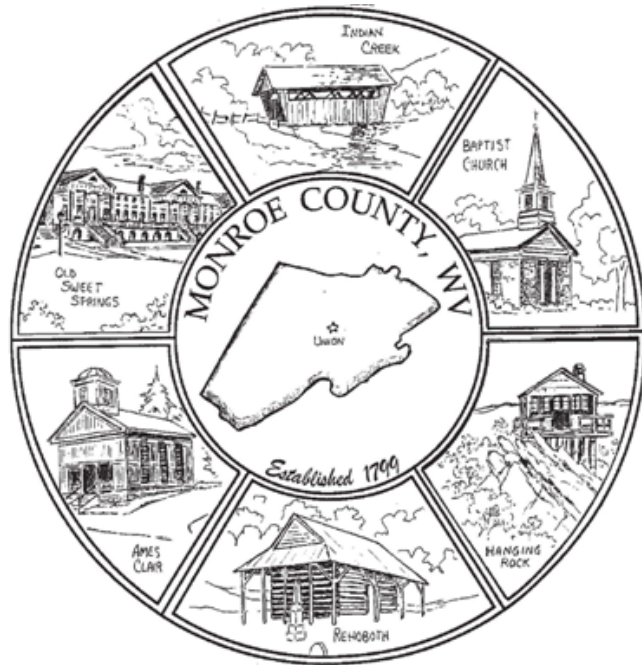




# Monroe County, West Virginia Comprehensive Plan



July 27, 2009

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Monroe County Planning Commission H. Craig Mohler, President  
Rod Graves, Vice-President  
Judy Ellison  
Lynn Newberry  
Larry Mustain  
John Terry  
Garry Taylor  
Margaret Vass  
Shane Ashley

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- ❖ Jim Menard
- ❖ The Monroe County Commission
- ❖ The West Virginia Bureau of Public Health Source Water Protection Program
- ❖ Indian Creek Watershed Association
- ❖ Friends of Second Creek
- ❖ Region I Planning and Development
- ❖ The Towns of Union, Alderson and Peterstown
- ❖ Red Sulphur Public Service District
- ❖ The West Virginia University College of Law
- ❖ Virginia Polytechnic University's Department of Planning
- ❖ Monroe Tourism

The Planning Commission also acknowledges the tremendous contribution of Glenn Riffe, whose participation and leadership helped guide the

development of this Plan. It is our hope that Glenn's tireless dedication to the residents of Monroe County is reflected in the following pages.

The Comprehensive Plan was drafted with assistance from Dave Clark, AICP.

# Monroe County Comprehensive Plan

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**From the 2006 Monroe County Commission Ordinance  
Creating the County Planning Commission**

*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, create goals, and establish a proactive role in the future development of the jurisdiction.*

*It is acknowledged 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.*

## Monroe County, West Virginia

Between 1900 and 1990, Monroe County's population chart is essentially a straight line. Unlike most of its neighbors in the coalfields to the west, or across the state line in the Piedmont communities of Virginia, Monroe County had experienced little of the boom-and-bust economy indicative of the region. Consequently, the number of county residents has remained steady, consistently hovering around 13,000.

The county's mainstay, both culturally and economically, has always been agriculture and forestry, and most county residents still feel vested in the larger agrarian community. But perhaps even more than the farms that make up much of the local landscape, residents take much pride in the prolific springs that stretch across the county. At the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were no less than thirteen



resorts that had been developed around some of the more famous springs – Red Sulphur Springs, Salt Sulphur Springs, Sweet Springs, and others. Peters Mountain, running along the southeastern border of the county, contains thousands of these springs, and is the source for most of the county's drinking water.

But beginning in the late 1990's, Monroe County "was discovered," as some residents have put it. As development pressure began to spill over from the I-81 corridor in Virginia, the number of retirement, second, and commuter homes began to increase. Between 1990 and 2005, Monroe County saw a 23% increase in the number of housing units.

While most residents agreed that some level of growth in the county was acceptable and even desirable, the majority also agree that development cannot come at the cost of the integrity of their water or their quality of life. Local organizations solicited input from state and regional agencies, and eventually came to the conclusion that any intervention would have to be made at the local level. In response, the County Commission held a series of public meetings, leading to the creation of the Monroe County Planning Commission in 2006.

**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;
- ❖ Basic 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;
- ❖ 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,
6. Providing for the best use of Monroe's assets for future generations.

## ***Guiding Principles and Assumptions in Planning Monroe County's Future***

### ***Planning Commission Goals:***

#### ***A Foundation for Community Design in Monroe County from the Monroe County Planning Commission***

Monroe County is a sparsely settled community that has remained under the influence of an agricultural economy. We have no four lane roads, no traffic lights, and no franchise "box stores." We have three incorporated communities in the county: Alderson, Peterstown, and Union. Alderson is a split town residing partly in Monroe County and partly in Greenbrier, divided by the Greenbrier River. The



Monroe portion is an old established town, contains several historic homes and buildings, and has minimum sprawl. The town of Peterstown borders the Virginia line in the Southwest corner of the county, it serves as a residential community for many persons who work out of county or out of state, and it has maintained many of its small town businesses but is experiencing significant growth and sprawl. Union is the county seat, has significant historic homes and buildings, has maintained its small town businesses within the town therefore maintaining its town boundaries, and is experiencing limited growth. There are several smaller non-incorporated communities scattered throughout the county, and each has its share of unique architecture, history, and culture.

A main focus of this plan is to incorporate the community values into a progressive strategy that protects as well as advances the best interests of the residents of each community. We expect growth, and want to plan for it in such a way that the communities are bettered rather than overwhelmed. We want to balance growth and protection in accordance with the desires of the communities. We want to remain within the constraints of our values as well as within the limits of our infrastructures and resources. We plan to



emphasize the rural quality of life issues in the county while providing for the opportunities of growth and expansion in areas of the county where the infrastructure and resources are compatible and the people prefer it.

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.

Key aspects of our Design are to keep the rural nature of the county intact and to maintain and further the livability factors of the individual communities. We expect the communities to maintain a pedestrian friendly concept as they grow. By keeping the communities more consolidated, they are more efficient in use of energy and tend to keep shopping, and therefore dollars, within the community. We expect hiking and biking to be part of our considerations for all road upgrades and building. We expect to maintain a reverence for the rustic nature of our communities and for the rural, agricultural, and forested appeal as we consider growth. We expect these considerations to be a main factor in influencing the community at large as well as the individual communities to maintain our low crime status as we progress economically as well as socially.

The social values of the community are also to be considered when considering any growth or developmental aspirations. The county is noted for its low crime rate. It has a strong moral compass and wishes to maintain the values that are consistent with that compass. Keeping the county's rural character and working values are germane to its values of social and environmental respect. Allowing those social values to be overwhelmed by the fads that sometimes accompany growth are not consistent with our

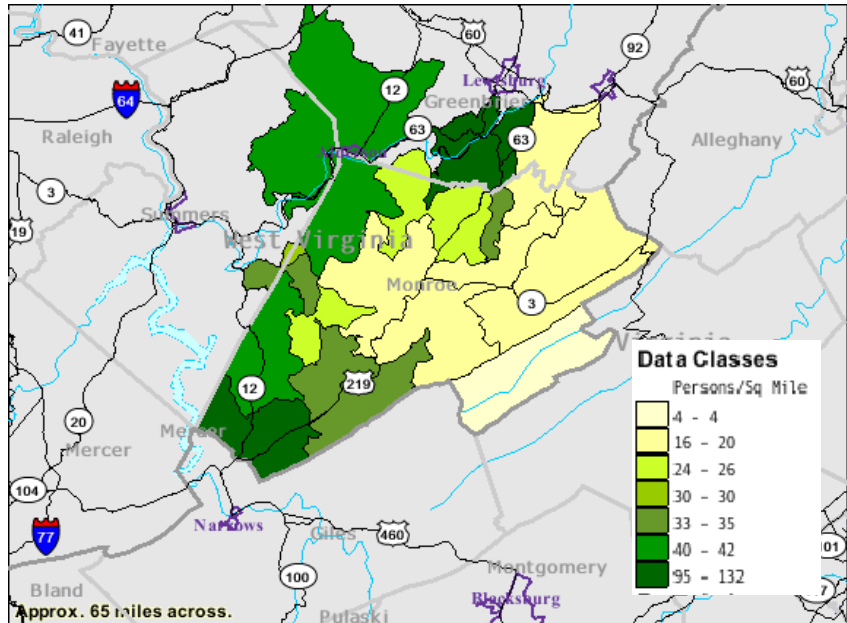
plan for the future of the county. Therefore, we will attempt to regulate and minimize industries that are inconsistent with our core values such as adult entertainment and gambling.

To guide our efforts the following guidelines are seen as supportive and directive:

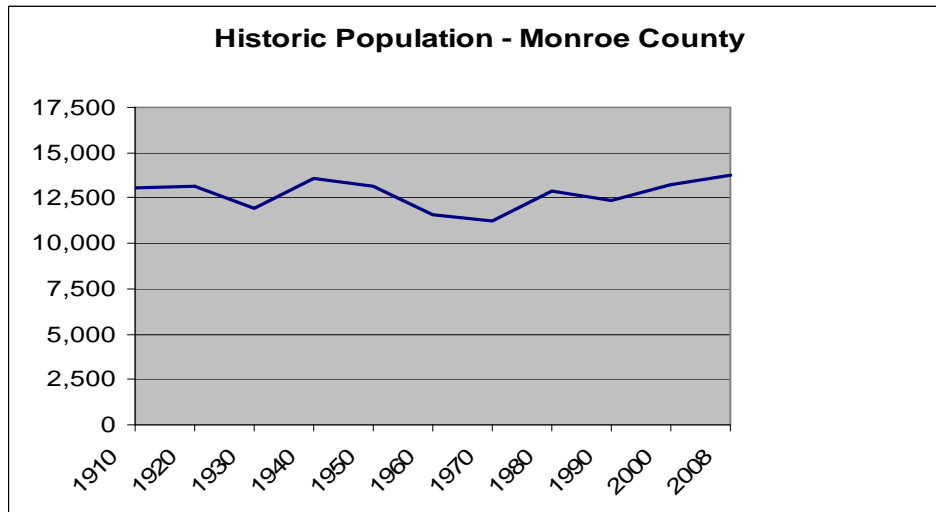
1. Prevent uncontrolled sprawl which threatens the rural way of life by taking farm land for development, creating undesirable environmental impacts due to the lack of environmental impact studies.
2. Identify and prevent potential threats to water quality.
3. Prevent increased air pollution and view shed pollution.
4. Identify and preserve historic & archeological sites.
5. Minimize and regulate “sin” industries such as adult entertainment and gambling.
6. Maintain and enhance the integrity of the towns with emphasis on pedestrian friendly access.
7. Encourage hiker/biker friendly roads throughout the county whenever roads are upgraded or built.
8. Protect and preserve agriculture and forestry and forestall areas from development consistent with best management plans for agriculture and forestry.
9. Regulate negative visual impacts from all public roads.
10. 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.
11. Require public notification and a public comment period for any major development, or other development that would potentially impact surrounding landowners or communities.

## Monroe County Population, Demographics and Projections

In spite of recent surges in housing development and in-migration, Monroe continues to be a very rural county. The average number of people per square mile in Monroe is 30.8, compared to 75.1 people/square mile for the state of West Virginia. The highest concentration of population is in the southern area of the county, particularly in and around Peterstown. The proximity of major highways to that region provides for commuter access to more urban areas to the east and west.

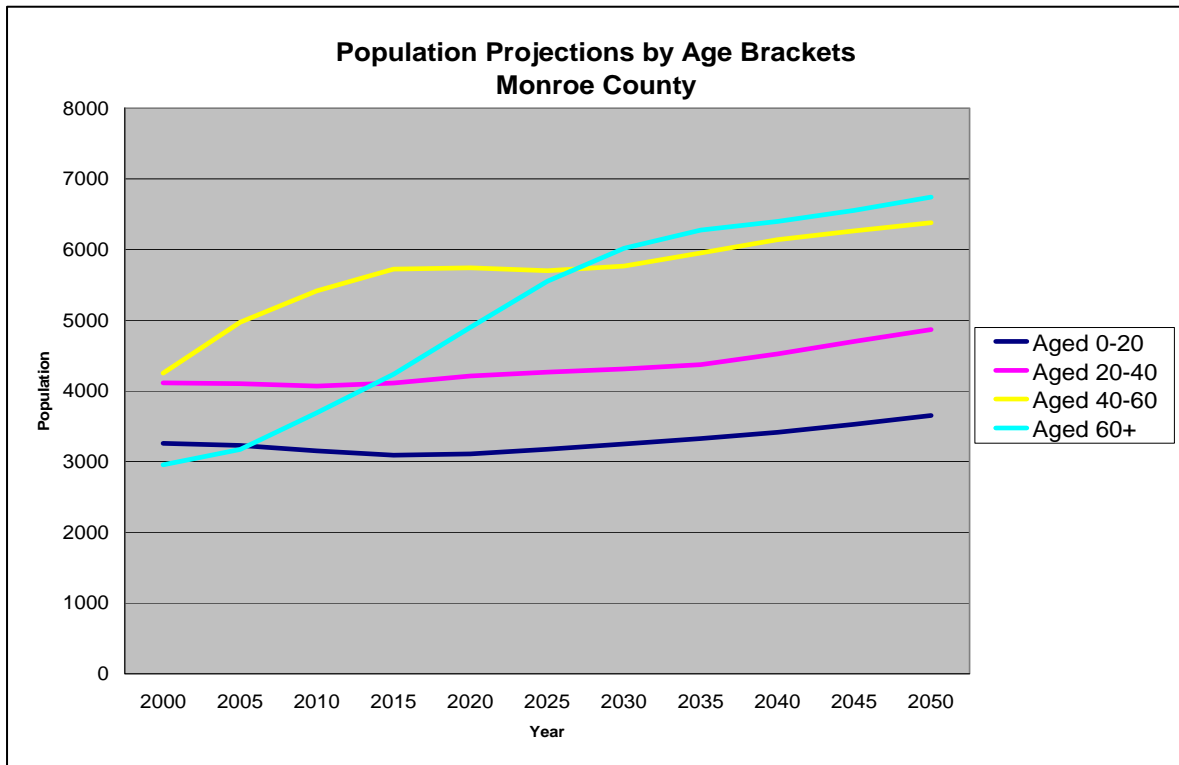


There are now an estimated 13,736 people living in Monroe County – more than any other point in Monroe’s recorded history. In the last 18 years, the population has risen by 11%.



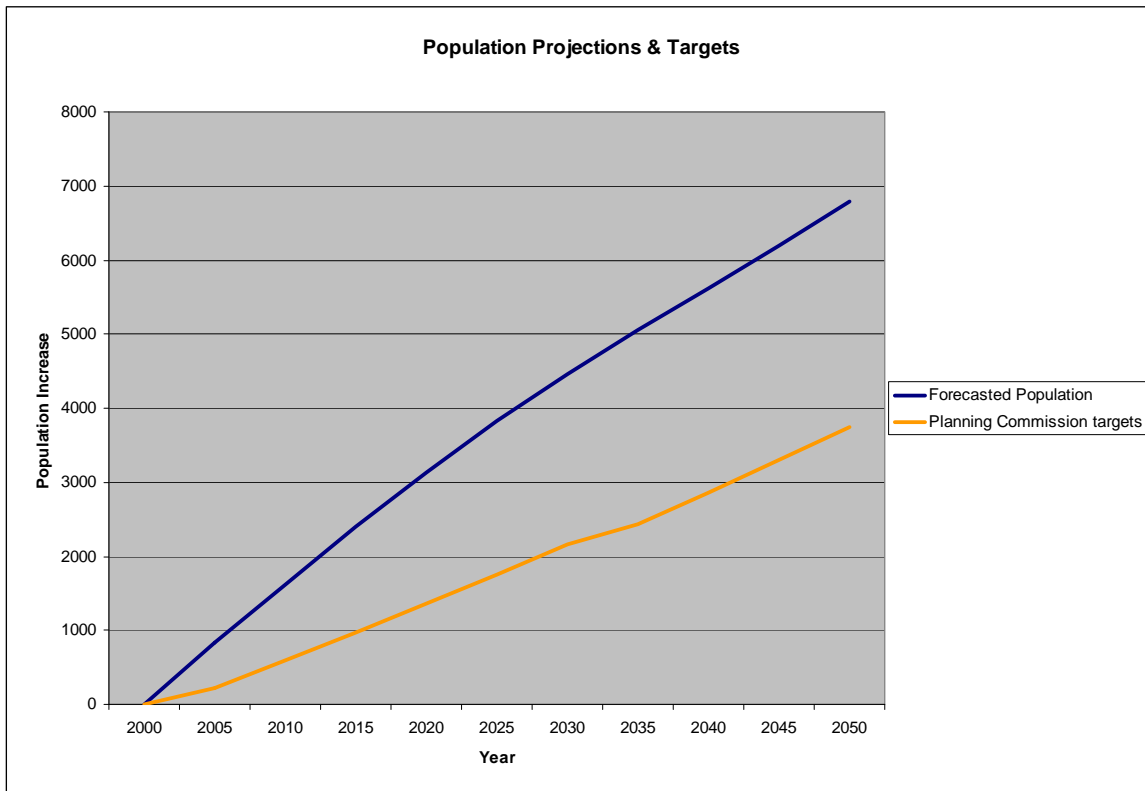
Monroe’s demographics mimic much of the state. There are a relatively low number of minority populations living in Monroe, as is the case in most of West Virginia. The state’s homeownership rate is very high when compared to the national average, and Monroe’s rate (84.5%) is higher than most of WV. Monroe’s poverty rate (14.3%) is below that of much of WV (16.2% state average). Education attainment rates in Monroe fall significantly below the state average -- 8.2% of Monroe residents aged 25 or older have a college degree, compared to 14.8% for the state.

And also like much of West Virginia, Monroe County’s population increasingly reflects a rise in the number of older residents. The current median age of Monroe is 39.7 years, and the population aged over 65 years is expected to grow significantly in coming years. This projected shift in demographics will have a tremendous impact on the county and related planning. Consideration will need to be given to housing and the provision of public services in order to adequately accommodate the increased number of elderly residents.



## Assumptions and Planning Objectives

Based on the Planning Commission's goal of stable and managed growth, a desired population growth rate was targeted at 1.5% per year. This equates to a very real difference between the projected rate of growth, based on historic trends, and the desired rate.



Projections are, by their very nature, poor forecasters of real population growth or decline since the potential interventions in the otherwise straight projection line are limitless. They do, however, reflect general trends in demographics and migration that are worthy of consideration. In the case of Monroe County, the discrepancy between the projected growth rate and the target rate is significant. Planning goals and objectives have subsequently been developed with the intention of encouraging growth that is in keeping with the Planning Commission's target and goals.

With regard to future development, other basic assumptions have been made throughout the planning process. For one, given the strong focus on the protection of

water resources, the “precautionary principle” is often applied. That is, utilizing the best science and information available to make decisions, without delaying decision-making for want of more data. Conducting more research and collecting data is critically important, particularly in the case of groundwater aquifers. At the same time, when sound but limited data is available, action cannot be delayed when the integrity of vital resources is at risk.

In the interests of getting as much input as possible from other county residents, the Planning Commission held a series of meetings around the county, soliciting feedback on a draft outline of the Comprehensive Plan. Many of those comments and concerns have been incorporated into the Plan, and a summary of those comments can be found in the Appendices.

## **Karst and Planning in Monroe County**

A significant portion of Monroe County is underlain by geology and landforms generally defined as “karst,” typified by limestone outcrops, caves, sinkholes and springs. Because these features often provide direct conduits from the surface to groundwater, runoff



contaminants dramatically increase the risk of widespread health and environmental impacts.<sup>1</sup> Underground karst aquifers can contain complex, dendritic channels and tunnels, creating large fluctuations in water levels in springs and wells. These same characteristics provide an additional impediment to county planners, as karst aquifers do not adhere to any visible

surface topography, and therefore groundwater recharge areas are difficult to designate.

Exacerbating the risk, state and local jurisdictions do not currently differentiate between sensitive and non-sensitive areas with regard to groundwater or site-specific environmental risk. While the state legislature has provided for a mechanism to allow greater scrutiny and regulatory actions in defined sensitive groundwater areas,<sup>2</sup> the state has not chosen to exercise that authority.

There are multiple potential sources of groundwater contamination – runoff from gas stations, agricultural feedlots, various industries – the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health Source Water Assessment and Protection Program lists over 150 possible sources of drinking water contamination<sup>3</sup>. Many of these possible contaminants, however, are

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<sup>1</sup> George Veni, et al, *Living with Karst, A Fragile Foundation*, 9 (American Geological Institute, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> West Virginia State Code §22-12-4. This code provides the WV Environmental Quality Board (and subsequently WVDEP) with the authority to “set standards more restrictive than the maximum contaminant levels where it finds that such standards are necessary to protect drinking water use where scientifically supportable evidence reflects factors unique to West Virginia or some area thereof, or to protect other beneficial uses of the groundwater.”

<sup>3</sup> *Source Water Assessment and Protection Program*, West Virginia Bureau of Public Health, Office of Environmental Health Services, 1999.

addressed by state and federal regulatory authority. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) is charged with enforcement of various state and federal laws governing groundwater related pollution,<sup>4</sup> including:

- Hazardous Waste Management,<sup>5</sup> including runoff from hazardous waste holding sites,
- the Underground Injection Control Program,<sup>6</sup> which regulates all direct subsurface (ground) discharges from any commercial source. This includes septic systems that serve multi-family dwellings (i.e. apartment buildings, townhouses),
- the WV Groundwater Protection Rule,<sup>7</sup> which prohibits waste from industrial and commercial sources from contaminating groundwater through any means, including surface runoff,
- Underground Storage Tanks.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, the Department of Agriculture has oversight of several agriculture related potential harms to groundwater, including pesticide and fertilizer application.<sup>9</sup>

The efficacy of enforcement programs aside, systems are in place to address these potential contaminants from commercial and agricultural sources. The Groundwater Protection Program of the WVDEP has inspection officers and other staff, as well as funding, albeit limited.<sup>10</sup>

The WV Bureau of Public Health's Source Water Assessment and Protection Program works to protect public sources of drinking water as well under the jurisdiction of the federal Safe Water Drinking Act. The Wellhead Protection Program promotes protection of areas around public drinking wells through primarily voluntary measures.<sup>11</sup>

The Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) provides for data collection and analysis of potential threats to a given water supply, laying the foundation for subsequent protection efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> West Virginia State Code, §20-12-1. This designates the Department as the state lead department for groundwater.

<sup>5</sup> West Virginia State Code, §22-18-6.

<sup>6</sup> Id., §22-11-4(a)(16).

<sup>7</sup> Id., §22-12-5(d).

<sup>8</sup> Id., §22-17-6.

<sup>9</sup> Id., §§19-16A-4; 20-5M-5C.

<sup>10</sup> see *Groundwater Programs and Activities, Biennial Report to the West Virginia 2004 Legislature*, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.

<sup>11</sup> *Source Water Assessment and Protection Program*, p. 13.



Acknowledging the efforts of state regulators, the Monroe County Planning Commission believes that the most effective, locally-relevant approaches to protecting water resources must come from the county level.

## **Land Use**

***Purpose: Maintain agricultural presence and influence, preserve open space, reduce/prevent sprawl-type development, maintain the vitality of town centers, and control the impact of subdivision within reasonable levels.***

### **Background**

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 Appalachian Ridge and Valley Range extend along Monroe's southeastern border, represented primarily by Peters and Potts Mountains. Monroe County contains 473 square miles, or 302,957 acres.

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. There are 145,054 acres in farmland in Monroe – covering nearly half of the entire county. 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,

### ***Agriculture in Monroe County from the 2002 Ag Census***

- ◆ Average size of farms: 213 acres
- ◆ Average value of agricultural products sold per farm: \$25,273
- ◆ Average value of crops sold per acre for harvested cropland: \$43.53
- ◆ The value of livestock, poultry, and their products as a percentage of the total market value of agricultural products sold: 94.08%
- ◆ Average total farm production expenses per farm: \$20,792
- ◆ Harvested cropland as a percentage of land in farms: 16.17%
- ◆ Average market value of all machinery and equipment per farm: \$33,102
- ◆ The percentage of farms operated by a family or individual: 95.75%
- ◆ Average age of principal farm operators: 57 years
- ◆ Average number of cattle and calves per 100 acres of all land in farms: 16.58
- ◆ Milk cows as a percentage of all cattle and calves: 5.52%
- ◆ Corn for grain: 806 harvested acres

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.

***Current Regulatory/Government Authority***

1. The Monroe County Farmland Protection Program provides a voluntary conservation easement program.
2. A county ordinance banning the offering of erotic entertainment in public facilities.

**Key Partners in Land Use**

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Mountain Regional Conservation & Development
- Region 1 Planning and Development Council
- WV Department of Environmental Protection
- WV Division of Natural Resources
- WVU Extension
- Monroe County Farmland Protection Program
- Civic groups
- Church groups

## ***Planning for Future Land Use***

### **Goals**

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, for the purposes of planning, 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.

### ***Support enforcement of existing regulations regarding septic systems and private wells.***

In many areas of Monroe County, current regulations provide adequate protection of groundwater from contamination. Enforcement of regulations from both the local Health Department and the WV Department of Environmental Protection are, however, not always adequate due solely to a lack of capacity. Efforts should be made to provide local enforcement entities with the resources needed to provide adequate inspections.

### ***Promote land conservation through partnerships with public and private entities.***

Several groups are working within the county to promote voluntary land conservation. These groups, including the Monroe County Farmland Protection Board, the

Indian Creek Watershed Association, Friends of the Second Creek and others, have access to critical state and federal resources that benefit the entire county.

***Protect and promote agricultural land uses.***

As pointed out earlier, maintaining the general agricultural character of Monroe County is important to many residents. Agriculture should continue to be promoted and protected where it is being practiced and local support is evident. Local action should include the consideration of “right-to-farm” policies, minimizing development on agricultural areas, and supporting agriculture-related economic development.

***Manage slopeside development.***

Development on steep slopes can have a significant detrimental affect on soils and water quality. While WV Bureau of Public Health’s standards do not allow septic placement on steep slopes, there is nothing in place to restrict construction of any other kind. Development on slopes from 15%-25% should be monitored closely particularly in karst terrain, and regulated as needed; development on slopes greater than 25% should be prohibited altogether.

***Emphasize and support locally-owned businesses by minimizing mega-commercial development and big box stores.***

As witnessed in many parts of the country, mega-commercial and big box store development can devastate smaller, locally-owned businesses. While often bringing jobs and access to cheap goods, the resulting “leakage” from the local economy can be great. Their footprint on the landscape and potential for environmental harm – in the form of increased stormwater runoff, erosion, and stream bank degradation – is significant. Supporting local businesses, including the creation of new businesses, is our primary goal.

***Limit the establishment of bars, night clubs, adult entertainment facilities and video lottery venues.***

Monroe County residents have consistently voiced concern over the establishment of these types of facilities. At a minimum, businesses in this category should not be sited

near schools, churches, or residential areas. A process providing for greater public input should be implemented regarding their permitting and placement.

***Develop a method for tracking development in the county for tax purposes and adherence to future codes or ordinances.***

It will be critical for county government to institute an inspection and monitoring program for future development. Developing building codes and providing for their enforcement is one readily available option.

***Limit light pollution.***

Monroe enjoys one of the darkest night skies in the eastern U.S. Options should be considered for ensuring that major developments limit their impact on the night sky.

***Manage development in the county's karst areas.***

While implied earlier and in other sections of the Comprehensive Plan, the protection of groundwater resources is a very high priority for local residents. All steps should be taken to support continued research to further delineate and assess groundwater aquifers, and to further quantify the potential impacts of development in karst terrain.



<b>Land Use Planning:</b> <i>Maintain agricultural presence and influence, preserve open space, reduce/prevent sprawl-type development, maintain the vitality of town centers, and control the impact of subdivision within reasonable levels.</i>		Very High priority	High priority	Mid-level priority
<b>Goal 1.1</b>	<b>Support enforcement of existing regulations regarding septic systems and private wells.</b>			
Objective 1.1.1	Provide support to the County Sanitarian to enforce existing minimum requirements for septic system and well placement.	•		
<b>Goal 1.2</b>	<b>Promote land conservation through partnerships with public and private entities.</b>			
Objective 1.2.1	Develop agreements with the Indian Creek Conservancy, Indian Creek Watershed Association, Friends of the Second Creek, and other organizations as needed to conserve and protect land and water.	•		
Objective 1.2.2	Coordinate the priorities and plans of the Monroe County Farmland Protection Board into local ordinances and decision-making.		•	
<b>Goal 1.3</b>	<b>Protect and promote agricultural land uses.</b>			
Objective 1.3.1	Designate all of Monroe County as “Rural Agriculture” areas outside of “Preferred Development Areas” (see Chapter 8?).	•		
Objective 1.3.2	Tailor subdivision densities, minimum lot size, and/or design requirements to reduce subdivision or limit its impacts in areas where an agricultural focus is desired.		•	
Objective 1.3.3	Support Community Supported Agriculture, Farmers’ Markets, and similar initiatives.		•	
Objective 1.3.4	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.	•		
<b>Goal 1.4</b>	<b>Manage slopeside development.</b>			
Objective 1.4.1	Establish maximum slope restrictions to control subdivision or commercial development on mountainsides.	•		
<b>Goal 1.5</b>	<b>Emphasize and support locally-owned businesses by minimizing mega-</b>			

	<b>commercial development and big box stores.</b>			
Objective 1.5.1	Promote setback requirements, clustering, and landscaping techniques to minimize impacts and improve quality of development.			•
Objective 1.5.2	Implement policies to encourage location of business in traditional downtown centers, including those of smaller unincorporated villages.	•		
Objective 1.5.3	Establish maximum square footage limits for retail stores, providing that allowances are made in specific cases where such large retail stores might primarily offer goods not otherwise available, or may be locally owned and operated, and as such could be seen as beneficial.	•		
<b>Goal 1.6</b>	<b>Limit the establishment of bars, night clubs, adult entertainment facilities and video lottery venues.</b>			
Objective 1.6.1	Provide opportunities for public input into the State ABC's permitting process.		•	
Objective 1.6.2	Restrict bars, night clubs, and video lottery establishments to the established business centers of towns and villages, and limit impacts to residences, churches, and schools.	•		
Objective 1.6.3	Limit quantities of video lottery establishments and bars to correlate with local population.	•		
<b>Goal 1.7</b>	<b>Develop a method for tracking development in the county for tax purposes and adherence to future codes or ordinances.</b>			
Objective 1.7.1	Implement use of building permits as a means of tracking development.	•		
<b>Goal 1.8</b>	<b>Limit light pollution.</b>			
Objective 1.8.1	Assess options for regulating exterior lighting to preserve the "night sky" experience	•		
<b>Goal 1.9</b>	<b>Manage development in the county's karst areas.</b>			
Objective 1.9.1	Recommend implementation of 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.	•		

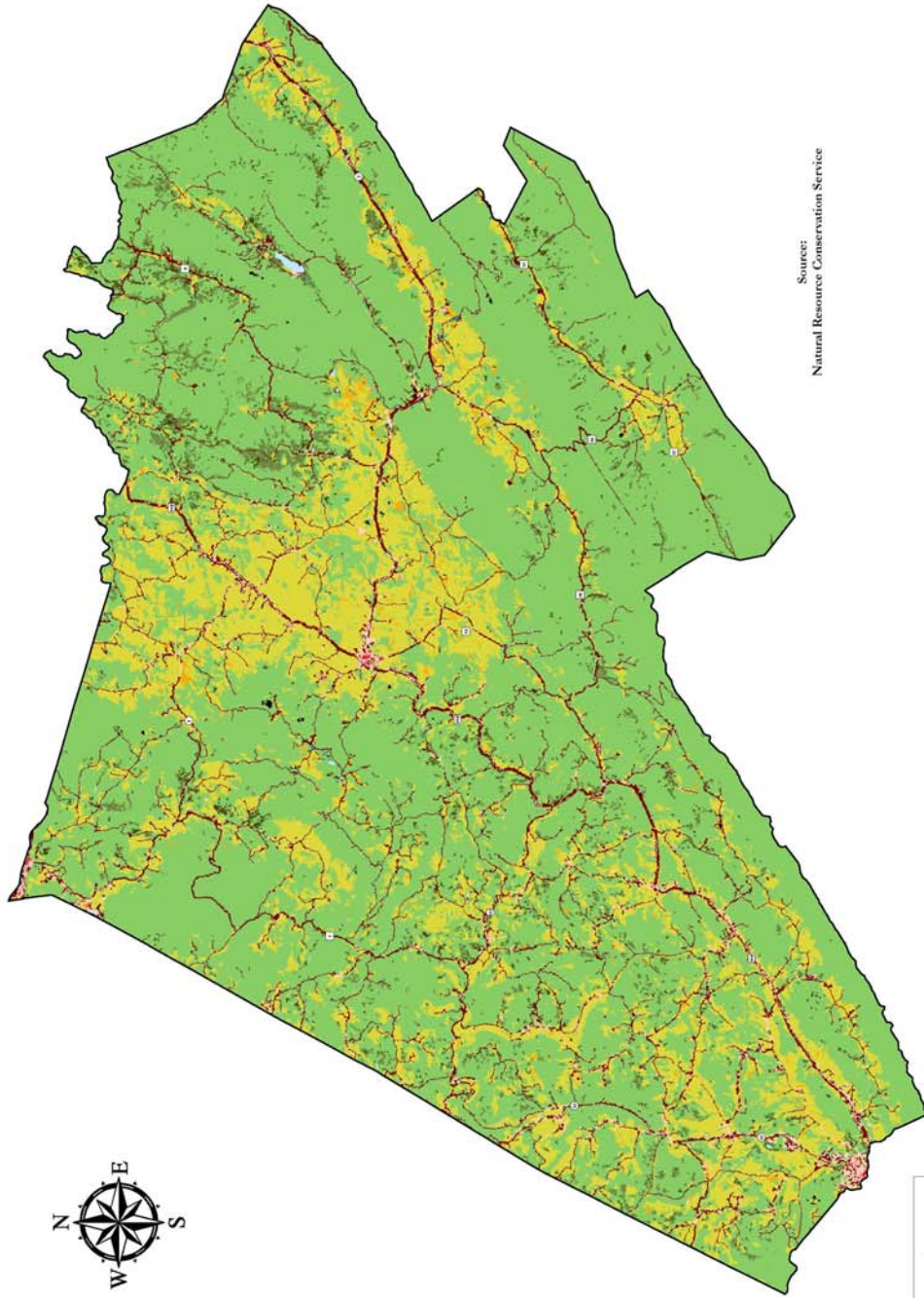
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Land Cover



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Land Cover
- Crops/Pasture
- Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
- Cultivated Crops
- Pasture/Hay
- Water/Wetland
- Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands
- Open Water
- Woody Wetlands
- Land Cover
- Forest Land
- Deciduous Forest
- Evergreen Forest
- Grassland/Herbaceous
- Mixed Forest Land
- Shrub/Scrub
- Land Cover
- Developed
- Developed, High Intensity
- Developed, Low Intensity
- Developed, Medium Intensity
- Developed, Open Space



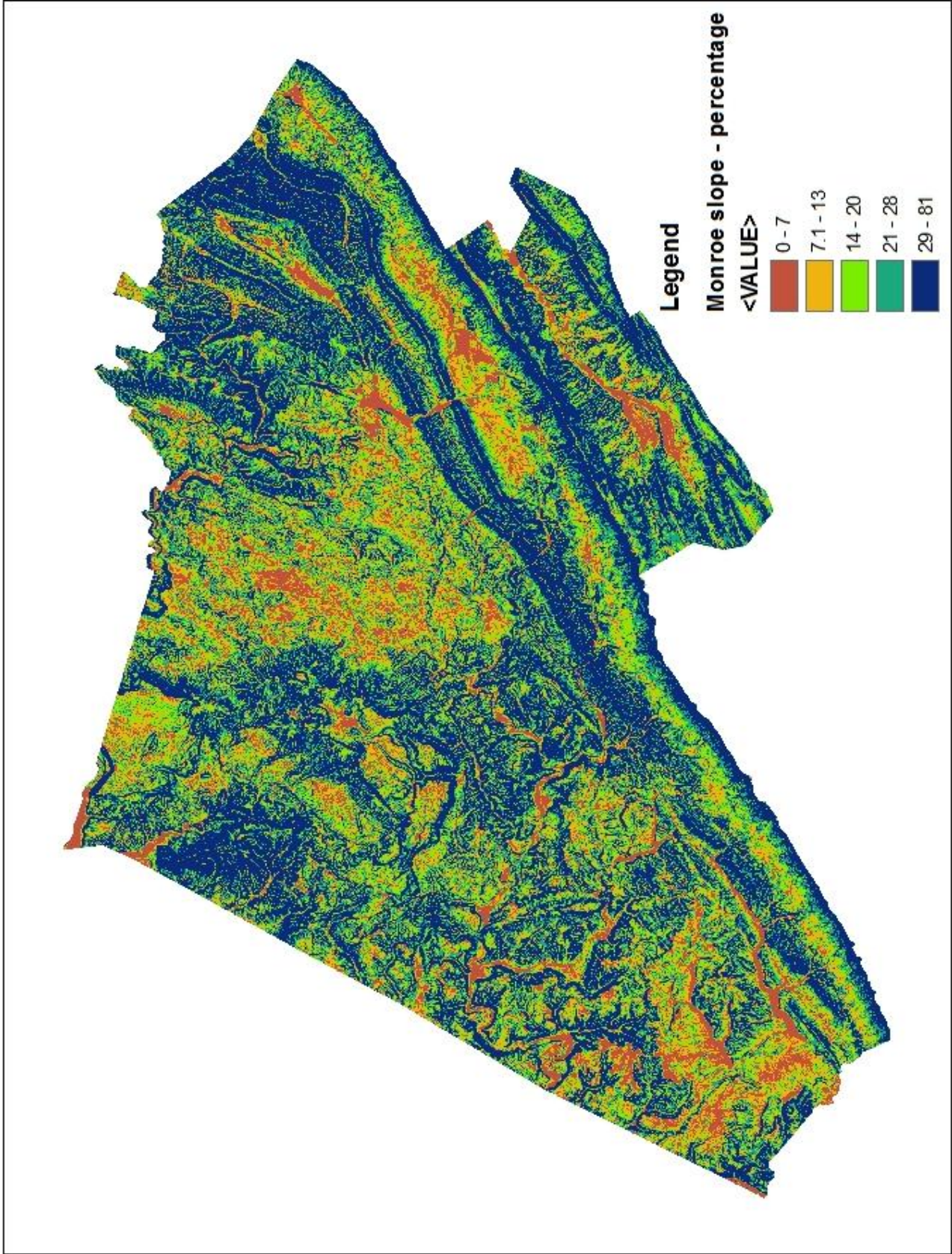
Source:  
Natural Resource Conservation Service

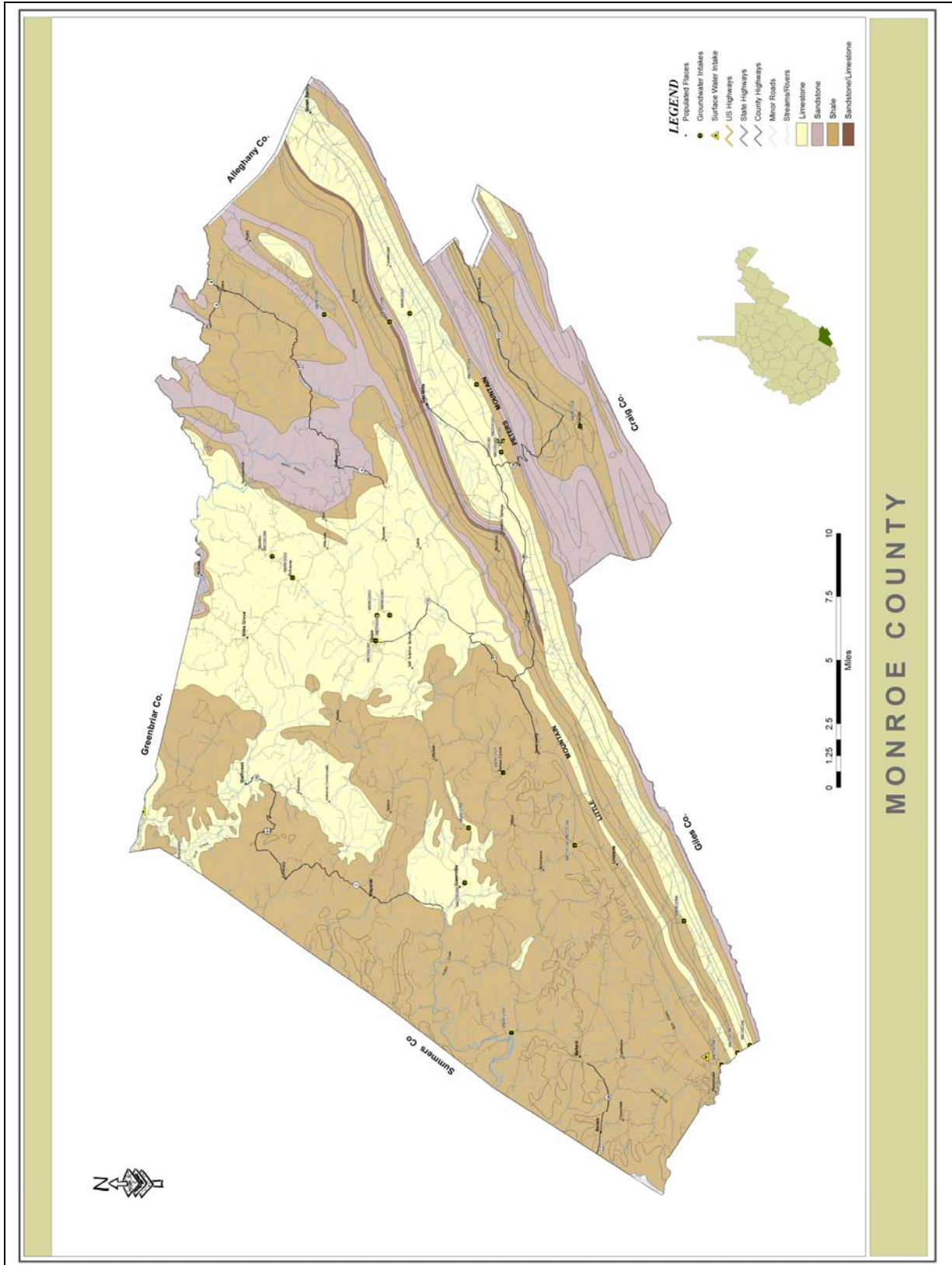


Produced By Region 1 PDC  
1439 E. Main St., Suite 5  
Princeton, WV 24740  
(304) 431-7225  
[www.regiononepdc.org](http://www.regiononepdc.org)

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

***Purpose: To establish policies for reasonable, responsible use of natural resources; while at the same time fostering conservation practices and good environmental stewardship.***

Compared to many areas, water quality, air quality, and general condition of the environment are considered favorable within Monroe County as evidenced by the county being placed on lists as one of the most desirable counties in which to live. 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.

Surface water quality throughout the county is presently impacted by problems related to high levels of bacteria. All major county streams are listed on the WVDEP 303d Impaired Streams Listing for bacteriological pollution. However, county streams do not suffer from many of the pollution problems such as acidity that affect other state streams and diminish usage of the waters. So county streams still serve for recreational purposes such as trout fishing and, to a limited extent, boating.

All or parts of Monroe County have suffered from the effects of drought over the last two years. The result, diminished stream capacity, has a number of ramifications in regard to water quality. As stream flows diminish, water temperatures typically rise and dissolved

oxygen levels, essential for the survival and propagation of aquatic life, go down. The negative effect of contaminants is more profound since there is less dilution capacity and thus higher concentrations of those contaminants. Two contaminants, nitrogen and phosphorous, which are common contaminants in agricultural watersheds, may cause algae bloom within the stream.

Drinking water in the county suffers from problem similar to that of surface waters. Over the past decade over half of private wells tested have been found to be unsatisfactory due to the presence of coliform bacteria. This primarily is a result of the karst topography which typifies the county. Contaminated groundwater passes through fissures in the limestone bedrock to underground aquifers without going through the natural process of filtration which typically occurs in other types of subsurface environments.

Indian Creek Watershed Association conducted an extensive survey of both wells and homeowners in 2007-2008. Sixty private wells within the watershed were sampled and tested for total coliform and E-coli bacteria – indicators of surface contamination. Of the 60 wells tested, 30 tested positive for both total coliform and E-coli.

Generally water quality deficiencies (high bacteria levels) have been attributed by the WVDEP to agricultural practices. The two main streams, Second Creek and Indian Creek, flow through large areas of farm pasture wherein livestock have direct access to those streams. Total Maximum Daily Load allocations have been developed by WVDEP for most of the watersheds in Monroe, and these reports provide an in-depth assessment of impairments and potential sources.

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. Continued drought conditions may occur resulting in an increase in the problems mentioned above. These latter issues are becoming critical concerns to many residents.

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 are 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. (Greenbrier County was listed by the EPA for air quality violations for ozone in the eighties.) 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, and to a lesser extent, residential development. Agriculture census data shows that Monroe lost over 7,000 acres (15%) of its total cropland to development between 1997 and 2002. In the last decade, one major residential development and some other smaller developments have reduced agricultural acreage by over a thousand acres.

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.

### ***Regulatory authority***

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.. 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, WV Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, 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).

Wind: 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 should continue to gather additional public input, and work to determine a consensus position among county residents. County government should begin consideration of regulating commercial wind generation with respects to potential impacts to scenery, property values, water and wildlife.

## ***Planning for the Future of Monroe's Natural Resources***

General goals 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.

### **Goals**

#### ***Protect surface water resources.***

As with most natural resources, protecting creeks and rivers is far less costly and involved than restoring them once degraded. The WV Department of Environmental Protection has many safeguards in place, particularly for large scale, point sources of potential stream pollution. But many of the non-point sources of contaminants are much more difficult to identify and monitor. Examples include sediment from road and building construction, runoff from paved and other impervious surfaces, and household disposal of hazardous waste.

A high priority of many Monroe residents is the protection of water *quantity* from both surface and groundwater sources. Streams and rivers in Monroe are an essential component of the local economy and culture. For multiple generations, streams in Monroe have been utilized for agricultural operations, historic mills, and as a source for public drinking water. The value of these resources cannot be overstated.

As Monroe's population and development continues to grow, local government will need to play a central role in water resource protection. Local agencies can augment DEP's efforts by enforcing existing state code, including monitoring construction sites of any type, identifying potential sources of non-point contaminants and ensuring environmental safeguards are in place.

Additionally, counties and municipalities are enabled to impose specific stormwater management practices. In most cases, these local stormwater ordinances are focused primarily on large, dense developments with the potential to cause significant, and readily recognizable harm. So while the state does make efforts to mitigate runoff and stormwater events during the construction phase, the few protections that are in place once a development is completed are compelled by local governments.

Monroe's streams are also critically important as fisheries. Local cold water trout streams, as defined by WVDNR, are both a critical component of the local ecosystem and a vanishing resource. Additional protection should be afforded these streams.

### ***Protect groundwater resources.***

#### *1. Define critical groundwater areas.*

Monroe County would benefit from additional work with state and federal agencies and private organizations to identify and delineate, as best as possible, groundwater recharge areas and/or sensitive groundwater areas. Assessment should take into consideration the "precautionary principle" wherever possible -- utilizing the best available data to establish adequate buffer areas, and not delaying decisions until more information is available. Additional study of the recharge areas will be critical but also necessarily lengthy.

There are several models already established by state agencies and organizations to consider. These applications and services have been developed for a variety of purposes, but could be applicable to delineation of sensitive groundwater areas needing protection. West Virginia Conservation Agency's Water Resource Assessment program provides resources to assess current and future water-related needs of a county.<sup>12</sup> In Hardy County, for example, a Water Resource Assessment included an overview of the characteristics and

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<sup>12</sup> This program derives its authority and funding through 16 USCS § 1005, Chapter 18, *Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention*, and is commonly referred to as PL-566 and PL 534. Funds are administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

usages of known groundwater reserves. These same tools could be further enhanced and utilized in Monroe to fund and develop assessments of groundwater reaches.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has developed a computer model, known by its acronym DRASTIC, to assess the relative risk of pesticide application with regard to groundwater. The model takes into consideration several different surface and subsurface physical features, and can be applied to other potential contaminants well beyond its intended pesticide use. Applications of the DRASTIC model have been developed for several counties in the West Virginia/Northern Virginia region.

In addition, research assistance is often made available to West Virginia communities through West Virginia University's Water Research Institute and the US Geologic Survey. Pooling resources from universities and federal agencies, while helping to share the financial burden and often significant workload, also works to create a more comprehensive understanding by assimilating research techniques and skill sets.

While this is by no means an exhaustive list or reflective of any rigorous scientific review, the prevalence of these tools demonstrate that resources are available to assist Monroe County in identifying groundwater aquifers and recharge areas.

## *2. Establish subdivision ordinances aimed at protecting the resource and human health*

Identify a minimum subdivision acreage allowable to protect groundwater resources and related community health, and use that minimum allowance to set a subdivision ordinance for application county-wide. Subdivision ordinances are, among other things, clearly meant to protect public health and safety, as noted above. Given the connection between failing septic systems, stormwater runoff, and the potential contamination of drinking water sources, county planning commissions can justify using conservative estimates to establish appropriate parcel size when subdividing. Assignment of an appropriate parcel size must therefore take into consideration adequate space for proper siting of septic systems and stormwater dispersal.

While zoning has received little public support statewide, subdivision ordinances, perhaps perceived as less invasive and prescriptive, appear to be much more acceptable. A



recent survey of counties in West Virginia found that over one-third of counties have some type of subdivision ordinance currently in place.

Determination of a minimum parcel size within a subdivision ordinance based on groundwater protection must be applied uniformly across a county. In *Singer v. Jefferson County*, the courts made clear that subdivision ordinances cannot be applied to only a portion of the county, and essentially become *de facto* zoning ordinances. Subdivision ordinance, like zoning ordinances, must also be consistent with the goals outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Models for citing groundwater protection in subdivision ordinance application



currently exist in West Virginia. Mineral County's subdivision ordinance, for example, cites the protection of water supplies and other natural resources in laying out the purpose of the ordinance and subsequent limit of a two-acre minimum parcel size. In those West Virginia counties underlain by karst, and all the inherent risks and unpredictability that the topography confers, a higher minimum parcel size may be appropriate.

### 3. Provide for additional protection of sensitive groundwater areas.

With a delineation of sensitive groundwater areas based on available data and research, and a basic level of protection afforded across the county through subdivision ordinances, provision could then be made for "density



bonuses.” This would allow increased density development on non-sensitive lands, in exchange for a cash equivalent to purchase easements on known critical groundwater recharge areas.

Providing added protection of resources through density bonuses is not a new technique. Municipalities and counties have often allowed developers to build at greater densities in some areas in exchange for the provision of local amenities – infrastructure development, parks, or affordable housing. The same concept, however, can also be applied to the increased protection of important natural resources. Certainly under the “innovative land use technique” provision of WV statute §8A, density bonuses can be utilized to further the county’s plans for resource management. In this case, density bonuses would allow for the increased subdivision of land into smaller parcels. If a county subdivision ordinance, for example, provided for a minimum of four acres across the county for residential development, a density bonus would allow land outside of defined sensitive groundwater areas to be further subdivided into a minimum of one or more acre parcels.

Any allowance for increased densities on non-sensitive lands should mandate certain conditions. For example, increased housing development density on non-sensitive groundwater recharge areas could incorporate all available best management practices with regard to wastewater treatment and stormwater management. Examples include tertiary treatment or better for on-site wastewater treatment systems; that is, treatment that goes beyond a standard septic tank and drainfield system. Stormwater management for the subdivisions can include rain gardens, infiltration basins, constructed wetlands and others. Subdivisions that are considered for increased density allowances should provide for a minimum of these practices.

One option, depending on the Monroe’s final Comprehensive Plan and the proximity to existing services, could mandate that increased density is allowable only when new development is connected to public wastewater treatment.

Additionally, developers seeking a density bonus could be required to either (1) place conservation easements on sensitive groundwater areas if such areas exist within the land considered for subdivision, or (2) charged a fee, corresponding to the number and size of desired subdivisions, for the discreet purpose of purchasing conservation easements on

sensitive groundwater areas. Such practices, while not common, have been effectively utilized in other areas of the country.

It is imperative that any fees assessed be consistent with the desired outcome of groundwater protection, and to distinguish them from impact fees. When enacted at the local level, impact fees, which are provided for in West Virginia State Code, are mandatory for all subdivisions, and are intended to generally offset many of the costs of development, including infrastructure development, roads, schools and other additional services. Fees generated as a result of density bonuses for groundwater protection, however, are voluntary and specific. In addition, such an arrangement targeted to groundwater protection is clearly in keeping with §8A, which specifically allows for “density bonuses and/or density transfers” to offset the impacts of haphazard development.

Monroe County would have to closely examine local conditions to determine both allowable densities and the return sought from the developer. Consideration will have to be given to the added costs of compliance, increased property values as a result of improvements, as well as current market rates and other factors.

#### *4. Utilize existing Monroe County Voluntary Farmland Protection Program (FPP).*

Farmland protection boards, as noted in a previous chapter, have the authority and management systems in place to develop specific conservation easements. Since prime farmland is often found on karst terrain and contain springs and seeps, several of the existing county boards already identify the potential for water resource protection as a prioritization criterion.

Fees assessed through density bonuses can be directly transferred to existing farmland



protection boards. Most boards also have a provision whereby they can accept specific, targeted funding for purchase of an easement outside of their other ranking criteria. County commissions could direct the Farmland Protection Board to establish a fund specifically for money collected for the purchase of voluntary easements on sensitive groundwater areas. Counties could then insure that fees collected from density bonuses or other sources would then have a clearly defined path and intent.

The added benefit of utilizing the existing FPP is the general acknowledgement and acceptance of the program as voluntary. The board would necessarily have to match up willing landowners, sensitive groundwater areas, and available funding – an alignment that may not always be possible. And, it could be argued, as a voluntary program dependent on individual landowner willingness, protection may be scattered and disjointed.

But with the developer's contribution through a density bonus also voluntary, any such combination is potentially more likely to receive public acceptance.<sup>13</sup> Again, the success of voluntary farmland protection programs statewide would suggest that similar approaches would also be successful. With regard to a cohesive protection strategy, if the objective is groundwater protection in sensitive areas, having contiguous parcels is less critical than if the objectives were open space or maintaining large tracts for habitat. While such a program does not provide for the wholesale protection of entire aquifers, it does provide protection measures that will be politically and publicly viable, and in the end, more likely to endure changing governmental administrations and varying development pressures.

### *Marcellus Shale Gas Drilling and Groundwater Protection*

Public feedback has indicated that there is concern with the potential impact of oil and gas drilling activities as a result of Marcellus Shale gas production. This is a legitimate concern in that there have been a number of environmental problems associated with drilling in other areas of the country. The process of drilling and recovering natural gas in this activity requires the usage of millions of gallons of water per well and the contamination of that water with byproducts which may be potentially hazardous. In that

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<sup>13</sup> Murphy, *Innovative Tools and Techniques*. As the author notes, such voluntary programs “tend not to be opposed by developers who often challenge impact fees and mitigation requirements where no benefits are offered to them.”

there are currently minimal regulatory guidelines in regard to this type of drilling, the Planning Commission is looking at a regulatory system which will support the protection of both water quantity and quality during gas development.

***Support existing regulatory authorities in the protection of natural resources.***

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.

***Support voluntary targeted actions to protect and restore resources.***

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.

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.

***Collect information on current and potential sites of resource extraction.***

A county water resources assessment is a valuable tool for future planning in relation to this valuable resource. The Planning Commission should encourage the funding and completion of such an assessment and use it in determining both growth limitations and potentials.

***Improve the energy efficiency of public buildings.***

Energy assessments should be initiated on a staggered basis for all public buildings over the next five years. As funding becomes available, necessary upgrades to improve energy efficiency should be made. Upgrades could range from replacing light fixtures to installation of programmable thermostats to installation of alternative heat sources.

***Consider, address and support renewable energy system development.***

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.



***Encourage 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.

***As funding allows, create and/or expand a position(s) within county government to monitor compliance in regard to natural resource, land use, and historic preservation components.***

If Monroe County is to take steps to protect its resources at the local level, adequate staffing must be put in place. In this time of shrinking budgets and revenue, current officials with local and state agencies are already often over-extended with existing responsibilities. Management of our local resources must be made a funding and staffing priority.

<b>2. Natural Resources, Environment, and Conservation</b> <i>To establish policies for reasonable, responsible use of natural resources; while at the same time fostering conservation practices and good environmental stewardship.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 2.1</b>	<b>Protect surface water resources.</b>			
Objective 2.1.1	Compile and disseminate information on the quality of streams.	•		
Objective 2.1.2	Support data collection on baseline flows of streams in the county.	•		
Objective 2.1.3	Based on historic flow rates of county streams, regulate the quantity of water withdrawn from streams for commercial use.	•		
Objective 2.1.4	Support the efforts of The Friends of Second Creek and the Indian Creek Watershed Associations to assess surface water quality and quantity.	•		
<b>Goal 2.2</b>	<b>Protect groundwater resources.</b>			
Objective 2.2.1	Compile and disseminate information on the quality of groundwater resources.	•		
Objective 2.2.2	Compile and disseminate information on the quantity of groundwater resources.	•		
Objective 2.2.3	Develop more protective regulations for the placement of septic systems, considering slope and soil limitations.	•		
Objective 2.2.4	Establish reasonable restrictions on the quantity of water withdrawn from wells for commercial purposes.	•		
Objective 2.2.5	Create enforceable protection zones around recharge areas for public water sources including limits to septic installation, chemical use, erosion control, and timber operation.	•		
Objective 2.2.6	Promote efforts to educate residents on potentially harmful actions that could compromise groundwater quality.	•		
<b>Goal 2.3</b>	<b>Support existing regulatory authorities in the protection of natural resources.</b>			
Objective 2.3.1	Provide additional support to the Monroe Co. Health Dept. for inspection of septic systems and the siting and installation of new septic systems.	•		

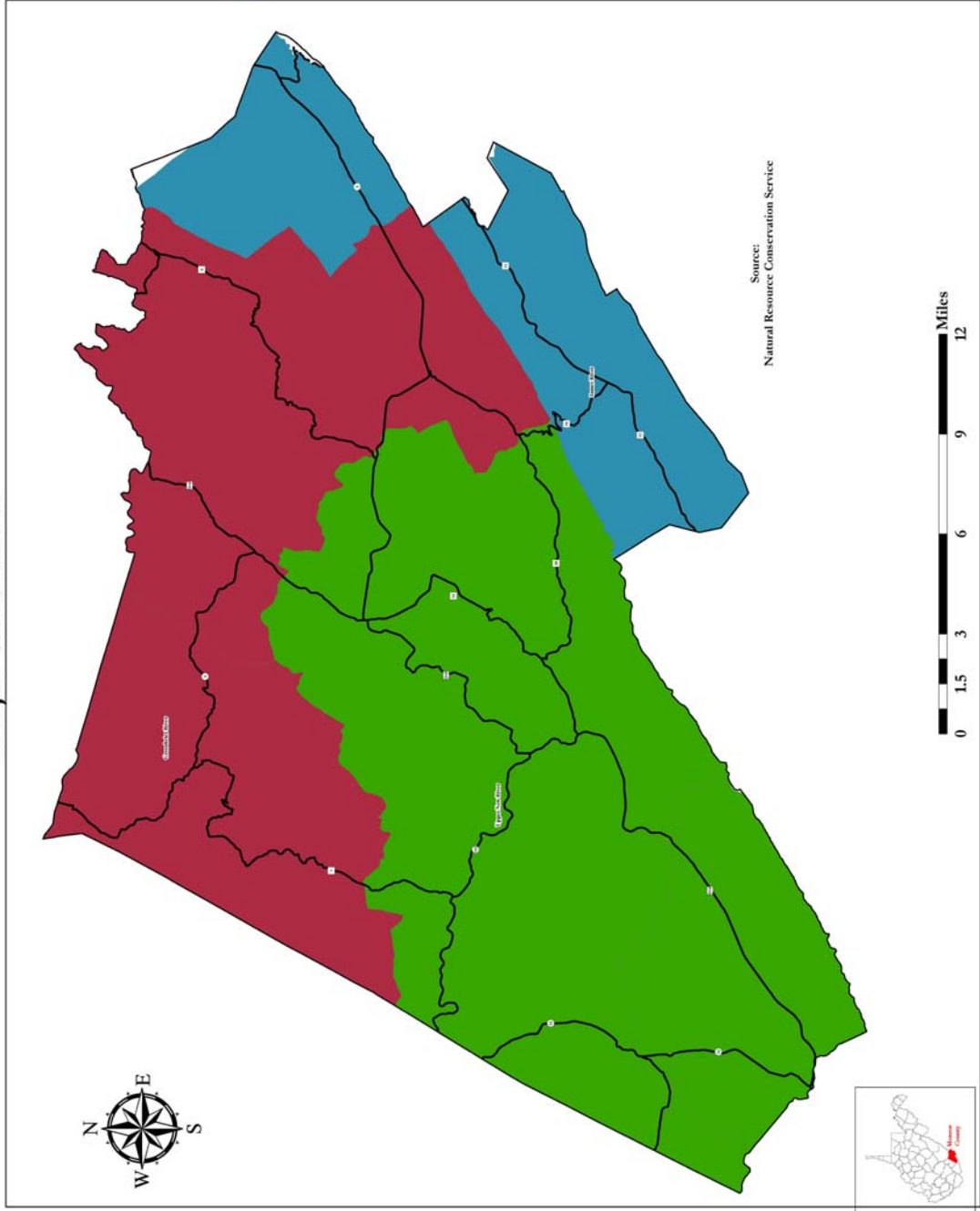


Objective 2.3.2	Clarify and streamline enforcement of existing regulations, and make reporting of violations easier and more anonymous.	•		
Objective 2.3.3	Promote open communication between county government and state and federal entities to bring attention to potential problems.	•		
Objective 2.3.4	Increase efforts to enforce regulations against littering & illegal dumping.	•		
<b>Goal 2.4</b>	<b>Support voluntary targeted actions to protect and restore resources.</b>			
Objective 2.4.1	Promote best management practices relating to agriculture through outreach, financial assistance, and public recognition.	•		
Objective 2.4.2	Promote best management practices relating to forestry through outreach, financial assistance, and public recognition.	•		
Objective 2.4.3	Promote best management practices relating to grounds & maintenance of private residences.	•		
<b>Goal 2.5</b>	<b>Collect information on current and potential sites of resource extraction.</b>			
Objective 2.5.1	Identify and compile data on predominant areas of commercial timbering.		•	
Objective 2.5.2	Compile data on the general status of forests in the county, including number of acres, locations, and forest types.		•	
Objective 2.5.3	Compile data on current and potential areas of extractive industry activity.	•		
<b>Goal 2.6</b>	<b>Improve the energy efficiency of public buildings.</b>			
Objective 2.6.1	Complete an energy assessment of all publicly-owned buildings within the county in five years, retrofit building to improve energy efficiency as available funding allows, and re-assess as necessary.	•		
<b>Goal 2.7</b>	<b>Consider, address and/or support renewable energy system development.</b>			
Objective 2.7.1	Conduct outreach and education, and assess public sentiment on the development of commercial wind power generators.	•		
Objective 2.7.2	Actively encourage development of small renewable energy systems through the provision of technical assistance, financial assistance, and promoting related state and	•		

	federal legislation.			
<b>Goal 2.8</b>	<b>Provide for local government staffing to support resource protection.</b>			
Objective 2.8.1	As funding allows, create and/or expand a position(s) within county government to monitor compliance in regard to natural resource, land use, and historic preservation components.	•		

# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Major Watersheds



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Major Watersheds
- Greenbrier River
- James River
- Upper New River

Source:  
Natural Resource Conservation Service

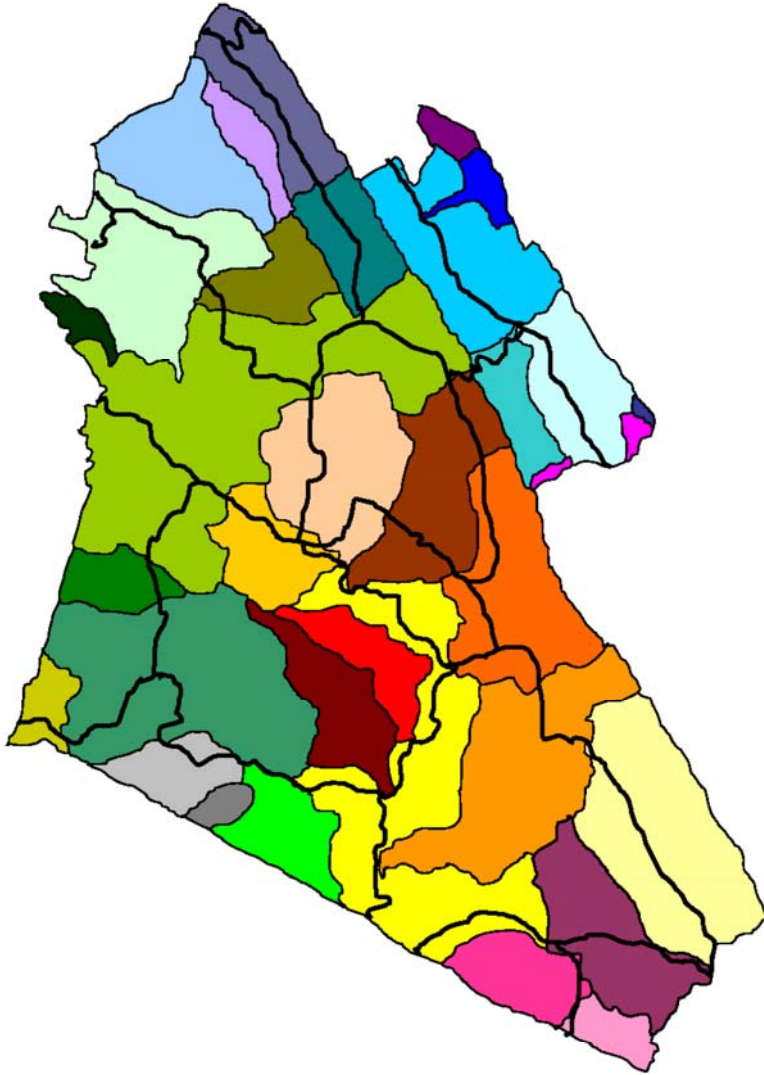


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# Local Watersheds Monroe County, West Virginia



- New River**
- Indian Creek**
- Hans Creek
- Blue Lick
- Lick Run
- Dropping Lick & Rock Camp Ck
- Bradley Branch
- Wiseman Branch
- Turkey Creek
- Trotter Branch
- Laurel Creek (ind.)
- Sarton Branch
- Back Creek (ind.)
- Hunter Branch
- Byrnside Branch & Tackett Branch
- Stinking Lick
- Bee Branch
- Misc. unnamed
- Cook's Run
- Fitz Run
- Humphreys Run
- Possumtot Branch
- Pepper Run
- Gin Hollow Branch
- Lick Run
- Indian Draft
- Symms Branch
- Slaty Run
- Rich Creek**
- Brush Creek
- Crooked Run
- Crooked Creek
- Dry Creek
- Trigger Run
- Scott Branch
- Painter Run
- Spruce Run
- Mud Run
- Small New R. trib.**
- Ford Hollow Br.
- Misc. unnamed
- Big Stony trib.**
- North Fk Stony & White Rocks Br.



- Greenbrier River**
- Second Creek**
- Laurel Creek (Gr)
- Little Laurel Ck
- Archer Fork
- Kitchen Creek
- Devil Creek
- Little Devil Ck
- Carpenter Creek
- Forest Run
- Rayburn Draft
- Wolf Creek**
- Broad Run
- Laurel Creek (Wf)
- Hardy Run
- Stony Ck. (Gbr)**
- & Little Stony
- Kelly Creek**
- Wind Creek**
- Mystic R. (subt.)**
- Small Gbr. trib.**
- James River**
- Potts Creek**
- (to Jackson R.)
- South Fk. Potts
- Crosier Branch
- North Fk. Potts
- Trout Run
- Ewin Run
- Wilson Branch
- Cove Creek**
- (to Dunlap Cr)
- Back Creek (Cv)
- Big Branch
- Sweet Sprgs. Ck**
- (to Dunlap Cr)
- Eliher Sprgs Br**
- (of Craigs Creek)

Key listings arranged by watershed and sub-watershed, and generally appear largest to smallest in each grouping. Small named but unmapped streams also appear on the key in their appropriate grouping, but do not have a color-code symbol. Many smaller streams are intermittently underground in the central and north central portions of the county. Mystic River watershed is entirely subterranean. Heavy black lines indicate roadways as points of reference.



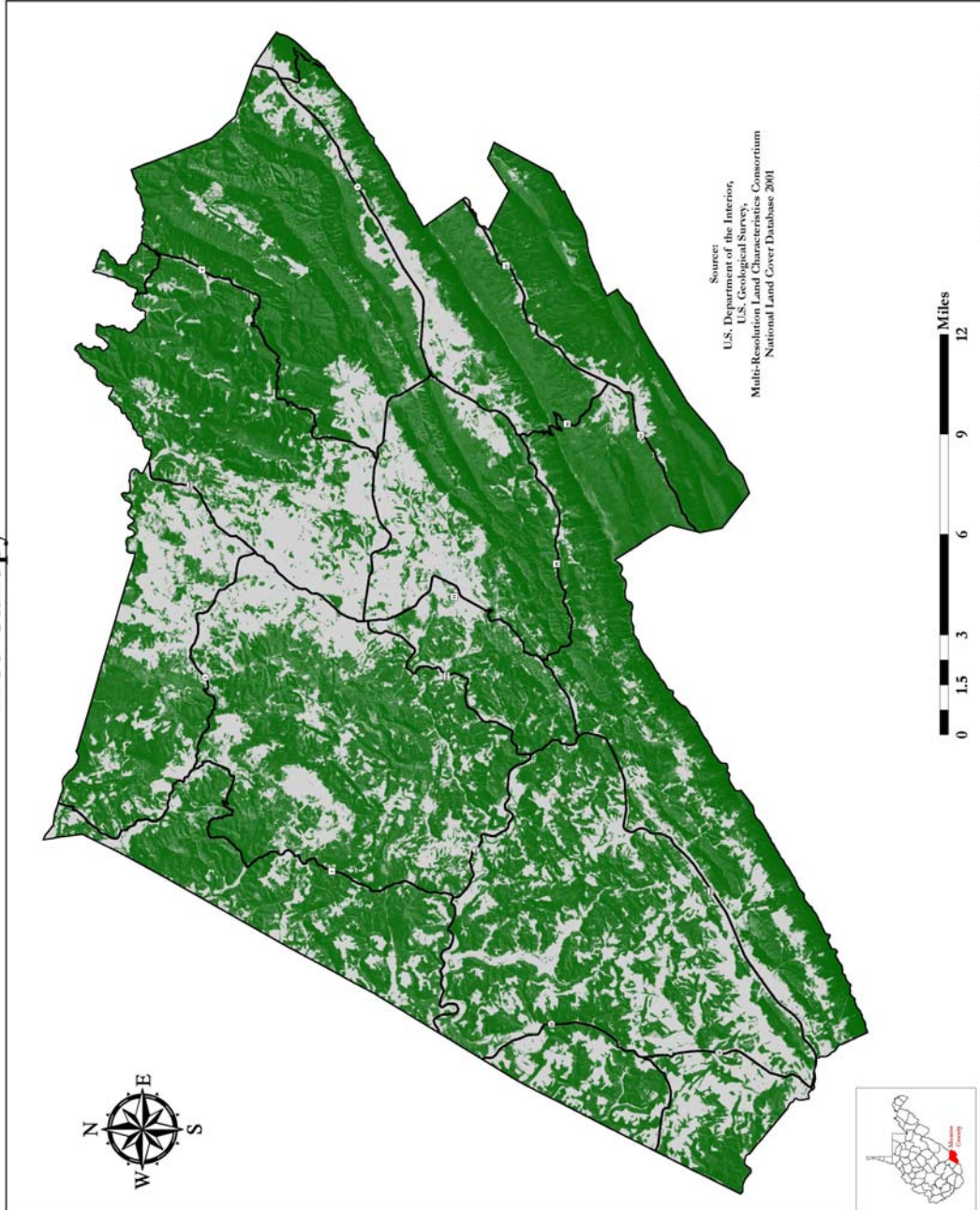
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Tree Canopy



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Major Roads



Sources:  
U.S. Department of the Interior,  
U.S. Geological Survey,  
Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium  
National Land Cover Database 2001



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(904) 431-7225  
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## **Housing**

***Purpose: Provide a diversity of quality housing that meets the housing needs of all residents, encourage continued use and reuse of existing structures, and apply innovative land management practices for all housing developments.***

Historically Monroe County has been a rural agrarian community with few large industrial employers. Many residents travel out of the county for employment, and land and housing prices consistently remained low for years. Increased housing cost in surrounding states and cities, and recent publicity designating Monroe County as one of the most desirable places to live, have driven up housing prices drastically in recent years. As we plan for future growth and development, housing prices are expected to continue on a natural rate of growth (in spite of the recent economic downturn) making it difficult for low or moderate income individuals to purchase homes.

Without managed growth, major housing site developments may consume large areas of land suitable for farming, be located in areas not environmentally compatible and thereby creating a potential source of ground water pollution. Roads associated with housing may not be compatible with increased vehicular traffic caused by major development. 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.

### ***Current Status of Housing***

West Virginia has the highest rate of homeownership in the country. In addition, the number of residents that own their homes in Monroe County is significantly higher than the state average: 84.5% to WV's 75.2%. The high rate of homeownership in Monroe can be attributed in part to its rural character and a culture centered strongly on agriculture and a sense of place.

There are currently 7,508 houses in Monroe County, and 1,857 (25%) were built prior to 1950. While older homes, in many cases, contribute to the historic and cultural qualities of the county, many of the older homes are occupied by families that cannot afford the upkeep needed to make them safe and energy efficient. Various programs have, at times, operated in Monroe providing home upgrades and rehabilitation (REACH, Southeastern Appalachian Rural Alliance). There are, however, no consistent programs in place to assist homeowners with repairs.

Perhaps the most significant development in housing in the county in recent years is the dramatic increase in new home construction, providing for both new residents and second home purchasers. Of the 7,508 homes in Monroe, 1,414 (19%) were built since 1990. Median house values have also risen substantially -- in 2000, median home value was \$62,000; in 2007, it had risen to nearly \$96,000. While this reflects trends in the national housing market during that time, it also is indicative of the higher value homes developed in Monroe.

### ***Senior Housing***

Monroe County currently has one nursing home and one assisted living home providing care to senior citizens. With population projections suggesting a dramatic increase in the number of elderly residents in the coming years, local government and service providers need to provide for a range of housing alternatives. These include assisted living facilities, nursing homes, senior rental housing, and handicap-accessible upgrades to existing single family homes.

### ***Building Codes and Inspection***

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.

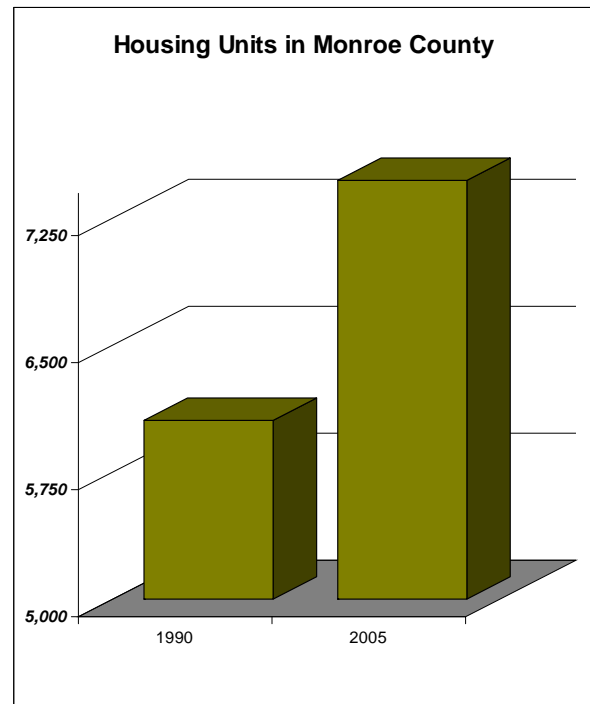
Building Codes provide a means to ensure safe, sanitary housing that will not become a burden to neighboring homeowners or the county in future years. Without

adequate safeguards in place and given the increased rate of home construction in the county, the potential for the development of substandard housing is very real.

Building Codes also provide a less intrusive mechanism for ensuring housing development that is compatible with the Community Design objectives of the Planning and County Commissions. Components of a Building Code Ordinance can include minimum setbacks from roads and sidewalks, minimum/maximum lighting requirements, and a quantifiable approach to identifying unsafe and substandard housing.

### ***Floodplain Ordinance***

As with many counties in WV, Monroe County has a floodplain ordinance in place. Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program mandates that a county ordinance be in place in order to be eligible, and the current Monroe ordinance provides basic guidelines about development in the floodplain, as



stipulated by the NFIP and its WV counterpart, the WV Office of Emergency Services and its State Floodplain Coordinator.

Monroe's ordinance is fairly dated, however, and does not reflect current understanding about floods and floodplain management. The Floodplain Ordinance can provide the basic framework for limiting potentially dangerous floodplain development. The State OES office has provided counties with a model ordinance, providing updated information on best practices. Limiting floodplain development, and detailing how and when floodplain development can occur. By extension, the Floodplain Ordinance serves as a basic building permit, providing for basic safety features for structures built in the floodplain.

Support dilapidated or abandoned building ordinance, in the interests of public safety, maintenance of property values., including foreclosed properties.



## ***Planning for Future Housing Needs***

### **Goals**

***Provide a diversity of affordable, quality housing that gives county residents a choice of housing based on individual desires or physical needs.***

As Monroe continues to be a destination area for second homes and retirees, ensuring that affordable housing options remain for residents is critical. The County Commission and Planning Commission must establish partnerships with existing organizations, or consider establishing new entities that can adequately address housing needs in the County.

***Promote residential growth in designated areas.***

For Monroe's growth to continue in a manageable and organized manner, county government will need to take the necessary steps to promote housing development in targeted areas. Those target areas include communities identified as "Preferred Development Areas," including regions of the county that already have public water and sewer. Rehabilitation and reuse of existing housing stock should be encouraged (e.g. promotion of the USDA's Housing Preservation grant program)

***Encourage the continued development of a growth management plan that includes the most current innovations in good land management practices for both minor and major housing developments.***

The Comprehensive Plan initiates a 'growth management' strategy and framework. With regard to housing development, "Preferred Development Areas," "Community Design" and related components of the Plan should be considered a starting point. As subsequent ordinances and guidelines are developed, Planning Commissioners will need to be versed in best management practices.

***Regulate housing development in environmentally unsuitable areas to protect groundwater resources.***

Continued managed growth in the housing sector is an essential component of Monroe County's future. Unmanaged, poorly planned development, however, poses perhaps the largest threat to Monroe's groundwater resources. Stormwater runoff from both construction and permanent impervious surfaces, as well as poorly sited septic systems and improper waste disposal can have major impacts.

A strong majority of Monroe residents have consistently voiced support for measures to protect groundwater quality and quantity. As demand for additional housing increases, much attention will need to be paid to the areas of the county underlain by karst. Future conditions may warrant limiting housing development in those areas through application of targeted subdivision ordinances or other growth management tools.

***Provide a means to regulate camping units***

Camping is a recreational activity enjoyed by many Monroe residents and visitors. These temporary structures, however, can sometimes become permanent residences without provision for adequate services, and often without notice of health or county officials.

<b><i>Housing:</i></b> <i>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, provide opportunity for local recreation, and are environmentally safe with limited or no impact.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 3.1</b>	<b>Provide a diversity of affordable, quality housing that gives county residents a choice of housing based on individual desires or physical needs.</b>			
Objective 3.1.1	Increase the availability of rental housing, and promote the development of mixed use residential housing with a range of affordability.		•	
Objective 3.1.2	Promote the development of affordable starter and workforce housing.		•	
Objective 3.1.3	Assess the need and provide housing opportunities for senior citizens, disabled and low-middle income residents.	•		
Objective 3.1.4	Create a Housing Authority with power to advocate and require affordable housing.			
<b>Goal 3.2</b>	<b>Promote residential growth in designated areas.</b>			
Objective 3.2.1	Encourage continued use and reuse of existing structures to preserve the character and historic values of the community.	•		
Objective 3.2.2	Promote growth in areas where public water and sewer system are currently available.	•		
Objective 3.2.3	Limit lot size where public water or sewer is not provided	•		
Objective 3.2.4	Encourage village centers/mixed use development in designated growth areas		•	
<b>Goal 3.3</b>	<b>Encourage the development of a growth management plan that includes the most current innovations in good land management practices for both minor and major housing developments.</b>			
Objective 3.3.1	Provide clear guidance and needed restrictions to manage light and sound impacts.		•	
Objective 3.3.2	Identify proper and suitable areas for desirable low, medium and high density residential development through management of public services, employment, and infrastructure.		•	
Objective 3.3.3	Integrate relevant parts of neighborhood design principles into new development proposals.		•	
Objective 3.3.4	Encourage open space for recreation in cluster development.		•	

<b>Goal 3.4</b>	<b>Regulate housing development in environmentally unsuitable areas to protect groundwater resources.</b>			
Objective 3.4.1	Regulate housing to protect karst regions and natural resources.	•		
Objective 3.4.2	Ensure that all housing is developed in accordance with any defined floodplain regulations.		•	
<b>Goal 3.5</b>	<b>Provide a means to regulate camping units.</b>			
Objective 3.5.1	Prevent clustering of camps used for recreational purposes.		•	
Objective 3.5.2	Discourage campers from becoming permanent or semi-permanent residences		•	
Objective 3.5.3	Encourage recreational camping and traditional, temporary camping units.		•	

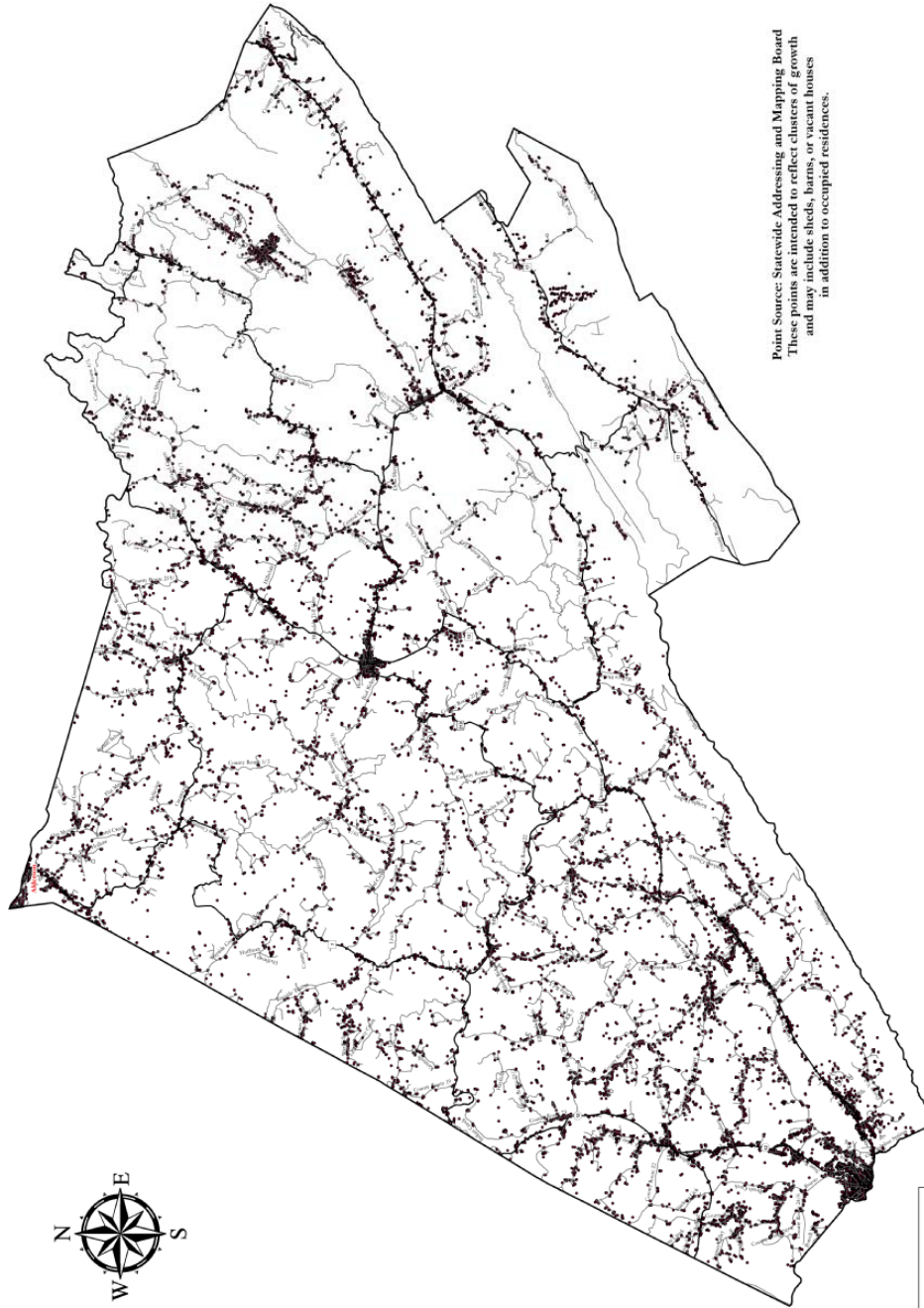
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Building Points



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Buildings



Point Source: Statewide Addressing and Mapping Board  
These points are intended to reflect clusters of growth and may include sheds, barns, or vacant houses in addition to occupied residences.



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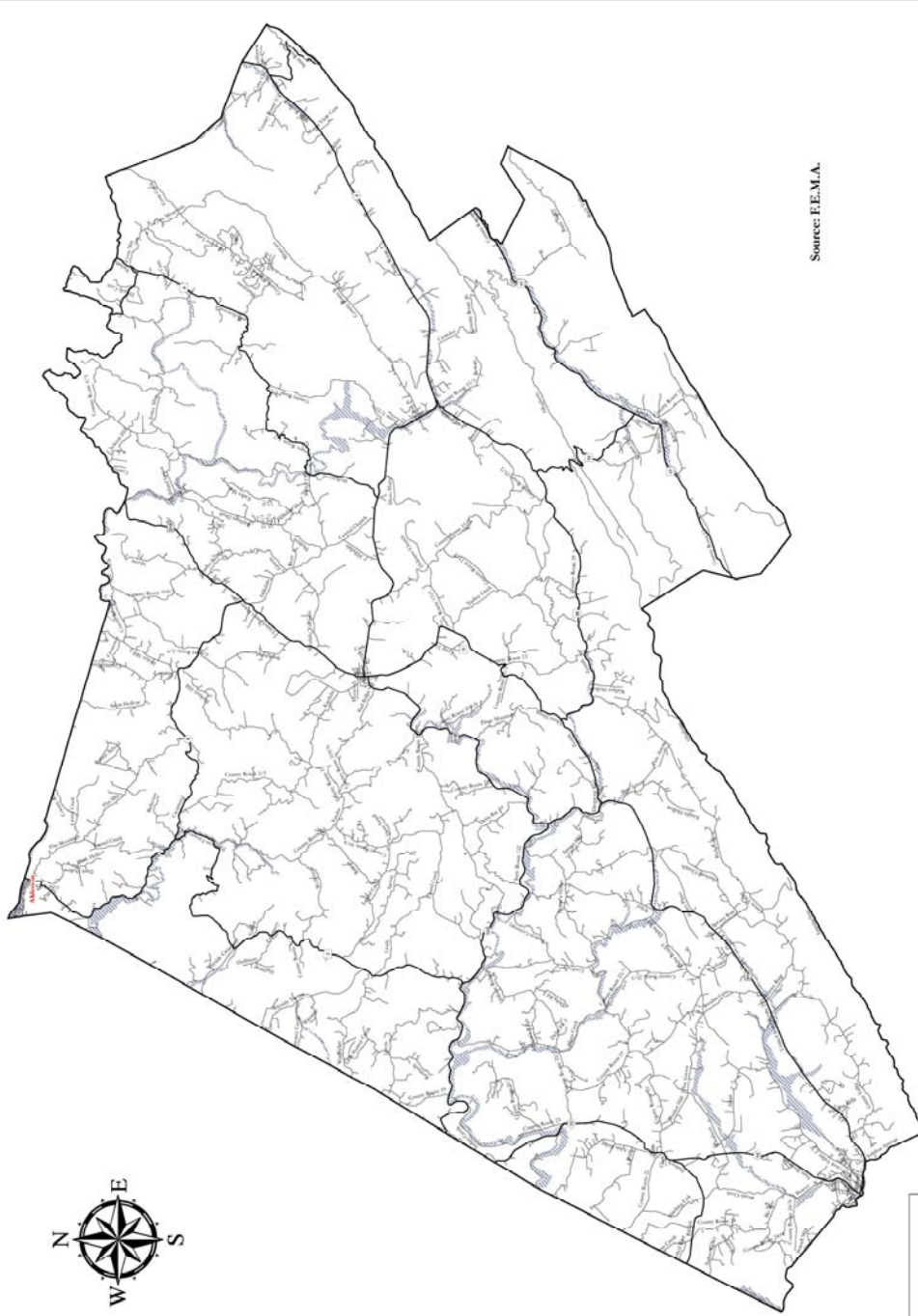
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## 1% Annual Chance Floodplain



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Secondary Roads
- 1% annual chance



Source: F.E.M.A.



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## ***Transportation***

***Purpose: Create an improved transportation system which is proportional to demand; increase recreational and healthful exercise opportunities by an improved system of hiking and bicycle trails; and enhance vitality of town economic centers by improving parking and walkability.***

### 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 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 followed the crest of Potts Mountain for about 10 miles along Monroe's southeastern border. It, too, joined with the Appalachian Trail, within the borders of Giles County, VA. Parts of the Potts Mountain trail are still walkable; however it is no longer maintained by the forest service as a public trail. 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 passed 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.

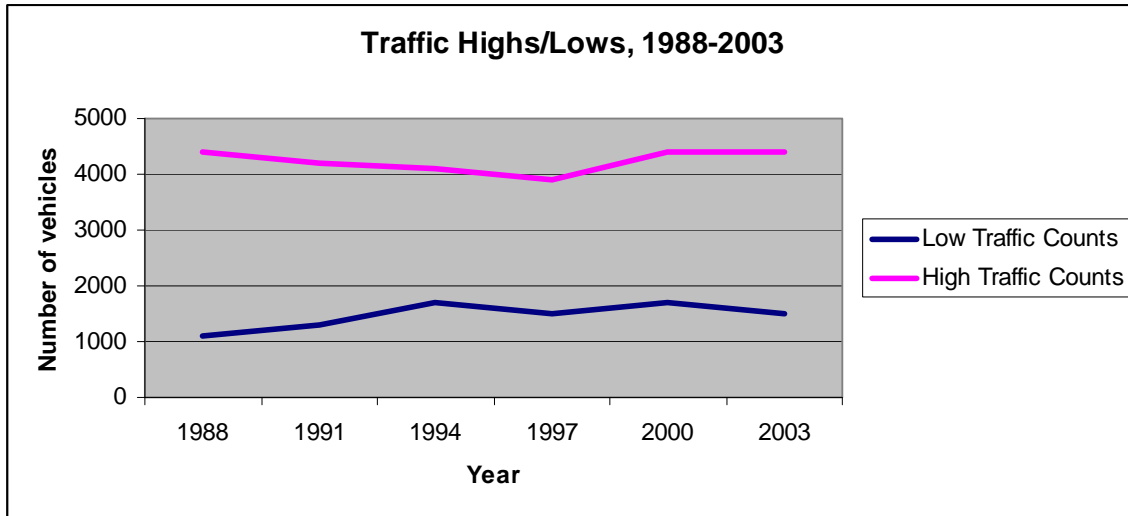
## **Current status**

### ***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

High & low traffic 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.



***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; WV Scenic Trails Association; Moncove Lake State Park; Monroe County Tourism Director.

## ***Planning for Future Transportation Needs***

### **Goals**

#### ***Improve primary highways as needed.***

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.

***Improve and/or maintain secondary roads as needed***

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.

***Support continued and/or expanded mass transit service to the region.***

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. As Monroe's population is projected to both increase and age substantially, maintaining and future expansions of the senior bus/van service should definitely be promoted.

***Encourage pedestrian-friendly improvements where appropriate.***

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.

***Expand opportunities for walking, hiking 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.

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.

***Limit ATV use on public roads.***

As in many areas of the state, public roads are frequently used for ATV travel. Inappropriate use of ATVs on public roads is a significant hazard, resulting in accidents and fatalities. While many farm owners utilize ATVs and farm use should be distinguished from recreational use, ATV use on public roads should be strictly limited.

## 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.

## Monroe County Planning Commission

<b>Transportation</b> <i>Create an improved transportation system which is proportional to demand; increase recreational and healthful exercise opportunities by an improved system of hiking and bicycle trails; and enhance vitality of town economic centers by improving parking and walkability.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 4.1</b>	<b>Improve primary highways as needed.</b>			
Objective 4.1.1	Widen Rt. 219; modify dangerous curves, intersections and bridges; provide passing lanes.	•		
Objective 4.1.2	Widen Ft. 122 through Greenville and to the Summers County line.		•	
Objective 4.1.3	Improve primary highways with modern safeguards (e.g. non-skid pavement on curves, center line reflectors, pot-hole repair).		•	
<b>Goal 4.2</b>	<b>Improve and/or maintain secondary roads as needed</b>			
Objective 4.2.1	Pave, widen, and/or upgrade as traffic and safety demand.		•	
Objective 4.2.2	Reestablish centerline on Potts Valley road.		•	
Objective 4.2.3	Preserve and maintain rural, single lane, country roads that contribute to local rural character and where low traffic flows deem appropriate.	•		
Objective 4.2.4	Assess additional roads for potential scenic byway designation where local interest is present.		•	
<b>Goal 4.3</b>	<b>Support continued and/or expanded mass transit service to the region.</b>			
Objective 4.3.1	Support expanded rail, air, bus and/or van services.		•	
Objective 4.3.2	Support expanded transit services for seniors in the county.	•		
<b>Goal 4.4</b>	<b>Encourage pedestrian-friendly improvements where appropriate.</b>		•	
Objective 4.4.1	Improve walkability and parking in the county's three incorporated downtown districts.		•	
<b>Goal 4.5</b>	<b>Expand opportunities for walking, hiking and bicycling.</b>			
Objective 4.5.1	Continue maintenance and promotion of existing trails in the county.	•		

Objective 4.5.2	Investigate opportunities for designating trails on unmaintained or lightly traveled public roads.		•	
Objective 4.5.3	Expand hiking and biking trails where feasible (including the Narrows of Hans Creek).		•	
Objective 4.5.4	Create bicycle and/or pedestrian lanes when any major highway upgrades are undertaken.		•	
<b>Goal 4.6</b>	<b>Limit ATV use on public roads.</b>			
Objective 4.6.1	Restrict ATV use on all paved roads.		•	
Objective 4.6.2	Restrict ATV use on all public roads.		•	
Objective 4.6.3	Require that all persons driving ATVs on public highways be required to carry appropriate insurance.	•		
Objective 4.6.4	Require driver's license for recreational use of ATVs on all public highways.	•		

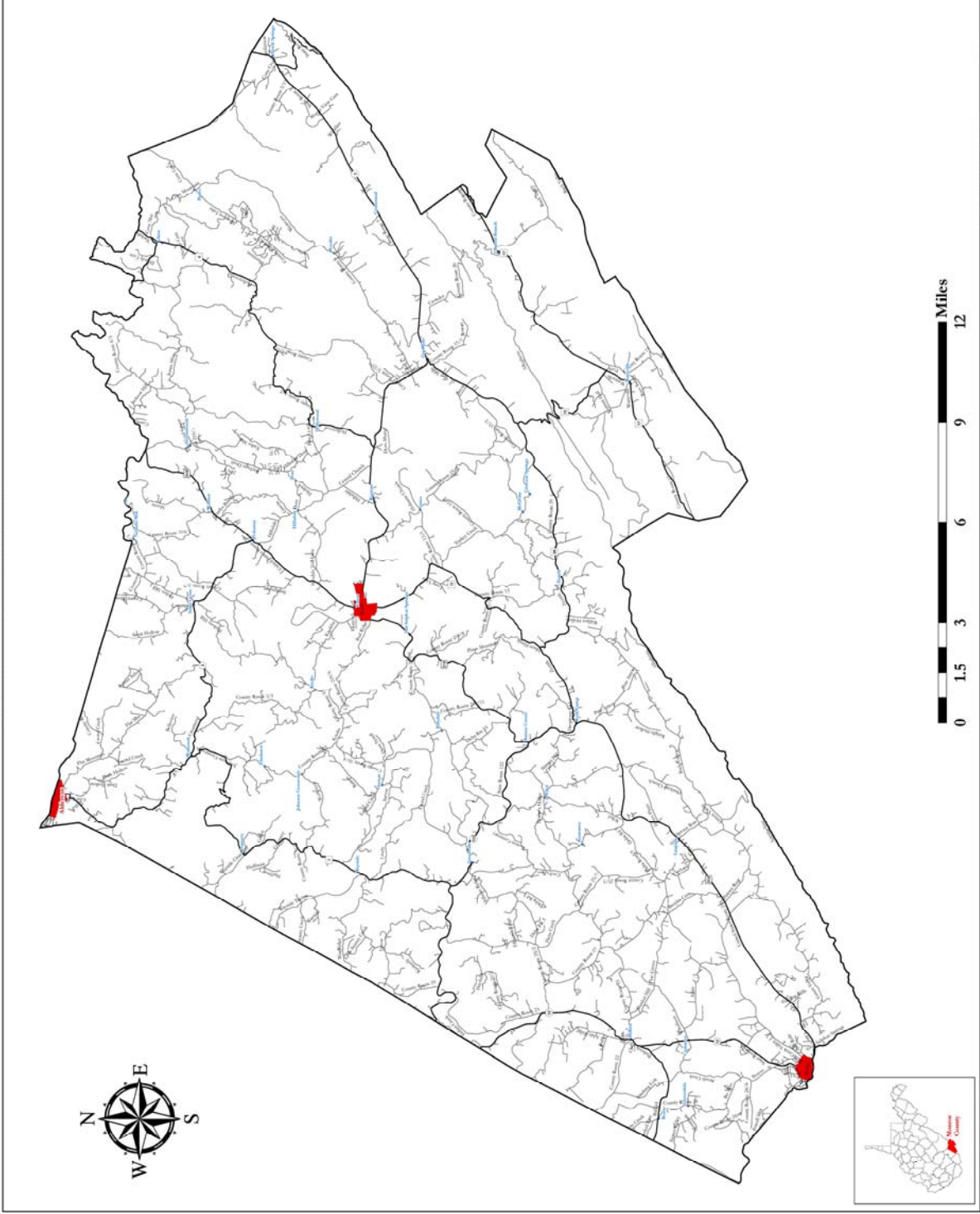
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Roads & Communities



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipalities
- Major Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Communities



Produced By Region I PDC  
1439 E. Main St., Suite 5  
Princeton, WV 24740  
(804) 431-7225  
[www.regiononepdc.org](http://www.regiononepdc.org)

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## ***Infrastructure***

*Purpose: Maintain current infrastructure where adequate, support improvement of critical existing facilities where needed, and promote expansion into areas where population density, lack of available services, or potential environmental hazards make such expansion advisable.*

### ***Background***

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. Monroe is 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 five years.

Public water and sewer service, likewise, began in county 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 complement 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.

***Current conditions and potential impacts and 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 Public Service District (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 water 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 AT&T. 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. AT&T 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 repeater are ongoing with Green Bank and the FCC.

***Utility Providers in Monroe County***

- 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
- AT&T (formerly Cellular One)

Cable television service is limited primarily to the county's three incorporated towns, as is high-speed or DSL internet service. Many residents rely on satellite television. 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.

## **Renewable Energy Development**

Small scale renewable energy production is becoming increasingly viable, including applications of solar, wind, and geothermal technologies. Producing energy on-site is often in the best interests of the local landowner, and reduces the demand for public transmission infrastructure. Homeowners should be encouraged to develop small scale systems however possible.

## **Additional Infrastructure Needs**

As noted in the chapter on Economic Development, there are multiple forms of infrastructure, each critical to the County's well-being and sustainable development. This chapter focuses exclusively on "hard" infrastructure – those utilities that convey to us the basic services that traditionally define infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, and communications. While not addressed here, the other forms of infrastructure are equally important, and those include *soft infrastructure* (e.g. schools, medical services, libraries), *green infrastructure* (e.g. soils, water, topography), and *fiscal & administrative infrastructure*. These components are each addressed separately in other sections of this Plan.

## ***Planning for Future Infrastructure Development***

### **Goals**

Efforts at providing needed infrastructure should be consistent with and sensitive to the existing intrinsic qualities of the area and its culture. In regard to public water and sewer, countywide public service 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.

Expansion of infrastructure should be undertaken 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.

### ***Collect and maintain data on current status of infrastructure delivery and needs.***

Conduct periodic reviews of provider performance and reliability and ensure that established performance standards are met. Provide a contact to coordinate reviews of infrastructure performance and needs.

### ***Provide for public water and sewer as needed.***

Establish guidelines that specify how need will be determined, and what areas will be considered for public water and sewer.

***Support the continued availability of utility services to all residents of the county.***

Work with utilities to ensure that services are provided reliably, that proper maintenance is being performed, and that any conflicts with county goals are resolved

***Expand cellular phone, high-speed internet and cable television services to make such options available for a greater portion of county residents.***

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

Support the ongoing government incentives to increase availability of high-speed internet or broadband service Search out opportunities for funding service expansion. .

***Regulate cellular phone and radio towers.***

Create a county permitting requirement for cellular and radio towers, such that towers are approved only as necessary to meet the need, and are located to minimize scenic and environmental impacts. Sitings should be considered which would allow shorter towers (perhaps only minimally above tree line) – thereby eliminating the need for aircraft warning lights.

Require that towers be removed at the company's expense when they are no longer necessary.

***Coordinate the delivery and upgrade of infrastructure services.***

Ensure that delivery and upgrades of infrastructure are performed in accordance with county guidelines and planning goals. While communication between jurisdictions and public service districts in Monroe is ongoing to an extent, formalizing regular coordination between these entities will be essential.

***Promote the increased use of alternative energy sources.***

County government should support or provide incentives to homeowners who develop small scale alternative energy production. Permitting should be considered for construction of wind-generation turbines, allowing some local control in siting large wind-generation towers.

### **Priorities**

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. Included in this action would be the assessment of areas where local private sources of water are inadequate or failing. Implementation of suggested county regulatory actions should occur concurrently.

### **Ongoing Evaluation**

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 complied with.



<b>Infrastructure:</b> <i>Maintain current infrastructure where adequate, support improvement of critical existing facilities where needed, and promote expansion into areas where population density, lack of available services, or potential environmental hazards make such expansion advisable.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 5.1</b>	<b>Collect and maintain data on current status of infrastructure delivery and needs.</b>			
Objective 5.1.1	Collect information on coverage areas, customers served, and capacity for additional customers from: Allegheny Power, Craig Botetourt Electric, Mountaineer Gas, Red Sulphur PSD, Gap Mills PSD, Union and Alderson municipal water sewer systems, Greenville Community Water System, Verizon, U.S. Cellular, AT&T, DSL & broadband providers.		•	
Objective 5.1.2	Catalog risks which could cause interruption of electric or telephone service (e.g., transmission/telephone lines at risk, substations located in floodplains).		•	
Objective 5.1.3	Identify areas where local private sources of water are inadequate, unsafe or failing.	•		
<b>Goal 5.2</b>	<b>Provide for public water and sewer as needed.</b>			
Objective 5.2.1	Support adequate maintenance of existing water and sewer systems through staff training, regular facility assessment, and funding coordination.		•	
Objective 5.2.2	Expand public water and sewer only as need determines and with consideration to preferred development areas.	•		
Objective 5.2.3	Expand public sewer systems, or install alternative treatment systems, where private septic systems are not feasible.	•		
Objective 5.2.4	Provide public water, within financial restraints, for underserved citizens.	•		
Objective 5.2.5	Support the development of private water treatment systems for residential and commercial uses where appropriate.	•		
Objective 5.2.6	Assist residents with acquiring access to quality drinking water.	•		
<b>Goal 5.3</b>	<b>Support the continued availability of utility services to all residents of the county.</b>			
Objective 5.3.1	Require that all new subdivision utilities be placed underground.		•	
<b>Goal 5.4</b>	<b>Expand cellular phone, high-speed internet</b>			

	<b>and cable television services to make such options available for a greater portion of county residents.</b>			
Objective 5.4.1	Encourage government incentives to increase availability of high-speed internet or broadband services.		•	
<b>Goal 5.5</b>	<b>Regulate cellular phone and radio towers.</b>			
Objective 5.5.1	Implement a permitting process for all towers, approving only those that are necessary and in locations which minimize scenic and environmental impacts.	•		
Objective 5.5.2	Require that all towers be removed at the company's expense when they are no longer in use.	•		
<b>Goal 5.6</b>	<b>Promote the increased use of alternative energy sources.</b>			
Objective 5.6.1	Support or provide incentives to homeowners who develop small scale alternative energy production.	•		
Objective 5.6.2	Require permitting for construction of wind-generation turbines, providing for local input on if and where turbines are located.	•		
<b>Goal 5.7</b>	<b>Coordinate the delivery and upgrade of infrastructure service.</b>			
Objective 5.7.1	The Planning Commission, County Commission, PSD boards and others must meet regularly to coordinate and prioritize infrastructure services.		•	

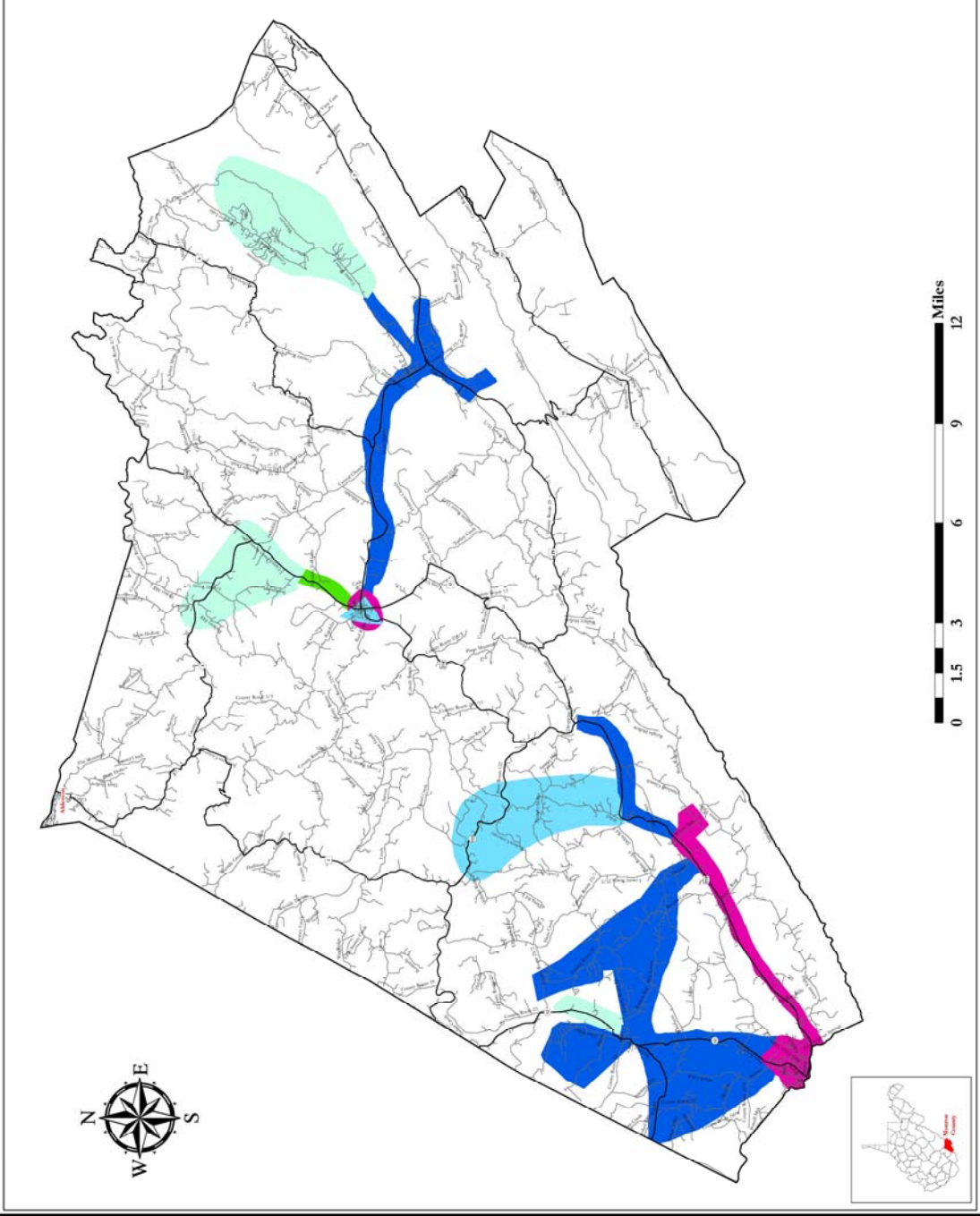
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Water & Sewer



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Water & Sewer
- Water
- Planned Water Extension
- Funded Water/Awaiting Construction
- Existing Water/Application Filed
- Water Extension Application Filed
- Water Under Construction
- Sewer
- Planned Sewer Application Filed
- Water and Sewer



Produced By Region I PDC  
 1439 E. Main St., Suite 5  
 Princeton, WV 24740  
 (304) 431-7225  
[www.regiononepdc.org](http://www.regiononepdc.org)

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## ***Public Services***

**Purpose: *Provide and/or enhance services which meet the medical, cultural, historical, community, social, and educational needs of county residents.***

Assisting with the coordination of public services is a critical function of a Planning Commission and the County Comprehensive Plans. Within this context, “public services” includes services and amenities related to medical care, cultural resources, family support, and education.

### ***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.

### ***Current Status***

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.

<u>Health Indicators</u>	Percentage of residents Monroe County	Percentage of residents West Virginia	Rank Amongst WV Counties
<b>No Health Insurance Ages 18-64</b>	27.9	22.8	9
<b>No Leisure Exercise</b>	33.8	28.2	7
<b>Diabetes</b>	10.3	10	13
<b>Hypertension</b>	36.3	32.6	5
<b>High Cholesterol</b>	42.2	39.1	12
<b>Obesity</b>	29.3	27.7	12
<b>Cigarette Smoking</b>	27.1	27.5	21
<b>Smokeless Tobacco Use</b>	23.5	16.9	7
<b>Binge Drinking</b>	7.6	10.1	28
<b>Heart Attack, Angina or Stroke</b>	16.2	13	5
<b>Current Asthma</b>	9	9.2	17
<b>Arthritis</b>	38.2	33.9	7
<b>Fair or Poor Health</b>	29.8	24.3	7

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.

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; Radford University; Roanoke College; Hollins College; and Virginia Western.

Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue Services: The county is currently being served by the following fire departments and rescue squads:

Fire Departments: Union, Lindside, Ballard, Peterstown

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

Alderson: The Monroe County side of the city is provided fire and rescue services headquartered 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.

Training requirements for fire and rescue squads are established by the state. Since Monroe County and many counties in West Virginia are served primarily 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 to better accommodate volunteer fire and rescue squads.

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.

## ***Regulatory Authority***

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 FRN has a comprehensive website at <http://www.monroecountywestvirginiafamilyresourcenetwork.com>, containing a link to a resource directory, the most recent Community Plan, and a *Monroe County Assessment, 2007*. 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.

On National Forest lands, the US Forest Service provides law enforcement, fire control and emergency services to some extent.

***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

## ***Planning for the Provision of Future Public Services***

### Goals

#### ***Facilitate increased coordination between related agencies and organizations, and expansion of services where appropriate.***

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.

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.

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.

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

***Provide for animal control services.***

As stated above, animal control is an essential service, and warrants additional staff and funding as those resources become available. Animal control services should include support of the Monroe County Animal League.

***Support and improve disaster preparedness across the county.***

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.

Require disaster preparedness drills at regular intervals, involving county OES and various fire and rescue departments.

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.

***Support improvements to schools in keeping with Board of Education priorities.***

The Monroe County Board of Education is required to develop an Educational Plan for the county’s schools every 5 years. The Planning Commission, County Commission, and other service providers should support and coordinate with that Plan to the fullest extent possible. Likewise, the Planning Commission should be represented when such Education Plans are being developed.

Many residents have also voiced support for the Board’s efforts to upgrade or replace the Peterstown High School, a facility which is currently inadequate to serve the

education needs of that region. This should remain a priority, and garner support from the County Commission and other local government entities.



<b>Public Services</b> <i>Provide and/or enhance services which meet the medical, cultural, historical, community, social, educational, and disaster needs of county residents.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 6.1</b>	<b>Provide for animal control services.</b>			
Objective 6.1.1	Create a new animal control service, and provide for stray animal housing.		•	
<b>Goal 6.2</b>	<b>Support improvements to schools in keeping with Board of Education priorities.</b>	•		
Objective 6.2.1	Prioritize upgrading & improvement to Peterstown school buildings.	•		
<b>Goal 6.3</b>	<b>Support and improve disaster preparedness across the county.</b>			
Objective 6.3.1	Ensure full development of an incident command structure based on the requirements of the National Incident Management System.	•		
Objective 6.3.2	Ensure that county emergency plan is adequate to meet the needs of residents in each individual geographic location, including those with special needs.	•		
Objective 6.3.3	Continue county wide emergency preparedness training for the 911 center, rescue squads and fire departments.	•		
Objective 6.3.4	Identify how responsibilities will be shared during a county wide disaster or community disaster.	•		
Objective 6.3.5	Increase opportunities for public education in disaster preparedness.	•		
<b>Goal 6.4</b>	<b>Facilitate increased coordination between related agencies and organizations, and expansion of services where appropriate.</b>			
Objective 6.4.1	Improve communication between agencies and organizations through workshops, informational meetings and other venues (e.g. the Office of Emergency Services, WV DHHR, Monroe County FRN, CASE Monroe, WVU Extension and the Board of Education).	•		
Objective 6.4.2	Support fundraising and volunteer recruitment efforts.		•	
Objective 6.4.3	Promote 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.			
Objective 6.4.4	Increase support, including financial assistance, provided to local libraries as funding is available.	•		

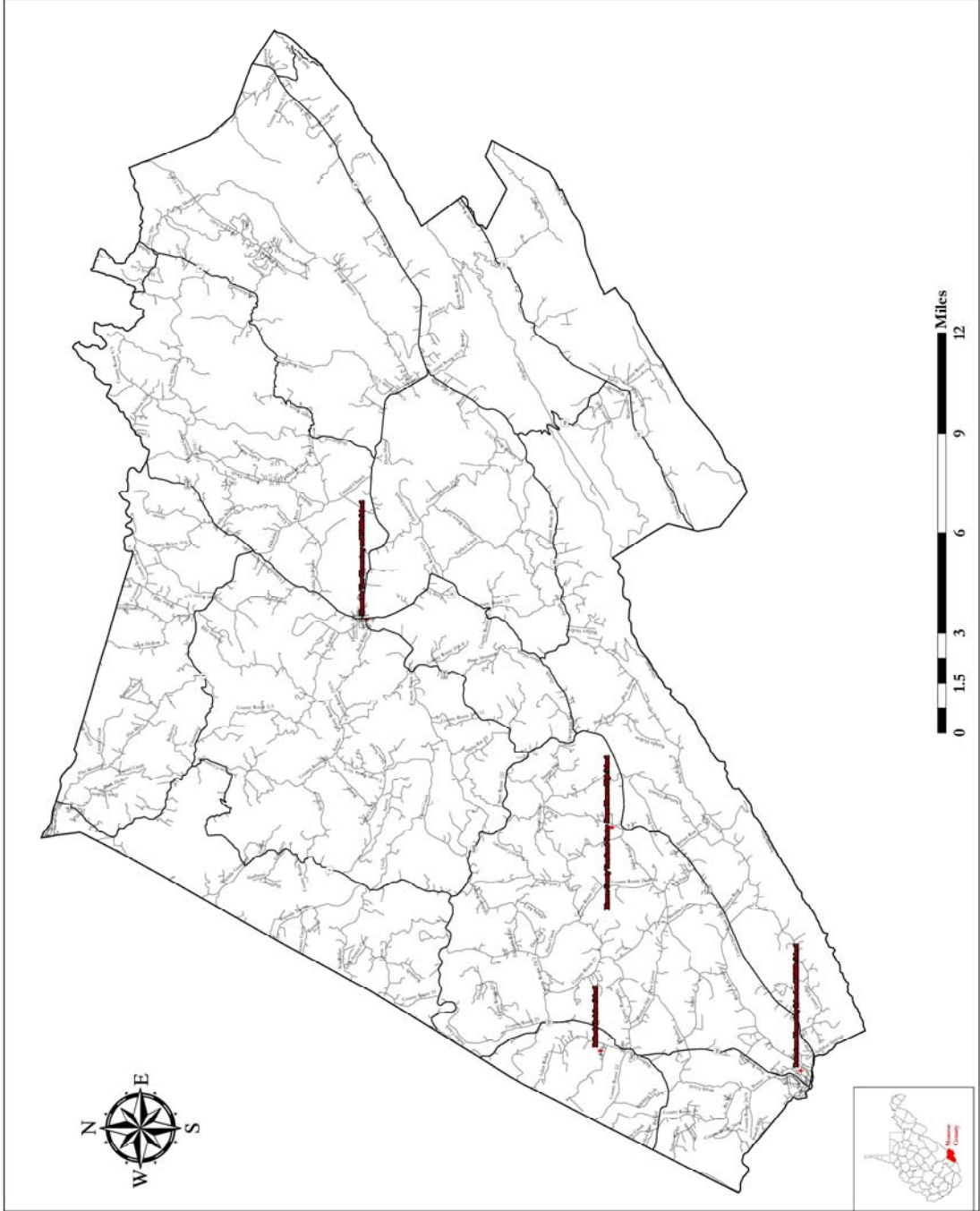
# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Schools



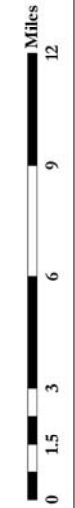
### Legend

- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Schools
- Secondary Roads



Produced By Region I PDC  
1439 E. Main St., Suite 5  
Princeton, WV 24740  
(304) 431-7225  
[www.regiononepdc.org](http://www.regiononepdc.org)

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## ***Recreation and Tourism***

***Purpose: Promote the creation of additional recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors, and encouraging growth of the tourism industry as a means of economic opportunity.***

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.

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 (2008), 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 is located on the Monroe County side of the river.

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 8.8 in 2006p;
- Earnings were impacted by visitors (\$M) at 1.7 in 2000 and 2.0 in 2006p;
- and Employment (jobs) decreased slightly from 140 in 2000 to 130 in 2006p (2.9% 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 |

Some of Monroe County's Historic 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, Mountain Meadow, Potts Valley Outfitters and Hollow Hill Farm), 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.

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.

***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, US Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers.

## ***Planning for Future Recreation and Tourism***

### **Challenges**

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.



## **Goals**

### ***Support public and private tourism expansion efforts by coordinating the collection and dissemination of important data.***

Multiple organizations and individual business owners are contributing to tourism expansion in the county through site and destination promotion, and marketing of local tourism related businesses. Local government should encourage these and additional efforts through coordination of relevant data collection and distribution. Outputs could include current local tourism maps, collected interpretive information, and joint marketing campaigns. These efforts may best be served through support of the ongoing efforts of Monroe County Tourism.

### ***Support historic and cultural tourism efforts.***

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.

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.

### ***Support protection of open space and public recreation areas.***

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.

***Support the creation of new tourism-related business wherever possible.***

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.

Creation of new tourism-related business in the private sector is needed, and should be encouraged in whatever fashion possible.

***Protect and expand the county's system of trails and scenic byways.***

Much time and effort on the part of local volunteers has been put into the development of trails and byways, and these efforts have clearly supported tourism promotion in the county. Byways should continue to be protected and maintained.

Efforts to expand hiking and biking trails in the county are also underway, and these should likewise be encouraged. Local government can help ensure that mechanisms are put in place to provide for long-term upkeep of new trails and byways.

***Coordinate and support related efforts of local government agencies and organizations.***

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.

***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.

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

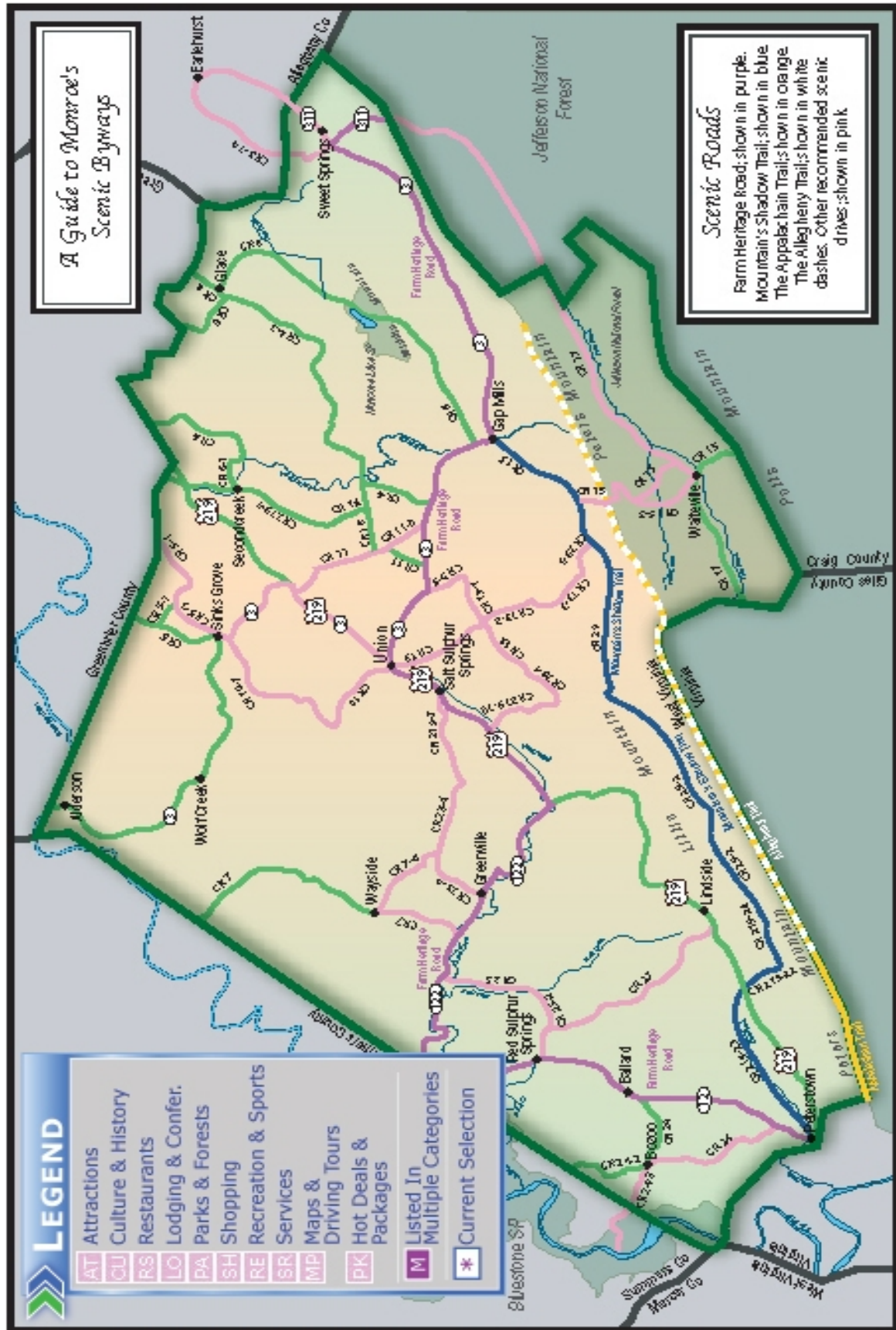
Preservation of historic homes, and use of historic buildings for business purposes would also positively impact tourism and recreation (see *Historic Preservation*).

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.

***In general, local government should encourage public input and development of locally-specific guidelines regarding recreational activities that are environmentally destructive, excessively loud, or may not be in keeping with other stated planning goals.***

<b>Recreation and Tourism</b> <i>Promote the creation of additional recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors, and encouraging growth of the tourism industry as a means of economic opportunity.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 7.1</b>	<b>Support public and private tourism expansion efforts by coordinating the collection and dissemination of important data.</b>			
Objective 7.1.1	Update and maintain a comprehensive list and map of currently available tourism and recreational opportunities.	•		
Objective 7.1.2	Collect and maintain a comprehensive list of potential tourism or recreational opportunities, and steps needed to make them publicly accessible.		•	
Objective 7.1.3	Collect, maintain, and distribute data on current level of tourism site usage, visitor numbers, and economic impacts.		•	
<b>Goal 7.2</b>	<b>Support historic and cultural tourism efforts.</b>			
Objective 7.2.1	Support the preservation of historic structures in the county, and assist the Monroe County Historical Society with their efforts.	•		
Objective 7.2.2	Encourage and facilitate participation in historic home or site tours.		•	
Objective 7.2.3	Provide staffing of historic sites to allow easier visitation by the public.		•	
Objective 7.2.4	Encourage those privately own historic properties to make them open to the public.		•	
Objective 7.2.5	Support efforts to develop increased agri-tourism sites and events.		•	
<b>Goal 7.3</b>	<b>Support protection of open space and public recreation areas.</b>			
Objective 7.3.1	Support local land trusts and the Monroe County Farmland Protection board in efforts to protect open space in the county.	•		
Objective 7.3.2	Maintain current publicly accessible recreation areas and increase where appropriate for hiking, biking, hunting, and other outdoor recreation pursuits.	•		
Objective 7.3.3	Expand economic benefits of tourism on all public lands.		•	
<b>Goal 7.4</b>	<b>Support the creation of new tourism-related business wherever possible.</b>			

Objective 7.4.1	Encourage the development of new lodgings, restaurants, and craft or specialty stores, or other related private sector businesses.	•		
<b>Goal 7.5</b>	<b>Protect and expand the county's system of trails and scenic byways.</b>		•	
Objective 7.5.1	Establish bike trails and a bike-friendly atmosphere.		•	
Objective 7.5.2	Provide support to Monroe County Tourism in the creation of a network of biking trails on lightly used or abandoned county roads.		•	
Objective 7.5.3	Protect 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.		•	
<b>Goal 7.6</b>	<b>Coordinate and support related efforts of local government agencies and organizations.</b>			
Objective 7.6.1	Maintain the county tourism office, and provide additional resources for expansion when possible.		•	
Objective 7.6.2	Support a vibrant tourism economy by adhering to other related priorities in the County Comprehensive Plan, including protection of the county's agricultural character, the revitalization of town centers, reasonable control of strip development, management of subdivisions, protection of clean water, provision of litter control and the reduction of public eyesores (abandoned cars, dumps, derelict buildings) and adult entertainment venues.	•		



A Guide to Monroe's Scenic Byways

**Scenic Roads**  
 Farm Heritage Road; shown in purple.  
 Mountain's Shadow Trail; shown in blue.  
 The Appalachian Trails; shown in orange.  
 The Allegheny Trails; shown in white dashes. Other recommended scenic drives; shown in pink.

**LEGEND**

AT	Attractions
CU	Culture & History
RS	Restaurants
LO	Lodging & Confer.
PA	Parks & Forests
SH	Shopping
RE	Recreation & Sports
SR	Services
MP	Maps & Driving Tours
PK	Hot Deals & Packages
M	Listed In Multiple Categories
*	Current Selection

## ***Economic Development***

***Purpose: Identify development opportunities that best meet the rural nature of Monroe Count; continue promotion of sustainable industries such as agriculture, small industry, forestry, tourism and recreation, and service oriented businesses.***

### **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 1800s. The gentle climate and healing springs in the area provided the backdrop of a thriving tourist industry. The demand for the farmers' 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 much of today's national economy.

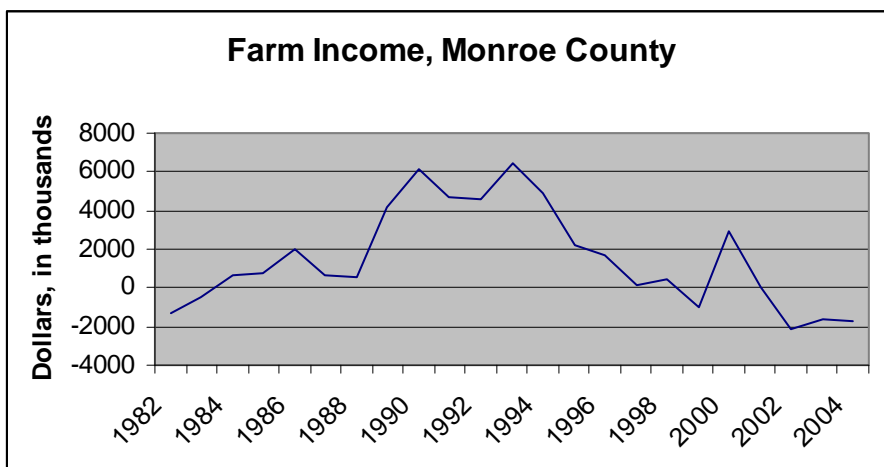
As the role of farming has waxed and waned in this county, other means of employment have been sought and occasionally provided. Often, civic and business leaders in the early 1900's were successful in attracting industry to areas within close proximity to the county. This has provided work opportunities 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.

## **Current Economic Structure**

### ***Agriculture Today***

Farming continues to play a significant part in the county's economy – although not nearly to the extent of its historic role. Farming does account for 18% of full and part-time jobs in the county. And in an era when corporate farms have become the norm, 96% of Monroe's farms are operated by a family or individual.

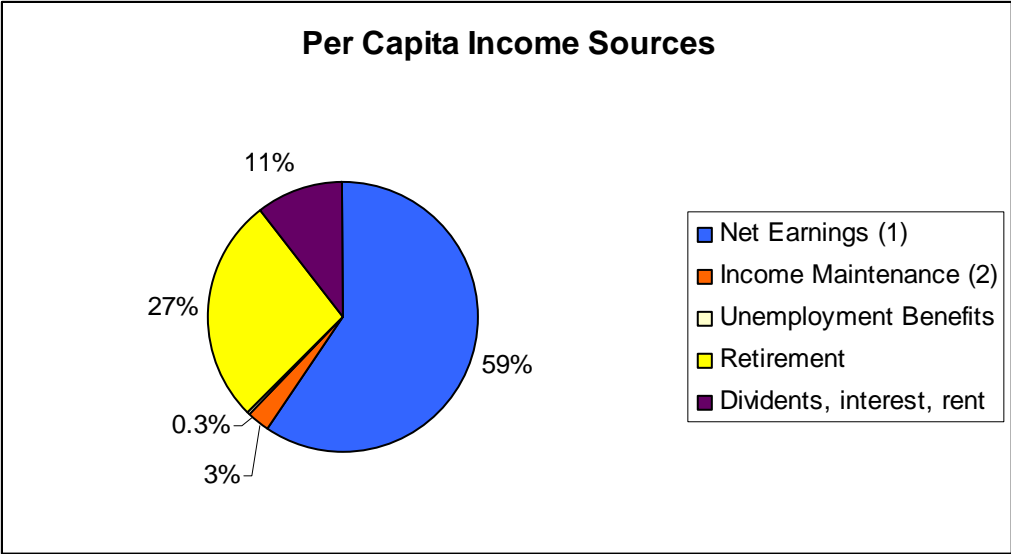
But while farms cover nearly half of Monroe's landscape, they account for 2% of all wages paid out in the county. In 2002, there were 682 farms in Monroe County. 465 of those farms, or nearly 70%, made less than \$10,000. Total market production of farms in Monroe is greater than \$17,000,000 a year; for several years, overall proceeds coming from farms in Monroe has been in the negative.



### **Sources of Income**

Average per capita income in Monroe in 2004 was \$20,615. This ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the state, and total personal income throughout Monroe accounted for .6% of West Virginia's total.





(1) Includes wages, compensation  
 (2) Includes SSI payments, general assistance payments, food stamp payments, emergency assistance  
 From 2004 data

Local, state and federal government employment accounts for half of all wages dispersed in Monroe County. In addition to farms, the largest employers by industry include manufacturing, education and health services, and retail trade.

<b>Industry</b>	<b>% of total county employment</b>	<b>% of total wage compensation</b>
Government (federal, state, local)	20%	50%
Farm	18%	2%
Construction	9%	10%
Retail	8%	3%
Health Care and Social Services	6%	4%
Forestry	2%	1%
Entertainment, Gambling, and Recreation	1%	1%

40% of Monroe’s workforce commutes outside of the county to work, reinforcing the general perception that many of Monroe’s towns are increasingly becoming “bedroom communities,” particularly in the southern end of the county.

<b>Work County</b>	<b>Number of Employed Residents Traveling to Work County</b>	<b>As a Percentage of Monroe County Employed Residents</b>
Monroe County, WV	2,073	39.9
Greenbrier County, WV	1,123	21.6
Giles County, VA	889	17.1
Mercer County, WV	189	3.6

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

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.

- 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.

## **Planning for Economic Development**

This and future economic plans should 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.

We expect growth will be of such scale that it can be managed and adequately funded, ecologically feasible, and socially supported. As with other components of the Plan, design is for an expected population growth of about 15% in the next ten years. This will equate to over 1,000 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.

We are aware of the extent of the workforce (over 20%) that commutes to out-of-county jobs and intend to work with the citizenry to keep this number acceptable. We are also aware that many of those who commute are content with keeping their living quarters separate from their work environment so as to maintain the rural quality of life they enjoy at home.

Any economic plan must emphasize sustainability. This can be defined as economic development that can be depended on for the long term. Strategies should consider whether any proposed development is ecologically sustainable, consistent with the social values of the community, and from the grassroots of the community. Any plan should 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 that complies with all the considerations above, 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, including treatment, distribution, and supply
- ◇ Sewer, including treatment and collection
- ◇ Transportation, including road, rail, water, and air
- ◇ Power: including both generation and distribution
- ◇ Solid waste, including collection, disposal, and recycling
- ◇ Storm water, including drainage, collection, and treatment
- ◇ Communications, including microwave, fiber optics, towers, etc.

(2) Soft Infrastructure:

- ◇ Schools and education facilities
- ◇ Libraries
- ◇ medical facilities
- ◇ police
- ◇ fire and rescue
- ◇ open space and recreation.

(3) Green (natural) Infrastructure:

- ◇ 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.**

### **Goals**

#### ***Manage environmental impacts of development at the local level to promote health and safety and adequate living conditions of all residents.***

As discussed throughout the Comprehensive Plan, protection of natural resources, and particularly water resources, are of primary concern of Monroe residents. Any commercial development will need to be monitored to ensure minimal environmental impacts. The WV Bureau of Public Health and local public water providers have identified areas of concern around public water sources, and any consideration of commercial and industrial development should be thoroughly scrutinized and reviewed with public infrastructure managers.

With regard to agriculture and forestry, best management practices should be encouraged and promoted by local government and its private and federal partners. Monroe farmers and foresters have managed resources sustainably for generations, and as increased demands are put on the local environment, we must continue to ensure that best practices continue to be the norm.

#### ***Support efforts to better educate & train workforce.***

With an emphasis on promoting small business growth and development, Monroe's workforce will need to be flexible, adaptive, and entrepreneurial. Workforce training at all levels should continue to emphasize the essential skills demanded by all small businesses – critical thinking, communication, technology applications, and others.

***Solicit or promote business which would provide economic opportunities without negatively impacting rural character and culture (e.g. tourism, crafts, artisans, high-tech, innovative agriculture).***

Agriculture will continue to remain a cultural and economic mainstay in the county for the foreseeable future. With a large number of small independently-owned farms, prime farm land, and proximity to markets, Monroe is well positioned to explore and implement innovative approaches to production and marketing.

As stated previously, existing small businesses should be supported by all available means, including discouraging “big box” national retailers particularly when in direct competition with locally-owned businesses.

***Implement extensive outreach and collaboration efforts with each community to determine the preferred and locally-acceptable levels of development.***

Given the diverse needs of the county, every effort should be made to collaborate with individual communities to further refine local goals and preferences. Local input should be of primary importance in the consideration of any commercial or industrial development.

<b>7. Economic Development</b> <i>Identify development opportunities that best meet the rural nature of Monroe County, continue promotion of agriculture, small industry, forestry, tourism and recreation and service oriented businesses.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 8.1</b>	<b>Manage environmental impacts of development at the local level to promote health and safety and adequate living conditions of all residents.</b>		•	
Objective 8.1.1	Promote development that preserves the quality and quantity of surface and sub-surface water supplies.	•		
Objective 8.1.2	Promote a harmonious relationship between timber industry and conservation needs utilizing Best Management Practices.		•	
Objective 8.1.3	Promote a harmonious relationship between agricultural industry and conservation needs utilizing Best Management Practices.		•	
Objective 8.1.4	Infrastructure limitations and capacities should be considered when siting any development.	•		
<b>Goal 8.2</b>	<b>Support efforts to better educate &amp; train workforce.</b>		•	
<b>Goal 8.3</b>	<b>Solicit or promote business which would provide economic opportunities without negatively impacting rural character and culture (e.g. tourism, crafts, artisans, high-tech, innovative agriculture).</b>	•		
Objective 8.3.1	Foster collaborative relationship with county extension office, farm service agency, NRCS, etc. to research and develop innovative and desirable agricultural opportunities and markets.		•	
Objective 8.3.2	Foster collaborative relationship with WV WorkForce Development, the Economic Development Authority, etc. to research and develop innovative and desirable non-agricultural		•	

	opportunities and markets.			
Objective 8.3.3	Emphasize and support locally-owned businesses by minimizing mega-commercial development and big box stores, and that support local businesses that provide employees with livable wages and benefits.	•		
Objective 8.3.4	Promote vertical marketing of timber products.	•		
<b>Goal 8.4</b>	<b>Implement extensive outreach and collaboration efforts with each community to determine the preferred and locally-acceptable levels of development.</b>	•		
Objective 8.4.1	Consider and identify those areas where the citizenry wishes to remain residential/agricultural instead of job centered.	•		
Objective 8.4.2	Consider agricultural, service, and tourist (or even no) industries as more appropriate for those areas where the citizenry prefer a rural environment.	•		



## ***9. Preferred Development Areas***

***Purpose: To identify areas where incentives should be used to encourage development, infill development, or redevelopment in order to promote well designed and coordinated communities and prevent sprawl.***

Monroe County has in the past 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 sprawl-type development is becoming more evident in certain parts of the county. Some areas seek to continue to grow, while other areas seem to exhibit a preference for remaining rural.

### ***History***

Locations of pioneer thoroughfares and forts, access to natural resources such as water, tillable soil, and timber, and efforts by Colonial Virginia to settle its western frontier through entities such as the Greenbrier Land Company or Loyal Land Company, all impacted early settlement patterns within the county. With the exception of the town of Union, which was legislated into existence in 1799 as the seat of government for the new county of Monroe, centers of development sprang up at different times across the county as dictated both by chance and convenience for the residents of the time. Future towns and villages might have begun at the location of an early water-powered mill, at an important crossroads, or (in one case) as the result of the coming of the railroad in the 1880s.

For the last century, development areas in the county have basically included three incorporated towns and a few dozen unincorporated villages. In the past, these unincorporated communities often contained a school, post office, church, a general store, and perhaps other businesses. At present, many of these former communities are represented only by a church or perhaps a community center. It is only within the last few decades that significant tendencies have been observed for creation of housing developments or commercial enterprises outside of existing towns and villages.

### ***Development Trends and Boundaries***

Very few mechanisms are currently in place which have any impact in controlling or regulating where continued development does or does not occur. Past development trends have simply reflected personal preference and tradition. Some control lies with the County Board of Health and County public health department inspection system in regard to the necessity of approving septic systems for commercial and residential developments which lie outside of public sewer systems. Development within flood plains is regulated to some degree by federal floodplain designations and county enforcement in regard to the same. Other existing regulatory authority, especially with larger developments or industries, may also lie with the DEP; Dept of Environmental Health; Dept of Ag; Corps of Engineers; and DOT. City and town ordinances play a role within their jurisdictions. Enforcement is not strongly and uniformly in place. Funding and staffing are major issues.

### ***Planning for Future Development***

A primary goal of the Planning Commission is the creation of a plan that facilitates and supports desirable growth while at the same time offering protection from sprawl, in concert with the Land Use and Economic Development components of the county plan. Monroe's towns are still the center of commerce and population in this county. It is the planning commission's goal to establish incentives for maintaining our towns as viable, non-sprawling, resident friendly entities, to preserve rural and natural areas in between areas of development, and to encourage growth only in those areas where the infrastructure and social support can sustain it.

### **Possible Interventions**

West Virginia Code section §8A-3-4 requires that county planning commissions establish preferred development areas within their jurisdictions. Rather than selecting currently undeveloped areas of the county for development, it is the preference of the Monroe County Planning Commission that preferred development areas generally be

established to include and be limited to the county's three municipalities as well as numerous other traditional village centers. In addition, the Rt. 219 corridor between Lindside and Peterstown has also been selected as a development area; largely because considerable development is ongoing here already, and because the corridor is served by public water and sewer service.

This approach is consistent with Planning Commission goals of both preserving and improving the vitality and economic health of traditional town centers, as well as protecting open space and rural character in the outlying areas. Suggested boundaries of development areas are provided at the end of this section.

Actions in conjunction with and in addition to the establishment of preferred development areas would include:

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.
4. Create a feedback process that measures the effectiveness of the plan at guiding growth in the designated areas and protecting undeveloped areas. Continue to monitor public acceptance of the designations, and assess any indicators which might show potential need for future modifications.

## **Proposed Preferred Development Areas**

**The following recommendations are proposals, and not intended to be exclusive or inflexible.**

### **Alderson (Monroe side only)**

Commercial – current municipal boundary plus .2 miles in all directions

Residential – current municipal boundary plus .4 miles in all directions

### **Ballard**

Commercial – .2 mile radius from intersection of WV 12 and CR33

Residential - .4 mile radius from intersection of WV 12 and CR 33

### **Bozoo**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 24 and CR 24/2

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 24 and CR 24/2

### **Cashmere**

Commercial - .2 mile radius from intersection of WV12 and CR 31/4

Residential - .4 mile radius from intersection of WV12 and CR 31/4

### **Cloverdale**

Residential - .2 mile radius from intersection of CR 24 and CR 24/8

### **Coulter's Chapel**

Commercial - .2 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 25

Residential - .4 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR25

### **Creamery**

Commercial - .15 radius from intersection of CR 7 and CR7/2

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 7 and CR 7/2

**Gap Mills**

Commercial and Residential - .3 miles on either side of WV 3, from Red Mill to intersection of WV 3 and CR 3/19

Residential Only - .2 miles on either side of CR 15 from intersection of WV 3 and CR 15 to intersection of CR 15 and CR 15/8.

All of CR 15/1 excluded from preferred development area.

**Gates**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 13/1 and CR 3/9

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 13/1 and CR 3/9

**Glace**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 8 and CR 4/2

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 8 and CR 4/2

**Greenville**

Commercial and Residential - .2 miles on either side of WV 122, between intersection of WV 122 and CR 23/4 and intersection of WV 122 and CR 23/3

**Hillsdale**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 11 and CR 219/5

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 11 and CR 219/5

**Hollywood**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 4 and CR 4/2

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 4 and CR 4/2

**Keenan**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and CR 11

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and CR 11

**Knobs**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 10 and CR 10/1

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 10 and CR 10/1

**Lillydale**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 219/7 and CR 219/11

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 219/7 and CR 219/11

**Lindside**

Commercial - .2 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 219/19

Residential - .4 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 219/19

**Lindside-Peterstown Corridor**

Commercial and Residential - .3 miles on either side of US 219 between Lindside and Peterstown.

**Moncove Lake**

Commercial and Residential - .2 miles from CR 8, along SE side only, between intersections of CR 8 and both ends of the lake loop road.

**Monitor**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 219/4

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 219/4

**Orchard**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 27 and CR 33

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 27 and CR 33

**Peterstown**

Commercial – current municipal boundary plus .2 miles in all directions

Residential – current municipal boundary plus .4 miles in all directions

Plus Lindside-Peterstown Corridor

CR 219/23 excluded from preferred development area

**Pickaway**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and WV 3

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and WV 3

**Raines Corner**

Commercial – .15 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and WV 122

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and WV 122

**Red Sulphur Springs**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of WV 12 and CR 27

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of WV 12 and CR 27

**Rock Camp**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 29

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 29

**Salt Sulphur Springs**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 219/7

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of US 219 and CR 219/7

**Sarton**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 7/4 and CR 23/13

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 7/4 and CR 23/13

**Second Creek**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 219/1 and CR 219/4

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 219/1 and CR 219/4

### **Sinks Grove**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and CR 5

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and CR 5

### **Sweet Springs**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and US 311

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and US 311

### **Union**

Commercial – current municipal boundary plus .2 miles in all directions

Residential – current municipal boundary plus .4 miles in all directions

219 corridor north of municipal boundary and area between WV 3 and CR 13 SE of municipal boundary is excluded from preferred development area.

### **Waiteville**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 17 and CR 15/3

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 17 and CR 15/3

### **Wayside**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 7 and CR 9

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 7 and CR 9

### **Wikel**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 219/17 and CR 23/7

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 219/17 and CR 23/7

### **Willow Bend**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 13 and CR 29/1

Residential – .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 13 and CR 29/1



**Wolf Creek**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and CR 10

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of WV 3 and CR 10

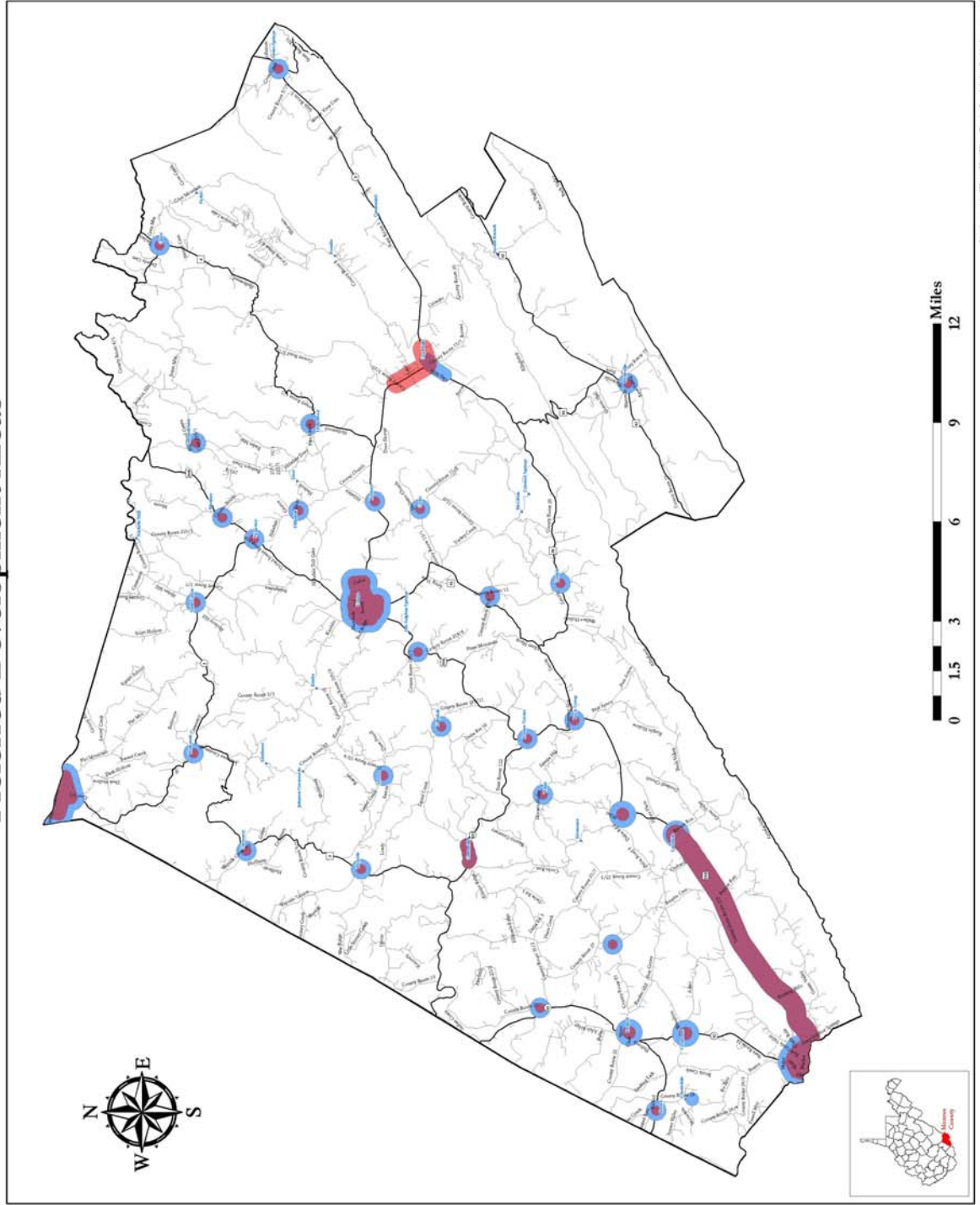
**Zenith**

Commercial - .15 mile radius from intersection of CR 29 and CR 13

Residential - .3 mile radius from intersection of CR 29 and CR 13.

# Monroe County, West Virginia

## Preferred Development Areas



### Legend

- Major Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Preferred Development Areas
- Commercial
- Residential
- County Boundary
- Communities

Produced By Region I PDC  
1439 E. Main St., Suite 5  
Princeton, WV 24740  
(304) 431-7225  
www.regiononepdc.org

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## **Financing**

The County Comprehensive Plan lays out a series of ambitious goals, many of which will need some level of financial support. Recognizing that the County Commission and its affiliates have very limited revenue streams or budget surpluses, the following is a brief sampling of potential funding sources and resources. It is, by no means, meant to be a comprehensive list; in fact, the very nature of local government financing and resource development in West Virginia demands a creative, dynamic and adaptive approach.

## **Resources**

### **Natural Resource Protection and Restoration**

#### Potential Partnerships

- 1) Local watershed groups, including Indian Creek Watershed Association and The Friends of Second Creek, have access to volunteers and state technical and financial assistance.
- 2) Local land trusts and county Farmland Protection Program have access to resources for land protection, including state and federal financing programs (e.g. state and federal Farmland Protection Programs, Forest Legacy Program).

#### State and Federal Government Resources

- 1) WV Dept. of Environmental Protection has several funding programs available for stream protection and restoration. DEP's Non-Point Source Program oversees watershed-based funding programs, including the Stream Partners program and Non-Point Source project funding, authorized by section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This funding can be used for projects that remove pollutants

caused by non-point sources (e.g. agriculture, excess sedimentation, failing septic systems), and requires the development of a Watershed-Based Plan.

Given that a small portion of Monroe County lies in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, additional resources are available primarily through DEP. The US Environmental Protection Agency also has specific funding programs, often best accessed, again, through WVDEP.

- 2) WV Bureau of Public Health has funding programs available for source water protection. Any funding sought should be coordinated with local public water providers.
- 3) WV Conservation Agency and the Southern Conservation District have access to funding, equipment, and staff to assist with stream restoration and protection efforts.
- 4) The WV Development Office administers the Land and Conservation Fund, which can support protection and related recreation programs.

#### Private and University Resources

- 1) West Virginia University can often access funding through the Water Research Institute. Technical resources can often be leveraged through various academic programs, including groundwater and stream assessments.
- 2) Resource Conservation and Development office is a publicly-supported non-profit organization affiliated with US Dept. of Agriculture. RC&Ds can often provide small amounts of funding for protection and restoration projects, and can provide assistance with accessing additional funds for similar projects.
- 3) USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service provides funding for land protection to private landowners through several programs, including the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and others.
- 4) Private non-profit organizations that can provide financial or technical assistance for resource protection includes Canaan Valley Institute, American Rivers, American Farmland Trust, Virginia Environmental Endowment, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and others.

## Housing

### Potential Partnerships

- 1) The Greenbrier County Housing Authority and its affiliate the Southeastern Appalachian Rural Alliance have access to state and federal resources for housing development and rehabilitation, as well as a rental assistance program.
- 2) WV Habitat for Humanity has local affiliates statewide, and can coordinate home construction for qualified applicants.
- 3) Faith-based organizations often provide volunteer and financial assistance for specific housing projects. The WV Council of Churches can provide information on specific organizations and their areas of service.

### State and Federal Government Resources

- 1) The WV Housing Development Fund coordinates all housing-related funding available to the state, and has a variety of funding programs for home and rental unit development.
- 2) USDA's Rural Development program also has several assistance programs related to housing, including its Housing Preservation Grant Program, its 502 Direct and Guaranteed Loan Programs, and a 504 Housing Repair Program.

### Private and University Resources

- 1) CommunityWorks in WV is a non-profit membership organization that can provide technical assistance and loan funding.
- 2) The WV Affordable Housing Trust Fund is a relatively new program to WV, providing grant and loan funding for housing-related endeavors.
- 3) Several foundations and federally-sponsored organizations have an emphasis on affordable housing. In WV, some of the largest private funders or assistance providers include the Benedum Foundation, the Federal Home Loan Bank system, NeighborWorks, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

## **Infrastructure**

### Potential Partnerships

- 1) Local Public Service Districts and municipalities, as the managers of public infrastructure, are critical partners in any development or expansion of water and sewer.
- 2) Region I Planning and Development is one of eight Region's around the state, whose primary purpose is to assist local governments with infrastructure and economic development. Region I coordinates much of the public funding devoted to water and sewer system development in the county, and often acts as a project manager. They have access to a host of other funding and technical assistance programs.

### State and Federal Government Resources

- 1) Most public funding for infrastructure development is coordinated by the WV Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council (IJDC). The IJDC is made up of representatives of several of the major funding entities.
- 2) Specific federal sources for infrastructure funding include:
  - WV State Revolving Loan Fund, directed to the state by USEPA, and managed by the WVDEP;
  - Other EPA-based funding also managed by WVDEP;
  - WV Drinking Water Fund, managed by the WVBPH;
  - USDA's Rural Utility Service program;
  - Various programs available through the US Army Corps of Engineers, typically coordinated by congressional districts;
- 3) The WVDEP's Non-point Source program has, again, small amounts of funding available for clean water projects;
- 4) Low interest loans for septic system installation or upgrades are available through the WV Housing Development Fund and USDA's 504 program, which also has limited grant funding.

### **Other Resources**

- 1) Tax credit programs at both the state and federal level can provide good incentives for private investment, and local government can provide assistance with the application and documentation process. These can include Historic Tax Credits and New Market Tax Credits for larger scale redevelopment projects, renewable and energy efficiency credits for both commercial and residential applications, low income housing tax credits, and others.
- 2) The WV Division of Arts and Culture has several programs available to support historic preservation, arts development and public access to the arts.
- 3) The WV Development Office coordinates a host of funding programs for economic development, including business retention & expansion loans and grants, tourism promotion grants, and access to the Appalachian Regional Commission.

## ***Historic Preservation***

***Purpose: Protect the wealth of historic structures, archeological sites, and landscapes within Monroe County; 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; and nurture Monroe's rather unique cultural identity, reflective of a respect for the land and a respect for generations past.***

Monroe contains an incredible collection of historic architecture. A very general and partial listing includes:

- 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 continuing local interest in quilting and weaving, historic farming techniques, crafts, antiquated building techniques, and community socials and festivals, all reflect evidence of living history.

### **Potential partners**

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).

## **Planning for Future Historic Preservation**

The historic structures and towns that dot the county's landscape are a central component of Monroe's identity. The protection and preservation of these structures is critical to its economic and social development. The preservation and protection of local culture and tradition, in addition to historic structures, must also be considered, along with actions taken to foster its continued importance in local society.

Historic preservation offers increased economic opportunities through tourism, and provides a unique and enjoyable environment in which area residents can live and work.

### **Goals**

#### ***Identify and protect historic buildings and sites within the County.***

The identification and registration of sites with all appropriate organizations and agencies should be strongly encouraged. Coordinate preservation organization and agency requirements with County ordinances to ensure that adequate protection is afforded to sites and structures. The formation of an archive of information and history should be pursued. Conduct additional public surveys to gauge the extent to which county government intervention for historic preservation is acceptable to the public.

#### ***Promote the use & rehabilitation of historic structures.***

The Planning Commission and local partners should encourage any collection and dissemination of information on location and desired use of sites, with owner agreement.

Local government can provide assistance with tax credit applications related to historic preservation and restoration, lower or waive Business and Occupation taxes for reuse and rehabilitation, and offer other incentives.

All efforts to reuse or restore historic structures should be recognized and publicly commended.

***Support the efforts of non-governmental organizations and voluntary actions on the part of the general public.***

Continue support of the Monroe County Historical Society's 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.

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.

The Friends of Second Creek have taken on a significant and unprecedented effort to achieve a "Historic Watershed" designation. This approach, as opposed to the more typical neighborhood or community approach, has caught the attention of state and federal agencies, as well as national organizations. They have documented much of the commercial and human history of the watershed. Local government and organizations should not only applaud the work done, but support replication in other areas of the county.

***Conduct public education and outreach regarding historic preservation.***

Information on newly-designated historic sites and success stories in preservation and reuse should routinely be published in local media. Disseminate information regarding funding and support available for historic preservation. Owners of historic properties are not always aware of the historic and cultural value of their property, so specific outreach efforts should be targeted towards those owners.

Local efforts should 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.

<b>Historic Preservation</b> <i>Protect the wealth of historic structures, archeological sites, and landscapes within Monroe County; 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; and nurture Monroe's rather unique cultural identity, reflective of a respect for the land and a respect for generations past.</i>		<b>Very High priority</b>	<b>High priority</b>	<b>Mid-level priority</b>
<b>Goal 9.1</b>	<b>Identify and protect historic buildings and sites within the County.</b>			
Objective 9.1.1	Compile list of properties on the National Register, other historically important properties, and important archeological sites.	•		
Objective 9.1.2	Protect historic buildings and sites through specific county regulations limiting demolition or major modification.	•		
Objective 9.1.3	Require notification of Planning Commission whenever destruction of historic structures or archeological sites is being considered.	•		
Objective 9.1.4	Consider funding public purchase of the most important historic sites if they are in danger of destruction.		•	
<b>Goal 9.2</b>	<b>Promote the use &amp; rehabilitation of historic structures.</b>			
Objective 9.2.1	Create incentives for persons willing to locate businesses or homes in older buildings.	•		
Objective 9.2.2	Create disincentives (e.g. more restrictive permitting) to make it less desirable to construct new buildings when existing structures are available.		•	
Objective 9.2.3	Publicly recognize accomplishments in historic preservation.		•	
<b>Goal 9.3</b>	<b>Support the efforts of non-governmental organizations and voluntary actions on the part of the general public.</b>			
Objective 9.3.1	Support the many efforts of the Monroe County Historical Society.		•	
Objective 9.3.2	Support the watershed-based work of The Friends of Second Creek, and promote replication in other watersheds where there is interest.	•		
Objective 9.3.3	Support efforts to update existing county historic chronicles.	•		
Objective 9.3.4	Facilitate the preservation and protection of local culture and tradition, and support actions taken to foster the continued integration of that culture		•	

	in local society.			
<b>Goal 9.4</b>	<b>Conduct public education and outreach regarding historic preservation.</b>			
Objective 9.4.1	Conduct additional public surveys to gauge the extent to which county government intervention for historic preservation is acceptable to the public.	•		
Objective 9.4.2	Promote the economic benefits of historic preservation and tourism, as well as the improved quality of life historic preservation affords.		•	
Objective 9.4.3	Provide outreach and education to specific historic property owners regarding both the local importance of the site and funding opportunities for preservation and restoration.	•		