

## Activity 4:

### *Jonestown: A Case study*

**Summary:** Participants will explore the community of Jonestown, Pennsylvania and apply their knowledge and skills as they help Jonestown develop a greenway.

#### Preparation

- Gather artifacts that reflect an important aspect of Jonestown history.
- Display maps of Jonestown (p 174).
- Prepare sets of photos from Jonestown website ([www.jonestownpa.org](http://www.jonestownpa.org)).

**Questions:** Why is the greenway important to Jonestown? What tools and partners did they develop to implement a greenway? What were the challenges and success?

#### Procedure

**1. Where is Jonestown?** If we were zooming in from Google Earth, we'd begin with the solar system where eight planets circle the sun and one of those planets, the third from the sun, is planet Earth. The Earth and all its inhabitants are traveling at a speed of 66,705 miles per hour in orbit around the sun and rotating at approximately 1,037 mph at the equator. There are seven continents (Antarctica, Australia, Asia, Africa, Europe, South America and North America), 194 countries and over six billion people. Most of those six billion people live in communities that have some of the same qualities as Jonestown. But Jonestown is unique because it is your community.

This is Jonestown, Pennsylvania. Located in Lebanon County at the confluence of the Swatara Creek and the Little Swatara Creek, it is home to about 2,000 people and about 500 families. It is a borough governed by a mayor and a borough council.

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*Activity 4*

**2. What is history?** You may think it is about famous wars, famous people and famous places. History is the story of everyday people and places. It's about your community, your house, and your school. You are making history. The objects you use are part of history. Objects like a microwave, a cell phone, an iPod, even a toothbrush are part of your history. History reflects the stories of people, events, places and things.

There is also natural history. Natural history is the study of the river, the forests, and the animals. The natural history helped to shape Jonestown. The Little Swatara and the Swatara provided power and transportation. Today, the rivers provide beautiful scenery and opportunities for healthy recreation.

History is a story that is passed down through people talking, writing or through objects left behind. Things written down make it easier for people of today to learn about the past. It's important to capture the history in the memories of people who have stories to share. Jonestown is fortunate to have a living history "book" in the memories of Evelyn Isele, a local historian. She continues to share her memories in the borough newsletter. Citizens of Jonestown, especially the children, benefit from visits with Evelyn, capturing interviews on tape and writing in journals. By demonstrating the importance of our historians, children develop the sense of pride and importance in their history.

**3. Artifacts:** Each group will be given an item that represents clues to the history of Jonestown. These objects will depict the culture, the manufacturing and lifestyle of the people during different periods of time.

Participants must look at their object and try to determine the following:

- What is the object?
- What is it made of?

- Who made it?
- What it was used for?
- Who would benefit from it?

Participants analyze the object and discuss when it might have been made or used in Jonestown.

The following is a list of objects representing aspects of life in Jonestown history.

- Arrowhead
- Animal pelts and traps
- Bricks, pottery
- Tobacco press
- Horse bits and hardware
- Ice tongs
- Shoemaker equipment
- Tools
- Leather water bucket
- Washboard
- Cotton coverlets

Group discussion will help analyze the different objects and how they relate to Jonestown. What do the objects tell us about the people and industries?

*A brief history of Jonestown: Susquehannock Indians settled along the Swatara Creek. German settlers were the first Europeans who settled Lebanon County. In 1761 Jonestown was first named Williamsburg but it was changed to Jonestown because another community had already selected Williamsburg. Jonestown became a central location for many travel routes. With the opening of the Union Canal in 1828, much trade passed through Jonestown. Floods in 1862 wrecked the canal and ended the heyday of canal usage. A railroad from Pine Grove to Lebanon began operation in 1870 with a station in West Jonestown. Between 1870 and 1875 Jonestown was a booming town with many businesses*

*including two drug stores, mills, boat builders, cigar makers, coachbuilders, brick and pottery kilns, and coverlet factories and blanket manufacturing.*

**4. Building a Borough.** Participants will work in small groups. Each group will receive poster board. Participants will orient the poster board to north, south, east, and west. Look at a map of Pennsylvania and of Jonestown. Locate Jonestown on the Pennsylvania map and take note of major highways near their community. Note neighboring communities, state parks, and other special features.

After examining the large maps, participants will draw the Swatara Creek and the Little Swatara Creek on the west and south edges of the poster board, joining each river in the lower southwest corner of the poster board. Color and label the rivers.

**Question:** Why did people settle in Jonestown?

What were some of the natural resources that brought people to this area? Good soils and water are very important natural resources combined with a moderate climate. Food could grow on the land and water could also be used for power. It was a fairly level area without steep slopes so that people could farm and build on the land. If there were steep slopes, it would not be easy for early settlers to build a home or farm the land.

What is the source of surface water surrounding Jonestown? The Little Swatara Creek enters the Swatara Creek at Jonestown. A confluence of a river is a place where two rivers come together. Jonestown is at the confluence of these two rivers. (The place where a river begins is called the headwaters. The watershed of a river is the land surrounding that river that is “elevated” in a certain way that allows rainwater/surface water to drain into that specific river.) Why were rivers important to early settlement of

Jonestown? (i.e. waterpower for mills, transportation by boat or barge, movement of goods, water for people and livestock, fishing.)

Today, Jonestown is called a borough. Because it is a borough, it has a form of government led by a strong borough council and a mayor elected by the people. What are some of the services needed in Jonestown that the mayor and the borough council must address? Participants will discuss services, facilities and infrastructure that are necessary and those that are special to their community. List these aspects on a flip chart: safety, fire protection, water, sewer, roads and road maintenance, lighting, post office, schools, playground, park, wooded area, shops, parking, etc. Circle those aspects that are necessary and place a star next to those that are special to Jonestown.

Participants will think about their own community and layout a grid of main roads or side roads as best they can recollect or imagine. Participants will discuss some of the buildings and places they remember. They will examine the borough's zoning ordinances.

Participants will be given a set of photos of buildings in Jonestown from the borough's website (if available). They will place them on their poster board map where they think they belong. The photos include the school, post office, churches, firehouse, municipal building, stores, factories, playground, etc. They will develop symbols for special places such as their friends house, a place to skateboard, a picnic table.

Participants will use a green marker and color in green areas of their community. This is important to identify. (Be sure to color the area adjacent to the rivers as green space.)

People need places to live. Participants will add drawings of their homes and homes of their friends. Place the homes where you think they belong.

Look at your map. Are the stores clustered in one area? Are the factories or gas stations in another area? Are homes clustered together in certain areas? Sometimes this happens without rules to make it happen. If we decide to define each of those areas, we could develop rules for each area based on certain uses such as commercial uses, industrial uses and residential uses. This is called "zoning" if a community decides to label areas based on uses and create laws that restrict those uses. Jonestown has decided to officially zone the community. Look at the zoning map. What are the zones and what color are they? Did you place your buildings in the correct zone? Take different color markers and circle the zones. Develop a key for each color and the zone it represents.

Why do you think zoning is important to Jonestown? Why would another community choose NOT to zone? Communities have a right to choose whether they implement zoning or not. If they choose to develop laws for zoning, they must follow codes or regulations established by the state through the Municipalities Planning Code.

Communities are always changing. What are some of the things that have changed in your lifetime? What are things you like about your community? Have you noticed that something you liked is not there anymore (i.e. a tree, a patch of woods, a red barn, an ice cream shop)? If you want to keep something you like, you need to recognize why it is special and then work toward ways to keep it for the future. You have a right to express why you like something or don't like something.

How and where can you express your opinion about something happening to your community that you like or don't like? Discuss freedom of speech and freedom of press. Discuss the right to voice your opinion. Discuss the right to organize a group that shares similar opinions. Discuss different ways to voice an opinion (i.e.

write editorials, meet and present to officials, express your thoughts in a flyer, brochure or postcard, etc.).

*5. What could we do to protect the land along the river?*

The rivers are still very special places for the people of Jonestown. There are some laws that can protect the river. The land along the river could become a park for everyone to enjoy. The borough is developing a greenway and trying to save the land. What are some things the community could do to make the area along the river an enjoyable place to visit?

- Plant native trees, bushes and plants along the greenway
- Develop a butterfly garden area
- Develop a brochure about the town and the river
- Develop a trail for other school children to use
- Study the water quality

*6. Community of the Future.* Communities change. It will happen to every community. Sometimes change will improve the community such as developing a waterfront park in a busy city and sometimes it will be a negative change such as an increase in abandoned stores and deserted lots. Some changes will require people to compromise on their expectations.

What if an industry wanted to build a factory (or shopping center) in Jonestown today? What positive impacts could result from that decision and why? (Record responses.) It could generate an increase in population, an increase in housing construction jobs and materials, additional jobs, improve the economy, benefit the local business community, increase funding toward community improvements such as a new borough hall or park, increase tax revenue to the borough, etc.

What problems could it bring? (Record responses.) Depending on the factory and its environmental

ethic, it could increase pollution, noise, traffic, need for road expansion, demand for groundwater, wastewater treatment, unpleasant landscape, odors, dust, future brownfields, etc.

If the decision is inevitable, there are situations that are better than others. There are CHOICES that could be more appealing to the community and choices that may not be beneficial. Some people may think that a factory on the outskirts of the community is a good idea. Some would think that a factory should not be built near the school, or next to the river or on a favorite natural area.

It is the right of the community to envision the future, decide to protect what will maintain a character for the community and protect the natural areas, historic sites, farms and open space BEFORE something happens to them. Jonestown decided that the land along each of the rivers should be protected and enjoyed by future generations.

The community decided they wanted to protect the natural areas along the rivers. They decided they wanted a park for all to enjoy. If the land was developed for private homes or factories, then people could not access the land. It could destroy the beauty of the wooded stream. It was such a beautiful place for people of Jonestown to enjoy.

*7. What did they decide to do?* The Mayor and the Borough Council along with community leaders, researched grants that would give them money to buy the land or to buy the right to protect the land (conservation easements). They began by talking to people who owned the land and generating interest in the concept of saving the ribbon of “green” land that surrounds their town. They envisioned a park where all the community could walk, ride bikes, play and enjoy. It could be a place for wildlife and a place of beauty. It would protect the landscape along the river and allow people to access the banks for fishing and boating.

What is a “greenway?” A greenway is a corridor of open space. They vary in size and scale from narrow ribbons of green that surround an urban area to wide corridors of wilderness. Greenways can be land or water-based, running along stream corridors or wetlands. Many greenways provide healthy recreation by having a network of trails. Some are primarily recreation corridors. Some primarily provide corridors for wildlife travel. All greenways protect natural, cultural and scenic resources, enhance the natural beauty and improve the quality of life in the communities. The defining characteristic of greenways is connectivity. The purpose is to provide connections to other natural areas and/or connect communities. Greenway development is initiated by volunteers who share a vision with the community. They form a partnership with local, county and state officials.

**8. What type of activities would you propose for the Jonestown Greenway?** Brainstorm ideas in your group.

Before making any decisions, there is a process that will help you develop a proposal and guide the community to make the best decision. It is important to develop a plan. The plan must address many different considerations. It is important to have a committee because there is a lot of work to be done.

- a.** Conduct an inventory of the site using the Concept Map. It’s important to know what you have. List plants, wildlife, historic sites, wetlands and soils. Note any litter problems, drainage pipes, bridges, etc. Create a map. Identify flood zones; sink holes, highway, noise, and other problems that will be important to the project.
- b.** Survey the community. Develop a survey and ask the community what they would like. Solicit help. Compile results and incorporate them into your proposal. Try to recruit a representative sampling of the

community by asking different ages, careers, genders, businesses, scientists, etc.

- c.** Survey what services already exist in the surrounding area. You might have a canoe rental facility just upstream from your greenway. You might have a state park that you would like to eventually connect to your greenway. Remember, that the defining character of a greenway is connectivity.

- d.** Identify funding sources. DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation is a source for information on funding community projects. Propose sources for funding. Develop a proposal that addresses funding needs. Develop a funding campaign or propose a bond initiative.

- e.** Develop a vision statement. What do you envision for this greenway? Have group consensus.

- f.** Brainstorm ideas. What would you like to develop in your greenway to align to your vision statement?

Using a chart, make three columns. In the first column, write down the activity you would like to propose. In the second column, write down what is needed to allow that activity to happen. In the third column, write down what impacts that activity would have on the natural area and the community.

- g.** Design your greenway. As a group, decide which activities you would allow and where you would place them on your map. Draw or discuss the infrastructure needed for that activity. Develop a proposal based on the consensus of the group. Develop a sign about your project. Present your ideas to the class. Present your ideas to the Borough Council.

- h.** Help implement the ideas that are approved. Help plant trees and flowers. Help pick up litter. Help create

wildlife habitats and viewing areas. Help by enjoying and using the greenway.

**9. Congratulations!** You made a positive contribution to the community that will be enjoyed by all who live there today and in the future. Remember, the community is the result of the culmination of its past right up to the present. But the question now is “Who will shape the community of the future?” YOU will. What do you want your town to look like in 10 years? 50 years? What could happen if no one cared to make decisions that address future change? By protecting the Jonestown Greenway you took leadership in deciding what is important to the community character and made recommendations that will have a positive impact for today and for future families and businesses.

## Assessment and Review

1. *What are the services provided by a community?*
2. *What makes a community special?*
3. *Why is the history of a community important?*
4. *What did Jonestown do to make their community special?*
5. *What are some of the ideas proposed for the greenway?*
6. *Why is a greenway important to Jonestown?*
7. *Who will visit the greenway?*

**In the end,** *our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy.*

**John Sawhill (Conservation Advocate)**