

## **Introduction to Monroe County Planning Commission Committee Reports**

The following pages reflect a portion of the work of the Monroe County Planning Commission, since the organization's first meeting in September of 2006. Other efforts have included educating planning commission members in the planning process, and the gathering of data, maps, and contacts which will be needed in the future. These documents do not by any means constitute a county comprehensive plan. They are a collection of drafts – suggestions if you will – which set forth current county assets, establish goals, discuss ways of achieving those goals, and recognize possible obstacles along the way. The reports certainly lay the groundwork for a future plan, but should not be considered a final product.

When faced with the daunting task of creating something which has never been in place in Monroe County before, planning commission members chose to break the effort down into smaller parcels. The subject-oriented drafts were created based on the 13 mandatory components which by state law must be considered in any county comprehensive plan. Also included are 6 optional components also set forth by state code. In cases where the various components fit well together, more than one has been addressed in a single draft. Examples of this include the “Recreation and Tourism” draft, or the “Environmental, Conservation, and Natural Resources” draft. Other components have received a draft all their own, such as “Transportation” and “Infrastructure.”

It should also be noted that even a completed comprehensive plan has no enforcement authority. Implementation of the goals of the plan comes later, through the enactment of ordinances. Some aspects of a finished plan may spur the suggestion of ordinances soon after the plan is implemented. Other topics may not become the focus of an ordinance until much later, or perhaps never at all. However, no ordinances can be created unless the importance of a topic is first established by its inclusion in the county plan.

Suggestions in regard to the goals, approach, or information in these committee reports are welcome. Responses may be mailed to: Monroe County Planning Commission, PO Box 141, Union, WV, 24983; or emailed to [watchman2@earthlink.net](mailto:watchman2@earthlink.net)

## **Background Information**

### *Introduction from the County Ordinance on Planning*

BEFORE THE COUNTY COMMISSION OF MONROE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

The members of the County Commission find that there is an innate value in Monroe County, comprised and defined in part by natural environment, abundant water resources, agricultural influence, locally owned businesses, neighborly small town communities, and a wealth of historic character. We contend that these characteristics will only become more valuable in the future, and assert that it is in the cultural, aesthetic, and economic interest of both current residents and future generations to recognize assets, establish goals, and establish a proactive role in the future development of the jurisdiction.

It is established that Monroe was one of very few West Virginia counties which showed a population increase between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. The growing number of high-end housing developments in recent years is also proof that the very attributes which some simply take for granted are attracting residents from outside areas, while at the same time people are vacating many other counties in the state. The influx is also proof that Monroe has been discovered – and that residents can no longer assume to be too much off the beaten path to consider the possibility of major change in the future. The goal should be to make the most of the changes, the investment, the new opportunities – while at the same time neither discarding nor subjugating the very qualities which make Monroe County unique and valuable in its present condition.

December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006

### *Planning Commission Vision and Mission Statement*

#### ***The Monroe County Planning Commission envisions a Monroe County with:***

- Abundant, clean water;
- A steady and stable population;
- An improved transportation system that is proportional to the demand;
- A strong agricultural influence on the landscape and culture;
- Minimum standards for housing, health care, and safety for the resident population;
- Locally-owned businesses that serve as the economic base;
- Preserved historic sites that enhance local economic opportunities;
- Minimum housing standards;
- Public recreation opportunities that draw on the surrounding natural environment.

***The mission of the Planning Commission is to provide for the common good of present and future county residents.***

#### ***The Commission will work towards this mission by:***

1. Taking stock of Monroe's current assets,
2. Actively engaging county citizens,
3. Providing leadership in efforts to conscientiously manage local resources,
4. Providing the history and background needed to establish a County Comprehensive Plan and related ordinances,

5. Drafting a Comprehensive Plan by January 2009,
6. Providing for the best use of Monroe's assets for future generations.

### *Mandatory Components of a County Plan*

According to WV Code, county plans must address the following components. However, the manner in which each component is addressed can be adapted to suit local needs and desires.

**Land use:** Set goals and programs for the proposed general distribution, location and suitable uses of land, including, but not limited to: Residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational, public, historic, conservation, transportation, infrastructure or any other use of land; Population density and building intensity standards; Growth and/or decline management; Projected population growth or decline; and Constraints to development, including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas.

**Housing:** Set goals, plans and programs to meet the housing needs for current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction, including, but not limited to: Analyzing projected housing needs and the different types of housing needed, including affordable housing and universally designed housing accessible to persons with disabilities; Identifying the number of projected necessary housing units and sufficient land needed for all housing needs; Addressing substandard housing; Rehabilitating and improving existing housing; and Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing.

**Transportation:** Consistent with the land use component, identify the type, location, programs, goals and plans to meet the intermodal transportation needs of the jurisdiction, including, but not limited to: Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river and any other mode of transportation system; Movement of traffic and parking; Pedestrian and bicycle systems; and Intermodal transportation.

**Infrastructure:** Designate the current, and set goals, plans and programs, for the proposed locations, capabilities and capacities of all utilities, essential utilities and equipment, infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction.

**Public services:** Set goals, plans and programs, to ensure public safety, and meet the medical, cultural, historical, community, social, educational and disaster needs of the current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction.

**Rural:** Consistent with the land use component, identify land that is not intended for urban growth and set goals, plans and programs for growth and/or decline management in the designated rural area.

**Recreation:** Consistent with the land use component, identify land, and set goals, plans and programs for recreational and tourism use in the area.

**Economic development:** Establish goals, policies, objectives, provisions and guidelines for economic growth and vitality for current and anticipated future residents of the jurisdiction, including, but not limited to: Opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and workforce; Identifying and designating economic development sites and/or sectors for the area; and Type of economic development sought, correlated to the present and projected employment needs and utilization of residents in the area.

**Community design:** Consistent with the land use component, set goals, plans and programs to promote a sense of community, character and identity.

**Preferred development areas:** Consistent with the land use component, identify areas where incentives may be used to encourage development, infill development or redevelopment in order to promote well designed and coordinated communities and prevent sprawl.

**Renewal and/or redevelopment:** Consistent with the land use component, identify slums and other blighted areas and set goals, plans and programs for the elimination of such slums and blighted areas and for community renewal, revitalization and/or redevelopment.

**Financing:** Recommend to the governing body short and long-term financing plans to meet the goals, objectives and components of the comprehensive plan.

**Historic preservation:** Identify historical, scenic, archaeological, architectural or similar significant lands or buildings, and specify preservation plans and programs so as not to unnecessarily destroy the past development which may make a viable and affordable contribution in the future.

#### *Optional Components of a County Plan*

In addition to the mandatory components, county plans may also address the following:

**History:** An analysis of the history of the area to better provide for the future.

**Environmental:** Recommend programs where appropriate to appropriate regulatory agencies to protect the area from all types of pollution and promote a healthy environment.

**Tourism:** Recommend programs to promote tourism and cultural and heritage development in the area.

**Conservation:** Recommend programs to conserve and protect wildlife, natural habitats, sensitive natural areas, green spaces and direct access to sunlight.

**Safety:** Recommend public safety programs to educate and protect the public from disasters, both natural and man-made.

**Natural resources use:** Identify areas for natural resource use in an urban area.

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# **1. *Land Use and Rural***

v. August 9, 2007; minor revisions December 9, 2007

## **A. Purpose**

To facilitate, through citizen participation and thorough analysis, the established planning commission goals of maintaining agricultural presence and influence, preserving open space, reducing/preventing sprawl-type development, maintaining the vitality of town centers, and controlling the impact of subdivision within reasonable levels. Regulation of the location of erotic entertainment, bars, and video lottery could also be considered under land use (although also perhaps appropriate for discussion under “community design”).

## **B. Current status**

### ***Current condition and potential impacts/threats***

Monroe County can be divided into four general geographic regions: winding stream valleys typical of the Allegheny Plateau make up the county’s northwestern section; a belt of rolling karst tableland (primarily underlain by the Greenbrier Limestone) begins in the south central portion of the county and extends beyond the county boundary to the northeast; the southeastern branch of the rugged Allegheny Mountains enters the county from the northeast and terminates near Gap Mills; and the lofty, parallel ridges of the Appalachain Ridge and Valley Range extend along Monroe’s southeastern border, represented primarily by Peters and Potts Mountains.

Quality farmland exists throughout the central limestone belt, and within the valleys of each of the other regions. Monroe’s limited section of the Alleghenies includes Moncove Lake State Park, and many acres of woodland currently used for commercial timbering. The Peter’s Mountain aquifer is of considerable importance; currently supplying three public water systems, two commercial water operations, and many households through use of private springs. The southeastern face of the mountain is mostly protected from development by the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. The mountain’s northwestern slopes are nearly all privately owned, although thus far, development has been scattered and minimal. Towns and villages are scattered within each of the county’s geographical regions. Likewise, historic buildings and beautiful (though varied) scenery abounds throughout the entire jurisdiction.

Many county residents still utilize wells or springs as private sources of household water. The susceptibility of karst to contamination, and the uncertainty of the direction and interconnections of underground flow, create particular vulnerability in regard to the county’s central limestone belt.

Compared to many areas, agricultural lands, forest lands, and open space are still abundant in Monroe; and commercial sprawl and subdivision are limited. Recent years, however have seen a marked trend toward a greater level of both subdivision and commercial sprawl, which is of course reducing open space and farmland. This trend will likely continue. Commercial sprawl and subdivision is most evident between Lindside and Peterstown, surrounding the village of Gap Mills, just east of Union, and in and around the community of Pickaway. Residential growth is evident on 122 from Raines' Corner to Greenville; and in subdivisions surrounding Lindside, Peterstown, and Gap Mills, and along Willow Bend Road, Bud Ridge Road, Kates Mountain, and Limestone Hill Road.

Monroe's three principal towns, Peterstown, Alderson, and Union (though reasonably small) still exhibit vitality, and are not greatly impacted by vacant storefronts, decay, or derelict neighborhoods. The county's smaller villages, however, have been significantly impacted by the removal of schools, post offices, and most businesses from their localities. Mennonite-operated businesses have helped preserve a certain amount of commerce in Gap Mills. Proposed reopening of the Sweet Springs Hotel should in the future serve to revitalize that community – perhaps too much, to the point where sprawl and excessive subdivision may need to be addressed. For many other smaller communities, however, only a church and in some cases, a convenience store/gas station remain as the town centers.

### *History*

Artifacts indicate that prehistoric tribes of Native Americans may have lived in the area which would later become Monroe County. Upon the arrival of the first Europeans, however, there were no permanent native settlements. Various tribes were leading periodic hunting expeditions into the region, when the scattered cabins of white settlers began cropping up around 1760. Agriculture and timbering soon became the mainstays of these early European settlers. Towns began to appear in the late 1700s, and became centers of administrative, judicial, and commercial activities. Individual landowners controlled the very modest growth for over 200 years. Communities were well defined, and rural areas were maintained as places to conduct farming and timbering. Mineral extraction has never played an important role in the county, and coal is not known to exist within Monroe's borders in quantity or quality sufficient for mining.

Many of the previously described current characteristics of the county can be attributed to two factors. First, county population has remained stable – neither decreasing greatly nor increasing greatly – throughout the course of the last century. Current trends indicate that this may be about to change toward significant population increases. Secondly, since its early settlement, Monroe has been primarily an agricultural community. Since farmers make their living off of the land, it both in their best interest and a part of their natural tendencies to take care of the land; and avoid dividing it into small tracts. The mindset has carried over to a certain degree to the county in general. This “unofficial” policy will continue to have an impact in county development only so long as there is both local interest and profitability in agriculture.

It is only within the last few decades that boundaries between town and country have become blurred or compromised by sprawl. While continuation of the current trend is not inevitable, the tendency toward sprawl does seem to be accelerating. Now, land speculation for residential developments has evolved, and more commercial sprawl may soon follow.

### ***Existing available data***

Population info and growth patterns can perhaps be obtained by comparing census data over the course of the last 20 years or so. Farm-use classifications from the Assessor's office may help quantify location the extent of farming areas (although this is generally pretty obvious even from casual inspection). The Assessor may also have specific plats on subdivisions within the county. The NRCS office may be able to offer data (soil quality, etc.) which could be used to establish location of prime agricultural areas. Some overlapping data may also be available from the Greenbrier Valley Soil Conservation District. WVU Extension may have, or be able to estimate farm production in various categories, and perhaps be able to document trends in certain areas of the county.

### ***Existing regulatory authority & level of enforcement***

Aside from the Monroe County Farmland Protection Program (which is voluntary), there are no existing regulations on general land use within the county. A few years ago, the county commission did pass a county-wide ordinance banning the offering of erotic entertainment in public facilities. This has thus far not been challenged. Some feel the prohibition is too broad, and would not stand up in court.

### ***Potential key players/programs at the local, state, and federal level***

NRCS, Mountain RC&D, Region 1 Planning and Development, DEP, DNR, WVU Extension, Monroe County Farmland Protection Program, civic groups, church groups (perhaps more in regard to establishing limits on video lottery, bars, and adult entertainment).

### ***Data and information needed***

Population density and growth trends, location of current subdivisions, areas where sprawl is occurring or likely to occur, identification of areas of prime agricultural importance, identification of areas of importance and suitability for commercial timbering, and location of public and private water sources. In regard to areas where growth is more or less likely, information might also be needed on plans for infrastructure creation, such as sewer systems, public highways, and power grids.

## **C. Target**

The broad goal might perhaps be described as a “sustainable, independent, livable community.” Future condition could in some (though not all) aspects be seen as based significantly on the status quo – while perhaps allowing for natural population increase of up to 15% within the next 10 years, and incorporating improved community design, and resource protection techniques. Importance of agriculture, rural character, and open space (in terms of economic impact, cultural impact, and scenic impact) should be maintained. Efforts should be made to maintain vitality of the county’s three principal towns, to restore lost vitality to the multitude of smaller villages, and limit sprawl (which is detrimental to downtown centers and very wasteful in use of land). Subdivision should not be prohibited, but rather controlled to minimize environmental and scenic impacts, and to improve ability of subdivisions to mesh with the surroundings. In regard to watershed recharge and septic issues, subdivision control on mountainous terrain should be more stringent; and could perhaps be tied to slope and soil characteristics. Adult entertainment, bars, and video lottery should be restricted to locations where negative impacts are decreased; and the quantity of all such establishments should be limited.

#### **D. Potential obstacles**

It is likely that most local residents will support the above-stated general goals. There will be some objections, however, by those who see any regulation as an infringement on property rights. Such objections would most likely manifest themselves in regard to location regulations on subdivision; and regulations or disincentives put forth in an effort to control sprawl. Some may claim that “growth” is inevitable, and fail to see that planned growth is preferable to haphazard growth. Similar objections will no doubt arise from persons hoping to establish facilities offering adult entertainment, alcoholic beverages, or video lottery. Most people in the communities, however, will likely support the latter such regulation. Public “buy-in” to all phases of the process should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.

Investigation into state code may need to be undertaken to determine whether quantity or density limits are permissible in regard to certain types of businesses.

#### **E. Possible interventions:**

##### ***Encouraging enforcement of existing regulations***

There are few existing regulations to control general land use within the county, The following do apply:

Legislative Rules 64-9-8.5 and 64-9-8.6 – limit minimum lot size in subdivisions to 10,000 square feet (just under ¼ acre) if public water is in use; or 20,000 square feet (just under ½ acre) if private water sources are in use.

Legislative rule 64 also requires that all homes or businesses utilize either a public sewer system or private sewage systems, and specifies that septic tank locations must pass a predetermined perk test before installation. This regulation would either preclude

development or require an acceptable alternative system on lots without public sewer and where soils or slopes are not suitable for septic.

Lot size and septic requirements are under the jurisdiction of the county sanitarian. Said official would probably welcome both technical and moral support.

State ABC officials can and do regulate location of establishments selling alcoholic beverages, and do not approve permits for such facilities within a minimum distance (300 feet) of churches or schools. Public input and the input of local government are strongly considered by the ABC, and permits are sometimes denied based on community opposition, even if the 300 foot rule is not violated.

### ***Support efforts of existing non-governmental entities***

The Indian Creek Conservancy has been working in the county for several years toward the goal of preservation of open space. Goals of the Indian Creek Watershed Association, and Friends of The Second Creek, are also consistent with general planning concepts. Cooperative efforts may be possible in regard to land-use planning.

Support where possible Community Supported Agriculture initiatives, and groups such as the Union Farmer's Market, and others, which are attempting to broaden opportunities and profitability in agriculture. One essential item in maintaining presence of agriculture in the county is to help insure that agriculture remains profitable.

### ***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

The Monroe County Farmland Protection Board, through purchase of conservation easements and assistance with donation of conservation easements, is likewise engaged in protection of farmland and open space. Primary limitations to the program at present include insufficient local revenue and insufficient staffing.

### ***New county regulatory action***

a). Define regional focus areas – certain communities of prime agricultural importance or where residents have a greater desire to protect agricultural land use than in other areas. Areas favoring agriculture might include Pickaway, Sinks Grove, and the area south to Union, the area south of Union to Willow Bend and east to Gap Mills and Sweet Springs, Waiteville, Greenville, Hans Creek, Bozoo, Wolf Creek, and Red Sulphur Springs. As mentioned at the last meeting, the agricultural base is already nearly gone on Moncove Lake Road, for about 1 mile west of Gap Mills, and in the area between Lindside and Peterstown - and attempts to protect the remaining farmland may be neither worthwhile, nor wanted.

b). Tailor subdivision densities, minimum lot size, and design requirements to reduce subdivision or limit its impacts in areas where an agricultural focus is desired. The same

might be applied to strip commercial or industrial development. Consider “setback,” clustering, and landscaping techniques to minimize impacts and improve quality of development.

c). Establish maximum slope restrictions to control subdivision or commercial development on mountainsides (which tends to be visible over wide areas) – and lesson legitimate concerns about septic issues on steep slopes. Perhaps mountainside developments could be allowed on some mountains, and prohibited on others according to the wishes of the various communities. Another (slightly less restrictive) means of implantation could be to link minimum lot size to slope...., i.e., the greater the slope, the greater minimum lot size would become. Such could effectively lesson the impact of mountainside development. Some mountains in the county already have substantial residential development, and have had for generations..., for example, Swope’s Knobs and Flat Mountain.

d). Implement policies to encourage location of business in historic downtown centers (including those of smaller unincorporated villages. Such might be accomplished either by regulation/prohibition, by density restrictions (see #2 above), or by incentives.

If county budget improves to where greater flexibility is an option, property tax breaks could be considered for businesses locating within town centers. This is in direct contrast to the current situation. Because municipal taxes are levied on top of county tax, in-town taxes are higher and thus business is actually encouraged to locate outside of town. Rather than reducing in-town property tax, a similar alternative could be to increase out-of-town commercial property tax. The legality of both would need to be investigated. Aside from the basic levy rate, local government may not currently have authority to adjust rates or offer incentives.

Efforts would need to be made to make sure such property is available within community centers. Also of importance in maintaining community vitality are adequate sidewalks and lighting.

e). Establish maximum square footage limits for retail stores, in an effort to address the “big box store” phenomenon. Such large chain-operated retail stores are considered by many to have negative effects on local economies and often force the closure of locally-owned business.

Allowance should be made in specific cases where such large retail stores might primarily offer goods not otherwise available, may be locally owned and operated, and as such could be seen as beneficial. Variances could perhaps also be used in these cases.

f). Restrict bars, night clubs, and video lottery establishments to the established business centers of towns and villages – and continue current policy of trying to limit impacts to residences, churches, and schools.

g). Limit quantities of video lottery establishments (and perhaps also bars), and tie to population. For example, if a “one per 250” ordinance was established, a community of 250 residents could have one video lottery establishment, a town of 500 could have a maximum of two such establishments, a town of 750 could have three, etc.

h). Implement use of building permits as a means of tracking development and land use for county tax purpose and adherence to future codes or subdivision ordinances.

i). Establish “right to farm” policies in compliance with WV Code, to prevent or reduce action or complaint against existing agriculture by new, nearby residential development.

j). Assess options directed toward regulation of exterior lighting, in an effort to preserve the “night sky” experience currently inherent in rural areas of the county.

k). Implement a study of the county’s karst areas to determine the threshold at which continued growth in these areas (in the absence of public water and sewer) would likely result in significant negative consequences.

#### **F. Prioritize & design**

Possible interventions in terms of new regulatory action could reasonably be prioritized in the order as presented above – or could perhaps occur concurrently. Resources needed or useful in implementation would include:

- Legal research (possibly WVU School of Law)
- Assistance in understanding general land use planning principals (possibly VPI students)
- Advocacy from WV Planning Association (for lobbying of legislature in the event that any of the above-proposed incentives or restrictions is not currently allowed under state law.

Responsible entities for implementation would include the County Commission (presumably acting on recommendations of the planning commission). Also needed would be cooperation of county prosecutor, county sanitarian, and circuit court (in terms of enforcing any regulations so imposed). As noted above, legislative action may be needed if any of the proposed actions are not currently addressed in state code. Such would almost certainly slow down the process considerably.

Costs would likely range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, depending on expenses associated with legal advice and field research, and the degree to which the work can be done “in-house” by the planning commission. Implementation within 2 to 3 years is probably not unreasonable.

#### **G. Evaluation & monitoring**

In terms of maintaining rural lands and open space, and in preserving or restoring vitality of town centers and reducing sprawl – assessments of success can likely be made by simple observations in the various communities. Degree of success will vary depending on the observer. Some may consider maintaining the current status as the ultimate goal. Others might see a slowing of current trends toward subdivision and sprawl development as success. Lack of widespread public opposition will indicate that efforts are generally being supported. Specific monitoring protocols could be developed and implemented on a regular basis to assess compliance and impacts.

Review and possible modification of any established county plan will of course be an ongoing process for the planning commission. Annual community meetings may have value in maintaining public support, and recognizing need for revision.

## ***2. Housing***

August 6, 2007; revised February 5, 2008

### **A. Purpose**

- Provide a diversity of affordable, quality housing that gives county residents a choice of housing based on individual desires or physical needs. Such assurance reflects the County's ability to respond to the individual needs of its citizens at the same time accommodating growth and economic development.
- Improve the quality of existing housing and the availability of affordable housing. Encourage continued use and reuse of existing structures to preserve the character and historic values of the community.
- Assess the need and provide housing opportunities for senior citizens, disabled and the low income.
- Encourage the development of a growth management plan that includes the most current innovations in good land management practices for minor and major housing developments to include light and sound management.

Local government can positively influence and shape the housing delivery system as the population gradually increases. This influence can prevent homes from being built in flood planes and prevent areas that are not environmentally suitable for home construction from being developed.

### **B. Current Status**

There are no current regulatory requirements for existing single family dwellings unless imposed by the lender or insurance company during a purchase of a home.

Building contractors are required by State Code to build new homes compliant with the State Building Code and referenced materials. There is no inspection or review process in place to assure that builders are complying with these requirements in single family dwellings.

Historically Monroe County has been a rural agrarian community with few manufacturing facilities. Many residents travel out of the county for employment which caused land and housing prices to remain low for years. In comparison housing cost in surrounding states and cities and recent publicity designating Monroe County as one of the most desirable places to live prices have drastically increased over time. As we plan for future growth and development housing prices are expected to continue on a natural rate of growth making it difficult for low or moderate income individuals to purchase homes.

The county currently does not have an ordinance pertaining to light discipline to maintain a rural nighttime environment, or a sound/noise ordinance. Without these ordinances there will be an impact on the rural character of the county in the event of major development.

Monroe County currently has one nursing home and one assisted living home providing care to senior citizens. With an aging population additional assisted living facilities may be needed to meet the needs of the residents. State government regulates the number of nursing homes permitted and currently is not permitting any new bed additions or new nursing home construction.

***Potential impacts***

- a. Without managed growth major housing site developments may consume large areas of land suitable for farming, be located in areas not environmentally compatible creating a potential source of pollution to the ground water.
- b. Roads may not be compatible with increased vehicular traffic caused by major development.
- c. Affordable housing will become increasingly difficult to find for many current residents.

***Existing available data***

There are currently 7,267 houses in Monroe County, and 1,367 were built in 1939 or earlier. Many of the older homes are occupied by families that cannot afford the upkeep needed to make them safe and energy efficient. In 2006, the REACH program repaired and updated 89 homes. Local individuals that worked with the program acknowledged that many families live in substandard conditions. About 35 of these families live in mobile homes.

There are 4,597 owner occupied homes out of 7,267 in the county.

8% of housing lack complete plumbing and 7% lack complete kitchen facilities. Water and sewer utilities are not available for many residents. Wells, springs and septic tanks are a norm in Monroe County and some depend on cisterns for their water needs.

Apartments:	
1 room: 8	9 or more rooms: 39
2 rooms: 35	
3 rooms: 75	
4 rooms: 232	
5 rooms: 243	
6 rooms: 92	
7 rooms: 80	
8 rooms: 46	

The final FY 2007 Fair Market Rent Document System at [www.husduser.org](http://www.husduser.org) indicates a fair market rent of 2 bedrooms home in Monroe County at \$439.99 a month. A family living on minimum wage can easily spend 50% of their disposable income on housing.

***Existing regulatory authority***

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Farmers Home Administration (FHA)

The West Virginia State Fire Marshal by State Code can enforce the state building code but does not due to the lack of staff.

Electrical Service Providers enforces the National Electric code (NEC-70) to the meter base of each customer.

***Potential key players/programs at local, state and federal level***

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Farmers Home Administration (FHA)

County Planning Commission

County Commission

***Data and information needed***

Information pertaining to all future proposed major housing developments and location.

Information and specific location for new or proposed public water and sewer systems in the county.

Data collection showing where public water and sewer is most needed within the county.

Data collection showing average age of citizens living in the county. (Refer to the Bureau of statistics)

Data collection showing the number of disabled citizens in the county.

Design capacity of public water and sewer systems.

**C. Target**

Maximize the opportunity for a diverse range of housing to serve varying needs of the County's present and future population. This would include senior citizens, the disabled and low income.

Promote residential growth in designated areas and provide suitable, compliant infrastructure.

Ensure that the County's natural beauty, environmental quality, and rural character are not sacrificed when planning for future housing growth.

Limit residential expansion in designated rural areas that are not appropriate for large scale development or in areas where there are environmental concerns such as flooding, lack of public water and sewer disposal, or karst topography.

Restrict growth in areas where public water and sewer system are currently operating at maximum design capacity.

Be responsive to the housing needs and requests from the elderly and disabled.

Increase the availability of rental housing, and promote the development of mixed use residential housing with a range of affordability.

Promote the development of affordable starter and workforce housing.

The county should encourage affordable housing or create an ordinance and Housing Authority with power to advocate and require affordable housing.

Identify proper and suitable areas for desirable low, medium and high density residential development through management of public services, employment, and infrastructure.

Integrate relevant parts of neighborhood design principles into new development proposals and require open space for recreation in cluster development.

Limit lot size to be no less than 2 acres where public water or sewer is not provided.

Allow for village centers/mixed use development in designated growth areas.

To assure safe housing conditions guidelines should be created for approving homes as single family dwellings not first occupied as a permanent single family dwelling. This would include weekend cottages, or camps that may have not been constructed to meet minimum code requirements.

#### **D. Potential Obstacles**

Lack of community support.

Lack of financial resources.

#### **E. Possible Interventions**

Encourage local government and community support.

Give residents an opportunity to provide input and answer questions by holding public meetings.

Identify current needs based on community or individual input.

**F. Prioritize and Design**

Design a housing plan and ordinances that are consistent with the needs of the public, compliant with state and federal regulatory requirements to assure safe living conditions, opportunity for local recreation, and environmentally safe with limited or no impact.

**G. Evaluation and Monitoring**

Periodic monitoring of population growth and housing needs will be required to assure that housing development is not exceeding the County's capability to provide safe infrastructure.

### **3. Transportation**

1 May 2007, GE Riffe; revised and expanded December 11, 2007;  
additional revisions: 12/30/07, 1/15/08

#### **A. Purpose**

To facilitate established planning commission goals of creating an improved transportation system which is proportional to demand; increasing recreational and healthful exercise opportunities by an improved system of hiking and bicycle trails; and enhancing vitality of town economic centers by improving parking and walkability.

#### **B. Current status**

##### ***Current condition and potential impacts/threats***

Public Highways: Monroe County contains within its boundaries one U.S. highway (two-lanes), four state highways (two-lanes), and numerous secondary roads which are an assortment of two-lane paved, one-lane paved, and one-lane gravel or dirt-surfaced. These county secondary roads were formerly under the control of local government, however for the last many decades all public highways, even those referred to as “county routes,” are under the control and jurisdiction of the WV Department of Transportation. Currently the system can be crowded in a few select locations at certain times of the day, although the vast majority of roads would be considered far from congested by most observers.

Pavement is in generally good condition on most primary routes, and in generally poor condition on many secondary roads. Lane width on the county’s primary routes is not adequate to comfortably accommodate the size of modern commercial trucks, and potentially dangerous curves are a concern on some of these primary routes as well. Lane width and curves are generally not seen as so much of an issue on secondary routes. Large trucks travel these roads infrequently or not at all, and most motorists do not anticipate being able to drive in these areas at a high rate of speed.

The state still maintains rights-of-way on many public roads which are no longer maintained for vehicular travel (or only marginally maintained). These routes are sometimes used by 4-wheel-drive enthusiasts and for hiking or horse-back riding. Some of these latter mentioned routes have been blocked by adjoining landowners who feel they no longer need to recognize the public rights-of-way.

The county contains one designated WV Scenic Byway, the Farm Heritage Road, which incorporates portions of WV Routes 12, 122, 3, 311, and U. S. 219. A WV Scenic Backway, the Mountain’s Shadow Trail, was established concurrently with the scenic byway. This latter route generally follows the base of Peter’s Mountain from Peterstown to Gap Mills, and incorporates portions of Rich Creek Valley Road, Watson Mill Road, Painter Run Road, Back Valley Road, and Zenith Road.

Mass Transit: Passengers may still board a passenger train in Alderson – a claim which cannot be made by many rural counties in this era of declining rail service. This Amtrak line which touches the northern tip of Monroe County is The Cardinal – providing rail service between New York City and Chicago by way of Washington D.C, Charlottesville, Staunton, and Covington in Virginia, White Sulphur Springs, Alderson, Hinton, Charleston, and Huntington in West Virginia, Cincinnati, Ohio, and etc. Runs on the line are generally twice per week, in both directions.

There are no commercial airports within Monroe. Local travelers have access to a reasonable number of connector flights at the Greenbrier Valley Airport in Lewisburg, roughly 30 minutes from the center of Monroe County by automobile. A wider assortment of commercial flights is available at Roanoke Regional Airport, Roanoke, VA, and Yeager Airport, Charleston, WV; roughly 1½ hours and 2½ hours distant, respectively, from the center of the county.

Regular commercial bus service is not currently available, nor is taxi service. An extensive bus service is of course operated by the school system; and the Monroe County Council on Aging offers limited transportation in a passenger van for senior citizens who are unable to drive on their own. There are no waterways within or bordering the county which are navigable by anything larger than a canoe, kayak, or small raft.

Parking and Pedestrian: Monroe's three incorporated towns, Alderson, Peterstown, and Union, all have reasonably efficient sidewalk systems in their downtown business districts. Streetscape and sidewalk renovations in Alderson and Union have greatly improved the attractiveness of these areas. Many "side streets," however, are without sidewalks. Union is currently undertaking a fairly substantial sidewalk extension along WV Rt. 3 east.

Parking along the main street in each of the three towns is generally sufficient, although all could perhaps benefit from the addition of a small municipal parking lot to accommodate overflow during peak usage. Neither parking nor public sidewalks are perhaps as significant an issue in the county's smaller villages. Most do not have a sufficient concentration of business and residential locations in close enough proximity to make foot travel a frequently used option. However, exceptions do exist and even some of these smaller villages could perhaps benefit from improved walking areas. For example, three Mennonite-owned businesses are currently operating in the old town-center of Gap Mills. On-site parking at these businesses is adequate, however no sidewalks exist between the facilities.

Foot Travel and Bicycling: Monroe is one of only two West Virginia counties which contain a portion of the Appalachian Trail, a well known long-distance footpath extending from Georgia to Maine. The AT follows the crest of Peter's Mountain (and the Giles-Monroe border) from the southwestern tip of Monroe for about 10 miles to the northeast. At the point where the Appalachian Trail turns to the southeast to go deeper into Virginia, the Allegheny Trail begins. This latter trail follows along or near the crest of Peter's Mountain to the northeastern corner of the county – an additional 20 miles. The Allegheny, a much newer footpath, is not yet complete in all sections. When the route is finished, it will extend from Monroe County to Pennsylvania; traversing the rugged

eastern mountains of West Virginia. The Groundhog Trail connects secondary roads in the Back Valley near Lindside with the Appalachian Trail at the crest of the mountain. The Potts Mountain Trail, lightly used and unknown to many, follows the crest of Potts Mountain for about 10 miles along Monroe's southeastern border. It, too, joins with the Appalachian Trail, within the borders of Giles County, VA. The above trails are all predominately within Monroe's portion of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest.

A network of five marked hiking trails exists at Moncove Lake State Park, traversing the roughly 750 acres of public lands surrounding Moncove Lake. The longest trail is about 2 miles in length. Hiking opportunities are also present along many old timber roads within the national forest, although most of these are not officially marked as trails. Funding is currently being sought to create a bicycling and hiking trail along a 5-mile section of abandoned railway in Potts Valley. The county tourism office is also exploring the idea of establishing and promoting a series of biking and hiking trails along lightly traveled secondary roads, or old public roads which are no longer maintained for vehicular travel.

Some recreational walking, jogging, or bicycling is currently done along less heavily traveled public roads. One route rather consistently used for this purpose is the Willow Bend Road, just south of Union. In many cases, such usage can probably be accomplished with reasonable safety even though designated pedestrian or bicycle lanes do not exist on these routes – however, if funding were available, walking or bicycle lanes would be preferable. The practice is certainly less consistently safe along the county's primary roads – where traffic flow and vehicle speeds are higher.

### *History*

Public Highways: The earliest transportation corridors in what is now Monroe County were "Indian" trails. These in turn may have been established to follow animal paths. The most well-known of these is the Seneca Trail or Warrior's Path, the route of which is closely matched by present-day U.S. 219 from the New River (about a mile west of Monroe County's southwestern corner) northward into the Niagara region of western New York. The path was originally used by members of the Seven Nations (Iroquois) tribes to conduct hunting and raiding expeditions into the Virginia territory and perhaps further to the southwest. One of the tribes was the Seneca. Widening and some rerouting of the original road has occurred on numerous occasions throughout the 250 year period of Monroe's settlement by the Europeans. Traces of a former "219" are clearly visible at several locations near the present road in Monroe; particularly to the south of Union. One such place is at the Indian Creek Covered Bridge, which rests about 50 yards off of current 219, but was of course used to carry travelers across Indian Creek along one of 219's earlier incarnations. The small section of earlier roadway which skirts the hillside between the covered bridge and St. John's Church is particularly striking, as it is incredibly narrow even by today's standards for unpaved single lane roads.

Of equal importance to early Monroe pioneers was an Indian trail which ran from the Jackson and James River country (in what is now Alleghany County, VA) upstream along Dunlap's Creek. The route entered Monroe just east of Sweet Springs, followed

Sweet Springs Valley, and passed through the two Second Creek gaps in the Little Mountain range at Gap Mills. Similarly to the association seen with U.S. 219, modern day WV Rt. 3 closely follows the route of this old trail from Sweet Springs to a point a few miles east of Union. Near the present day intersection of Rt. 3 and the Gates Road, however, the old path turned more to the southwest; crossing Byrnside Hollow and following the southern rim of this stream valley to the place along the Seneca Trail near Salt Sulphur Springs where Byrnside and Tackett branches join to create the beginning of Indian Creek. The impact of this route in central and eastern Monroe County is demonstrated by an assessment of the location of structures built between 1763 and 1800. Rehoboth Church (Methodist), Good Hope Church (Presbyterian), Byrnside Fort, the earliest lodgings at Sweet Springs, and the log homes of the Alexander, Tackett, Neel, and Keenan families, just to name a few, were all constructed along or within a short distance of the old Dunlap trail.

Following the partition of Greenbrier and the establishment of Monroe in 1799, local government understandably placed a great emphasis on road building. Overseers were appointed to facilitate construction of specific routes, and local landowners were often expected to contribute either money or labor to the portions of the roads near their properties. Such landowners were frequently allowed to collect tolls from travelers to compensate for their expenses. A pole or pike was often placed across the route, which could be turned to permit passage once a traveler had paid their toll – hence the name “turnpike” for such roads. Access to the mineral springs resorts was often a focal point for road-building. Discussion of a new road between Fincastle (Botetourt County, VA) and Sweet Springs was ongoing as early as 1812. Several turnpikes radiated from Salt Sulphur Springs and Red Sulphur Springs as well. By 1835, stage coaches were running three times per week from Fincastle to Sweet Springs and then Lewisburg. Another stage line ran from Lewisburg through Union, Salt Sulphur Springs, and Pearisburg, to Newburn, VA, also three times per week. A fairly thorough discussion of early road-building appears in Morton’s History of Monroe County.

Monroe’s network of highways, both past and present, is typical of the dendritic pattern generally associated with roads in mountainous or hilly terrain. The regular and precise grid pattern often used for highways in flat topography was never implemented in Monroe, nor would it have worked well had it been attempted. Routes were determined by the lay of the land, and in general terms, followed the paths of least resistance.

Once principal arteries were in place, efforts over subsequent decades focused on improving road conditions. Early surfaces were rough, narrow, and offered only difficult passage in wet weather. It’s probably safe to assume that all local roads were still unpaved single lane affairs as late as the 1920s, but paving and widening of major thoroughfares to two lanes began in the subsequent few decades. Widening and route modification of these routes continued into the 1970s or 1980s, but such improvements have been less evident in recent decades. Paving and widening of previously unpaved or single lane secondary roads has continued to the present date; though again, significant route modification has been predominantly absent in recent years.

In the mid 1990s, an economic development agency in north central West Virginia proposed the creation of Continental 1, a high speed limited access international

freeway which from Buffalo, NY to the Virginia border, was to follow the course of U.S. 219. Almost concurrently, the West Virginia Department of Transportation also proposed an upgrade of U.S. 219 - to 4-lane status in Greenbrier County, and as a limited access 2-lane in Monroe, with rights-of-way being purchased for the eventual addition of two more lanes. Grass-roots organizations arose in opposition to the proposals in both Monroe and Greenbrier counties, with the Monroe group incorporating under the name of Monroe 219. Expressed concerns included the division of farmland, the loss of some homes, businesses, and historic structures, loss of local rural identity, and economic damage associated with the proposed by-passes of town business centers. While Continental 1 proponents had touted economic benefits of such a road to the entire region, Monroe 219 publicized a previous study from WVU which had found that only areas with an existing population center of at least 30,000 benefited economically from large freeways. At the time, Monroe County's entire population was roughly 13,000 – spread over an area of 464 square miles. While opposing the limited-access upgrades, the local group adopted a stance in favor of more moderate improvements to existing 219, including lane widening, improved safety measures, and modification of more dangerous curves. The opposition positions in both Monroe and Greenbrier were generally well-received by the public. Even Snowshoe Resort in Pocahontas County, as distant from interstate access as perhaps any location on Monroe or Greenbrier, voiced its opposition to the upgrades. Continental 1 proponents eventually abandoned their efforts, and the WVDOT has also neglected to pursue the proposals, at least for now.

Only a few years ago, the West Virginia Legislature passage language which allows the use of ATV vehicles on all public roads which do not have a center-line. At present, users are not required to carry collision or liability insurance on these vehicles. Counties may enact stricter regulations on ATVs, provided a comprehensive plan is in place.

Mass Transit: By 1850, a railway extended down the Valley of Virginia to Bristol. In 1857, the Virginia Central (later to become the C&O) had completed lines to Low Moor in neighboring Alleghany County. There was considerable excitement among local residents that the natural extension of the railway from Low Moor to the Ohio Valley would come by way of Monroe County. The route up Dunlap Creek, through Sweet Springs Valley, and then down either Second Creek or Indian Creek to the Greenbrier or New Rivers seemed almost ready-made for such a project. In 1873, the C&O was in fact completed to the Ohio, but it traveled by way of Greenbrier and not Monroe. The railway's choice of the much more difficult route over the Alleghenies to White Sulphur Springs is evidence of the considerable influence of the Greenbrier Hotel and the city of Lewisburg during that era. Whether Monroe was made better or worse to have gotten only a tiny corner of the C&O at Alderson remains a matter of debate.

By 1909, the N&W had built several miles of track into Monroe County. The line, known as the Potts Valley Branch, began from the N&W main line along the New River near Pearisburg, and extended the length of Monroe's portion of Potts Valley, to reach a dead end at the village of Paint Bank, in Craig County. Initial interest in the line was spurred by deposits of manganese and iron ore, but the money-maker for the railway proved to be vast stands of virgin timber in the valley. By the 1930s, most of the timber had been harvested and the line was discontinued. Tracks were promptly removed, and

much of the public secondary highway from Goldbond to Paint Bank follows the course of the old railway.

Commercial bus service was available in the county during the 1940s and 1950s, as was taxi service. As more local residents acquired their own automobiles, such service became unprofitable in such a rural area – and these public transportation options have long been unavailable within the county borders. Commercial airports have never operated within Monroe County, although private air strips have existed in the past and continue to be present. Larger creeks and rivers were used extensively for navigation by Native Americans, and likely by early white settlers. These are not deep enough nor free enough of rocks and rapids in the local area to accommodate larger boats. Ferries did once operate at several locations along or near the county borders to carry travelers across the New and Greenbrier Rivers before bridges became commonplace.

Foot travel and bicycling: Up until about 70 years ago, foot travel was so often a necessity, that few people viewed it as a recreational opportunity. The Appalachian Trail was completed in 1937, but has undergone many minor (and some major) relocations. It probably did not exist in its present location along the Monroe-Giles county border until somewhat later. Plans for the Allegheny Trail were initiated in 1975, and much (though not all) of Monroe County's portion was completed by the mid 1990s. The Potts Mountain Trail was in use in the 1950s, and was likely a local project of the Jefferson National Forest. Its route is now broken in a few places by small segments of private property, and the trail is no longer significantly promoted. Most of the route can still be followed, though, within national forest boundaries. Moncove Lake Public Hunting and Fishing Area was created in 1960, and establishment of trails began soon thereafter. A portion of the land was set aside in 1990 as a West Virginia State Park.

Older footpaths in the county did exist, though these were viewed as a means of transportation more so than recreation. Many of these old trails, such as the Seneca Trail and the Dunlap Trail, were later developed into roadways. Others were not, and many have of course been forgotten with the passage of many generations of residents. Three historic footpaths which were prominent enough to cause their names to be at least vaguely remembered were the Becky Neel Path, the Wray Path, and the Symms Gap Path. All crossed Peter's Mountain, and all may have predated the first roadways across the mountain. The Becky Neel Path crossed in the vicinity of Gap Mills; the Wray path, near Zenith; and the Symms Gap Path, between Lindside and Peterstown. Some of these, most particularly the Becky Neel path, were used by persons without automobile transportation even into the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the United States, bicycle travel never attained the importance as a means of transportation which it has enjoyed in much of the rest of the world – but has rather always been seen more as a means of exercise or recreation. There have historically been no designated bicycle routes within Monroe County, though secondary roads have been used for this purpose for generations. The five-mile Potts Valley Rail Trail, for which funding is currently being sought, will be the first in the local jurisdiction to be specifically designated for both bicycle and pedestrian use.

***Existing available data***

The following data on principal roadways was provided by W.W. Dept. of Highways:

<u>Route</u>	<u>Total Mileage within Monroe</u>
U.S. 219	33.34 miles
WV 3	38.34 miles
WV 12	11.31 miles
WV 122	11.89 miles
WV 311	3.98 miles

  

<u>Year</u>	<u>219 Traffic Flow, 24-hour highs and lows</u>
1988	4400 vehicles, high; 1100 vehicles, low
1991	4200 vehicles, high; 1300 vehicles, low
1994	4100 vehicles, high; 1700 vehicles, low
1997	3900 vehicles, high; 1500 vehicles, low
2000	4400 vehicles, high; 1700 vehicles, low
2003	4400 vehicles, high; 1500 vehicles, low

This data reflects that 24-hour highs were typically in western Monroe, and 24-hour lows were generally in northern Monroe. Both highs and lows did not vary greatly over the 15 year period.

Population data since 1960 is as follows:

1960	11,584
1970	11,272
1980	12,873
1990	12,406
2000	13,900

Maps showing all currently maintained primary and secondary highways are available at the local Department of Highways Office, in Union. These maps also show many (though not all) public rights-of-way which are no longer maintained for vehicular travel. DOH offices still maintain records of all public rights-of-way; even those no longer maintained.

Passenger usage of the Alderson Amtrak station may be available from the railway. Train schedules are certainly available. Flight schedules and passenger counts are likely available from airports in Lewisburg, Roanoke, and Charleston. Trail maps and hiking guides are available for the Appalachian and Allegheny Trails, and for Moncove Lake State Park and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests.

***Existing regulatory authority and level of enforcement***

Decisions regarding design, upgrades, planning, and maintenance of public highways are the responsibility of the West Virginia Department of Transportation, the District 9 DOT office in Lewisburg, and (more specific to maintenance) the local DOT

office in Union. Political influence often plays greatly into such decisions. Enforcement of highway safety laws is the responsibility of the WV State Police and individual town and county law enforcement agencies. Rail passenger service, and airport schedules and routes are determined by the individual carriers, and are based on demand, availability, and economic considerations. In regard to public transportation, safety measures and regulations are reviewed and enforced by the Federal Transportation Safety Commission; although individual carriers often implement their own regulations as well. Funding for trail construction is often provided by federal monies routed through the WV Department of Transportation. However, decisions on where trails will be built, if or when they are abandoned, and how they are constructed and promoted, are largely within the jurisdiction of the entity owning the land in question, or the organization which initiates and maintains the effort.

### ***Potential Key Players***

West Virginia Department of Transportation (state, district, and local offices); Amtrak; Greenbrier Valley Airport; Roanoke Regional Airport; Yeager Airport; Monroe 219; Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Authority; National Park Service (Appalachian Trail); George Washington and Jefferson National Forest; Moncove Lake State Park; Monroe County Tourism Director.

### ***Data and Information Needed***

WV DOT District-9; 10 or 20 year plan  
Vehicle counts on other county roads?  
Traffic thresholds which generally demonstrate the need for conversion from two-lane to three or four lane; from one-lane to two-lane, from gravel to paved, etc.

### **C. Target**

**Public Highways:** In regard to primary highways, the target may well vary with the specific roads. Based on moderate truck traffic and its status as the most heavily traveled road in the county, U.S. 219 should be widened uniformly to 11 or 12 foot lanes, and the more dangerous curves, intersections, and bridges should be modified if at all possible. The Rt. 219 bridge at the county line in Peterstown is of particular concern to local residents in regard to both its condition and width. Recent government efforts to have this bridge replaced had not yet been successful, perhaps in part because it is seemingly within the jurisdiction of both the West Virginia and Virginia Departments of Transportation. A few passing lanes or truck pull-offs might also be beneficial, particularly between Union and Rock Camp. WV Rt. 3 east of Union is in good condition, and is easy to travel. WV Rt. 3 west of Sinks Grove is narrow and winding, though light use may not justify extensive modifications. Rt. 12 from Peterstown to the Summers County line is in generally good condition. WV Rt. 122 through Greenville and to the Summers County line could greatly benefit from lane widening. WV Rt. 311 is reasonable, considering that it is clearly a mountain road; though the same route on similar terrain in Virginia is wider and exhibits somewhat gentler curves. Modern safety improvements, such as non-skid pavement on curves and center-line reflectors to improve visibility at night, should be considered for all the federal and state routes within the

county. Because of previously mentioned concerns in regard to division of properties, loss of structures, loss of rural character, and negative economic impacts, upgrades to limited access status should be implemented only when traffic flow clearly justifies the absolute need for such modifications – and not simply because the opportunity exists to do so. When such need is evidenced, designs should be sensitive to the scenic and historic character of the county; and local preference should be considered in regard to by-passes. County surveys during previous proposed upgrades of Rt. 219 showed that most residents of Union were opposed to any by-pass of the downtown; while many residents of Peterstown favored a by-pass.

Pavement should be improved on many county secondary roads, and these roads should be widened or upgraded as traffic flow and safety demand. There is local support for the reestablishment of a centerline on the road down Potts Valley. This route was originally one-lane, and later widened and marked with a centerline. In subsequent years, the centerline has been paved over, so that it is once again a one-lane road.

However, this is not to say that every one-lane paved road should eventually become a two-lane, or that every gravel-surfaced road should eventually be paved. Small rural country roads have a value and charm of their own, and local examples contribute to the overall atmosphere of the county. Narrow, winding roads also contribute to slower driving speeds, and in most cases, accidents which do occur on such roads are less severe than on major highways.

Likewise, remaining primitive roads which are currently only marginally maintained should continue at their current status until such time that increased usage demands otherwise. Many local residents have in the past enjoyed driving these old roads recreationally, and the practice will no doubt continue into the future.

Consideration should be given to the creation of bicycle or pedestrian lanes, where financially feasible, when any major highway upgrades are undertaken. Safe routes for non-motorized travel would likely increase the number of persons employing such means of travel – providing inherent benefits of exercise, recreation, and decreased fuel consumption.

Mass Transit: Passenger train service should be continued at Alderson; and expanded schedules might be conducive to increased patronage. A full-service station would be desirable as well – though such is not likely to happen with very limited numbers of persons boarding there. Continued service at area airports is vital; and van transportation for local seniors unable to drive on their own is a much needed service and should be maintained and expanded. Commercial bus service and taxi service within the county would offer benefits; but implementation is unlikely with limited population and usage. Increasing fuel costs may perhaps make mass transportation a more attractive alternative to automobile travel, and may perhaps lead to the return of more mass transit alternatives in the local area.

Parking and pedestrian: Efforts should continue at improving walkability of the county's three principal downtown districts; and similar goals should be carried forward to smaller villages where need is evident and funding can be found. Parking availability should be

monitored, and spaces created as need determines. Any focus on sidewalks and walkability issues in towns and villages should also incorporate wherever possible the needs of persons with disabilities.

Foot travel and bicycling: Recreational trail opportunities for casual walking, hiking, and bicycling should be expanded. Investigation should continue into the possibility of designating trails on unmaintained or lightly-traveled public roads – as this may be the most economical and efficient means of such expansion in the short term. Continued maintenance and promotion of existing trails should also be a priority. Incorporation of bike or pedestrian lanes in conjunction with highway improvements should be considered, as noted under “public highways” above.

#### **D. Possible obstacles**

Public Highways: Funding is likely the primary limitation for both highway improvements, and routine maintenance. This is further complicated by the role which politics sometimes seems to play in the application of available funding. Some feel that areas with only limited political “clout” receive less than their share of available funding. The flow of revenue for highways is very much a “trickle-down” effect. County funding is dependent on district funding, which is dependent on state funding, which is dependent on federal funding. Shifts in focus for various reasons and at various levels can result in a “trickle-down” which is by no means uniform.

An additional issue is a tendency by some to view highway improvements as an “all or none” phenomenon. For example, if a primary two-lane route is not to be converted into a multi-lane freeway, some might assume that nothing more could be done to improve the road. However, multiple improvements could be made to U.S. 219, for instance, which could improve safety and traffic flow and yet be much less expensive and carry fewer negative effects than construction of a limited access freeway. The somewhat overused advice might be to “think outside of the box.”

Mass Transit: Rail travel, air travel, and commercial bus and taxi service are all for the most part commercial enterprises, and the level of service available in any given area is in large part dictated by the potential customer base. Barring a very significant population increase, or a major decrease in the number of people who travel in their own automobiles, it will remain unlikely that an airport or commercial bus or taxi service will be available locally in the foreseeable future. There is some effort on the national level to increase subsidies for rail service, and if pursued, such might increase travel opportunities by rail (though most probably on lines already in existence).

Parking and Pedestrian: In regard to incorporated towns, available funding is again the limiting factor in addressing sidewalk and parking issues. An additional problem in regard to unincorporated towns is the lack of a government entity to seek funding for projects in the community.

Foot travel and bicycling: Funding and public-access lands are limiting factors. Foot and bike travel lanes along roadways are expensive, and hard to justify when the highways themselves are in need of improvement. The proposed use of unmaintained or very

lightly traveled roads for hiking and biking routes is certainly more economical, but a source of funding, still, will be needed for the implementation of such a program. In regard to this latter option, there may also be some resentment by a percentage of adjoining landowners. In the absence of maintenance or vehicular travel for years or perhaps decades, some landowners may look on such roads as essentially their own private property, and would not look favorably upon resurgence in public access.

#### **E. Possible interventions**

##### ***Encouraging action on the part of existing government entities***

As mentioned previously, decisions on road development and maintenance are within the jurisdiction of the WV Department of Highways, and are influenced to a moderate degree by the levying of political pressure. Efforts can be made to encourage the WVDOT, and political figures who might carry influence the WVDOT, to implement desired actions. Similar actions could be directed toward continued or expanded subsidies or government incentives to promote rail and air service within the region. Public support for sidewalk and parking projects will encourage municipalities to seek such funding – although “seeking” does certainly not guarantee “finding”. Designated grant funding may be available for municipalities and villages in regard to sidewalk and parking needs of those with disabilities. In regard to trails, most present county facilities are within the jurisdictions of the National Park Service (in regard to the Appalachian Trail), the Forest Service, or the WV DNR (in regard to Moncove Lake State Park). These entities will likely be responsive to public initiative, again, provided that lack of funding does not limit action.

##### ***Support efforts of existing non-governmental entities***

Patronage of rail and air service will of course tend to facilitate the maintenance and/or expansion of such services, which as mentioned previously, are in large part commercial affairs. Public information on the availability of these options may encourage usage by local residents. As noted previously, increasing fuel costs may also increase usage of public transit. Airports in particular sometimes solicit letters of support from local governments or organizations, as a means of justifying federal or state assistance. In regard to trails, the Appalachian Trail Council and the West Virginia Scenic Trails Association are both non-government entities which play significant roles in trail maintenance and development. Their efforts should be supported as applicable to local facilities.

##### ***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

Many projects, whether they fall within the government or private sector, begin as a result of the vision, support, and work of an individual or group. Such initiative could be a start in bringing about many of the goals discussed in this section, and should be encouraged. One possible example might be the establishment of additional scenic byways within the county. Such designations may increase tourism potential, and help reinforce the value of local scenery and history to residents of the county.

### *New county regulatory action*

Few situations exist in the transportation section in which county regulatory action is applicable. One topic appropriate for consideration would be the currently permitted use of ATVs on public highways without a center line. Manufacturers almost universally recommend against usage of their vehicles on roadways. Furthermore, West Virginia currently has one of the highest rates of ATV fatalities in the nation – a figure which may in part be due to use of ATVs on public roads. Current state law allows, through comprehensive planning, further restrictions on ATV use. Options might include prohibition of use on all paved roads, prohibition of use on all public roads, or the requirement that persons driving ATVs on public highways be required to carry collision and liability insurance, in similar fashion to drivers of automobiles. Public sentiment should be gauged on this issue to determine if more restrictive regulation is acceptable to or desired by area residents.

### **F. Prioritize and design**

Specific issues or goals in regard to primary and secondary highway routes should be outlined, and presented to highway officials and political leaders. Cooperative efforts with municipalities can be sought in regard to sidewalk and parking issues. Actions in regard to mass transportation will by their nature be more indirect and limited. Work on foot and bicycle transportation projects can continue concurrently with other efforts, with support from groups interested in such facilities.

### **G. Evaluation and monitoring**

In regard to public highways, the planning commission should meet at regular intervals with local government, civic, and community leaders and highway officials to evaluate progress and determine areas where focus is needed. Similar actions could be undertaken with participating agencies or groups on the topic of trails. Members should be alert for news of significant potential changes in access to rail and air transportation, and use what influence is available to support positive change or ward off negative developments.

## **4. Infrastructure**

v. August 9, 2007; revisions, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007; minor revisions, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### **A. Purpose**

To facilitate the planning commission goals of maintaining and enhancing the general welfare of the people of Monroe County by establishing goals for the maintenance of existing infrastructure and creation of new infrastructure to meet present and future needs. Efforts at providing needed infrastructure should be consistent with and sensitive to the existing intrinsic qualities of the area and its culture.

### **B. Current status**

#### *Current conditions and potential impacts/threats*

Electric: Electric service in Monroe County is provided to most residents by either Allegheny Power (in central, northern, and eastern Monroe), and Appalachian Power, in the western portions of the county. A small proportion of county residents (in the Potts Valley section) receive service from Craig Botetourt Electric Company. Transmission is almost entirely by way of overhead lines. Maintenance of these rights-of-way by power companies has been generally good in recent years. Power outages do sometimes occur following storms, but these are generally not frequent, nor of excessively long duration. In the not so distant past, an Allegheny Power substation was in use within the floodplain of the Greenbrier River. Flooding following a winter storm in 1996 left many residents without power for several days, during extremely cold weather.

Water and Sewer: Public water and sewer systems are mostly centered around incorporated towns, and in many rural areas of the county, residents use private wells or springs for drinking water and have individual septic tanks for processing of sewage.

Red Sulphur PSD, based in Peterstown, serves the largest customer base, and unlike most other systems, does extend significantly into surrounding rural areas. The PSD offers both water and sewage services. It extends along U.S. 219 nearly to Rock Camp, and also serves customers in the Dry Pond area and along Rt. 12 toward Ballard. Water is obtained from three springs arising near the base of Peters Mountain.

Municipal water and sewer systems in Union and Alderson are geared more toward residents of the towns themselves; although Union does offer water-only service to customers along Rt. 3 east, and recently completed a water and sewer extension to the B.F. Goodrich plant a few miles to the north along Rt. 219. Union uses a Peters Mountain spring located about 8 miles east of the town, and also a local well.

The Gap Mills Public Service District provides water-only service to the residents of the Gap Mills community. Its source is also a Peters Mountain spring at the headwaters of Second Creek. The lines extend along Rt. 3 for some distance from the center of the community, and also along the Zenith Road. An extension is currently being planned to

serve residents of Moncove Lake Road – where safe and palatable drinking water has in recent years not been readily available.

The Greenville Public Water system is neither a municipal system, nor a PSD, and has been operated in the past as essentially an all-volunteer community effort. The system is in need of updates and maintenance, and volunteers are having difficulty meeting increasing demands and regulation. Plans have been approved for a take-over of the Greenville system by the Red Sulphur PSD, and funding is currently being sought for this effort.

Communications infrastructure: Land telephone lines provide service throughout the county. All are a part of the Verizon network – formerly Bell Atlantic, and before that, the C&P (Chesapeake and Potomac) Telephone Company.

Cellular phone service is provided in varying degree by U. S. Cellular and Cellular One. Each company has one tower within county borders. U. S. Cellular’s tower is located atop Bickett’s Knob, a few miles northwest of Union. Coverage with this company is primarily limited to central and north central portions of the county. Cellular One operates a tower on top of Peter’s Mountain, south of Peterstown, providing reception in western portions of the county. Cell phone reception is not available in many locations in eastern and northeastern Monroe.

County emergency radio service is likewise provided by towers atop Bickett’s Knob, and also the same Peter’s Mountain location south of Peterstown. Emergency radio reception is lacking in the Moncove Lake/Glace area, in northeastern Sweet Springs Valley, and in all of Potts Valley. The county 911 center has proposed locating a repeater near the Crowder Road crossing of Peter’s Mountain, which would rectify coverage in all three areas. Initial applications were denied by the FCC, however, since the location is within the radio-quiet zone of the National Radio Observatory at Green Bank. Negotiations on a repeated are ongoing with Green Bank and the FCC.

Cable television service is limited primarily to the county’s three incorporated towns, as is high-speed or DSL internet service. Dial-up internet service is generally available throughout the county. Some rural customers frustrated with the limitations of dial-up service have resorted to high-speed access via satellite – however, costs for such service remain significantly higher than with line-based systems.

Natural Gas, Heating Oil, and Propane: A natural gas pipeline crosses Monroe in a generally east-west direction, somewhat north of the center of the county – providing service to the town of Union and to residences near the line. Renewed exploratory drilling for natural gas in the local area is anticipated, and installation of additional lines may increase areas where natural gas service is available. Home heating oil and propane is provided by vendors who transport into the county from facilities in adjoining areas. Refills of small bottled gas containers are available from various vendors within the county.

Wind Generation: Commercial wind generation does not exist within Monroe, although the high ridges of Peters and Potts Mountains may be attractive to energy companies in

the future. Installation of facilities at these locations would likely raise concerns in regard to viewsheds, wildlife impacts, and source-water issues. Additional discussion on the topic of wind energy appears within the Natural Resource component, and will not be dealt with in more detail here.

### ***History***

Commercial electric service came with much fanfare to the town of Union in 1909. Many outlying areas did not receive electric service until significantly later – the 1940s and 1950s, for example, in Potts Valley. Likewise, access to telephone communications began in the county's three incorporated towns, and gradually spread outward to finally become ubiquitous throughout the more rural areas. We are just now witnessing these same trends in regard to the more modern technologies of cellular phone service, emergency radio communication, and high speed internet. The county 911 center incorporated a second transmitter near Peterstown and upgraded from a VHF to a UHF system within the last 5 years.

Public water and sewer service, likewise, began in population centers, and to a lesser degree, have spread outward into surrounding rural areas. A nearby water source was essential for development of towns and villages. Among the earliest efforts were improvements incorporated into public springs for use by local residents. One such facility was still operating on Pump Street in Union into the early 1970s. An elevated pipe spewed forth a constant stream of water, which could be caught in containers and taken home by local residents. A concrete trough below the pipe collected the overflow; presumably for use in watering livestock or washing clothes.

The dates marking the onset of the piping of public water into homes are difficult to determine. Wooden water pipes have been unearthed in Union, indicating that the practice may have been in use at least in some degree during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Greenville's community system is little changed from when it was first implemented. It remains unmetered, and utilizes a wooden storage tank. Later improvements to water systems have included the testing and treatment of drinking water and the use of more distant sources, as well as the creation of public sewer systems to compliment public water systems. In contrast to electric and telephone service, however, Monroe's uneven terrain, rural nature, and the general availability of good quality drinking water from private wells and springs may make it less likely that a countywide public water and sewer system will be the ultimate result, at least in the foreseeable future.

### ***Existing available data***

Specific coverage areas and customer base for the electric utility companies, PSDs or municipal water systems, high-speed internet providers, cable television providers, natural gas retailers, and cell phone companies serving Monroe County should be available from the companies themselves. The county 911 center and various fire and rescue squads can document problematic areas in regard to emergency radio transmission. The county health department may be able to document areas not currently served by public water and sewer, where local sources of water are inadequate or contaminated.

### ***Existing regulatory authority and level of enforcement***

Electric companies, natural gas retailers, telephone companies, and public water and sewer providers are subject to regulation by the West Virginia Public Service commission in regard to jurisdiction, service and rates. Cellular phone service and radio communications are subject to regulation by the FCC, primarily in regard to signal strength and characteristics – but not in regard to any applicable rates or coverage areas.

### ***Potential key players***

Appalachian Power (a division of AEP), Allegheny Power, Craig Botetourt Electric, Mountaineer Gas, Red Sulphur PSD, Town of Union Municipal Water and Sewer, Gap Mills PSD, Town of Alderson Municipal Water and Sewer, Greenville Community Water System, Verizon, U. S. Cellular, Cellular One, Monroe County 911 Center, WV Public Service Commission, Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C.).

### ***Data and information needed***

- a. Coverage area and number of customers served for:  
Appalachian Power, Allegheny Power, Craig Botetourt Electric, Mountaineer Gas, Red Sulphur PSD, Gap Mills PSD, Union and Alderson municipal water and sewer systems, Greenville Community Water System, Verizon, U. S. Cellular, Cellular One.
- b. Risks which could cause interruption of electric or telephone service, such as inadequate line maintenance or location of substations within floodplains. (Risk to water sources is covered within the Natural Resources section).
- c. Information and coverage areas for various entities providing cable television and internet, DSL, and broadband service within the county.
- d. Capacity for additional customers for existing public water and sewer systems.
- e. Areas where public water and sewer service may be needed in the near future.

### **C. Target**

- a. The continued availability of reliable electric and telephone service and home heating options to all residents of the county; with adequate capacity to expand services as customer base increases.
- b. Adequate maintenance of current water and sewer systems, with expansion into areas where population density, lack of palatable local water sources, or environmental hazards from private septic systems make such expansion advisable.

- c. Expansion of current cellular phone and high-speed internet services to make such options available for a greater portion of county residents.
- d. Implementation of the above with the utmost sensitivity to scenic viewsheds, ecosystems, and established goals of preservation of rural atmosphere and open space. Public water and sewer expansions should only be implemented as need determines and with consideration to preferred development areas, since the availability of public water and sewer will likely hasten subdivision and sprawl development. Erection of cell phone and emergency radio towers should be limited to the minimum quantity needed to provide adequate coverage. Underground electric and telephone wires should be considered for sensitive areas or new subdivisions.
- e. Increased use of alternative energy sources and energy saving construction techniques, as discussed in other draft sections.

#### **D. Potential obstacles**

Expansion of water and sewer service into areas where such need exists is very much limited by available funding. Over the past few decades, the county has been successful in receiving funding from the WV Infrastructure Council only at five to ten year intervals – although such funding is typically requested on a yearly basis. Also in regard to public water and sewer, there is a tendency by some to view countywide public service as the ultimate goal. Such may not be particularly suitable to local terrain; water quality may not equal that already available from private sources; and countywide service would likely be counterproductive in regard to established goals of limited sprawl and maintenance of rural character.

Access to high-speed internet, cable television, and cellular phone service are influenced in large degree by economic factors, as is similarly the case in regard to public transportation. Companies will not likely invest funds in constructing infrastructure needed for expansion of such services unless a sufficient customer base is present to make the investment profitable.

Implementation of underground utility wires adds significantly to the costs.

The radio-quiet zone established for the Green Bank National Radio Observatory impacts emergency radio communication within eastern districts of the county.

#### **E. Possible intervention**

##### ***Encouraging action on the part of existing government entities***

Action on issues in regard to electric and land-based telephone service can likely be facilitated through involvement of the WV Public Service Commission. Specific issues could include continued adequate (though not excessive) maintenance of utility

rights-of-way, removal of substations from flood plains, prompt service following outages or for new installation, affordability of fees, etc.

Efforts should be supported to facilitate a compromise involving the F.C.C. and the Green Bank Observatory, in regard to emergency radio communication in eastern Monroe.

The ongoing government incentive to increase availability of high-speed internet or broadband service should be encouraged.

### ***Support efforts of existing non-governmental entities***

Efforts could be considered to encourage expansion of high-speed internet, cable television, and cellular phone service by companies providing such services. Again, however, economics and customer base will play heavily into such decisions.

### ***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

Opportunities for voluntary targeted actions are limited in regard to infrastructure issues.

### ***New county regulatory action***

- A county permitting requirement should be created for cellular and radio towers, such that towers are approved only as necessary to meet the need, and in locations which minimize scenic and environmental impacts. Sightings should be considered which would allow effective use of shorter towers (perhaps only minimally above tree line) – thereby eliminating the need for air-craft warning lights.
- Regulations should be in place to require that such towers be removed at the company's expense when they are no longer necessary. Many experts believe that land-based radio and cellular phone transmitters may be entirely replaced by satellite-based systems in the not too distant future.
- Permitting could be required for construction of wind-generation turbines; allowing some local control in whether or not such devices are constructed, and where they may be located.
- Regulation could be considered requiring that all new subdivision utilities be placed underground, and possibly that all new multi-user lines be placed underground.
- Designate areas where public water and sewer expansion is needed or likely to be needed in the near future, and also designate areas where continued use of private water sources and septic systems are adequate and perhaps preferable.

## **F. Prioritize and design**

Priority should be given to assessing immediate risks to adequate electric, telephone, water, and emergency communications services; and taking what actions are available to minimize such risks. Including in this action would be assessment of areas where local private sources of water are inadequate or failing. Implementation of suggested county regulatory actions should occur concurrently.

Efforts to encourage expansion of additional infrastructure services, such as cellular phone, high-speed internet, etc., can be addressed separately, and might perhaps benefit from the leveraging of political pressure. However as stated previously, economic factors will play a large role in these decisions.

## **G. Evaluation and monitoring**

Planning commission members should meet periodically with PSD boards and county officials and employees to assess needs or potential problems in regard to water and sewer service and emergency communication. Channels of communication should remain open with utility companies (electric, telephone, and natural gas) to assess needs, risks, and proposed changes which could prove either beneficial or detrimental to the local area. Periodic monitoring of the customer base served by cellular phone, cable, and internet companies should be performed to assess whether service is expanding, decreasing, or remaining static.

If county regulatory action is taken, regular monitoring will be needed to ensure that regulations are being either voluntarily followed, or enforced.

## **5. Public Services**

22 Aug 2007

Revised 25 Aug 2007

Revised February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

Minor Revisions, March 5, 2008

### **1. Purpose**

To facilitate established planning commission goals of providing and/or enhancing services which meet the medical, cultural, historical, community, social, educational, and disaster needs of county residents.

### **2. Current status**

#### ***Current condition and potential impacts/threats***

Medical: The county is currently served by the Monroe County Health Center, an entity which receives some government funding and operates under the guidance of a board of directors appointed by the Monroe County Commission. The Health Center operates facilities in Union, Peterstown, New Castle, Virginia, and in each of the county's public schools, is staffed by several doctors, and offers a sliding-scale fee structure for low-income residents. Also housed at the county health center is the Monroe County Board of Health (and the county sanitarian), involved in food service inspections, sewer system inspections, and other public health issues. In addition to the health center, two privately-owned facilities offer medical services to local residents, as does one chiropractic clinic and one physical therapy facility. Dental offices are present in both Union and Peterstown, and pharmacies operate in Union, Peterstown, and Alderson. FMRS Mental Health operates a satellite clinic in Union. Eye care is not currently available within county borders, however facilities in Greenbrier, Mercer, and Giles counties serve local residents in reasonably convenient fashion. There are likewise no hospitals within the county, nor have they been present here in the past. Residents in central and eastern Monroe generally utilize Greenbrier Valley Hospital, Fairlea, WV, or Alleghany Regional Hospital, Low Moor, VA – both of which are between 20 and 60 minutes distant from the above-mentioned sections of Monroe. Residents of western Monroe County are most commonly served by Princeton Community Hospital, Princeton, WV; Giles Carilion Memorial Hospital, Pearisburg, VA; or Montgomery Regional Hospital, Blacksburg, VA. Travel times to these facilities are generally between 15 and 60 minutes for residents of western Monroe. More advanced medical treatments are available at Roanoke Memorial Hospital and Lewis Gale Hospital, both in Roanoke, VA; Charleston Area Medical Center, Charleston, WV; and the University of Virginia Medical Center, Charlottesville, VA. All of these facilities are between one and three hours distant from most sections of the county. Monroe is served by three community rescue squads and one county-wide paramedic unit. These entities are discussed in more detail in the Public Safety protocol.

Cultural, Social, and Community: Cultural, social, and community needs are met locally by a host of clubs and civic groups, including Rotary, Ruritan, and Lions Clubs, Masons and Shriners, church groups, and the CEOS clubs operated by the extension service.

Special interest groups include an Antique Tractor club, a Spinning and Weaving group, and informal literary and bridge clubs. The Monroe Arts Alliance offers classes in various art venues for adults and children, and sponsors art exhibits and musical performances. Opportunities for young people include baseball, basketball, football, and soccer leagues, girl scouts and boy scouts, and a very active 4-H program. The community festival concept is represented locally by the annual Farmer's Day Parade, sponsored by the Union Area Chamber of Commerce; the Autumn Harvest Festival, sponsored by WVU Extension; and 4th of July Parades in Alderson and Lindside. Numerous "community centers" sponsor smaller social events throughout the county. Many of these facilities are situated in former public school buildings. Neighborhood cultural events like apple-butter making, molasses making, and quiltings are hosted sporadically. A wider selection of musical, art, and theatrical events are available nearby in Lewisburg and Blacksburg.

The county is currently served by one local newspaper, the Monroe Watchman, and also a radio station at the county high school. Nearby newspapers also circulate within the county – and reception in varying degrees is available for radio and television stations within the region. Cable TV service is generally limited to the residential areas of Union and Alderson – with the exception of western Monroe, where such service is available in Peterstown and also extends well beyond municipal boundaries.

Assistance for low-income families, and other families following fires or other disasters is provided by the Monroe County Family Resource Network, the local Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) office, and CASE Monroe, each with offices in Union. The Greenbrier Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross is also active within the county. The Family Refuge Center, an organization dedicated to assisting abused women and children, is based in Greenbrier County as is the WIC Program, and each provides services in Monroe. All of these entities have well-established plans and protocols, in regard to their roles and responsibilities within the area.

Needs of the elderly are addressed by the Monroe County Council on Aging, which offers social events, a "Meals on Wheels" program, and limited public transportation (as discussed in the Transportation document). Country View Assisted Living and Springfield Comprehensive Care Center provide assisted living and full nursing home care, respectively, for area residents. Country View, near Peterstown, is locally owned and operated. Springfield Center is affiliated with Princeton Community Hospital.

Animal control and stray animal housing are issues which need more attention whenever such is financially possible. There is currently no pound or animal shelter within the county, although shelters in neighboring counties will accept local strays when space is available. The county employs one part-time animal control officer, who could easily be kept busy full time if again, such funding were available. The Monroe County Animal League, a local volunteer group, has played and continues to play a very important role in helping to adopt homeless animals, and encouraging spaying and neutering of pets. A "Puppy Rescue" program, operated by the group, has quite literally

adopted hundreds of unwanted local puppies through agreements with no-kill shelters in Massachusetts and the DC Metro area.

Veterinary care is currently available through three local practices and multiple practices in adjoining counties. Large animal (livestock) service providers are somewhat less numerous than they once were, and waits may be experienced in busy times of the year.

Historical: Historic assets and preservation organizations are discussed within the Historic Preservation protocol.

Education: Monroe is presently served by one consolidated public high school, situated near Lindside; and two k-8 public schools – one at Union and one at Peterstown. Pre-K programs have recently been implemented. Schools are thought to be generally effective and in good condition. James Monroe High School has been designated a Blue Ribbon School by the state on one occasion within the last 10 years. As in most areas of the country, though, concerns about student apathy, performance, and drug abuse are not entirely absent.

Private schools include: Ballard Christian School, a K-12 facility in the community of Ballard, and the Mennonite School at Gap Mills, which serves children of that faith. Some parents within the jurisdiction homeschool their children, although this is likely a small percentage in comparison to the total student population.

Of the three current facilities, Peterstown's school buildings are the oldest, and perhaps most in need of updates or repairs. The consolidation of two former high schools in the 1990s has led to increased opportunities for students in terms of subject matter and extracurricular activities. It has also created some hardships in transportation, and perhaps made it more difficult for students from some communities to participate in afterschool events. Students in some sections are more than an hour's bus ride away from the high school.

The county board of education offers various adult education classes and GED programs – often working with local libraries in both regards. Public libraries operate in Peterstown and Union. Alderson's library is on the Greenbrier County side of the municipality. Peterstown Public Library has struggled with funding in recent years. The WVU Extension Office in Union sponsors numerous adult education opportunities ranging in topics from agriculture to health and nutrition, and also facilitates local CEOS (Community Education and Outreach Service) clubs.

There are currently no colleges or universities within Monroe's boundaries. Within a 90 minute drive of most parts of the county, however, are: the Greenbrier Valley Campus of New River Community and Technical College; Dabney Lancaster Community College; Bluefield State College; Concord University; Virginia Tech; and Radford University.

Disasters: Most local fire and rescue departments have protocols and locations for establishment of emergency shelters in the event of power outages in cold weather,

extreme storms, flooding, etc. The county Office of Emergency Services (OES) also has contingency plans in place for such events. A Threat Preparedness Group, sponsored by the Health Center has recently developed plans for dealing with potential bioterrorism and epidemics or pandemics. Region 1 Planning and Development has completed a “Hazuz” plan for the six counties within their jurisdiction. The effectiveness of all such plans is difficult to judge, since large-scale disasters have not been experienced in the recent past. The county’s topography (with the exception of Alderson) limits flooding to small stream events, wherein typically only small numbers of residents could be displaced. Lengthy power outages from wind, snow, and ice storms have been uncommon in recent years. Hurricanes have (at least thus far) never traveled this far inland, and tornados are rare and generally not intense. Earthquakes, likewise, are uncommon and have not caused significant damage. Wildfires occasionally occur in the forestlands, but have not impacted communities or farmlands. Emergency preparedness topics are also discussed in the Public Safety draft.

### *History*

Medical: It is almost a certainty that the early residents of the county had little or no access to medical care – aside from what they could provide for themselves. By the mid to late 1800s, doctors were established within the more populous communities of the county. Even so, transportation was slow and an M.D. might be called upon to travel from community to community – sometimes spending a few days at each stop to tend to people with various ailments while in the neighborhood. Even into the 1960s, ambulance service (essentially, a transport only service) was still being provided by local morticians.

Cultural, social, community: Community social and cultural activities most likely played a larger role in Monroe County’s past than they do in the present. Television, radio, movies, the internet, and other modern forms of more “individual” entertainment simply did not exist to fill what little free time was available after the day’s work was done. Church socials, pie suppers, quilting bees, and the like were common affairs. Newspapers from the late 1800s were replete with reports on the activities of debate societies, oratory groups, croquet clubs, book clubs, marching bands for adults, etc. We can perhaps fortunately note that community-centered entertainment, though diminished, most likely still plays a larger role here than in the nation’s more urban jurisdictions.

As with many rural areas, entertainment facilities have diminished somewhat in recent decades. In the 1940s and 1950s, Union could boast a movie theater, skating rink, and bowling alley. The increasing mobility of the automobile age has tended to focus such establishments in larger population centers. No such facilities operate anywhere within the county now – though most are available in neighboring counties.

Current service clubs are mostly a creation of the 20th century, although the Masons and some other fraternal organizations date back locally well into the 1800s. Independent baseball leagues were common from the 1920s into the 1950s. Quasi-governmental entities focusing on the needs of the poor or abused began to appear in the later decades of the 20th century. Before that time, churches and individuals often attended to these needs to the best of their abilities. A “poor farm” did operate near the

community of Gates during the Depression era – as did a CCC camp established just south of Union

The first newspapers were published in the county in the 1850s. Several were born and met their demise within only a few years. The Monroe Watchman began in 1872 as the Border Watchman, and has been published continuously since that time. The Monroe Mail was also published for a couple of decades beginning in the 1920s.

Education: The Colonial Virginia aristocracy generally saw education as a private affair. Wealthy families hired tutors for their children, and families who could not afford this “luxury” simply did without. This essentially English concept met opposition among Scotch-Irish and German settlers, who tended to favor some form of education for all. A law of 1811, in which funds were to be provided to educate poor children in the colony, reflected the beginnings of a change in thinking in public educational policy. The first board of school commissioners was appointed in Monroe County in 1820. By 1851, eleven school districts had been established in Monroe, each with its own assigned trustee. By 1876, 63 white and 6 “colored” schools were reported in the county. By 1916, the number of schools had increased to 120. Soon thereafter, the one room schools began to be consolidated into two, four, and six room facilities. In the 1950s, high schools included Waiteville, Gap Mills, Union, Greenville, and Peterstown; with more numerous grade and middle school facilities. By the 1970s and 1980s, high schools were in operation only at Union and Peterstown – with grade school and junior high facilities at Gap Mills, Union, Greenville, and Peterstown.

In regard to private institutions of higher learning, Union Academy was established in 1820. Trustees for the facility were named in an act of the Virginia General Assembly. The facility remained in operation for approximately 50 years. In 1872, the West Virginia Female Seminary was chartered, also in Union. In 1876, it was sold and renamed the “Johnson Female College.” While reported to be fairly successful, the facility lasted only until the mid 1880s. Other private colleges included the Rocky Point Academy, at Sinks Grove; and a boarding school established by William Adair at Red Sulphur Springs in 1855, which reported attracted students from as far away as Bedford County.

The Sally Miles Reading Room (functioning as a library) was established in Union in the 1920s and operated into the 1950s. The first public library there was built (also in Union) as a WPA project during the depression era. A bookmobile program (the first in the state) was implemented in the 1950s, wherein a panel van loaded with library books traveled to schools wherein students could browse and check out books.

### ***Existing available data***

Operational protocols and lists of services are likely available from the Monroe Health Center; as is the recently implemented Threat Preparedness Plan for dealing with biologic emergencies and the Hazuz Plan from Region 1. Protocols of operation are also likely available from the Monroe County FRN, FMRS, CASE Monroe, and the local Red Cross Chapter. There is likely not a single list documenting various civic, service, and church organizations – however individuals in each community could probably document

such organizations operating locally. School system data is available from the board of education, which may also include long-range planning. Fire and rescue departments and/or the county OES office should be able to provide information on disaster planning.

### ***Existing regulatory authority and level of enforcement***

Monroe Health Center is governed by a board of directors appointed by the county commission. The County Board of Health (also appointed by the county commission) oversees the activities of the county sanitarian – whose duties and powers are further established by state and federal law. Recent persons filing this role have attended to their duties with reasonable diligence. Private medical, dental, psychiatric, veterinary, and ophthalmic facilities are regulated in some degree by state practice acts governing these professions. FRMS is governed by a regional board of directors.

The Monroe County FRN and CASE Monroe are quasi-governmental organizations, subject to some state oversight. The Monroe County Council on Aging is operated by a local board and director, and also is connected to a state-level organization. DHHR is a state agency. The Greenbrier Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Family Refuge Center are both governed by local boards. Red Cross is of course also governed by nationally established policy. School policy is determined by a locally elected board of education, which in turn is responsible for hiring the county superintendent. Local libraries are governed by boards of directors. Countywide disaster planning is the responsibility of the county OES director, an employee of the county commission.

### ***Potential key players***

Monroe Health Center  
Monroe County Board of Health  
Drs. Gelderman, Gelderman, Miller, Kilcollin, Harvey, and Harvey  
Peterstown Pharmacy, Union Pharmacy, Alderson Pharmacy  
FMRS  
Monroe County Council on Aging  
Valley Vet Clinic, Tri-County Veterinary Clinic, Monroe Veterinary Housecalls  
Civic clubs, church groups, and special interest clubs  
Monroe Arts Alliance  
WVU Extension  
Scout leaders  
Little League and other Youth sports organizations  
Radio Station at VoTech  
Monroe County FRN  
CASE Monroe  
DHHR  
Greenbrier Valley Chapter, Red Cross  
Family Refuge Center  
Monroe County Board of Education  
Monroe County Library  
Peterstown Library

Monroe County Office of Emergency Services  
Cable companies  
Monroe County Extension Office

***Data and information needed***

Operational overview or protocols for: Monroe Health Center, Monroe County Board of Health, FMRS, Monroe County FRN, CASE Monroe, Local DHHR, Family Refuge Center, Red Cross, Monroe County Extension Office, Monroe County Council on Aging

List of Civic, Service, and Church Organizations List of special interest clubs or organizations

List of Youth organizations

Board of Education, long-range plan (if available)

List of Adult Education opportunities currently available

Cable TV providers and areas of coverage

List of area radio stations?

List of area television stations within range for viewers without cable or satellite?

List of emergency shelter designations and plans from local fire and rescue or county OES office

Monroe Health Center Threat Preparedness Group's Plan (for biologic emergencies)  
County Emergency Plan

Region 1 Hazuz Plan

**3. Target**

Continuation of existing medical, cultural, social, community, and educational services; with provision for increasing variety of opportunities and expanding services for underserved communities or underserved groups or focus areas. Ensure open channels of communication between groups or organizations whose roles may sometimes overlap.

Identify incident command based on the requirements of the National Incident Management System for implementation in the event of a large-scale disaster. Ensure that county emergency plan is designated to meet the needs of residents in each individual geographic location, including those of persons with disabilities. Continue county wide emergency preparedness training process for the 911 center, rescue squads and fire departments and identify how their responsibilities will be shared during a county wide disaster or community disaster. Increase opportunities for public education in disaster preparedness.

#### **4. Potential obstacles**

Funding is an ever-present limitation, both for governmental or quasi-governmental organizations and private groups. A certain degree of territorialism can also stand in the way of public service – sometimes resulting in competition between agencies or groups, rather than cooperation. In some cases, needs have not adequately been identified and brought to the attention of organizations which could potentially address them.

#### **5. Possible intervention**

##### ***Encouraging action on the part of existing government entities***

Help identify local needs and bring these to the attention of government or quasi-government entities such as the Office of Emergency Services, WV DHHR, Monroe County FRN, CASE Monroe, and the Board of Education Work to improve channels of communication between agencies. Such might be addressed by sponsoring periodic workshops and inviting representatives from each group to attend. Such workshops could also include representatives from non-government entities with similar goals. Increase funding for areas within county government’s area of responsibility (such as animal control) as soon as financially possible.

##### ***Support efforts of existing non-government entities***

Familiarize the public with resources available from such groups. Improve channels of communication (as referenced above). Support fundraising efforts and grant applications to the greatest extent possible. Additional funding could greatly benefit local libraries, MCAL, and other such groups; and could be considered if county budget expands to beyond the current minimal levels.

##### ***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

Promote recognition of the positive impacts made by volunteer service and special focus groups. Support fundraising efforts and grant applications to the greatest extent possible. Improve channels of communication between government agencies and volunteer groups, and encourage involvement of volunteer groups where applicable.

##### ***New county regulatory action***

Require disaster preparedness drills at regular intervals, involving county OES and various fire and rescue departments. Most other topics in this section are not particularly amenable to county regulatory action.

#### **6. Prioritize and design**

Actions involving disaster preparedness – drills, assessing adequacy of plans, etc., can be initiated soon. Plans for county-wide “public services” workshops for assessing

needs and improving services could also be implemented in the near future. Most other topics in this section are outside of the direct authority of either the planning commission or the county commission. Actions will be limited to assessing needs and encouraging governmental, private, and volunteer groups in their ongoing efforts.

## **7. Evaluation and monitoring**

Progress should be assessed independently in regard to the established categories of medical, cultural, social- community, education, and disaster preparedness. Various organizations working in these categories will be best equipped to monitor progress. The oft-mentioned public services workshops could be a means of assessing both needs and progress.

## ***6. Recreation and Tourism***

v. August 9, 2007; minor revisions, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007

### **A. Purpose**

To facilitate established planning commission goals of promoting the creation of additional recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors, and encouraging growth of the tourism industry as a means of economic opportunity. More specifically:

- To identify land, and, consistent with the land use component, set goals, plans, and programs for recreational and tourism use in the area.
- To recommend programs to promote tourism and cultural and heritage development in the area.

Tourism is uniquely compatible with other established goals of historic preservation, and the maintenance of agricultural influence and the scenic beauty of the region. The vision is that in fifteen years Monroe County will be a rural, agricultural community that continues to offer an authentic experience to the traveler.

### **B. Current status**

#### ***Current condition and potential impacts/threats***

Monroe is blessed with an abundance of pastoral and mountain landscapes, clean streams, and historic structures. All of these characteristics lend themselves to recreation and tourism opportunities. While the county's scenic attributes are innate, in recent decades more specific destination points have been less common, and tourism development has been limited somewhat by both a lack of specific attractions, and a lack of organized promotion. Although many historic buildings remain, few have been open and accessible to the public. The lack of promotion and opportunity is beginning to change.

A county tourism director was hired in 2003, a county tourism/recreation website has been developed, and county brochures are in circulation which attempt to tie together various recreational opportunities and points of interest. The number of businesses catering to tourist or "leisure" customers has increased in recent years in both Union and Alderson. Represented are such things as upscale restaurants, novelty or craft shops, and antique stores. Mennonite businesses at Gap mills are attracting visitors from a fairly wide area. However, within the last few months, the county has lost some ground in this area. Union's only antique shop has closed, as has an art supply store and an upscale restaurant which drew patrons from neighboring counties. In Alderson, a lovely arts and crafts shop has moved to the Greenbrier County side of the river.

Other current assets include:

- Four grist-mills, one still in operation (Reed's Mill), one not operating but in good condition (Cooks Mill at Greenville), one in fair condition (McClung's), and one in desperate need of attention (Rodgers).

- Two covered bridges (Indian Creek and Laurel Creek), one historic church-museum (Rehoboth), four National Register of Historic Places districts (Alderson, Lynnside, Pickaway Rural, and Union), four structures in Union owned by the Monroe County Historical Society, some of which are open to the public with reasonable frequency during the warmer seasons (Monroe Historical Society Museum, Clark-Wiseman House, Ames Clair Hall, and First Baptist Church), and many old cemeteries (always interesting to genealogy researchers).
  - Many old church buildings still in use, several quaint “mom and pop” businesses, and many historic homes (some quite impressive and unique, and more than ten outside the historic districts individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places).
  - Miles of scenic views interpreted in part by four driving tours: The Springs Tour, the Farm Heritage Road, the Mountain’s Shadow Backway and the Wolf Creek Backway.
  - Moncove Lake State Park, offering boating, fishing, camping, hiking, and picnicking, and Slaty Mountain Preserve (a conserved area of rare shale barren habitat).
  - Numerous caves offering opportunities for spelunkers, although none are currently operated commercially.
  - 15,000 acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, including Hanging Rock Observatory, the Allegheny Trail, the Appalachian Trail, and the proposed Potts Valley Rail Trail (hiking and biking – currently under development).
  - Fishing opportunities in numerous streams, including Second Creek Fly Fishing area.
  - Hunting opportunities in national forest, at “package hunt” facilities (Stony Brook and Mountain Meadow), and (with permission) on private property.
  - Lodging opportunities at a handful of unique facilities, (Creekside Resort, Salt Sulphur Springs Guesthouse, High Meadow Farm Lodge, Mountain Shadows Cabin, The Guest Cottage, Larew Cottage).
  - Good potential for tourism related activity with the proposed development of Old Sweet Springs Resort, with the Old Mill complex at Greenville, and at the now dormant Trout House Lodge facility.
- Note: A more extensive list of assets may be found in the appendix.

### *History*

Monroe is somewhat unusual in that use of the county for the purpose of recreation and tourism is historic itself, extending back over 200 years. Mineral springs resorts were drawing people to the area as early as the Revolutionary War era - and during most of the 1800s, business was booming at Sweet Springs, Salt Sulphur Springs, Red Sulphur Springs, and numerous smaller facilities. Travelers flocked from the lowlands of coastal Virginia and the Carolinas and even from as far away as Louisiana to escape the heat and diseases of the summer time. Throughout the latter years of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, it was not uncommon for private homes in the county to rent out rooms to summer visitors.

Most of the large resorts had closed, however, during or somewhat before the Great Depression, and tourism was reasonably dormant in the area for several decades. In the 1960s and perhaps the early 1970s, the Mountaineer Travel Council resurrected the promotion of tourism in the region, but this organization ceased to exist by the mid to late 1970s. Only in the last 10 years or so has the tourism industry in the county seemed poised for a rebound.

While the grand resort hotels of the 1850s had all closed their doors before the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, tourism continues to have an economic impact in Monroe County today. And that impact is increasing. According to a Dean Runyan Associates study released in 2005,

- Travel Spending (\$M) increased from 6.9 in 2000 to 7.9 in 2004p;
- Earnings were impacted by visitors (\$M) at 1.7 in 2000 and 1.9 in 2004p;
- and Employment (jobs) stayed level at 140 in the same time period (3.3% of total employment in Monroe County).

In January of 2004, hoping to fund an infrastructure for the tourism industry, the Monroe County commission instituted a Hotel Occupancy Tax.

Since the tax was instituted, the amount collected has more than doubled:

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| ● FY ending June 30, 2004 | \$ 522.41/6 months   |
| ● FY ending June 30, 2005 | \$2,842.00/12 months |
| ● FY ending June 30, 2006 | \$3,618.98/12 months |
| ● FY ending June 30, 2007 | \$3,300.00/12 months |

### ***Existing available data***

Information on current tourism or recreation opportunities is available from the office of the Monroe County tourism director, the West Virginia Division of Tourism and the Southern West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau; as is some data on tourism impacts. Information on both the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest and Moncove Lake State Park is available from those respective entities. The Appalachian Trail, The Allegheny Trail, and The Slaty Mountain Preserve respectively have web sites and various publications. Information on historic structures is available from the Monroe County Historical Society and the National Register of Historic Places. Information on hunting and fishing opportunities (and probably also on usage and economic impacts) is available from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources.

### ***Existing regulatory authority & level of enforcement***

Regulatory authority and enforcement is in most cases not particularly applicable to this subcommittee topic. Some usage restrictions do apply in regard to the National Forest and Moncove Lake, and these are within the jurisdiction of those entities. The county commission has imposed a hotel/motel tax upon lodging facilities, and proceeds of such are designated for tourism and recreation. The West Virginia Department of Transportation regulates signage and junkyards/eyesores along the public roadways.

### ***Potential key players/programs at the local, state, and federal level***

Local: Monroe County Tourism Office, Monroe County Tourism Advisory, Monroe County Historical Society, Monroe Arts Alliance, Monroe County Artists Guild, Friends of THE Second Creek, Indian Creek Watershed Association, Autumn Harvest Festival Committee, Union Area Chamber of Commerce, Alderson Main Street, Monroe Farm Market

Regional and State: Moncove Lake State Park, West Virginia Caving Association, West Virginia Scenic Trails Association, Southern West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau, West Virginia Division of Tourism, West Virginia Department of Transportation, West Virginia University Extension Service, and Mountain RC&D.

Federal: George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

### ***Data and information needed***

- Comprehensive list of currently available tourism or recreational opportunities.
- Comprehensive list of potential tourism or recreational opportunities, and what can be done to make them available to the public.
- Data on current level of usage, and economic impacts.

### **C. Target**

- Maintain and support currently available tourism and recreation options.
  - Preserve historical, cultural, and natural resources as attractive and informative facets of our community that tourists would appreciate.
  - Stay abreast of agri-tourism possibilities and support them.
  - Protect the trail systems (hiking, horseback, etc.) already in Monroe County and add to them when possible.
  - Maintain open spaces and timbered hillsides as habitat that hikers, hunters, and all nature lovers can appreciate and use.
  - Encourage protection of the rural beauty and character of state-designated.
  - Scenic Byways and Backways within the county, as well as the area's many other enjoyable and scenic country roads.
- Promote creation of low impact (on both landscape and culture) attractions so as to provide both a greater number and greater variety of tourism opportunities for visitors, and recreational opportunities for both tourists and local residents.
  - Establish biking trails and a bike friendly atmosphere.
  - Increase number of lodgings, restaurants, and craft or specialty stores so that visitors provide a greater economic benefit for the

community. Expand tourism and recreation opportunities at Moncove Lake State Park, perhaps to include a day lodge and rental cabins. Many current visitors to the Union area stay overnight in Greenbrier County because local lodging opportunities are limited. In regard to the target in general, it seems that a certain density of amenities and attractions are required before an area can draw significant numbers of visitors.

#### **D. Potential obstacles**

One potential obstacle is alluded to in the last sentence of the previous paragraph. A certain density of attractions and lodgings are required to attract substantial numbers of visitors. However, it may be financially risky for entrepreneurs to open tourism-related facilities, when tourism numbers may not yet adequately support such businesses. Growth in facilities, and growth in number of visitors, must happen incrementally, and to a certain degree, also concurrently. In addition, growth must happen wisely and within local limits of taste and acceptability.

A second obstacle is the lack of personnel to provide reasonably constant access to historic sites. Private owners of sites of potential interest to tourists (such as Reed's Mill, Cook's Mill, etc.) are not always able to have their facilities open on a regular, predictable basis. This is even true in regard to the historic society properties – lack of staffing frequently means that these facilities are closed when tourists might wish to visit.

A final obstacle is limited funding for promotion, or development of new facilities. The county has enacted the hotel/motel tax, which must be used for tourism or recreation. However, with the limited number of lodging beds in the county, income from this tax is small – typically \$3,000 to \$4,000 per year. (County Commissioners have recently raised the bed tax from 3% to 6% which will still fall far short of current needs.) In comparison, “bed tax” revenue in nearby Greenbrier and Pocahontas exceeds \$1,000,000 per year in each county. Income from the hotel/motel tax will of course increase as more lodging facilities are established. The opening of a large facility (such as the Sweet Springs Hotel) would greatly improve funding for tourism and recreation.

#### **E. Possible interventions**

##### ***Encouraging enforcement of existing regulations***

There are few existing regulations which would apply to tourism or recreation. One is certainly the continued application of the hotel/motel tax. While limited in impact, the tax is nonetheless contributing a few thousand dollars per year for tourism and recreation development and promotion. As previously noted, as number of lodgings grow, benefit from the tax will also increase. The continued presence of a county tourism office is very important, and should be maintained.

Existing state and local regulations pertaining to clean water, litter control, and public eyesores (abandoned cars, dumps, derelict buildings) are also important. One great potential draw for tourists considering a visit to Monroe County is the area's pristine

natural character. Clean streams, and clean farmland and woodland also enhance potential of enjoyment for local recreationists. Enforcement of these regulations may perhaps best be dealt with through the Natural Resources and Environment Committee.

***Support efforts of existing non-governmental entities***

Preservation of historic structures are important to tourism and recreation. Ongoing efforts of the Monroe County Historical Society should be supported and encouraged.

The Indian Creek Conservancy has been working in the county for several years toward the goal of preservation of open space. This, too, is important for tourism and recreation.

Likewise, highway litter control and clean-ups undertaken by various civic groups and adopt-a-highway programs should be supported and encouraged.

***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

The Monroe County Farmland Protection Board, through purchase of conservation easements and assistance with donation of conservation easements, is likewise engaged in protection of farmland and open space. As noted with the Indian Creek Conservancy, this effort will also enhance tourism potential and opportunities for local recreation.

Great potential also exists for agri-tourism and heritage tourism which has thus far not extensively been utilized. Current agri-tourism is limited to summer activities at Morgan Orchard, fall festivals at Cinderella Pumpkin Farm and Byrnside Branch Farm, and the milling of grains at the Reed's Mill.

Publicly sponsored events include the annual Autumn Harvest Festival and Farmer's Day Parade. Expansion of these concepts could provide additional opportunities for tourism and recreation.

Historic home or site tours could have positive impacts. Efforts could be made to encourage participation of private homeowners in such events, with attention devoted to finding ways to make such landowners feel secure in regard to issues such as possible injury liability. In regard to staffing issues at facilities which are already sometimes open to the public, perhaps greater use could be made of volunteer youth groups.

Creation of new tourism-related business in the private sector is needed, and should be encouraged in whatever fashion possible. Preservation of historic homes, and use of historic buildings for business purposes would also positively impact tourism and recreation. This is dealt with in another committee.

Recreation opportunities, of course, benefit both tourists and local residents. Efforts should be made to expand these opportunities. In addition to opportunities listed

under current assets, a Monroe County Tourism Advisory committee is considering creation of a network of biking trails on lightly used or abandoned county roads.

### ***New county regulatory action***

Established comprehensive planning goals in regard to land use, maintaining agricultural character, revitalization of communities, control of strip development, subdivision, clean water, litter control and public eyesores (abandoned cars, dumps, derelict buildings), and adult entertainment all have the potential to positively impact tourism and recreation opportunities. These are dealt with in more detail in other committees.

### **F. Prioritize & design**

Possible interventions in this category tend to be more voluntary or supportive than regulatory. A comprehensive list of existing tourism or recreation related assets and an asset mapping process would be reasonable starting places, followed by plans for addressing current obstacles as follows:

- \*Encourage establishment of additional tourism-related businesses.
- \*Establish means of staffing historic sites to allow easier visitation by the public.
- \*Encourage protection of historic properties; access of the public to privately owned historic properties, and the use of historic buildings by businesses.
- \*Encourage the creation of new recreation opportunities for both tourists and residents.
- \*Explore ways of creating additional funding of the local tourism office, to allow greater promotion of existing tourism opportunities.

Responsible entities for implementation would include:

Local: Monroe County Tourism Office, Monroe County Tourism Advisory, Monroe County Historical Society, Monroe Arts Alliance, Monroe County Artists Guild, Friends of THE Second Creek, Indian Creek Watershed Association, Autumn Harvest Festival Committee, Union Area Chamber of Commerce, Alderson Main Street, Monroe Farm Market

Regional and State: Moncove Lake State Park, West Virginia Caving Association, West Virginia Scenic Trails Association, Southern West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau, West Virginia Division of Tourism, West Virginia Department of Transportation, West Virginia University Extension Service, and Mountain RC&D.

Federal: George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

Costs would likely range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, depending on expenses associated with field research, and the degree to which the work

can be done “in-house” by the planning commission. Since most efforts are voluntary, implementation would be gradual.

### **G. Evaluation & monitoring**

A certain degree of evaluation of success of efforts could be accomplished simply by periodically listing available tourism and recreation related businesses and attractions, and comparing to the baseline list for trends in growth or decline of such facilities. Growth in the numbers of visitors could also perhaps be ascertained based on income of tourism-related businesses or more subjective impressions of the numbers of visitors at such establishments.

### **Appendices**

- I. List of Assets
- II. Tourism Advisory Committee Goals
- III. Status of Rural American (food for thought)

## ***7. Economic Development***

Revised 3/4/08

### **A. Purpose**

Establish goals, policies, objectives, provisions and guidelines for sustainable economic health and vitality for current and future residents of Monroe County. The economic plan will consider: (A) Opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and workforce; (B) Identifying and designating economic development sites and/or sectors of the county; and (C) Type of economic development sought, correlated to the present and projected employment needs and appropriate use of the residents of the county.

### **B. Current Status**

#### ***Current and potential impacts or threats***

Monroe County is a rural county with an economy based on rural traditions, capabilities, and limitations. Our towns are small; our roads are two lane, narrow, country roads; we have three small towns and several communities that boast settlements that have been or may be small towns in the future. We have a couple of small industrial entities in the county and a larger one in an adjoining Virginia county. Agriculture, timbering, and tourism have been the long term basis of our economy.

Development pressures have begun to appear and we have virtually no regulations in place in the county to manage the growth - - either commercial or residential. What building codes are in place have been rarely enforced. Our natural resources are vulnerable to uncontrolled growth and our transportation systems are not sufficient to bear heavy growth in many areas of the county.

We have in place a regional economic development authority that plans, funds, and implements economic development projects in our county. The Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation assists the needs of the business community of Greenbrier, Monroe and Pocahontas Counties, West Virginia. They provide a variety of services to new and existing businesses such as business financing, general and technical assistance, and site selection for development projects.

#### ***History***

Agriculture has always been at the center of Monroe County's economy since settlers occupied the area. Pioneer farming for survival transformed into profitable farming as hotels and spas sprang up in the area in the early 1800's. The gentle climate and healing springs in the area provided the backdrop of a thriving tourist industry. The demand for the farmer's goods and services was tremendous and a thriving economy flourished. As various political and economic factors vacillated so did the need for farm goods. Farming has had to adapt to remain a way of life. Farmers and strategically placed merchants have cooperatively coexisted often utilizing a barter system and script

in lieu of money. This has nurtured an environment and economy built on loyalty and trust sadly lost in today's economy. As the role of farming has waxed and waned in this county, other means of employment have been sought and occasionally provided. Often civic and business leaders in the early 1900s were successful in attracting industry to areas within close proximity to the county. This has provided work opportunities as many of the county's residents travel outside county lines to obtain jobs. While helping to maintain the economy, these off the farm jobs have also helped sustain many farms of a smaller scale that are not independently financially stable. And the communities in the county have adjusted along with the changes in farming to maintain a support system that still functions as an integrated agricultural economy.

### **Existing regulatory authority and level of enforcement**

- DEP
- County Board of Health

### ***Potential key players and programs at local, state and federal level***

- Monroe County Board of Education
- Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Commission
- West Virginia Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Department of Natural Resources, Region One
- Chamber of Commerce.

### ***Data and information needed***

We need feedback from the people of the county as a whole and from the separate communities and organizations of the county as to the economic and growth plans they want. We need figures that reflect the number of businesses in the county as well as the number of people employed. We need valid predictions of our resource limitations - - both natural and man made. We need to know the plans of the GVEDC and how we can coordinate with those plans or adjust them.

### **C. Target**

A sustainable economy that promotes the natural beauty and quality of life while providing economic stability.

Growth will be realistic such that it can be managed and adequately funded, ecologically feasible, and socially supported. We are designing our plans around an expected population growth of about 15% in the next ten years. This will equate to about 2,000 additional people. We are assuming this figure to be on the high end of probable growth and will revisit this figure annually for planning adjustments.

Our economic plans will emphasize sustainability. This can be defined as economic development that can be depended on for the long term. Strategies will

consider whether they are ecologically sustainable, are consistent with the social values of the community, and are from the grassroots of the community. The plans will consider the interaction of three systems inherent in our community's life: (1) The biological and resource system; (2) The economic system; and (3) The social system. Sustainability must be applicable to all forms of economic and social activity, ranging from agriculture and forestry to industry and human settlements.

To establish the framework for a sustainable economy, we must consider the necessary infrastructures to support it. A way of categorizing these infrastructures is to consider them in four forms: (1) Hard; (2) Soft; (3) Green; and (4) Administrative/fiscal.

(1) Hard Infrastructure:

Water: treatment, distribution, and supply.

Sewer: treatment and collection.

Transportation: road, rail, water, and air.

Power: generation/distribution.

Solid waste: collection, disposal, and recycling.

Storm water: drainage, collection, and treatment.

Communications: microwave, fiber optics, towers, etc.

(2) Soft Infrastructure:

Schools, education facilities, libraries, medical facilities, police, fire and rescue, open space and recreation.

(3) Green (natural) Infrastructure:

The physical attributes of the community: soils, topography, geology, water, climate, flood and drainage. If a community's environment is degraded it becomes less livable and less marketable.

(4) Administrative/Fiscal Infrastructure:

Clear and concise regulations make development and controls more time sensitive and less expensive. Tax structures may promote or inhibit development. Clear emphasis on the type of growth desired or opposed can prevent expensive contests, legal and administrative, in accomplishing the economic goals of the community.

**The community must be aware of the capacity of all these different types of infrastructure if we expect to be successful in promoting and maintaining sustainable economic development.**

This economic plan will be consistent with the other chapters in this comprehensive plan.

**D. Potential Obstacles**

1. Lack of community input which may lead to misperception and negative attitude.
2. Lack of understanding and communication of future changes anticipated that the county will face.

3. Differences among citizens as to the definition of sustainable quality growth.
4. Differences as to the needs in different areas of the county as to rural quality of life vs. job development.
5. Obtaining and supporting the type of industry/job development that is sustainable and socially desirable.
6. Education/training is inadequate for today's competitive workforce.

#### **E. Possible Interventions**

1. Extensive outreach and collaboration with the community to find the sustainable balance of growth vs. sustainability that is socially acceptable.
2. Continued education of the planning committee.
3. Implementation of policies to encourage desirable growth.
4. Define and enforce community acceptable sustainable business.
5. Maintain right to farm policies with respect to any commercial, industrial, residential development.
6. Foster collaborative relationship with county extension office, farm service agency, NRCS, etc. to research and develop innovative agricultural opportunities and markets.
7. Promote harmonious relationship between timber industry and conservation needs utilizing B.M.Ps.
8. Promote vertical marketing of timber products.

#### **E. Prioritize and Design**

1. Create an enforcement process.
2. Area specific, research necessary to identify unique objectives per area.

#### **G. Evaluation and Monitoring**

1. Create a process for routine evaluation of economical development plan based on current trends, need for development, but based on sound principles for amenable adjustments to changing situations utilizing public input.

## **8. Community Design**

December 12, 2007

### **A. Purpose**

To facilitate through citizen participation and thorough analysis, the established planning commission goals for maintaining a sense of community identity through integration of neighborhoods, shopping, recreation, learning centers, and churches as the communities evolve within the county.

The success factors for Monroe County's Comprehensive Plan for Community Design may have interrelated themes based on community discussions. For some residents, one issue may stand out above the others. For some, this issue may be employment. For others, the overriding issue is the continued protection of the environment, and farming and forestry. For some, education is the basic foundation for being able to achieve everything else. It is this diversity of priorities and diversity of communities desires based on continued citizen input that will make us a vital community. This process will give citizens and communities the opportunity to participate in the future design and identity characteristics of Monroe County and the community they live in.

### **B. Current Status**

Since Monroe County is currently being marketed as one of the most desirable locations in the country in which to live, considerable growth can be expected in the next 20 years. Monroe County's population in 1980 was 12,873 in 1990 12,406 and in 2000 14,583 showing an increase in estimated population after the decline between 1980 and 1990. Therefore, an enforceable Comprehensive Plan that protects the citizens and environment is essential, both now and for future generations.

### **C. Target**

Unmanaged growth can degrade our natural environment and rural character, but a lack of growth can mean a loss of economic opportunity and stagnation. It is important that we achieve and maintain balance. Like most communities, we also see that we are in need of improvements. We want to ensure the continuation of quality education for our children, and are concerned about maintaining and paying for high quality education. Maintaining a healthy supply of local jobs is important to us so that our young people can remain in Monroe County if they desire. We are also concerned about families living below the poverty level. We see the need to diversify our employment base, while maintaining agriculture, forestry and tourism as an important economic sector. It is important that we achieve and maintain balance in our economic and land use strategies. We see a great deal of energy in our County, and take pride in it as it exists today, as well as in what we want it to become.

Therefore, it seems prudent that we undertake the initial development and routine updates to a Community Design Plan with specific minimum requirements consistent with the requirements and subsections in section 8-A of the West Virginia Code with supplemental enforcement requirements. The Comprehensive Plan **goals** shall contain at a minimum the following components but not limited to:

- a. Guidelines and requirements to prevent uncontrolled sprawl which threatens the rural way of life by taking farm land for development, creating undesirable environmental impacts due to the lack of environmental impact studies, and subsurface geo-technical surveys.
- b. Create guidelines and a process for identifying and preventing potential threats to water quality.
- c. Create guidelines to prevent increased air pollution and view shed pollution.
- d. Create a process for the identification and preservation of historic & archeological sites.
- e. Create guidelines to protect and preserve agriculture and forestall areas from development consistent with best management plans for agriculture and forestry.
- f. Create guidelines to regulate negative visual impacts from all public roads.
- g. Create guidelines to conserve natural resources and influence “best practice” criteria for site development, water and energy usage, materials, and indoor environmental quality by referencing the Green Building Rating System.
- h. Create guidelines requiring public notification and a public comment period for any major development, or other development that would potentially impact surrounding landowners or communities.

Land Use: Creation and implementation of a land use plan based on a cumulative analysis of present land use patterns, landowner’s initiative, community interest, goals and objectives for future land use. The Plan must strive to establish a guide or blueprint for possible future development that will result in cohesive and logical growth. It is also designed to be flexible enough to accommodate changing communities.

Housing: Create and implement a housing plan that ensures citizens of all ages and all income brackets diversity in the types housing available in the community. Such assurance reflects a community’s ability to respond to the needs of its citizens, as well as to accommodate growth and economic development. Government can be influential in shaping the housing diversity and delivery system. Public policies can be designed and implement to positively influence the housing delivery system to ensure that local housing goals are met for all citizens.

Transportation: Create and implement a transportation plan designed to be flexible for changing times that meets the needs of the citizens and strive to establish a guide or blueprint for possible future development that will result in safe logical transportation.

Infrastructure: Create and implementation of an infrastructure plan designed to be flexible for changing times that meets the needs of the citizens. That establishes a guide or blueprint for possible future development by adopting a hard, soft, natural,

administrative/fiscal infrastructure planning process.

Public Services: Implementation of a plan and programs for public services, which assures all citizens and communities' public service needs are met.

Rural: Implementation of guidelines, plans, and process to identify areas not intended for urban growth, and management plans to maintain the identified areas rural. This shall include renewal and redevelopment of existing structures and existing developed areas.

Economic Development: Implementation of plans and guidelines which require the rate of growth and economic development to remain consistent with Monroe's counties capabilities for providing public services, public safety, health care, education, work force capabilities and employment needs of area residents.

Preferred Development Areas: Implement guidelines and procedures for identifying areas best suited for residential, urban, industrial, and tourism development. Consistent with best management practices for land use development.

Renewal and/or Redevelopment: Create guidelines to encourage development and infill development in current developed areas, or areas currently having infrastructure in place to support development.

Financing: To enforce the components of the Comprehensive Plan, impact fees and building permits shall be required for all major and minor development. The construction of new barns and buildings used for agriculture purposes that are not owned by a corporation shall not be required to purchase a building permit or pay impact fees. Guidelines shall be developed to establish a process for collecting impact fees and building permit monies. Impact fees and building permits shall be required for all major development.

**Create guidelines for:**

Dispersing of monies collected from impact fees and building permits shall be limited to the following; enforcement of the comprehensive plan, education, public services, and public safety. Enforcement of the comprehensive plan shall be considered the first priority to fund. The other identified entities shall be funded based on recommendations from the planning commission and available funding.

Historic preservation: Guidelines created to protect historic, scenic, archeological, architectural, or similar significant lands or buildings, and encourage preservation plans and programs to preserve and protect for the future.

Environmental: Create guidelines to educate the public about existing and potential health, safety and environmental hazards and adapt existing regulatory requirements to protect the public from pollution and create an enforcement process.

Tourism: Continue to identify and promote areas having a potential to attract tourist and promote recreational opportunities without creating negative environmental, or cultural impacts. Create guidelines to prevent tourism based upon the promotion of gambling and adult entertainment.

Conservation: Create guidelines or recommend programs to conserve and protect wildlife, natural habitats, sensitive natural areas, and green spaces.

Safety: Create public safety programs to educate and protect the public from both natural and man made disasters.

History: The design of Monroe County evolved with limited planning from the first settlers to the present times. Since most citizens in the county have been responsible stewards of the land it remains very desirable for development. Therefore, due to population growth planning will be necessary to maintain and improve the environment that we currently enjoy. The understanding of past, present, and future demographic trends provides the essential framework for community design.

#### **D. Potential obstacles**

It is very likely that many residents will oppose building permits and any fee associated with obtaining a building permit. Contractors and large developers most likely will oppose impact fees. Various other restrictions may be resented by some as well, including land use or subdivision regulations, historic preservation efforts, sourcewater protection, etc.

#### **E. Possible interventions**

Educate the public regarding the negative impacts communities could face where no guidelines exist to prevent uncontrolled sprawl, gambling, adult entertainment, infrastructure, building codes, land use etc., and work to garner support and implement regulation necessary to achieve established goals as noted in the various components of the comprehensive plan.

## **9. Preferred Development Areas**

March 4, 2008

### **A. Purpose**

Consistent with the Land Use component of this plan, identify areas where incentives may be used to encourage development, infill development, or redevelopment in order to promote well designed and coordinated communities and prevent sprawl.

### **B. Current Status**

Monroe County has maintained a generally well defined separation between its towns and its open spaces and requires little infill or redevelopment in order to maintain its status as an orderly, pleasant community. Some areas of the county have grown more than others and are seeking to continue to grow while other areas have maintained an appearance and preference for remaining in non-growth status.

### ***History***

The history of the economic development and land use status of the county are written up in the respective components of this plan that deal with those subjects. That history defines the background of this subject as well.

### ***Existing regulatory authority and level of enforcement***

County Board of Health; County public health department inspection system; DEP; Dept of Environmental Health; Dept of Ag; Corps of Engineers; DOT; and City/town ordinances. Enforcement is not strongly and uniformly in place. Funding and staffing are major issues.

### ***Potential key players and programs at the local, state and federal levels***

Chambers of Commerce; WV Dept of Commerce; Planning Commission; County Assessor; Watershed organizations; Land Protection organizations; NRCS; County School Board; City/town leaders.

### ***Data and information needed***

We need feedback from the people of the county as a whole and from the separate communities and organizations of the county as to the economic and growth plans they want and are feasible. We need predictions of population growth. We need valid predictions of resource limitations - - both natural and man made. We need the cooperation of the GVEDC in coordinating our plans with theirs.

### **C. Target**

A plan that integrates the best of growth and protection from sprawl in concert with the Land Use and Economic Development components of this plan. Our towns are still the center of commerce and population in this county. We want to establish incentives to maintain our towns as viable, non-sprawling, resident friendly entities. We want to encourage growth only in those areas where the infrastructure and social support can sustain it.

### **D. Potential Obstacles**

1. Lack of comprehensive community input on the subject of “Preferred Development.”
2. Lack of agreement and understanding of the limitations to sprawl in some areas while it may be encouraged in others.
3. Difficulty in securing cooperation and coordination of the key players in implementing a strategy of preferred development.

### **E. Possible Interventions**

1. Extensive outreach and collaboration with the community and the key players to reach cooperative agreements on the concept and implementation of “Preferred Development”.
2. Implementation of policies and regulations to encourage growth in preferred areas.
3. Foster collaborative relations with Chambers of Commerce, Land Protection organizations, infrastructure planners, and city/town leaders.

### **F. Prioritize and design**

1. Plan and implement community feedback/interaction processes.
2. Plan outreach/education/coordination events and procedures.
3. Coordinate and implement resulting policies.

### **G. Evaluation and Monitoring**

Create a feedback process that measures the effectiveness of guiding growth in preferred areas and the acceptance of the citizenry.

## **10. *Renewal and/or Redevelopment***

March 4, 2008

### **A. Purpose**

Consistent with the Land Use component of this plan, identify slums and other blighted areas and set goals, plans and programs for the elimination of such slums and blighted areas and for community renewal, revitalization and/or redevelopment.

### **B. Current Status**

At this time, Monroe County has virtually no manifestation of slums or blighted areas. The closest we come is the occasional “messy” farm or residence. Our population is sparse and well dispersed in the county. Our community is generally neat and well maintained.

### **C. Target**

As growth and development expand in the county, this component of the plan will require revisiting. But, if we do a good job of controlling growth and sprawl, perhaps this portion will never require much attention.

## **11. *Financing***

*To be developed*

## ***12. Historic Preservation, History***

v. August 9, 2007; minor grammatical revisions, Dec. 7, 2007

### **A. Purpose**

To facilitate established planning commission goals of protecting the wealth of historic structures, archeological sites, and landscapes within Monroe County; and to encourage their rehabilitation and use as a means of promoting unique county identity, improving quality of life for existing residents, and creating economic opportunity through tourism. Also of considerable importance is the need to protect and nurture Monroe's rather unique cultural identity, which in many ways is reflective of a respect for the land and a respect for generations past. Documentation of county history and tradition is important in this regard.

### **B. Current status**

#### ***Current condition and potential impacts/threats***

Historic Preservation: Monroe contains an incredible collection of historic architecture. A very general listing would include:

- Union's designated historic district, which lists over 30 individual properties; the Pickaway Rural Historic District (the largest such district in the state); numerous properties individually listed on the National Register; and a current effort to designate Second Creek as an historic watershed.
- Two covered bridges.
- Five grist mills which are still standing, Reeds Mill and Cooks Mill in reasonably good shape, McClung's Mill in fair condition; and Rogers and Nickell's Mill in dire need of assistance.
- Significant architecture remaining at two mineral springs resorts, which once housed U.S. presidents and other internationally famous guests. Use of Salt Sulphur Springs dates to the 1820s. Patronage at Sweet Springs extends back to the latter decades of the 1700s.
- Dozens of historic churches, ranging from the Rehoboth, circa 1780, to classic revival churches of the mid 1800s, and Victorian and Gothic structures of the turn of the century.
- Many one room schools still standing (including Second Creek, which is actually still furnished). Some are simply abandoned, and some have been put to use for homes, barns, and community buildings.
- Countless historic homes, including elaborate ante-bellum plantation houses, early log homes, Victorian farmhouses, and more modest examples of local vernacular architecture spanning the county's 240 years of settlement.
- Two turn of the century train stations.
- Numerous historic business buildings, including community groceries, post offices, and department stores.
- A unique stone roadside fountain pavilion

- Historic agricultural buildings and the classic “farm home complexes” should also not be forgotten in these listings. Even in areas which remain largely agricultural, vintage wooden barns, and the typical complex of small outbuildings surrounding a farm home, are disappearing rapidly. A recent visitor to Monroe commented on the abundance of old wooden barns in the area. Even though he lived in an agricultural community in North Carolina, he noted that vintage wooden barns had almost disappeared from that area.

Potential threats range from benign neglect, resulting in the loss of structures to decay over a span of perhaps decades, to destruction of older structures to make room for new construction. In the absence of regulation, loss in this latter category would be expected to increase with increased residential or commercial development.

A reasonably comprehensive county history was published by Oren F. Morton in 1915, and a somewhat less extensive work was published in the 1940s which focused a bit more on western Monroe. Since that time, county history has not been documented in any single source, although much exists in more diffuse fashion - in bulletins, historic pamphlets, and newspaper articles.

In what may be typical fashion in close knit rural communities, a fair amount of information still exists in the form of oral history. The continuance of local interest in quilting and weaving, historic farming techniques, crafts, antiquated building techniques, and community socials and festivals, all reflect evidence of living history.

### ***History***

As was the case with land use and natural resource assessments, current status is attributable in no small degree to lack of development pressure – in the case of historic preservation, the lack of stimulus to replace old buildings with new development on a substantial scale. Of course, many buildings have been lost, and new architectural styles constantly replace older ones. In the 1950s, young adults who had spent their childhood in clapboard farmhouses or Victorian homes began to build brick ranch houses. At perhaps the same time, however, interest began to grow in preserving older architecture and local artifacts. Monroe has had an active historical society for perhaps forty years. With recent generations, adults who grew up in ranch homes sometimes now prefer to restore and inhabit older homes.

### ***Existing available data***

Documentation is available on National Register properties in the county through the local historical society and the WV Division of Culture and History. Local historical society members also have significant information on important properties in the county which may not yet be listed on the National Register. Friends of The Second Creek has documented considerable information on historic buildings and culture of the Second Creek Watershed.

Newspaper archives and numerous individual records held by both private citizens and the county historical society could expand the scope of the published county history, and fill in the decades since that work was published.

***Existing regulatory authority & level of enforcement***

With the exceptions of some limited protection provided by National Register designations and the requirement for archeological surveys in areas to be disturbed by public projects, there are otherwise no regulations in place which require the protection of historic buildings, nor the nurturing of artifacts, historical documents, or cultural history.

***Potential key players/programs at the local, state, and federal level***

Monroe County Historical Society, Monroe County Tourism Office, Monroe County Commission, WV Division of Culture and History, The National Register of Historic Places, Civic and Church groups, and the Monroe County Farmland Protection Program (in the sense that protecting agricultural lands is a way of helping preserve that component of county history).

***Data and information needed***

List of National Register properties; list of important structures not listed on the National Register; list of documented historic structures in the Second Creek Watershed; similar list for all watersheds (?); and a list of important or registered historic structures which may currently be threatened.

List of important archeological sites or potential archeological sites.

Also of value might be an assessment of unique or important cultural traditions with evaluation into which may be in danger of being lost.

**C. Target**

The preservation and protection of historic structures and artifacts, with actions taken to encourage their restoration and use. Such efforts could offer increased economic opportunities through tourism, and provide a unique and enjoyable environment in which area residents can live and work.

The preservation and protection of local culture and tradition, with actions taken to foster its continued importance in local society. Benefits of such efforts would be identical to those noted in the previous paragraph.

To encourage the assimilation of widely diffuse historic information for the purpose of expanding on information provided in Morton's History of Monroe, and to perhaps help facilitate the creation of updated published county history, to include the 90 years since the completion of Morton's work.

#### **D. Potential obstacles**

While historic documentation of National Register properties is easily available, documentation of other historic buildings on a countywide basis would be a substantial undertaking. As noted previously, perhaps data could continue to be collected on a watershed by watershed basis, as has been initiated by the project of the Friends of The Second Creek organization. Likewise, documentation of local culture and traditions exists diffusely, but could likely not be found in any single source, or even in a conveniently small collection of sources. As such, pulling such information together might be a difficult undertaking.

Secondly, while it is unlikely that most residents would on the surface object to historic preservation, the creation of more stringent local regulations for the purpose of protecting historic properties could very well lead to a certain amount of resentment. The reaction would likely be akin to similar issues in land use regulation. Some may feel that individual property rights are of primary importance, regardless of whether the property is historic in nature or not.

#### **E. Possible interventions**

##### ***Encouraging enforcement of existing regulations***

The enforcement of limited protections placed by National Register Listings should certainly be encouraged. As noted previously, no other options for enforcement currently exist.

##### ***Support efforts of existing non-governmental entities***

The Monroe County Historical Society has made substantial contributions to historic preservation, in their several decades of activity. Accomplishments include: documentation of substantial amounts of history in written form; the gathering of previously published documents and works of historic importance; acquisition and protection of a sizeable collection of historic photographs, artifacts, and furniture; acquisition of three historic buildings and two historic churches which are now owned by the society; the creation of two public-access museums; and assistance provided to numerous private property owners in listing their sites on the National Register. Planning Commission support of these efforts is warranted.

##### ***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

As noted previously, for the last few decades, there has been increasing interest among area residents in restoring historic properties both for residential and business purposes, and efforts by various individuals and groups at keeping local traditions alive have been ongoing for many years. These activities are in every sense voluntary; and in the absence of more stringent regulation, they have formed the bulk of the mechanism for historic preservation throughout the history of the county. Ways of promoting these efforts should be explored, perhaps among other things to include public recognition of accomplishments in historic preservation.

### *New county regulatory action*

Perhaps more so than in any other component of the county plan, most specific regulation in regard to historic preservation will be implemented at the county level, if implemented at all. Various options exist which vary in degree, and the selection of the best routes may perhaps depend upon the consensus of the planning commission and of public sentiment. Options below are listed in generally diminishing degree of regulation:

- Implement specific county regulations to protect historic buildings and sites. Regulation could be tailored to address most historic properties, only selected important historic properties, or only Nationally Registered historic properties.
- Implement regulations requiring that new construction in certain situations be more consistent with historic architecture.
- Create incentives (perhaps tax incentives or other) for persons willing to locate business or homes in older buildings, rather than constructing new ones; or in contrast, to create disincentives (more restrictive permitting or higher tax rates) to make it less desirable or more difficult to construct new business or residential buildings when existing structures are available.
- Require notification of planning commission whenever destruction of historic structures or archeological sites is being contemplated.
- Apply funding toward public purchase of the most important historic sites, if they are in danger of destruction.

### **F. Prioritize & Design**

Logical progression in working toward established goals would likely begin with comprehensive documentation of current status (comprehensive listing of historic buildings and sites), and documentation of important manifestations of local tradition and culture. Inquiry could be made in regard to possible interest of other groups in documenting historic structures by watershed, as has been done by The Friends of Second Creek.

Research is needed in terms of how best to facilitate the efforts of non-government entities and voluntary actions on the part of the general public – both in regard to historic sites and preservation of local culture.

Consensus needs to be reached in terms of how much direct government intervention for historical preservation is desired by or acceptable to the public.

Legal research may be needed in determining whether county government has the authority to adjust tax structures for the purpose of encouraging use of historic buildings. If not permitted by current state code, consideration might be given in terms of trying to

have such legislation introduced. If tax incentives are permitted, it is likely that the county would not be in a position to implement them until local government finances are in better condition than they are presently.

The publication of an updated county history would certainly be recommended. Until which time someone becomes interested in pursuing this project, efforts should continue at protecting currently available data and gathering more information when available.

**G. Evaluation & monitoring:**

Evaluation of voluntary efforts can perhaps be assessed by noting a continued interest in historic preservation on the part of the public, increasing numbers of properties being listed on the National Register, increasing numbers of historic properties being restored and put to use, and continued interest in the propagation of local culture and tradition.

If specific county regulatory action is implemented, more careful monitoring would be required (most likely by paid staff persons) to ensure that regulations are not being violated.

### **13. *Natural Resources, Environmental, and Conservation***

v. August 9, 2007; revisions, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007

#### **A. Purpose:**

To establish policies for reasonable, responsible use of natural resources; while at the same time fostering conservation practices and good environmental stewardship. Resources addressed in this committee include: water quality and quantity; air quality; soil; timber; wildlife; and minerals (in Monroe County, primarily limited to natural gas, limestone, and of lesser likelihood, possibly manganese and iron ore). Litter and illegal dumps are mentioned in other committees, but will receive primary discussion here. Conservation of farmland and open space (including woodland) are of considerable importance and have some applicability to this committee, however, these issues receive primary attention in the Land Use Committee draft. Conservation of historic structures is deferred to the Historic Preservation Committee draft.

#### **B. Current status:**

##### ***Current condition and potential impacts/threats***

Compared to many areas, water quality, air quality, and general condition of the environment are considered good within Monroe County. The amount of woodland is probably greater now than it was 100 years ago, though mature forests are uncommon. Point-source industrial pollution is almost non-existent, with most potential threats coming from agriculture, timbering, residential sources, and over-use of resources.

Water: Based on surveys conducted by the Exploratory Committee on County Planning, water resources are considered very important by many residents of the county. This is perhaps not surprising, since county assets in this regard are somewhat unique. Dozens of deep springs in the county bring forth water which has in some cases been underground for decades, and often, is exceptionally pure. Several mineral springs exist within the county. Some are true “warm springs” and are naturally carbonated. An unusually high percentage of local residents still use private sources (springs or wells) for household water. Five water-bottling operations have operated within the county in recent years. At present, two are in current operation.

Stream quality is generally good, although the WV DEP has identified isolated problem areas. It is perceived that stream quality may perhaps be better than it was several decades ago, as a result of the implementation of more environmentally-conscious management practices by the agriculture and timber industries.

The generally good quality of local water sources is attributable in part to good stewardship practices of residents, the lack of industrial impacts, the lack of substantial development of the high mountain ridges, and perhaps to a certain degree, good luck. Water resources are certainly at risk. Increasing residential and commercial development, and commercial sale of water could impact (and may already be impacting)

available quantities of water. Recharge areas are at present not protected from development, and the presence of vast tracts of karst geology in central Monroe is (like all karst) highly vulnerable to accidental contamination. These latter issues are becoming critical concerns to many residents, and certainly merit attention in any county plan.

Air: With the exception of one manufacturing plant near Pickaway, local industrial sources of air pollution are completely absent from Monroe County. Automotive exhaust, and smoke from residential and some commercial heating systems is of course present, but since the area is rural, these occur in lesser quantities than would be seen in more urban or suburban areas. From these observations, it might be expected that air quality in Monroe would be exceptionally good. However, there are suspicions that prevailing westerly winds carry considerable quantities of contaminants into Monroe from numerous industrial plants in the Kanawha and Ohio valleys. There have been few, or perhaps no, comprehensive studies conducted within the county to confirm or refute this suspicion.

Soil: Monroe contains many productive soil types. The local NRCS office maintains a list of locally occurring soils which are considered to be prime or of statewide importance. The county farmland protection program utilizes this list as well. Agricultural management practices were implemented many decades ago to reduce soil erosion. Timbering practices have more recently been implemented for the same purpose. As such, erosive loss of soil is rare, except in occasional instances of severe flooding. Perhaps the most significant current threat to availability of productive soil is pavement. Agriculture census data shows that Monroe lost over 7,000 acres (15%) of its total cropland to development between 1997 and 2002.

Timber: As noted in the introductory paragraph, forest lands are probably more extensive in the county now than they were following the ambitious timbering of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The combination of latitude and altitude seen in the local area provides a mix of both northern and southern species. Deciduous species predominate in most regions of the county, however, soil types favor a somewhat higher percentage of evergreens in Potts Valley and near the communities of Second Creek, Hollywood, and Glace. Many local residents work in the timber industry. Selective cutting predominates, though occasional clear-cuts are seen. Reports of negative impacts from timbering have not been common in recent years – however, roughly two years ago, lack of attention to a public spring during a timbering operation resulted in undrinkable water for customers of the Gap Mills PSD for a period of several days.

Monroe contains roughly 15,750 acres of public forestland – 15,000 acres within the Eastern Divide District of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, and 750 acres associated with Moncove Lake State Park. Commercial timbering does not occur at Moncove Lake, nor in designated Wilderness Areas within Monroe's section of the national forest. Selective commercial timbering is sometimes undertaken within "multi-use" areas of the national forest.

Wildlife: A rich diversity of wildlife is found within the borders of Monroe County, including some rare or endangered species such as the Northern Flying Squirrel, James River Spiny Mussel, Bald and Golden Eagle, and various bat species. Occasional

sightings of the Eastern Cougar are reported, but the presence of this species has never been officially confirmed. Coyotes began returning to the area in the 1980s, and are now seemingly represented by an indigenous population. Smaller game birds, such as Bob White Quail and Ruffed Grouse are perceived as less common than they once were, perhaps due to the decrease in the amount of small grain crops grown by local farmers, or predation by coyotes.

Management of game and non-game species is the responsibility of the WV Department of Natural Resources; and the DNR's performance in this regard is considered by most as reasonable. However, some farmers and gardeners believe that the county's current population of White-Tailed Deer is excessive, based on damage done to crops by this species. Increased development in the county could impact many species, though immediate threats are not perceived.

Fish species are also managed by the DNR. Lakes are nonexistent in the county, with the exception of Moncove. The county borders on both the Greenbrier and the New rivers for short distances, though at no point is either river entirely within county borders. Moncove Lake, the New and Greenbrier Rivers, and Monroe's smaller streams all contain viable fish populations. Reproducing populations of both Rainbow and Native Trout occur in some streams within the county – a phenomenon which speaks well of local water quality and which is certainly not commonplace within all parts of West Virginia. Diversity of water species is of course contingent on maintenance of acceptable water quality.

Mineral (non-renewable extractive resources): In contrast to most of West Virginia, Monroe contains no coal reserves. Surface geologic layers in the local area are all older than coal-producing strata seen elsewhere in the Appalachians. Coal layers were either never present, or have long ago been eroded away.

Some reserves of natural gas do occur locally, and recent corporate efforts to acquire drilling rights from area landowners may indicate that natural gas extraction will become more commonplace. Potential negative impacts with drilling are almost certainly limited compared to coal mining practices elsewhere in the state – however, some justifiable concern does exist as to possible impacts of drilling on underground water reserves in the karst areas.

Reserves of iron and manganese ore are present in Sweet Springs and Potts Valleys, and perhaps in a few other isolated beds within the county. Commercial mining of these ores did occur in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but stopped after better grade and/or more easily accessible reserves were discovered in the western states. Economic benefits and potential negative impacts could both be seen if at some point, extraction of these ores becomes once again commercially profitable.

Litter and dumping: Monroe contains one commercial landfill, on Powell Mountain, near Peterstown; and local residents and commercial haulers are also permitted to use a landfill in neighboring Greenbrier County. Roadside dumping is unfortunately still evident in isolated locations, though not as common as it was several decades ago. Likewise, roadside litter is present, though in most locations, not overwhelming (perhaps

thanks to the efforts of volunteer clean-up efforts). Collections of junk cars, scrap metal, and private dumps also are occasionally seen, but, also, not in great frequency.

Actions against illegal dumping are undertaken, in various degree, by the DNR, the county health department, and county government. Local DEP involvement in this regard has not been evident in the past. Abandoned car issues are sometimes address by the WV Dept. of Highways, and local volunteer “Adopt-a-Highway” groups have made considerable progress in keeping highway litter under control.

A recycling program has recently been reinitiated by the Monroe County Solid Waste Authority. At present, the program is not generating sufficient revenue to meet expenses.

### *History*

As with other local assets, the reasonably good status of the local environment is likely due in part to voluntary good stewardship, and in part to very limited development and industrial pressure within the county’s recent past.

Use of water as a commercial resource extends back nearly to the first settlement of the county. Mineral springs were promoted as centers for health and relaxation as far back as the latter decades of the 1700s. Likewise, water was harnessed to power mills across the county soon after settlement began. The waters of Second Creek alone once powered over 20 individual mills. Current septic regulations, and management practices widely accepted by both the agricultural and timber industries, may perhaps have resulted in better water quality now than was the case several decades ago; however, some problem areas remain.

Timber, also, has of course been utilized individually and commercially throughout the county’s history. As stated earlier, current acreage in timber almost certainly exceeds that seen in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though it would not compare to the vast tracts of virgin timber of previous centuries. This is not to say, however, that Monroe was completely forested, even at the beginning of European settlement. An exploring party commissioned by Major Abraham Wood in 1671 reported savannahs and “curious meadows” in the area which would later become Monroe County – in effect, describing areas free of timber. Whether these cleared areas reflected lands intentionally burned by Native Americans, or accidentally burned by wildfires, remains uncertain.

Wildlife, at least in regard to select species, has likewise undergone a cycle of diminishment followed by a rebound, in the last 250 years. Wolf bounty records indicate that this species had been more or less eradicated from the county by about 1850. Similarly, elk and bison, both once native, have not been present as an indigenous native species in 100 years or more. However, white tailed deer, extremely rare locally by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, are now very common. Wild turkey remain plentiful, black bear populations are sufficient to support an annual hunting season, and coyotes, perhaps never a native species, are now at least somewhat entrenched as well. Increased populations of some species reflect management efforts on the part of the WV DNR.

Decreased populations of other species, such as the Northern Flying Squirrel or Whip-poor-will, may be attributable to habitat loss or environmental contaminants.

Mining of manganese ore occurred in Sweet Springs Valley, and on Fork Mountain, Potts Valley, during the early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some iron ore exists in geologic strata in these same areas, and was also mined commercially a short distance from the Monroe border. However, these mines have not been active for decades, and there are no present indications that mining of manganese or iron are likely to be revived in the local area in the foreseeable future. Natural gas drilling began perhaps 25 years ago. Current speculative interest in drilling rights may indicate the potential for increase in gas extraction; however the number of active or potentially active wells remains limited.

As with water, timber, and some wildlife species, state and federal regulations and voluntary efforts have lessened impacts of roadside litter and garbage dumps. Several decades ago, household dumps or on-farm dumps (often in sinkholes) were essentially, the norm. Towns had community dumps, but these were not maintained with the environmental safeguards applied to today's landfills. At present, commercial garbage pickup is available in nearly all sections of the county – and most (though not all) residents are responsible in the way they handle disposal of refuse.

#### ***Existing available data***

DEP information on local stream quality is abundant and detailed. Some work on Peters Mountain aquifer has been done by Joe Donovan and Rick Eades. Soil information is available at the local NRCS office. Timber resource information may be available from the local office of the West Virginia Division of Forestry. Wildlife data is available from the DNR. Information on mineral resources may be available through the West Virginia Geological Survey, or state offices involved with mining issues. Information on problem areas in regard to litter may be obtainable from the WV Department of Highways, the DNR, or through sources in individual communities.

#### ***Existing regulatory authority & level of enforcement*** (check accuracy)

Water quality in regard to pollutants and contamination (surface and presumably subsurface) is regulated on the state level by the Department of Environmental Protection, and in regard to surface waters, by the Department of Natural Resources and the county sanitarian as well. On the local level, DNR generally seems to be more responsive with enforcement than the DEP. Air quality is also the responsibility of the DEP, though as mentioned previously, few local sources of air pollution (aside from motor vehicles) exist. Soil erosion falls within the jurisdiction of the DEP, though the local NRCS office assists in encouraging voluntary management practices for farmers. Timber regulations are enforced by the Division of Forestry, and the DEP in terms of water contamination or erosion. Wildlife regulation is the responsibility of the DNR, and is reasonably enforced. Mineral extraction, depending on the type, falls under the responsibility of the Office of Surface Mining, or the DEP's Office of Oil and Gas Extraction. Highway litter and roadside dumps are addressed in some degree by the WV Department of Highways, the DNR (if streams are involved), and the county sanitarian.

### ***Potential key players/programs at the local, state, and federal level***

West Virginia DEP, WV Bureau of Public Health, WV DNR, Monroe County Health Department, Monroe County Solid Waste Authority, NRCS, WV Division of Forestry, WV Office of Surface Mining, WV Div. of Oil and Gas Extraction (DEP), WV Department of Highways, Mountain RC&D, Friends of The Second Creek, Indian Creek Watershed Association, WVU Extension and County 4-H Programs, Monroe County Board of Education (re: data from summer school programs assessing water quality), WVU Professor Joe Donovan (Peter's Mtn. Aquifer Study), Rick Eades (various water quality studies).

### ***Data and information needed***

Water: 1). Water quality reports for surface water in the county, much data currently available from the DEP. 2). Water quality analysis of groundwater (study in Union area currently being undertaken by Indian Creek Conservancy). 3). Water quantity analysis of surface water (historic data limited but may be available for some streams), baseline flow needs to be established for several streams. 4). Areas where groundwater is contaminated, or threatened with contamination or depletion.

Air: 1). Air quality analysis in various locations in the county and extending over time to take into account seasonal variation. 2). If concerns are found, need info on location of likely sources.

Soil: 1). County soil database, showing soil types and agricultural quality. 2). Areas where soil quality is threatened by erosion.

Timber: 1). Predominant areas of commercial timbering in the county. 2). General status of county timber, including number of acres, and locations and proportions of old growth, mature, and new growth.

Wildlife: 1). List of endangered or threatened species, and locations in county where they are found. 2). Overview of predominant animal and plant species.

Mineral: 1). Areas where various mineral resources exist – at present, would most likely include: limestone, iron, manganese, and natural gas. 2). Specific locations of former mining activity. 3). Specific locations of current extraction.

Litter: Locations of illegal dumps and specific problem areas. Break-down of income and expenses with the county recycling program.

Wind: This resource is not discussed earlier in this draft, nor can it be dealt with later in the protocol until some consensus of desired direction is established. Monroe's high ridges, where prevailing winds blow with some frequency and strength, make it likely that promoters of wind turbine generators may someday look at our county with interest. With evidence of global warming increasing, the concept of generating power from wind rather than the burning of fossil fuels seems reasonable and attractive. However, many

individuals find the large turbines intrusive to the point of being an eyesore on otherwise undisturbed landscapes. The equipment certainly poses risks to bird and bat species, and construction, road access, and operation might potentially create negative impacts on source water recharge areas. The planning commission might wish to attempt to determine a consensus position among county residents, in order to address the issue in a county plan.

**C. Target:**

General goals would include maintaining current favorable environmental status of the county and availability of natural resources for responsible use, while addressing (and improving) specific problem areas in all categories. Considerable baseline data is needed, particularly in regard to groundwater quality and quantity, surface water quantity (stream flow), and air quality – so that threats can be recognized, and actions taken to protect these resources from degradation or depletion.

**D. Potential obstacles:**

Collection of extensive data may be time-consuming and expensive. Enforcement of water protections beyond current level of state regulation may be resented by some area residents. Funding is sometimes an issue, in regard to individual actions of landowners geared toward reducing environmental contamination.

**E. Possible interventions:**

***Encouraging enforcement of existing regulations***

Current law exists pertaining to protection of water, air, soil, and wildlife, and for the prevention of scattered litter and illegal dumps. Encouraging and assisting various responsible agencies with enforcement could be very beneficial, as many specific problem areas are likely the result of violation of existing law. Policy may need to be changed in regard to public reporting of problems. Efforts at enforcement have been hindered in the past by the insistence of some agencies that reports of possible violations must be presented as signed complaints. Individuals are often reluctant to sign complaints against persons in their neighborhood, and would rather remain anonymous. Efforts need to be made to increase enforcement of laws against littering the roadsides. This could possibly be a joint effort between local law enforcement, the WV Department of Highways, and possibly the DNR. Use of surveillance cameras may be beneficial at areas where roadside dumping is occurring.

***Encouraging passage of new state regulations***

Selected members of the WV Legislature have tried repeatedly in recent years to pass a bottle-refund bill; however attempts have thus far proven unsuccessful. It seems the consensus of members currently on the planning commission that passage of such a bill could greatly reduce refuse along the highways, since bottles make up a substantial portion of highway litter. The county could perhaps more actively support future attempts at such legislation on the state level.

### ***Support efforts of existing non-governmental entities***

Friends of The Second Creek, and the Indian Creek Watershed Association have both been engaged in water quality analysis, stream bank restoration, and education of both students and adults on the importance of water resources. Indian Creek Watershed Association is also currently involved in a study of ground water quality in the Union area. The efforts of both of these groups are having an impact and should be supported.

### ***Facilitating voluntary targeted actions***

Best management agricultural practices, suggested by NRCS and others, are in many instances voluntary when it comes to implementation by farmers. Best management practices in regard to the timber industry are also voluntary in some cases. Many local civic groups pick up highway litter on a voluntary basis. Facilitation of these practices is certainly worthwhile. In some cases, financial assistance may be needed for implementation. In other cases, education on the importance of the work, and recognition for efforts made, could be stimulus enough.

As an alternative to supporting or tolerating commercial wind generation in the county, or in addition to the same, the planning commission could actively encourage individual efforts at energy independence – such as smaller windmills, water generators, solar panels, and “green construction” techniques for individual use at homes and farmsteads. Assistance could come with providing information on such products, documenting where technical advice can be found on where such products may be used effectively, and (provided that a funding stream could be located), offering financial assistance for the installation of such devices. Of considerable importance to this approach would be legislation requiring that utility companies purchase “excess energy” generated by individual citizens. Such action would most likely need to occur on the state or federal level, however the local planning commission could take the position of encouraging this legislation.

### ***New county regulatory action***

Increase minimum lot size for septic tanks, beyond current state regulations. Consider slope regulations for septics, or requirements for use of alternative systems when slope or soil characteristics are inadequate for proper septic function.

Upon establishment of baseline (and where available) historic flow rates of streams, create meaningful regulation of how much water can be withdrawn from streams for commercial use. Likewise, establish reasonable restrictions on how much water can be withdrawn from wells for commercial purposes without harm to aquifers or impacts to owners of neighboring wells.

Create enforceable protection zones around recharge areas for public water sources, which would apply to septic installation, chemical use, erosion control, and timber operations.

Streamline the complaint process on the county level, to make reporting of violations of existing environmental law easier, and more anonymous.

To the extent that such is financially feasible, complete an energy audit of all public buildings within the county at least every five years, and retrofit buildings to improve energy efficiency as available funding allows.

**F. Prioritize & design:**

A considerable amount of baseline data needs to be compiled to document current status. In regard to water quantity and air quality, primary collection of raw data may be needed. Many of the resources discussed in this committee are within the regulatory jurisdiction of existing entities. The planning commission may need to assess where current regulatory action by these entities is adequate; and where additional support or encouragement are needed.

A reasonable plan needs to be formulated for implementation of new county regulatory action, such as the consideration of septic restrictions beyond current state requirements, water extraction restrictions, and source water protection zones. County sentiment needs to be assessed in regard to the wind turbine issue.

**G. Evaluation & monitoring:**

In the several instances wherein primary enforcement authority lays with existing non-county entities, primary monitoring should probably remain with these entities. The planning commission may be able to play a role in bringing potential problems to the attention of state or federal entities. The county will need to bear primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcement new county regulation – or in cases where county regulations exceed state requirements. It seems likely that a county employee may be needed at some point to monitor compliance in regard to natural resource, land use, and historic preservation components.

## **14. Safety**

16 Sept 2007 revised January 2008

### **A. Purpose**

To facilitate and establish goals for providing public safety in all geographic locations of the county, that includes police services, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, and disaster response.

### **B. Current status**

Nationally the emphasis has changed since 9/11 and recent natural disasters. Public safety officials, emergency medical services and fire and rescue services are facing additional duties such as Homeland Protection, disaster planning and management in addition to routine safety, emergency medical service calls and fire and rescue calls. Since most of the first responders are volunteers other than public safety officials/officers training demands are difficult to meet in our rural county. However, in view of this mutual support and cooperation must be accomplished between all entities since the implementation of the National Incident Command System. Currently there are no documents regarding public safety other than state or federal codes or guidelines. In accordance with state code the county commission is responsible to assure public safety to all residents. Therefore, the county commission appointed a planning commission to develop a comprehensive plan.

The county is currently being served by the following fire departments and rescue squads:

Fire Departments: Union, Lindside, Ballard

Rescue Squads: Union, Sweet Springs, Medic 1 (county-wide paramedic unit)

Both: Peterstown operates both a fire department and rescue squad.

Alderson: The Monroe County side of the city is provided fire and rescue services from establishments located on the Greenbrier County side of the city.

Cooperative agreements exist with nearby departments; and such departments have in the past respond when needed.

Fire and rescue departments/squads from Paint Bank, Dunlap, White Sulphur, Lewisburg, Fairlea, Alderson, and Giles County have all answered calls in Monroe on occasion.

Law enforcement and police services are provided by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the West Virginia State Police. Adequate staffing continues to be an ongoing concern to most residents due to poor response times caused by the lack of available officers on duty.

There is currently no process to assure safe building construction unless the State Fire Marshal, FHA, or the State Health Department has jurisdiction.

The West Virginia Department of Transportation is responsible for highway safety. However, a reporting process can be implemented to report unsafe conditions and request corrective action.

### ***Existing available data***

There is no existing available data regarding individual community safety needs based on data collected from each community located in different geographic locations. The county emergency services coordinator is currently working on a mapping system to serve the entire county upon completion. Currently there is a county disaster and emergency response plan located at the 911 center. It has not been determined if this plan will serve individual communities in various locations in the county. Schools have plans for all disaster related aspects and the plan is not for public use due to the different threat levels and needs only to be referenced in the comprehensive plan. However, it should comply with the requirements of the National Incident Command System. The Monroe County Health Center is working on or has completed a county threat preparedness plan focused primarily on biologic risks.

State Codes and Federal regulations identify specific safety requirements which are enforced by specific designated entities such as the Sheriff's Office, State Police, OSHA, Fire Marshal, Health Department ETC.

### ***Existing regulatory authority and level of enforcement***

- Potential key players
- OSHA deals primarily with employee safety and is the existing authority for **work place safety** enforcement.
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Labor
- West Virginia Department of Health, Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification: Enforces all aspects of health care and health care safety
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
- W.V. Department of Health Office of Emergency Services
- Monroe Health Center
- 911 Centers
- Fire departments and rescue squads
- FEMA guidelines for emergency preparedness
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- West Virginia Department of Transportation
- Sheriff of Monroe County
- State Fire Marshall
- County Sanitarian: Oversees safe food handling, safe water and sewage disposal.
- National Institute of Safety and Health

### ***Data and information needed***

Listed below are the minimum codes or guidelines to get started. Additional codes can be obtained as needed.

The following documents need to be obtained as reference documents

- State Building Code
- State Fire Code
- West Virginia Disaster Response Manual and Disaster Response Protocol Manual
- County Emergency Plan
- Current West Virginia State Codes that reference public safety.
- National Incident Management System Management Systems (NIMS) study guide
- NFPA 1600 (NOTE: There is a legislative mandate that NFPA-1600 be followed regarding emergency preparedness and management if federal grant money is involved.)
- NFPA 101 Life Safety Code
- Monroe County Commission (W.V. State Constitution Article 9 deals with duties of the County Commission and should be addressed in the plan.
- Monroe Health Center Threat Preparedness Plan

### **C. Target**

Create a County disaster and emergency operation plan designed to meet the needs of all residents in each individual geographic location.

Create a county wide emergency preparedness training process for all law enforcement (rescue squads fire departments) first responders and identify how their responsibilities will be shared during a county wide disaster or community disaster.

Create a process for requiring the county emergency services coordinator or designee to teach emergency preparedness, create emergency operation plans and identify areas of assembly in various geographic locations of the county.

Identify incident command based on the requirements of the National Incident Management System.

Identify alternate shelters in various locations where resident can be evacuated to and cared for in the event of natural or manmade disasters. The shelters could be churches, schools, community centers, fire departments, rescue squads etc.

Solicit volunteers in various locations to function as points of contact for information during disasters until incident command can be established.

Implement a process to assure that the county 911 system and all first responders comply with NIMS and NFPA-1600 requirements regarding Incident Command and Management.

Create a process to educate county law enforcement in regards to the Incident Command structure.

Create a process for assuring compliance with the Department of Homeland Security requirements in regards to emergency preparedness. This will assure continuance of available grants.

Implement a process for county residents and all public safety personnel to report unsafe conditions or potential unsafe conditions and have a process for recording and investigating all reports.

Thoroughly evaluate plans as they written to assure safety hazards do not exist in the plan.

#### **D. Potential obstacles**

Not having a county wide communications system creates an obstacle in regards to first responders.

The collection of the extensive safety data available will be time consuming with moderate cost.

Existing fire departments, rescue squads and law enforcement may not be willing to corporate or have available time for additional training.

Finding volunteers to function as points of contact in various communities that are willing or have time to participate in minimum training requirements.

There are no apparent obstacles that must be overcome as the plan is written but safety needs to be emphasized.

The public may become offensive when they realize that the state codes exist and become aware of the same.

#### **E. Possible interventions**

Educate first responders and law enforcement regarding NIMS corporation requirements and the incident command system.

Encourage law enforcement and judges to enforce current laws if violations occur or when a potential public or personal safety risk is involved as described in various sections of Current State Code. It may be desirable to have judges or attorneys who deal with state codes, provide law enforcement officers with codes training and reference pertaining to violations or potential violations to identify and reduce safety risk.

Conduct, facilitate, educate, and encourage community participation in various geographic locations within the county regarding current public safety conditions,

improvements needed and changes required by federal or state law. Solicit suggestions for improvement.

Educate the public regarding current state codes pertaining to community design. Public Safety should not be an issue for most residents.

Current state law establishes the requirement regulating fire and rescue squads that are primarily for full time paid employees. Since Monroe County and many counties in West Virginia are served by volunteers it is very difficult to recruit and maintain adequate personnel to operate effectively due to the extensive training requirements. Therefore, members of the WV Legislature should be contacted to discuss potential changes with the Bureau of Public Health for fire and rescue squads that are volunteer organizations. The outcome would most likely mean more volunteers and quicker response times.

#### **F. Prioritize and Design**

In order to create an effective safety document that serves each geographic location in the county base line data must be obtained regarding individual geographic needs and the available resources. The planning commission and the county emergency services coordinator must work together and evaluate all data obtained to create individual community response plans that coincide with the county wide disaster plan. The final safety plan must meet minimum federal and state requirements.

#### **G. Evaluation and Monitoring**

A final draft will be provided to the public for evaluation upon completion.

The planning commission and emergency services coordinator will be responsible for evaluating and monitoring the safety document and adopting changes as needed. All recommended changes will be provided to the county commission for review and approval since the commission is responsible for assuring public safety to all residents.

The planning commission and emergency services coordinator will evaluate and monitor for compliance, with current federal or state law, seek guidance from these regulator authorities and make changes to the safety document accordingly.

## Appendix 1

### MONROE COUNTY ASSETS WITH THE POTENTIAL TO DRAW TOURISTS

#### *HISTORY*

*Name of interesting things that happened in the county's past. These may be "significant" events like a Civil War battle or items of primarily local interest like a ghost story. The aspects of an area's might include: industrial, agricultural, cultural, geological, military, social, settlement patterns, connection to famous people etc. History may be from different periods like the depression, the 60's, pre-Columbus, prehistoric, etc. How did the county begin? What major changes has it gone through? What is there that an outsider might be interested to learn about?*

#### County –

James Monroe, fifth president of the United States presided over a period of time known as the “era of good feeling,” because of the lack of fractional quarrels. Monroe County, which was formed in 1799, honors Monroe, but for his contributions before he became president.

#### Towns –

Peterstown – Named for Christian Peters who helped establish the town along the banks of Rich Creek in 1803.

Union Historic District – First settled in 1774 by James Alexander and established as the county seat in 1799. The historic district is composed of residences, commercial structures, county governmental buildings, two large cemeteries, and the land of part of three historic farms. Walking tour of National Register historic district exhibits several antebellum homes and churches. (NRHP)

Alderson Historic District – Along the banks of the Greenbrier River, Alderson offers a variety of quaint shops, restaurants, and historic architecture. Platted by George Alderson after 1872, there were 60 houses and 400 people by 1877. The arrival of the C& O Railroad did much to shape the town. This district also extends across the river into Greenbrier County, but the Monroe County side contains the historic commercial business district. (NRHP)

#### Areas –

Pickaway Rural Historic District – This grouping of 20 farms clustered near the village of Pickaway has a broad selection of buildings dating from the log homes of the 1790s to turn of the century housing. (NRHP)

Lynnside Historic District (Sweet Springs Vicinity) – This district receives its name from the traditional name of the Lewis family house. The large red brick Greek Revival mansion is 1 ½ stories on a raised masonry foundation. It was constructed in 1845 by William Lynn Lewis. The area contains several distinctive out buildings, two wooden timber bridges and a small pond. (NRHP)

Mann-Miller Springfield/Hunter Springs Historical Area – This project, sponsored by the Greenville Ruritan, is planning a historical marker, pavilion, maps and information detailing an area of middle Indian Creek Valley where pioneers settled.

#### Mineral Spring Resorts –

Red Sulphur – Aside from the village itself, nothing remains of the old spa except for the stone spring enclosure.

Salt Sulphur Springs Historic District – The complex of buildings and spring sites commonly called the Old Salt Sulphur Springs Resort, of “Old Salt,” survives as one of the largest native stone pre-Civil War groupings in West Virginia. Remaining stone buildings include a wing of the hotel, the bath house, spring house, church, and general store. All are in fairly good shape. Many 19<sup>th</sup> century clientele came to take the “cure,” as the spring waters were commonly believed to possess medicinal benefits. Some notable visitors to the area were: President Van Buren, Governor John Floyd of Virginia, and Jerome N. Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. (NRHP)

Old Sweet Springs – The first hotel was erected on the site in 1792, making the resort one of the area’s earliest. The brick hotel, cottages, and bathhouse which remain date from the 1830’s. The claim persists that Thomas Jefferson was employed to create the design for the resort complex. District Court proceedings for the counties of Greenbrier, Kanawha, Monroe (after 1799), Botetourt, and Montgomery were held here from 1796 until 1807. (NRHP)

#### Military Structures or Events –

Cook’s Fort – A marker notes the location of a wooden stockade which reportedly enclosed an area of roughly 1.5 acres. 300 settlers took refuge there in 1778. Nothing remains of the structure itself.

Wood’s Fort – A small stockade fort, and one of several fortifications which were erected in the county prior to the American Revolution. Nothing remains at the location now.

Confederate Soldiers of Monroe County Monument, Union – Plot was donated to the Daughters of the Confederacy in the late 1890’s by a descendant of Hugh Caperton, a congressman from 1813 to 1815. The monument was dedicated in September of 1901.

### Grist Mills –

Cook's Mill (currently called the Old Mill) – Erected in 1857 on the site of the original mill dating to the late 1700's. Much restoration has been done by the mill's owners. Not currently open to the public. (NRHP)

McClung's Mill – Moved to its present site in the early 1900's from Craig County, Virginia. The mill was used almost continuously for the grinding of grain through the late 1960's. Not currently open to the public.

Reed's Mill – Located on Second Creek near the Greenbrier County line, portions of the old gristmill building date back to the late 1700's. The mill remains open and functions commercially during limited hours. At one time, there existed 22 grist mills, 4 woolen mills, one powder mill, and many saw and planing mills along Second Creek. (NRHP)

Nickell Homestead and Mill – This Federal farmhouse is estimated to have been built in 1794. Although the family members were primarily farmers, they also operated a grist mill along Second Creek from 1814 to 1949, supplying both Monroe and nearby Greenbrier Counties. (NRHP)

### Covered Bridges –

Indian Creek Covered Bridge – Route 219 was built along the course of the old Indian path known as the Seneca Trail, or alternately, The Warrior's Path. The covered bridge was built along the course of the old road in 1898. Present day 219 doesn't vary too greatly from the course of the path used by tribes of the Iroquois Nation. (NRHP)

Laurel Creek Covered Bridge – Built in 1911, this bridge is still in use on Laurel Creek Road, between Lillydale and Greenville, the bridge has the distinction of being the smallest remaining covered bridge in the state of WV. (NRHP)

### Churches –

Rehoboth Church, Union – Reported to be the oldest church building in the Virginias, west of the Shenandoah Valley. The small log structure was erected c. 1785. The building remains, though now covered by a protective shed room. Rehobeth's rough-hewn sturdiness and simplicity of style reflect the frontier atmosphere in which the church was built. In 1960, by the action of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, Rehobeth Church was designated one of ten Methodist Shrines in America. A museum is also operated on the site. (NRHP)

First Baptist Church, Union – This 1845 structure is owned and maintained by the Monroe County Historical Society.

Ames-Clair Hall, Union – A restored 1857 African-American church, owned and maintained by the MCHS. Currently used for concerts and community gatherings.

St. John's Catholic Chapel, Sweet Springs – Oldest continuously used Catholic Church in WV, having been erected before 1859 and maybe as early as 1839. It was erected by slave labor and is extremely unique in its construction, particularly the last row of brick before the roof line.

St. Michael's, Salt Sulphur Springs

Marvin Chapel, Willow Bend – Founded about 1869 by Southern sympathizers who broke away from the near-by Dropping Lick Methodist congregation. Currently used as studio by private owner.

Mount Pleasant Presbyterian, Sinks Grove

Trinity Methodist, Pickaway

New Lebanon Associate Reformed Presbyterian, Pickaway – Founded in 1770, the church was the only organized ARP church in WV until another one opened in Fairlea in 1938.

Broad Run Baptist Church--Established in 1853 by some of the counties earliest settlers. (More detailed information can be obtained from Shirley Hancock, the unofficial historian of the church.)

#### Schools –

Pickaway School – Site of 1<sup>st</sup> 4-H Club in West Virginia.

Second Creek School – Board of Education set aside this one-room school building as a school museum with the relics, documents, school furniture and things of intrinsic value to be stored for posterity in the building.

#### Homes –

Wallace Estill Sr. House – The Estill House is actually two units. The earlier section, is of rubble stone construction and the later is a two-bay clapboard portion, with its own exterior end chimney of stone. The house was built in 1773. (NRHP)

McNeer House (Hope Manor), Salt Sulphur Springs – This frame 2 ½ story Colonial Revival house was built in 1919 by Lewis Caperton McNeer. A notable feature of this house is the unusually large entrance hall that has often been used as a small ballroom. (NRHP)

Spring Valley Farm (Richard Dickson Farm) – Began as a two-story log cabin built by John Knox in the late 1700s. After its purchase in 1834,

Richard Dickson extensively enlarged the structure between 1837 and 1841 into a two-story, vernacular, frame house. There are many distinctive farm buildings and structures surrounding the house. The Dickson family, who have farmed this property since 1835, have been among the first to use new and improved farming methods, thereby serving as a model for other farms in Monroe County. (NRHP)

Brigadier General John Echols House – The house in Union was built by John W. Lanus, who owned the property between 1845 and 1848. The Echols family owned the house between 1848 and 1865. The foundation is constructed of native blue limestone and the walls are of handmade brick made in a nearby brick kiln. (NRHP)

Byrnside-Beirne-Johnson House (Willowbrook) – This house stands prominently on a bluff overlooking the Byrnside Branch of Indian Creek. The home incorporates many different eras of Monroe County history. Built as a fortified log house by pioneer James Byrnside in 1770, the structure evolved into a dog-trot style dwelling after an addition in the early 1800's. In the years prior to the Civil War, the house was remodeled in the Gothic Revival style with board and batten siding and a two-story front porch. (NRHP)

Clarence Campbell House (Hillcrest) p This house, constructed between 1907 and 1909, is a large, wood frame 1 ½ story Queen Anne style farmhouse. (NRHP)

William Gaston Caperton, Jr. House (Wyndridge) – This Greek Revival residence was built by William Gaston Caperton, Jr., in 1872. The woodwork is native black walnut cut from the property. There are several adjacent buildings on this property which include two-story 18<sup>th</sup> century log structures and a late 19<sup>th</sup> century carriage shed. (NRHP)

Elmwood (Hugh Caperton House) – Hugh Caperton, II, built his two-story c. 1835 Classical Revival style home with hand-made bricks and timber from his land. (NRHP)

Andrew Beirne House (Walnut Grove) - This rambling two-story dwelling evolved over a period of fifty years. The original two-story log house, now enclosed within the north-south wing, was constructed c. 1783 by Michael Erskine, Jr., an early settler. (NRHP)

Maple Lawn, Rich Creek Valley –

Sunset Hill, Flat Mountain Road –

#### Train Stations -

Alderson Depot – Historic C & O depot (circa 1910) of board and batten construction. Railroad memorabilia and welcome center.

Persons/Families –

Andrew S. Rowan, the Spanish-American war hero who was immortalized in Elbert Hubbard's "A Message to Garcia," called Monroe County home.

Brigadier General John Echols – John Echols was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute and married the daughter of Hugh Caperton. By 1860, Echols had won distinction as a lawyer, orator, and statesman. He was president and director of the Virginia Branch Bank in Union, and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. He organized the Monroe Guards and served in the Confederate Army in the Stonewall Brigade and eventually attained the rank of Brigadier General. Interested in railroads, Echols induced C.P. Huntington to ride horseback with him over a proposed route, which may have influenced the construction of the C& O Railroad to Huntington, West Virginia. The family moved to Staunton, Virginia in 1865 where they lived until his death in 1896.

Hugh Caperton, II – Served as a Virginia state Legislator and as a Representative to the United States Congress from 1813 to 1815.

Andrew Bierne – A prominent local businessman and politician whose service to the community included building the local grist mill, working on three turnpike commissions, and serving as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates and twice as a United States Congressman.

Jones Family, In 1928, in the town of Peterstown, West Virginia, a father and son set up a game of horseshoes in a vacant lot. It was a game of horseshoes which they will never forget-for during the course of that game they accidentally discovered the "Punch Jones," a thirty-four-carat (34.46-carat) diamond. This family also set the world's record for consecutive male births-- 17 kids--and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt hosted Grover Jones Family Day at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Joseph Swope; Monroe County's first settler came to Wolf Creek in 1752.

Son

Michael born 1755 was the first white child born in Monroe County. (and maybe southern West Virginia). Another son Joseph was seized in 1756 by the

Shawnee Indians and held captive for 9 years. Swope served in the colonial

wars and his sons Joseph, John and Michael served in the American Revolution. Son Joseph is buried in a Wolf Creek cemetery.

Museums and Other Historic Sites –

Monroe County Museum, Union - This headquarters of the Monroe County Historical Society is located in an 1820 brick building which was

once the law office of Allen Taylor Caperton, who served as a Senator to the Confederacy and, after the Amnesty Act of 1872, became a Senator to the United States. This building also serves as a depository for the society's archives and provides a seasonal Visitor's Information Center.

Clark-Wiesman House and Owen Neel Houses, Union – Adjacent to the Monroe County Museum, these reconstructed log houses are furnished in period furnishings entirely from Monroe County.

Alderson Bridge – Graceful concrete bridge was erected in 1915. When the bridge was threatened by demolition in 1977, the bridge was preserved through local efforts and was converted to pedestrian use. (NRHP)

## **RECREATION**

*List of recreational activities that are or could be done in the area. This could include hunting, fishing, mushroom picking, ginsenging, motor sports, hiking, caving or storytelling etc. Also any recreational features or infrastructure like trails (biking, riding, walking etc.), lakes, dams, rivers, fishing areas, parks, campgrounds etc.*

### Parks or Management Areas –

Shanklin's Ferry – Location of the old ferry crossing of the New River. Now a part of the Bluestone Wildlife Management Area.

Moncove Lake State Park – The park, in a remote section of the county formerly known as Devil's Hollow, offers fishing, boating, camping, hiking, and picnicking in a serene, peaceful setting.

### Conserved Lands –

Slaty Mountain Preserve – Owned by The Nature Conservancy, a national organization which attempts to preserve wild lands world-wide. Area is comprised of a dry hardwood and pine woodland including a globally rare shale barren community. Open year-round for hiking and nature study.

### Hiking Trails -

Allegheny Trail – Originating from the Appalachian Trail near Pine Swamp Ridge, this trail follows the crest of Peters Mountain northeastward, beyond Sweet Springs. When completed, the footpath will extend northward through West Virginia, and into Pennsylvania.

Sugar Camp Farm – A part of the Jefferson National Forest, the Groundhog Trail which originates from the farm provides access to the Appalachian Trail. Plans are in the works for a picnic shelter and interpretive trail here.

Appalachian Trail – The famous Maine-to-Georgia footpath follows the crest of Peters Mountain above the farm, making Monroe County one of

only two counties in West Virginia which can claim a portion of the Appalachian Trail.

Hunting and Fishing –

Second Creek Fly Fishing – Catch and release fly fishing in an isolated setting, along a little-used country road. Managed by WV Department of Natural Resources.

Potts Creek and South Fork of Potts Creek, Waiteville – Stocked with trout once each month February through May.

Moncove Lake, Gap Mills – 144 acre impoundment provides a warm water fisher for largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish.

Zenith Fee Fishing, Zenith – Customers can angle for citation trout or catfish.

Brewer’s Trout Farm, Zenith -

Mountain Meadow, Greenville – Upland bird and trophy whitetail deer hunting preserve situated on 400 acres of beautiful rolling mountain meadows and hardwood forests. Special attention has been paid to handicapped accessibility with accessible tree stands and rooms in the lodge.

Stoney Brook Plantation – Hunting and fishing in a fabulous, 18,000 acre private setting. Hunts available for deer, wild turkey, ducks, and various upland game birds. Fishing enthusiasts may try their skill on Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout, and Small and Largemouth Bass. Lodging and meals available on the premises.

Golfing –

Fountain Springs Golf Course – A recently completed and highly acclaimed 18 hole course, complete with driving range and well appointed clubhouse.

Rock Climbing –

Bozoo Rocks - Bluestone State Park along Mary Ingels trail beside the New River.

Swimming –

Moncove Lake Pool – See listing under RECREATION/Parks and Management Area.

Town of Union Pool – Fully staffed public pool.

***PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS***

***List of the significant physical characteristics of the county and surrounding area - mountains, forests, rivers, swamps, old industrial sites, rock quarries, mines, farms, geographic or physical landmarks etc. What activities one might one do in relationship to these things – explore, learn about, look at or interact with in some other way.***

Caves –

Salt peter Caves – Salt peter was mined from these caverns for the manufacture of gunpowder during the previous century. Wagon ruts are still visible in the dry, undisturbed cave floor. Tours may be available on a limited basis.

Scott Hollow Cave – Recently discovered and still under exploration. Contains a fairly sizeable underground stream known as the Mystic River. Guided primitive cave tours of this extensive system offered.

Divide –

Great Eastern Divide – Monroe is the only WV county which straddles the eastern divide. Rain falling in Sweet Springs Valley east of the divide will eventually empty into the Chesapeake Bay by way of the James River. Rain falling west of the divide finds it's way to the Greenbrier and New Rivers and will reach the Gulf of Mexico through the courses of the Kanawha, Ohio, and Mississippi. Although Peters Mountain still looms high over the valley at the location of the divide, the valley floor here is in excess of 2600 feet above sea level.

### ***SCENERY AND THINGS TO SEE***

***List of the beautiful scenery in the area. Some possibilities include fall foliage, forests, mountains, a snowy meadow, a vast desert, rock formations, cave interiors etc. There may also be interesting things to see that aren't natural or even beautiful like large industrial projects (dams, strip mines etc.), environmental damage, industries at work (steelmaking, stone quarry etc.).***

Vistas –

Hanging Rock Observatory – Situated atop Peters Mountain, the site was once manned as a fire observation post of the Jefferson National Forest. Now used by hawk watchers to observe migrations in the autumn, the vantage point rests at an elevation of 3,812 feet, nearly 2,000 feet above the valley floors below. The lookout offers an outstanding panorama of Monroe County, and on clear days, can extend well into Mercer, Summers, and Greenbrier counties in West Virginia, and Allegheny, Craig, Roanoke, and Giles counties in Virginia. The observatory is reached via a 40 minute walk along the Allegheny Trail from the mountaintop parking lot along Monroe County 15.

### ***ADVENTURES***

*List of adventures someone entering your county could go on – climbing a mountain, cross country skiing, exploring an old (or operational) mine, exploring a cave, coon hunting, frog gigging, panning for gold, rafting down a river, touring an old cemetery at night, sleeping in a haunted house etc.*

Old Roadways –

Salt Sulphur Turnpike – The old turnpike came into being in the years between 1835 and 1860 as a stagecoach road which connected Christiansburg and the resorts in Montgomery County, Virginia, with Salt Sulphur Springs. (The Mountain Lake Hotel, which was featured in the film *Dirty Dancing*, originally developed as a stagecoach stop along this route.) The present condition of the Peters Mountain section of this old road is probably not that different than it was in the days when it was traveled by stage. Road is presently suitable for high-clearance 4-wheel drive vehicles, hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Country Roads –

Farm Heritage Road – A West Virginia Scenic Byway (part of the National Scenic Byway System), this road offers a picture of life in rural, agricultural communities which in many ways, retains the character imparted upon it by previous generations. The route encompasses three distinct geographical settings: the quaint winding course of Indian Creek; the gently rolling plateaus of karst farmland; and finally, the picturesque Sweet Spring Valley, nestled alongside the lofty ridge of Peters Mountain in the Appalachian Ridge and Valley region. The push of industry and commercialism has largely by-passed the area, therefore, many old homes, farms, and public buildings remain from throughout the county's 200 year history. Two lane paved road.

Mountain's Shadow Trail – A West Virginia Scenic Backway, this road carries on the same theme and general character as the Farm Heritage Road, though in a slightly more rugged fashion. The farms carved out of these mountain valleys reflect the handiwork of settlers who, by choice or economic necessity, created an existence for themselves in somewhat isolated areas. The variety of the backway is bound together by the tangible presence of Peters Mountain, the 40 mile ridge of which is undoubtedly the county's most notable geographic feature. Although wildlife is abundant throughout the area, it is perhaps even more easily seen along these less traveled roads. One lane paved and narrow gravel.

Wolf Creek Backway – This road winds into karst topography with 18<sup>th</sup> century settlements -- Wolf Creek, Pickaway and Sinks Grove -- and great farm scenery.

Neff Orchard Road – Cattle and sheep farms and a modern working orchard. A place to rest your eyes wherever you look. Investigate branch

roads: Moore Road and Rogers' Mill???? Road where there is catch and release stocked trout fishing on Second Creek.

Bozoo Road – Scenic, rolling farmland en route to the Shanklin's Ferry Wildlife Management Area. Two lane paved, one lane paved, and gravel.

Orchard Road and Hans Creek Road – Rural farmland, and the picturesque valley of Hans Creek. One lane paved roads.

Wayside to Lillydale – This road winds around the southern end of Swope's Knobs offering nice views back toward Greenville. Route passes through the Laurel Creek covered bridge and to the community of Lillydale. One lane paved, and narrow gravel.

Greenville to Lillydale – Another option for seeing the Laurel Creek Covered Bridge. One lane paved roads.

Pyne's Mountain Road – There are very few homes along this road, but it is a lovely woodland drive, particularly in autumn. After crossing the mountain, return to Union on Willow Bend Road, passing by scenic, open farmland. Narrow gravel and one and two lane paved.

The Knobs – This road offers spectacular views to the north and east as you descend the mountain toward Sinks Grove. Once off the mountain, the route offers a chance to admire the farmland around Pickaway, a WV Rural Historic District. Or, the longer loop may be taken, which passes by Morgan Orchard and the gravel road descending to the Second Creek Fly Fishing area. Steep one lane paved, reasonably wide gravel, normal one lane paved, and two lane paved.

Gates Road – This drive offers nice views of the range of Little Mountain and the lofty ridge of Peters Mountain beyond. One lane paved, gravel, and two lane paved.

Hillsdale – Attractive rolling farm country. Nice views of the Pickaway plains and Swopes Knobs.

Cove Creek Road – An interesting, and fairly short trip through a secluded valley. One lane paved.

Potts Valley – This road crosses Peters Mountain; passing by the parking lot for the Allegheny Trail and the Hanging Rock Observatory, then descends into Potts Valley. Views are extensive to the north and south on either side of the mountaintop, particularly after foliage has been shed in the fall. One lane paved and two lane paved.

Turkey Creek Road – The route is mostly wooded as it passes through the range of Little Mountain, then the countryside opens up a bit as one enters

the rolling hill country near Willow Bend and Union. The stream crossed twice by the road is the upper portion of Turkey Creek; one of the few streams in the state where native Rainbow Trout are known to spawn. Road is narrow gravel, and one and two lane paved.

### ***ATMOSPHERE***

***What is the atmosphere of the area like? How is the atmosphere different than other places? Contrast it to a place like New York City or Japan. Are there things that people from those areas would find interesting or different or a refreshing change?***

The inhabitants of this farming county in the southeastern corner of West Virginia have been living in harmony with the land since the late 1700's. The practice of agriculture was the driving force in the early days of Monroe County's economy, and remains a significant part of the lives of many Monroe Countians to this day.

When asked what sets Monroe County apart and makes it unique, residents listed:

- 1) Beautiful
- 2) Quaint
- 3) Historic
- 4) Artistic
- 5) Friendly
- 6) Rural
- 7) Agricultural

#### Organizations working to preserve and protect the working landscapes and viewsheds –

Indian Creek Conservancy  
Indian Creek Watershed Association  
Monroe County Farmland Protection Board  
Nature Conservancy

### ***EVENTS***

***List of fairs, festivals and other events or activities in the area. Most of the time in rural areas these events tend to be community activities that basically draw residents from within a 50 mile radius. Do any of these events have the potential to be developed to the point of drawing people from outside the area (i.e. would someone drive over 50 miles to attend)? This category could also include things like plays, outdoor dramas, historical reenactments, festivals, flea markets, hunting and fishing shows, musical events, dances, races, concerts, sporting events or just watching the fall foliage.***

#### Fairs and Festivals –

Farmer's Day, Union – First weekend of June. Dance and games Friday night; Grand Parade, horse show, and entertainment on Saturday.

Fourth of July, Alderson – Parade, live entertainment, impressive fireworks display.

Autumn Harvest Festival, Willow Bend – Last full weekend in September. Exhibition of local arts, crafts, produce, canning, flowers, and farm crops. Live entertainment. Demonstrations of antique farming techniques and machinery.

Union Christmas Parade: First Friday in December.

Various Musical and Art Shows sponsored by Monroe Arts Alliance.

### ***TALENTS***

***List of talents of people in the county (musical, storytelling, lying, crafts, carving, artistic, theatrical, etc.)***

Musicians and thespians  
Bill Whipple

### ***SKILLS***

***List of the skills of residents in the county (woodworking, furniture building, carpentry, metal work, mechanical etc.)***

#### Craftspersons

Mark Soukup, Chairmaker, Gap Mills - Mark has filled orders for Monticello, Poplar Forest, and other museums and private collections.

Joe Chasnoff, Woodworker, Zenith

Allen Ritzman, Woodworker, Zenith

Nancy White's log cabin on US 219N, Union. Spinning, weaving, painting and potting.

### ***PROXIMITY***

***Is the county within 100 miles of any other tourism or recreational draw? Is the county near any main tourist routes?***

Greenbrier County – County seat of Lewisburg is full of quaint shops, fine restaurants, cultural attractions and historic architecture with some structures dating to the late 1700's. The Midland Trail, another of West Virginia's Scenic

Byways crosses Greenbrier County west to east and leads to the world famous Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs; one of the few of the areas old mineral springs resorts which still functions as a resort today. Two commercial cave tours operate in the county. Organ Cave and Lost World Caverns offer lighten tours on pathways constructed for easy walking. Camping is available at the Greenbrier River Campground, along Route 63 near Alderson. The Greenbrier River Trail, built on an old C&O rail bed, shows off some of the state's best scenery as it travels 77 miles north from Caldwell to Cass in Pocahontas County.

Summers County – Route 12 between Alderson and Hinton offers several points of interest. The Pence Springs Hotel has been restored to its former grandeur and provides lodging and dining opportunities. The small railroad town of Talcott is home to the John Henry Memorial, a monument to the “steel drivin’ man” of American railway folklore. The Graham House, a restored Colonial era log house is worth a visit. The city of Hinton, another railroad town, lies at the junction of the Greenbrier and New Rivers and is the entrance to the New River Gorge National River. Rafting tours can be booked here. Nearby, Bluestone Dam and Bluestone Lake offer boating and fishing opportunities. Pipestem Resort was recently voter the “reader’s favorite” state park in *Southern Living Magazine*. Camping, hiking, hunting, and picnic and canoe launch areas are provided in the Bluestone Wildlife Management area. Just over the Monroe County line, in Forest Hill, Wakerobin Gallery showcases a local potter’s work.

Mercer County – Contains the two sizable towns of Princeton and Bluefield. The East River Mountain Lookoff, along old route 52 south of Bluefield, provides a nice vantage point. Another of West Virginia’s Scenic Byways, the Coal Heritage Trail, begins in Bluefield and winds its way through coal mining country and toward the city of Beckley. The town of Bramwell, along the Coal Heritage Trail, is noted for the opulent homes built here by coal barons near the turn of the century. It remains a quaint, peaceful town, and is interesting to visit.

Craig County – Perhaps more similar to Monroe than any of her other neighbors. The Route 311 Virginia Scenic Byway joins the Farm Heritage Road at the state line on the top of Peters Mountain, and leads the traveler through some very scenic countryside to the county seat of New Castle, and onward to the city of Roanoke. Route 42, between New Castle and Newport is a very scenic country drive. Hollow Hill Farm, home of the largest bison herd in Virginia is located near the village of Paint Bank. Paint Bank is the home of The Paint Bank General Store and The Depot Lodge Bed and Breakfast, offering warmhearted hospitality in a restored historic train depot.

Giles County – The Narrows of the New River, in Giles County, is just a couple of miles from the western end of the Farm Heritage Road in Peterstown. The towns of Narrows and Pearisburg are both interesting places to visit. Giles County contains a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities, including the Cascades, the White Rocks Campground, the Appalachian Trail, and the Mountain Lake Wilderness Area. Mountain Lake Hotel, a stone lodge situated on the shore of a

serene natural high mountain lake, is the site where the movie Dirty Dancing was filmed.

Allegheny County – The Humpback Bridge, near Covington; a covered bridge rather unique for being built on an arched platform, spans Dunlap Creek along the course of old Route 60. Earlhurst Logg Cabbin Inn, rooms available in a re-constructed log lodge, lies just east of Sweet Springs on 311 north. Douthat State Park lies to the east of Covington, and to the north, US 220 provides a scenic drive toward the Homestead in Bath County. The Homestead, like the Greenbrier, still functions as an opulent mineral springs resort.

### **ARCHITECTURE**

*List of any interesting architecture or buildings in the area. This could be an old church, a still operating soda fountain, a “Mail Pouch” barn, a string of coal camp houses, a railroad round house, a closed industrial complex like a foundry, or just pick out ten houses that represent the architecture of each decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. A structure doesn’t have to be historically significant to be of interest. Sometimes a place that is an eyesore to the locals might be an eclectic attraction to an outsider.*

### **THINGS TO LEARN**

*Some interesting things a person could learn, in or about the area – flora and fauna of the area; the industrial, agricultural, military, geological or cultural history of the area; what was the place like 50 or 100 or 1000 years ago; famous residents; infamous residents. Are there artisans who could teach people a craft or skill (pottery, spinning, quilting, carving, calligraphy etc.)? Are there older citizens who could teach people what life was like 50 years ago? Are there farmers or industrial workers who could teach people what it was like to do their jobs or what life was like for people doing their jobs 50 years ago?*

#### Environmental -

Institute for Earth Education – International organization, home-based in Greenville. The group promotes education on living with the earth. Academics, orientation, camping. Worldwide focus and presence. Visitors by appointment.

#### Agricultural -

Morgan Orchard – Commercial orchard., “Pick Your Own” fruit or select orchard-picked fruit in the farm market. They grow 40 varieties of apples; peaches; plums; black, red, and purple raspberries; thornless blackberries; pumpkins; vegetables in season; baked goods; jams; and sauces. Tours and fruit growing advice available with advance notice. Open June through November.

Cinderella Pumpkin Farm – Pumpkins, Halloween supplies and decorations, and fall displays. Homemade baked goods and preserves. Great family entertainment and views of Indian Creek Valley. Open September and October.

McCormick’s Corn Maze – Open for the first time in the fall of 2004. A family can get some good exercise, enjoy a fall day , laugh as a family and learn about agriculture in a corn-fusing field of cornstalks towering high above their heads.

Wolf Creek Winery – A farm winery that raises and processes the grapes on a family farm. Planting of the wine grapes (French Hybrids: Seyval, Vidal, Chambourcin and Foch) started in 1991. Also bottle fruit wines in cooperation with Morgan Orchard. Tasting room on premises looks out over the fields and the grape vines.

Bob Pond Blueberry Farm, Peterstown – Pick Your Own seasonal berries.

## **SHOPPING**

***Shopping experiences in the county? Are there any unique items or shopping experiences that a person could find? These might include such things as milk straight from a cow, home canned vegetables, home cooking, quality handcrafts, area souvenirs, home grown tomatoes, area delicacies, area oddities etc. Shopping experiences might include purchasing vegetables from the person who grew them, shopping in an old general store or in a store that hasn’t changed much in 50 years, watching an artisan make the item you are going to purchase, being able to have input into the design of an item you are going to purchase etc.***

### Old Fashioned General Stores

Emma Jean’s General Store, Wayside – Authentic 1800s general store selling antiques and groceries.

### Crafts, Artisans, Specialty Stores

Wolf Creek Winery, Wolf Creek - See listing under THINGS TO LEARN.

Alderson’s Store – A rare and beautiful example of vintage Art Deco architecture and interior design. Distinctive fashions, unique gifts, and Alderson area souvenirs. Family operated since the late 1800’s.

Quilt Essentials, Peterstown – Quilts, quilting work and supplies, silks and accessories, handmade baskets and rugs.

Creekside Natural Foods, Greenville – Natural foods and Monroe County

Crafts.

Double J Store, Back Creek Road near Greenville – A gift and souvenir shop with a restaurant.

Union Outfitters, Union – Hunting, fishing, and outdoor gear.

Valley Springs Furniture, Gap Mills – Solid oak and cherry tables, crafted in a family-run woodworking shop. Visitors welcome.

Cheese and More Store, Gap Mills – Cheeses, dried fruit, specialty foods, area novelties.

Kitchen Creek Bakery, Gap Mills – Features baked goods.

Valley Springs Country Gift Shop – Hand made furniture – ready made and to order – and gifts.

Morgan Orchard, Sinks Grove – Apples, peaches, plums, berries, seasonal produce and selected cooked and preserved products. See listing under THINGS TO LEARN.

### Antiques

Riverbend Auction House, Alderson – Dealing in antiques and collectibles.

## ***LODGING***

### ***List of lodging facilities.***

#### Country Resorts/Cottages/Lodges:

Creekside Resort, Greenville – Vacation homes and cottages on 200 secluded acres. Hike or bike the mountain trails, fish Indian Creek, enjoy the private swimming pool and a relaxing massage. Lodgings are completely furnished with equipped kitchens and most have Jacuzzi, fireplace, or woodstove. Meal plans and get-away packages available as well as conference and wedding facilities.

Salt Sulphur Springs Guest House, Salt Sulphur Springs – Located in a portion of the old 1820's hotel. Elegant period décor. Great atmosphere for history buffs.

High Meadow Farm Lodge, Wolf Creek – Accommodations in lodges built of hand-hewn white oak logs by some of the area's earliest settlers. Situated on its own private road, the location offers privacy yet provides spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and the Wolf Creek Valley.

Larew Cottage, Hans Creek – A 1920’s fully remodeled bungalow-style house. Very private.

Mountain Shadow Cabin – Early 1800’s hand-hewn log cabin, located at the foot of Peters Mountain, in an ideal location from those seeking rest and relaxation, mountain views, or walks in the woods. Located on the Mountain Shadow Backway, just a “stones throw” away from the Allegheny and Appalachian Trail.

The Guest Cottage -- In the heart of historic Union, nicely appointed with antiques, old quilts, down comforters, books, TV, quality linens and towels. Complimentary tea and coffee. Fully equipped eat-in kitchen. Back patio and fenced back yard. Front porch with rocking chairs. Four bedrooms.

Bed & Breakfast:

Fountain Springs -- ???(Grover and Pat Jones)

Camping:

Jefferson National Forest - Monroe County contains 18,000 acres of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest, most of which is open to primitive camping.

Moncove Lake – See listing under RECREATION.

## ***RESTAURANTS***

***List of restaurants. Is there a restaurant with food so good you could turn dining there into an event by adding music or drama to the experience?***

Gourmet -

Moxie Café, Union – Set in quaint old store building, the Moxie offers upscale lunch and dinner menus. Owner was formerly a chef in the Adirondacks and at the world-famous Greenbrier Hotel. His talent reflects his experience.

Country Cooking -

Hometown Restaurant, Peterstown

Corner Dairy Bar, Ballard

Kalico Kitchen, Union

Taste of Monroe, Union

Betty’s Korner Kafe, Pickaway

Shale Bank Diner, Lindside

Fountain Springs Clubhouse, Peterstown

Double J Store, Back Creek Road near Greenville

Darlene's Country Cooking, Peterstown

???.Pizza Barn and Family Fun, Pickaway

???.Trout House Restaurant, Lindside area

### ***OTHER ASSETS***

#### ***Other assets that could be built upon.***

Psalm 23 Camp – Non-denominational Christian camp operated in conjunction with a sheep farm (i.e. Psalm 23). Located in a beautiful open valley near the source of Second Creek. Visitors welcome.

Sweet Springs Valley Water Company – Repeat champion at national and international water tasting competitions, the bottling plant lies near the spring's source at the foot of Peters Mountain.

Yoder's Country Kettle – Home-made jams and jellies. Plant tours available with prior notice.

EnhanSSe Massage and Bodywork, Peterstown – Fitness center, massage and body works, hair salon, nail technician, juice bar and exercise classes.

7/15/07

Closed or discontinued:

Trout House Lodge – Former location of the Mercer Angler’s Club; a private trout hatchery. Offers catch and pay fishing, a restaurant, and hiking.

Moncove Lake Summer Festival – Third weekend of June. Parade, antique car show, games and contests.

Peterstown Horse Show – Typically the third weekend in July.

Sydneys, Union – Gift items including SunnyBrook hand-poured scented candles, gourmet teas and accessories, specialty foods and kitchen gadgets, antiques, collectibles, and fine art by local artists.

Llama Llady, Union

Wine Goblet & Spirits, Union – Gifts and an assortment of wines and liquors. Wolf Creek wines.

Wolf Creek Gallery, Alderson – Gifts for any occasion.

Americana Homestead, Sweet Springs – In-home artisans specialize in reproducing primitive early American painted furniture with a mixture of antiques and accessories.

North Street Antiques, Union – Several local dealers offer an extensive selection of antique and vintage furniture. There is also crystal and collectible glass, pottery, rugs, decorative art, and estate jewelry.

Lillydale Cottage, Salt Sulphur – Cozy and romantic “country getaway.” Easily accessible from US 219.

The Trout House Restaurant, Rich Creek Valley – Specializes in trout raised adjacent to the restaurant in freshwater ponds.

Monroe Dining, Alderson

Tudor’s Biscuit World & Gino’s Pizza, Union

Confetti’s Cocktail Lounge, Union – Cocktail lounge, sports bar, café, meeting place. Nightly drink and appetizer specials. Unique mural of local folks.

**Appendix 2**

**PROGRESS ON MONROE COUNTY TOURISM PRIORITIES**

As set by Tourism Advisory Group on February 9, 2005

TOP PRIORITIES

Web site	Liability/ legalities	Bus tours	Theme tours	Targeted advertising campaign	Music & arts festival	Open historic homes
<p>Develop a good web site – one that is highlighted and linked with other sites.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>♦Web site went on line in February of 2006. Is easy to manage and has received rave reviews for appearance and ease of use.</p> <p>♦Lodging and Realtor sheets for e-mail requests.</p>	<p>Pursue research. e.g., the liability of crossing private property with hiking or biking trails or having tourists occasionally stay overnight in a private residence.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>♦Public meeting held.</p>	<p>Develop &amp; Promote Bus Tours. e.g. cemeteries and old churches, or covered bridges, or backway &amp; byway roads.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>♦Working with John Luckton Agency to bring bus tours into county. Looking to fall of '07.</p> <p>♦\$2500 Hollowell grant received for publicity for bus tours.</p>	<p>Develop &amp; Promote themed tours of about 7 hours duration</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>Target our advertising to magazines or tour groups. Develop an advertising campaign. Update By-ways brochure.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>♦Active advertising committee.</p> <p>♦Have focused on “free” publicity – articles in Blue Ridge Country, Gbr. Valley Quarterly, Beckley Post Herald, book by author Leonard Adkins. County ad in fall Gbr. Valley Quarterly.</p> <p>♦By-ways brochure updated.</p>	<p>Develop an annual music or arts festival</p> <p>-----</p> <p>♦Serve on Board of Directors of Monroe Arts Alliance. Group has sponsored art classes and musical performances .</p> <p>♦Ziegler’s at Old Mill in Greenville hope to host summer art fairs.</p>	<p>Open historic homes for one night of housing</p> <p>-----</p>

SECONDARY PRIORITIES

Promote agri-tourism	Promote environmental tourism	Identify additional recreation	Package deals	Create “National Park for Disabled”	Historic and cultural tourism	Promote restaurants	Network
<p>Identify farms that could open to tours ----- ♦Morgan Orchard, Wolf Creek Winery, Spangler’s Greenhouse and Organic Farm, Almost Heaven Farm, Breezy Acres, Cinderella Pumpkin Farm, Byrnside Branch Farm, Reed’s Mill Hendrick’s</p>	<p>Identify birding spots. -----</p>	<p>For example: tours of Potts Creek (Glen Alton White Rocks area) or hiking and biking trails on abandoned roads ----- ♦Trails Group working to designate biking/hiking/horseback riding trails. ♦Working with Jefferson National Forest to designate rail trail on old rail bed. Three miles out and back.</p>	<p>Create and Promote -----</p>		<p>Develop tours of historic homes &amp; places. Develop a condensed version of Monroe County history -----</p>		<p>Form ties with adjoining towns and counties in Virginia and WV -----</p>

## OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

◆ Placement of large brochure rack in Monroe County Historic Society Museum, Distribution of small brochure racks throughout county.

◆ \$2000 LED Grant from Budget Digest to place kiosks at county gateways.

◆ As a member of the CRED Community Leadership Team, Graves participated in the development of thirty leadership training curriculums with packaged power point presentations. She was the co-developer of the “Leadership Styles and Roles” piece and editor of “Five Keys to Effective Volunteer Program Development – An Overview.”

Two of the curriculums and were piloted with the Monroe County Health Center Board of Trustees.

◆ Engaged in inspection and introspection through Recrutable Communities/First Impressions (May & June 2005)/Community Design Team (June 2006) /Dr. Deng’s Graduate Students (October 2006) programs.

❖ Philosophy –

*The development of tourism in rural communities while maintaining their rural character and country atmosphere can be a challenge. Though rural authenticity is valued by both rural residents and visitors, tourism development can transform rural areas physically and socially in ways that reduce the very asset appeal on which tourism is dependent. Thus, tourism development should consider its potential negative impacts on rural society and environment and strategies should be followed to minimize the impact.*

“A Union of the Past and the Future”, Community Design Team, p. 4

❖ Tips -

- ◆ Tap into visitor stream traveling through to other destinations or traveling close-by.
- ◆ Or figure ways to grow their experience while they’re here.
- ◆ Keep efforts small.

❖ Suggestions –

◆ Rather than advertising Monroe County alone, put the county on travel itineraries and in promotional tourism packages (perhaps through the WV Division of Tourism)

Web site could have suggestions for day trips (motor bikes, autos, and bicycles) with downloadable maps.

◆ Visitor information

Rather than staffing a center; find a small, centrally located, highly visible place where information can be shown and brochures can be displayed.

- ◆Target youth  
Young tourists make relatively modest demands on overnight housing. Establishment of a campground is less likely to affect the rural environment and atmosphere than construction of large motels or hotels.
- ◆Farm tourism  
Attract visitors to stay on farms; participate in farm activities.
- ◆Events and Festivals  
Explore one or two new events.
- ◆Develop towns as gateway communities  
Visitors from Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina who enter the state may use the town as a staging point to other points or attractions.
- ◆Serve travel needs of the disabled (accessible tourism)  
Study the possibility of developing facilities that cater to the needs of the disabled. Would increase demand for medical services in the county which would benefit tourists and permanent residents alike.
- ◆Enhance downtowns as shopping areas  
Present an enticing enough collection of businesses for travelers to stop and get out of the car.
- ◆Keep downtowns clean.  
Cleanliness is not only important because it creates the impression of prosperity, but also creates the impression of safety.
- ◆Business ownership succession and cooperation  
If downtown retail businesses are not already working together on marketing, events, etc., it is recommended that they form an association to begin to do so.
- ◆Seek funds for tourism development

### **Appendix 3**

Sykes, Dr. Wanda D. **Rural Tourism**. Virtual Institute for Small Town and Rural Development (Prepared for the Center for Community, Economic, and Workforce Development, WVUES, Morgantown, WV). Pages 6-8.

#### **STATUS OF RURAL AMERICA**

America's rural communities face an uncertain future – these communities struggle to maintain their vitality and sense of identity. Over the past 50 years, many rural communities seem to have lost their purpose. There are fewer, larger and more specialized farms. Rural populations are declining, and the demand from local markets is declining.

These realizations have exacerbated the economic decay of many rural communities as industry hunting became a preoccupation of many small town councils and chambers of commerce. Jobs – any kind, at any cost – seemed to be a primary objective from some declining rural communities.

The challenge of rural economic development is to create places where workers can be developed, and productive, where they will want to stay and become part of the community.

Rural communities can no longer depend on agriculture as the primary engine of rural economic development. Development linked to other local resources will protect the physical and social environments of the community and enhance quality of life.

Quality of life is the product of relationships among people and between people and their environments. The linkage of rural community development with varied local resources will be increasingly important.

Home to a fifth of our nation's people, rural areas once were dominated by farming, but today rural residents who are not engaged in farming outnumber those who are by more than 10 to one. Yet, rural people have been and continue to be the keepers of natural amenities and national treasures. They safeguard a unique part of American culture, traditions, and history.

Increasingly, rural communities seek ways to diversity, to replace and supplement traditional incomes. Tourism is one appealing way. The economy of rural communities has begun to rely increasingly on small businesses and individual entrepreneurs who cultivate a demand for unique niche products and services. In fact, the USDA reports that tourism, home-based businesses, and small-scale retailing are the leading areas of interest among rural communities.

Society has once again reached a point of returning to matters of the human spirit, to more traditional cultural and historical values. Small towns and communities can prosper by promoting this spirit and promoting special products and services not otherwise available. The historic character of a small town or community can be used to promote community identity and spark economic recovery.

Rural tourism is alive on secondary roads that lead us through small towns, communities, and the countryside. Travelers learn and experience along the way by enjoying local museums, historic sites, cuisine, architecture, landscape, heritage crafts, and customs.

Demographic trends of rural communities, as well as demographic trends of potential changes in rural communities, become increasingly important to the concept of rural tourism. Overall trends due to demographic, economic, and cultural changes include the aging of U.S. population, shrinking size of households, increasing urbanization, the increased number of two-paycheck households, and an increasing interest in the environment.

These trends certainly impact rural tourism. There is also a perceived attitude that urban dwellers have fewer children, have both parents working outside the home, and are interested in the environment. The rural countryside offers them opportunities to experience the interesting and different rural culture and an agrarian environment.

In addition to taking shorter vacations rather than longer vacations, people are showing a growing interest in vacations involving action and involvement, hands-on, and experience-driven activities. These changes have led to the growth of the new rural tourism market, including ecological, cultural, heritage, and agricultural tourism.

Can rural communities compete in the tourism industry? Lane (1994) questioned how rural tourism could effectively compete with urban or resort-based tourism that is relatively concentrated, professionally managed, and increasingly operated in international markets. But despite their small settlements, weak infrastructure, small establishments, local ownership, few visitors, and amateur management, rural tourism can compete. This assumption is based on these facts: capital investments are lower for simple commodity production, smaller part-time tourist operators can provide fixed capital needs of enterprise at lower cost, and family labor can be utilized. Rural tourism also has potential for environmentally friendly and cultural-sensitive offerings. Family businesses may offer niche tourist products and create new opportunities not captured by large-scale tourism ventures. They also can share cultural attributes. It may even be easier to develop new tourism ventures in relatively undeveloped tourist destinations than to revitalize traditional tourist resorts. Most importantly, rural tourism must be community driven. For tourism development is not free. It requires resources and commitment.