

Skate park

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A ban is not the only way to keep skateboarders out of the streets and off both public and private property. Some municipalities in Luzerne County have begun providing skate parks either within existing parks, or by designating new land specifically for the parks.

In 2001, Exeter Borough installed a skate park in an effort to help curb the number of skateboarders on their streets, only to have it closed due to damage less than a year later.

According to Pam Fenner, Exeter Borough's Park and Recreation President, Exeter and the local police association spent approximately \$6,000 to create the park that has been closed indefinitely.

"There were so many kids on bikes and rollerblades, they destroyed everything," said Fenner.

Fenner said the borough would like to reopen the park if money could be obtained for more durable equipment. She is currently looking into the possibility of getting equipment that would be mostly made out of metal.

In addition to highly durable

equipment, Fenner said she would recommend separate places for different age groups. Although no one was ever hurt, she said there was always a concern that a smaller child would get hurt in a collision with an older child.

"First of all they just need a place to go," said John Tasco, father of 14-year-old petition organizer Alex Tasco. "They take buses into Wilkes-Barre just to have some place to go."

"They're not smoking, drinking or fighting, it's a healthy sport," said Doreen Henderson, a friend of Alex's family.

James Balavage, Kingston Township's Chief of Police said there is no ordinance prohibiting skateboarding in the township but that skateboarders have become an issue in parts of Shavertown — mostly around the post office and at the Back Mountain Shopping Center.

"There is no place for these children to go; hopefully someone will recognize it's a popular sport and that maybe something should be installed for these kids," said Balavage.



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Mike Purdy leaped off the loading dock at a Dallas Borough business. He and his skateboarding friends want to build a skatepark so they can participate in their sport legally.

Prior to the installation of signs prohibiting skateboarding and trespassing at Shavertown businesses, Balavage said parents would bring their children in from out of the area to skate.

Balavage said Kingston Township started handling the issue by maintaining a list of children caught in violation of the signs. The second time they are caught they receive a citation.

Private for-profit businesses have sprung up to fill the needs of children active in skateboarding such as the Wyoming Valley Sports Dome in Wilkes-Barre. However, the boys are quick to point out that even the dome is closed in the winter.

Mike, Alex and Josh — and they say many others — skate in Dallas Borough despite the ordinance prohibiting it and the fact they are told daily by police and business owners to leave.

The boys said they are willing to do all of the labor to create the park, and they have some ideas about how it should be run. Mike Purdy, also 14, who seems to have a head for business, said he would want to make it a rule that

"It's clearly an issue that is not going away; I believe we'd be interested in exploring a dialogue."

Joe Moskovitz
Dallas Borough Manager

people wear helmets at the park. "And it could have a snack bar that would pay for itself in a couple of years," said Purdy.

"It's clearly an issue that is not going away; I believe we'd be interested in exploring a dialogue," said Moskovitz.

During an interview, the teens maturely talked about statistics of injuries, how to orchestrate a petition, what rules they would want at the park, but at the end of the day when asked about their timeline, they shrunk back into their 14-year-old bodies and replied "we want it all done in time for summer, yeah, in time for summer."

Library

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books.

If you would like to learn more about the library, you may visit their website at backmountainlibrary.org. If you would like to make a donation to the library, you may send it to: Friends of the Library, c/o Back Mountain Library, 96 Huntsville Road, Dallas, PA 18612.

A late in life observation of myself is that I should have been a librarian."

Shirley Forney
Outgoing chairperson
Friends of the Back Mountain
Memorial Library



Members of the Friends of the (Back Mountain) Library who attended the luncheon for Shirley Forney, from left, first row: Neela Patel, Martha Butler (librarian), Jill Kryston (incoming chairman), JoAnn Hall, Mary Lou Grant, Vivian Bednarz. Second row: Phyllis Eckman, Jane Chilson, Shirley Forney, Sharon Randolph, Rita Rusnak. Third row: Nancy Brown, Vi Gommer, Carol King, Carolyn Johnson, Carol Vanstory, Lillian McManus, Claudette Banks, Beth Gager, Beth Rosenthal.

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COG

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Route 415 in Dallas, an alternate plan may have come about other than the dissection of the center of Dallas, which is blamed for making it an unwalkable downtown.

In addition to addressing traffic, Goodwin said that because of continued development, a much-needed regional aquifer study is on the long-range planning agenda. Doing the study within the COG, would provide a more accurate picture of the whole region's resources while at the same time, prove more cost effective because the municipalities would share the cost.

"The region needs to determine what water resources remain and what it can handle in the future. It would be thousands of dollars out of taxpayers' pockets if we did the study alone, but if three contiguous municipalities apply, the chances are good for grant money," said Goodwin.

Forming a COG has been lucrative for two of Mountain Top's five municipalities. For Wright Township, forming the Mountain Top Area COG with Fairview Township meant receiving a \$1.1 million grant for a shared compost site, soon after its inception.

"The state was very receptive, thrilled, there was no hassle it was real quick," said Chairman Donald Zampetti about getting the DEP grant.

Zampetti, who was reached by phone Saturday, explained that Wright Township had been a part of a COG with Hazleton, but found they did not benefit as much as they hoped, largely due to the distance between the two. The township decided to create its own cog to better address its needs and the needs of the closer municipalities.

"You can do anything with a COG; we could probably save money on tires if we wanted to," said Zampetti.

According to Moskovitz, COGs are more likely to be awarded grant money from the state because cooperation between municipalities means less duplication of state funds, helping to eliminate inefficient use of highly sought after monies.

In addition to focusing on traffic, land use planning and an aquifer study, there have been discussions about the possibility of sharing a zoning officer.

To become a part of the COG, interested municipalities must first approve the drafting of an ordinance and then allow for two public readings.

At the next meeting of the proposed Back Mountain COG, tentatively set for early November; a representative from the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) will discuss how successful COGs are organized.

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