

Mispillion Greenway

*Sponsored By
City of Milford
Parks and Recreation Department*



The Heart of Kent & Sussex Counties

Mispillion Greenway (1988-2012)

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
I	1992	Library Square	\$250,000	DL&WCTF/Suburban St Funds/City of Milford
II A	1994	Memorial Park South	\$23,000	USDA/SCS Sussex Con. Dis./DL&WCTF/City of Milford
II B	1994	Memorial Park South	\$46,000	DL&WCTF/Surburban St Funds/City of Milford
III	1991	Memorial Park South	\$16,000	USDA/SCS/City of Milford
IV	1996	Memorial Park South	\$180,000	DL&WCTF/Suburban St Funds/City of Milford
V	1997	Mandarano Greenway	\$120,000	DL&WCTF/City of Milford
VI	1998	Kent & Sussex Greenway	\$150,000	DL&WCTF/City of Milford
VII	1998	Pedestrian/Fishing Bridge	\$350,000	ISTEA/Suburban St Funds/City of Milford
VIII & IX	2001	Bicentennial Greenway & Nelson Silicato Greenway	\$400,000	ISTEA/Suburban St Funds/City of Milford
X & XI	1999	Inns of The Mispillion Greenway	\$210,000	DL&WCTF/Suburban St Funds/City of Milford
XII	2001	The Old Cannery	\$225,000	ISTEA/Suburban St Funds/City of Milford
XIII	2002	Old Firehouse Greenway	\$50,000	DL&WCTF/Surburban St Funds/City of Milford
XIV	2001	NE Front St / Public Launch Facility	\$250,000	Suburban St Funds/National Fish & Wildlife/City of Milford
XV	2002	Chaney Acquisition	\$50,000	DL&WCTF/City of Milford
XVI	2003	Wilmington Acquisition	\$50,000	DL&WCTF
XVII	2008	Warnell Acquisition	\$300,000	DL&WCTF
XVIII	2002	Peninsula Oil Acquisition	\$120,000	DL&WCTF/City of Milford
XIX & XX	2005	Mill Race Greenway	\$740,000	TE/CTF/City of Milford
XXI	2008	Goat Island Bridge Project	\$300,000	TE/City of Milford
XXII	2008	Salvation Army Trailhead	\$165,000	DL&WCTF/City of Milford
XXIII		Growmark Greenway	TBD	TBD
XXIV		Goat Island Nature Trail	\$1,000,000	TE/CTF/City of Milford
XXV		Chaney/Wilmington Greenway	\$350,000	CTF/DL&WCTF
Total:			\$5,345,000	

* DL&WCTF- Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund

* TE – Transportation Enhancement Fund

* Suburban Street Fund – Legislative Funding

* CTF – Community Transportation Funds – Legislative Funding

* SCS – Soil Conservation Service

THE MISPELLION GREENWAY (An Overview)

The town of Milford was laid out in 1787 by Joseph Oliver. Like many small communities in Delaware this town developed along the shores of tidal water, the Mispillion River. A long, graceful, and meandering waterway, the Mispillion River was once the economic lifeblood of Milford. It served as transportation and supplied power for industrial complexes. The river provided an area for recreation and excellent habitat for abundant fish and game. In particular, Milford was known for its many mill ponds set up to support the milling industries' including sawmills, textile mills and grist mills. In fact, it was the easy fording across these mill ponds that gave Milford its name.

Not only has the river proven to be a focal point for sustaining the community throughout its history, but it has been determined that it also will be the key to sustaining progressive and desirable economic growth in the future for its 8,000 plus population.

Recognizing the value of this natural asset to the economy, the Chamber of Commerce established a council of local citizens to fortify the river's future through the creation of a greenway along the Mispillion River. All local organizations with an interest were invited to participate including conservation groups, developers, the Chamber of commerce, the City of Milford government, the school system, the historical society, and various community organizations. This council determined a mission of the Mispillion Greenway: "The Mispillion River provides a natural corridor geographically uniting the entire Milford community. The Mispillion Greenway mission is to highlight this union while protecting the watershed and enhancing the natural, educational, and cultural resources that are bound along it." Several goals were established, both short-term and long-term. These include:

- I. Expand and complete the City of Milford's current riverfront park and walkway.
- II. Link the retail hub of Milford with the parkland, recreational areas, and schools, as well as cultural and historic centers. Greenway planning will establish guidelines for citywide beautification.
- III. Develop a long-range plan to implement these same goals to outlying areas outside the boundaries of the City of Milford. This plan should offer protection for the river that will thereby enhance and attract well-planned future development.
- IV. Plan a trail or path of transportation linked with the city that will eventually extend well beyond the city out to farthest reaches of the watershed.

Because of the revitalization occurring downtown, many highlights we hoped to link together were readily available. Simultaneous to the greenway initiatives, the Board of Directors for the Milford Public Library decided to build a new library and community center downtown directly next to the river. The redevelopment of a fairly dilapidated retail section provided the council an excellent opportunity to join forces with the library as well as the city and implement the first phase of the greenway while long-term planning continued for the rest of the watershed.

Commitment to this plan was magnified by the progressive steps taken by the city, the library, and the greenway council to purchase and subsequently demolish four structures that were below current standards and frankly an eyesore. This space is now used as a new urban park, linking people with the river, the new library, and the main shopping area of town.

Recent expansions of the riverwalk extend west through the community to one of the old mill ponds, Silver Lake, which still graces the center of our town. Several key landowners including the Riverbank Associates have enthusiastically worked with the City to allow for easements and access ways through their property along the river. Most excitedly, the plan reflects historical trends of the city when considering lighting, paving, and plants indigenous to the region.

The Mispillion River Greenway has proven to be a success on a grand scale. It has helped to revitalize Milford by inviting residents and tourists alike to visit a rejuvenated downtown. It offers a unique view of the River and all its wonderful wildlife and rich history. And it links shops, inns, cultural sites and neighborhoods together with a safe and pleasant pedestrian trail.

Taking off in 1991, the Greenway has grown phase-by-phase. When complete, it will offer a trail more than one mile long. This extraordinary access to the water's edge lets people get out of their cars and stroll or bike along the beautiful banks of the Mispillion River.

The Mispillion River Greenway has been successful because of the vision and dedication of various State, Federal and Local entities.

I can think of few communities throughout Delaware where the natural resources and cultural, educational, and recreational assets of the community are actually being capitalized to redevelop what was a decaying and stagnant downtown area. There is little question that the future of Milford's downtown and riverwalk area is a bright one.