park a fantastic facility for residents and visitors." She acknowledged the park's many "sustainable features," including solar lights, stream buffers, wetlands and a pollinator garden.

"What's needed now is funding, and that's where RESTORE Pennsylvania could help," Dunn said.

Commissioner Vicites said the meeting was a positive one for both Jacobs Creek Park and the county.

"Anytime you can have a secretary of the state department in your county and really focused on your objectives, it's an outstanding opportunity to get support from state government," he said. "Recreation is very important to improving the quality of life in our community and the county is committed to improving the county park system and building the Sheepskin Trail throughout Fayette."

Commissioner Zimmerlink said having the Jacobs Creek Watershed Association, volunteers and county staff meet with Dunn about future development was a "very nice" event.

“As one of three county parks, it is important to maintain and improve this park so that the residents of Fayette County may enjoy walking trails, playgrounds, fishing and a beautiful landscape, or just sit on a bench and relax,” she said.

Commissioner Lohr said county officials greatly appreciated Dunn taking time out of her busy schedule to visit Jacobs Creek Park.

“To know that our efforts in Fayette County are recognized and valued by our state officials is wonderful,” Lohr said. “We’ve been working hard on Jacobs Creek. The Master Site Plan is coming along and there’s something for everyone - from the lake to the walking paths, playgrounds to pavilions, and even a dog park for our furry friends.”

In regards to Wolf’s RESTORE legislation, Lohr said the message county officials sent back to Harrisburg with Dunn was, simply, “We’re hoping Jacobs Creek will benefit from those funds.”

Fayette County recently received DCNR grant funding to assist with the Master Site Plan for the 151-acre park, which includes a lake stocked by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. The county also operates Dunlap Creek and German-Masontown parks.

Moving forward, Vicites said, the county plans to begin applying for state funding during the next round of grant opportunities. He said commissioners are committed to providing matching funds as leverage to help their efforts.

“In addition, we want to complete the master plans for Dunlap Creek and German-Masontown parks to get them on the same path as Jacobs Creek,” Vicites said.

As for Jacobs Creek, Lohr said, county officials will continue working through the Master Site Plan.

“We’re in the process of approving plans to build a fort-themed playground, which will be great fun for children and their families,” Lohr said. “On the lake, we’re making repairs on the main dock, which will benefit everyone who uses the lake for boating and fishing.”

Lohr said Fayette County parks are a “valued resource” for many reasons.

“So many Fayette County residents love the outdoors, and the parks have so much to offer, but it’s not just residents who benefit,” he said. “It’s also a draw for businesses looking to relocate. They look at local amenities for their employees, and it’s important that people have somewhere to go for recreation and relaxation.”

Outdoor recreation also comes with “significant health benefits” and many other perks, Lohr added.

“Our parks are also great venues for entertaining and hosting events, from informal picnics to family reunions and company outings,” Lohr said. “As we’re coming into warmer weather, it’s a great time to remind everyone to get out and enjoy Jacobs Creek and all our county parks.”

For more information on RESTORE Pennsylvania, contact Terry Brady at 717-705-2225.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the 2016 Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

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