

A. PHYSICAL SETTING/NATURAL RESOURCES

Elk County lies in the north-central part of Pennsylvania and is bounded on the north by McKean County, on the east by Cameron County, on the south by Clearfield County, on the southwest by Jefferson County, on the west by Forest County, and on the northwest by Warren County and consists of approximately 532,600 acres. See Exhibit No. 1.

A.1 History

The County is rightfully proud of its unique history and resulting present day character, which is well documented. Elk County, named for that noble herd of animals that still exists as one of the two only wild elk herds east of the Mississippi, was formed out of the lands of Jefferson, Clearfield, and McKean Counties by an act of the Pennsylvania Legislature on April 18, 1843. The first courthouse was completed in Ridgway in May of 1845. The present Elk County Courthouse was completed on December 28, 1880 and remodeled/expanded in 1970. Elk County is also renowned for its industries, specifically, powdered metal plants. Elk County has been known as the Carbon Capital of the world and is also a producer of fine hardwood.

This plan does not recount the County's already well documented heritage but notes that evidence of the County history are available to be observed at:

The Elk County Historical Society Museum on Center Street in Ridgway; The Historical Society of St. Marys and Benzinger Township Museum in the St. Marys and Benzinger Township Museum in the St. Marys Municipal Building, St. Marys; Decker's Chapel in the City of St. Marys; and the Shawmut Railroad Switchbacks on the Ridgway-St. Marys Road (Highway Route 120).

A.2 Physiography

Elk County lies in the Allegheny Mountain section of the Appalachian Plateaus Physiographic Province. The Clarion River and Sinnemahoning Creek and their tributaries drain the Allegheny Mountain section. The highest elevation is 2,370 feet above Median Sea Level (MSL) at Boone Mountain in southern Elk County. The lowest elevation of approximately 900 feet above MSL, is located at Dents Run and its confluence with the Sinnemahoning Creek near the village of Dents Run at the Cameron County line.

A.3 Geology

The bedrock geology in Elk County is of the Pennsylvanian, Mississippian, and Devonian Periods of the Paleozoic Era (about 230 million to 500 million years old). Minor uplift and folding of sediments during the Permian period (about 200 million years ago) caused the formation of broad anticlines and synclines. Uplift also occurred in post-Paleozoic time, adding to the present bedrock structure. The axes of the broad anticlines and synclines and the general bedrock strike are oriented in a northeast-southwest direction.