

B. DEMOGRAPHICS/POPULATION

B.1 Introduction

This section presents population and demographic information for Elk County. The information, when analyzed, presents a base for projections regarding growth, housing needs, land use demands, and adequacy of transportation, community facilities, and public infrastructure for example. This data will be utilized in developing each of the Comprehensive Plan components in Section II of this document.

B.2 Population Growth Trends (1950-1994)

The analysis of demographics and population is central to projections of future needs such as development, land use, housing, transportation, community facilities. These are essential for sustaining or improving the quality of living. Growth trends and projections are used as a reference point from which planning, policy evaluation, and management of programs develop.

Overall, Elk County has experienced growth from 1950 to 1980. By the 1980(s), the County's economy began to collapse and the current out migration trend began. The outmigration is attributed to limited economic opportunities.

The following table shows population trends in Elk County. Some recovery from the region's economic downturn is evident in the early 1990's. In the late 1990's, economic conditions, although not necessarily stable, have been comparatively stronger than those in adjacent counties.

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TABLE 4 TOTAL POPULATION 1960-1994

Area	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1994	Percent Change 1990-1994
Pennsylvania	10,498,012	11,248,665	11,766,412	11,864,720	11,881,961	12,052,410	1.4
Elk County	34,503	37,328	37,770	38,338	34,878	35,173	0.8
Benezette Township		363	353	310	243	252	3.7
Benzinger Township		5,934	7,755	8,808			
Fox Township		2,738	3,210	3,723	3,392	3,516	3.7
Highland Township		796	639	672	551	560	1.6
Horton Township		1,418	1,318	1,577	1,655	1,628	-1.6
Jay Township		2,009	2,115	2,166	2,087	2,135	2.3
Johnsonburg Borough		4,966	4,304	3,938	3,350	3,360	0.3
Jones Township		1,881	1,636	1,959	1,870	1,890	1.1
Millstone Township		94	135	121	85	90	5.9
Ridgway Borough		6,387	6,022	5,604	4,793	4,827	0.7
Ridgway Township		2,404	2,578	2,777	2,617	2,716	3.8
St. Marys Borough		8,065	7,470	6,417			
Spring Creek Township		273	235	266	215	152	-29.3
City of St. Marys					14,020	14,048	0.2

U.S. Census Bureau
 Pennsylvania State Data Center

B.3 Population Growth Projections (2000 to 2010)

Methods

Multiple regression analysis was used on the historic population data from 1960 to 1994 to make projections for the years 2000 and 2010. The Multiple Regression variables were population, net growth, and percent population change. This statistical analysis was used to predict a population for the years 2000 and 2010. Birth and death data were used to calculate net natural growth and net out migration. The predicted population for each decade was adjusted using a projected net natural increase and net out migration (both calculated from the birth and death data) to obtain an average projected population. The minimum projected population is calculated based on a zero net natural growth and the maximum projected population is calculated based on a zero net out migration.

TABLE 5 POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR ELK COUNTY FOR THE YEARS 2000 AND 2010

Year	Average Projection	Minimum Projection	Maximum Projection
2000	35,197	34,199	37,092
2010	34,960	33,969	37,438

Source: The EADS Group

This table projects a loss in population in Elk County over the next 20 year period, assuming historic migration trends over the last two decades remains unchanged. However, Elk County has begun to work towards overturning the economic downturn. Efforts of agencies having primary responsibility for enhancement of Elk County's economic future are visible in the population changes from 1990-1994. If a more stable economic base is acquired, the population may increase slightly.

Similarly, the Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Watershed Conservation, prepares a population projection report. The Bureau's projections for the years 2000 and 2010 are 36,198 and 37,567 respectively, anticipating a scenario comparable to the maximum projection prepared by the EADS Group. With a carefully implemented growth management plan, the States' predictions may be achievable.

B.4 Population by Age, Gender, and Ethnicity/Race

The following table identifies fluctuations in population by age, gender, and race. It has been included in order to allow planning projections of the future labor force, housing needs, and social services needs.

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TABLE - 6 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS FOR 1990 and 1994

1990										1994
	Population	% Female	Age		Race				% Change in Pop. 1980-1990	% Change in Pop. 1990-1994
			%<18	%>65	% White	% Black	% Other	% Hispanic		
Elk County	34878	50.9	25.7	16	99.5		0.5	0.2	-9.0	+0.8
Benezette Township	243	50.2	19.3	24.7	100				-21.6	+3.7
City of St. Mary's	14020	51.4	25.2	16.9	99.4	0.1	0.5	0.2	-7.9	+0.2
Fox Township	3392	49.4	27.8	11.5	99.5		0.4	0.1	-8.9	+3.7
Highland Township	551	46.1	23.2	13.6	99.6		0.4		-18.0	+1.6
Horton Township	1655	48.3	27.3	11.4	99.8	0.1	0.2	0.2	+4.7	-1.6
Jay Township	2087	51.0	24.8	16.5	99.5	0.1	0.4		-3.6	+2.3
Johnsonburg Borough	3350	51.9	25.6	18.6	99.7		0.3	0.1	-14.9	+0.3
Jones Township	1870	49.8	28.2	14.1	99.4		0.6	0.3	-4.5	+1.1
Millstone Township	85	49.4	15.3	28.2	100				-29.8	+5.9
Ridgway Borough	4793	52.0	24	18.7	99.3		0.7	0.3	-14.5	+0.7
Ridgway Township	2617	50.1	28.3	11.3	99.8	0.1	0.1	0.1	-5.8	+3.8
Spring Creek Township	215	49.3	21.9	17.2	100			0.2	-19.2	-29.3
Pennsylvania	11,881,961	52.1%	23.5%	15.4%	88.5%	9.2%	2.3%	2.0%	+0.1%	+1.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the data in **Table 6**, Elk County has a greater proportion of people under the age of 18 than the percentage of those over the age of 65. **Table 6** also indicates that slightly more than one half of the residents of Elk County are female. Generally, the ratio of females to male increases with population density. This is demonstrated in viewing the individual municipalities of Elk County. The following table, **Table 7**, further details the population of Elk County by categorizing the age of individuals into small age groups.

TABLE 7 PERCENT OF PERSONS BY AGE, 1990

Area	Total Population	0-4	5-17	18-59	60-64	65+
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	6.7	16.8	56.0	5.1	15.4
Elk County	34,878	6.8	18.8	52.9	5.5	16.0
Benezette Township	243	6.2	13.2	49.8	6.2	24.7
Benzinger Township	8,509	7.0	19.7	54.6	4.8	13.8
Fox Township	3,392	7.5	20.3	56.1	4.5	11.5
Highland Township	551	6.4	16.9	56.3	6.9	13.6
Horton Township	1,655	7.1	20.2	56.6	4.7	11.4
Jay Township	2,087	6.4	18.4	52.8	5.9	16.5
Johnsonburg Borough	3,350	6.6	19.0	48.9	6.9	18.6
Jones Township	1,870	6.0	22.1	52.7	5.0	14.1
Millstone Township	85		15.3	50.6	5.9	28.2
Ridgway Borough	4,793	6.4	17.6	51.2	6.0	18.7
Ridgway Township	2,617	8.7	19.6	55.8	4.6	11.3
St. Marys Borough	5,511	6.5	16.3	49.4	6.0	21.8
Spring Creek Township	215	5.1	16.7	50.2	10.7	17.2

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing

Tables 6 & 7 also reflect an aging population in Elk County. Approximately 26% of the population are children, approximately 58% are work force age adults and 16% are retirement age persons.

B.5 Population Density

Population density is depicted on **Exhibit 5**. Major population centers are the City of St. Marys, Johnsonburg Borough, and Ridgway Borough. Distribution patterns are impacted by the large land ownership by the State Game Lands, the State Forest, and the Allegheny National Forest.