

2022 ANNUAL TRAILS REPORT



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



WeConservePA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 A Message from the Trails Advisory Committee Chair

2 Funding Highlights

3 Trail Plan Accomplishments

6 Top 10 Trail Gaps

10 2022 Trail Gap Closures

12 DCNR Motorized Recreation Updates

12 ATV Pilot Program Report

14 Catawissa Recreation Area

16 Reports and Analysis

16 Circuit Trails Gap Analysis

17 Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition Report

19 Equity and Accessibility Along the Highlands Trail

20 Gravel Riding

22 2022 Eastern PA Greenways Summit

Regional Trail Grant Reports

25

Latino Conservation Week

33

Appalachian Trail Reroute

34

Trail of the Year

35

River of the Year

37

Trails Month

39

Trail Resources

46

The Pennsylvania Trails
Advisory Committee

48



This project was financed in part by the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program, Federal Highway Administration, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. Project manager, WeConservePA.

Josh Shapiro, Governor

Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

A MESSAGE FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

Welcome to the 2022 Pennsylvania Trails Annual Report. Trails across the commonwealth provide numerous outdoor recreation opportunities to millions of people each year. In fact, Pennsylvania ranks sixth in the nation in outdoor recreation economy size and total employment. The commonwealth's outdoor recreation industry supports more than 152,000 jobs and contributes nearly \$14 billion dollars to the annual economy.

Pennsylvania is home to more than 12,000 miles of trails, and that number is growing each year as communities realize the value that trails bring. So, whether you are an avid outdoor enthusiast or someone just starting to explore trails, there is an opportunity near you. Individuals can enjoy kayaking, biking, hiking, birdwatching, and much more along the thousands of miles of trails. In Pennsylvania the goal is that there will be a trail within 10 minutes of every citizen.

The Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee is made up of 20 citizens from throughout the commonwealth. Each member of the committee represents a different sector of trail use, including cyclists, disabled trail users, ATV/OHV users, equestrians, hikers, and more. Members of the committee give their time to help improve and promote trails across the state. The committee is charged with implementing the development of the statewide land and water trail network plan to facilitate recreation, transportation, and healthy lifestyles for all. The committee reviews trail projects and helps set policy regarding trails in the commonwealth. The committee also reviews and votes on the Trail of the Year.

In 2022, Trail of the Year was awarded to the Delaware Canal State Park Towpath, a section of the longer Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. French Creek was named River of the Year. The Trail of the Year and River of the Year awards are opportunities to showcase these valuable assets. To read more about these award-winning resources, see pages 34–37.

A few other trail highlights from 2022 include the closure of three major trail gaps, the continuation of the DCNR ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot, and the acquisition of the Catawissa Recreation Area. Please check out the rest of this Trails Report to get more information about these trail highlights.

As funding becomes available each year, new opportunities will be available for users to recreate in the commonwealth. We must also protect these lands and trails for future generations so we must be good stewards of the land we have access to. The Advisory Committee is committed to ensuring our trails provide inclusion, equity, diversity, and accessibility for all.

We, the Pennsylvania Trail Advisory Committee, encourage all Pennsylvanians to enjoy the vast variety of trail opportunities throughout the commonwealth. One thing the pandemic taught us is that more people used trails for their physical and psychological wellbeing. Go out and enjoy nature.

Happy Trails,



Donna Iannone, Chair (2023)
Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee

PTAC MEMBERS

Pennsylvania Trail Advisory Committee (PTAC) — 2022 membership

Bob Amelio—*Persons with Disabilities*
Cindy Barrick—*Snowmobiling*
Anil Dham—*Members at Large*
Elizabeth Fager—*Water Trail Users*
Chris Firme—*Hiking*
Brett Hollern—*Cross-Country Skiing*
Donna Iannone, Secretary—*Members at Large*
Mike Kuhn—*Mountain Biking*
Brook Lenker—*Members at Large*
Courtney Mahronich Vita—*Members at Large*
Pamela Marlowe—*Members at Large*
Lydia Martin, Vice Chair—*Walking*
Penny Mason—*Four-Wheel Driving*
Miica Patterson—*Members at Large*
Joe Perry—*ATV Riding*
David Saunders—*Members at Large*
Ron Steffey, Chair—*Members at Large*
Gwen Wills—*Horseback Riding*
Owen Worozbyt—*Bicycling*
Paul Wurst—*Off-Highway Motorcycling*

AGENCY STAFF

Ronique Bishop, FHWA
Justin Cambric, PennDOT
Jacqueline Koons-Felion, PennDOT
Mark Palerino, DCNR
Alex MacDonald, DCNR
Leslie Sarvis, DCNR
Tyler Semder, DCNR
Stephanie Dressler, DCNR
Paula DeVore, DCNR
Michael Hoffman, DCNR

DCNR 2022 FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

Accomplishments of DCNR Funded Projects:

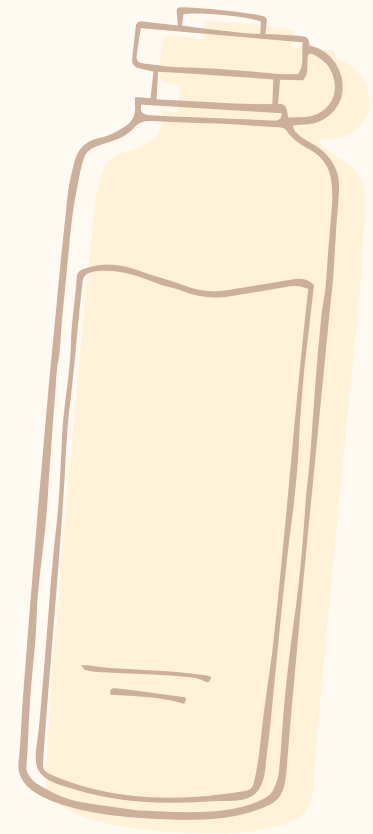
- 2 Priority Trail Gap projects were completed and open to the public in 2022.
- 43 trail grant projects completed totaling \$8,045,765 in grant funds.
- 11 projects completed that address Priority Trail Gaps.
- 44 Priority Trail Gaps are being addressed by ongoing DCNR grant projects.
- Development of 12 miles of non-motorized trails, including 8 bridges, 1 comfort facility, and 4 trailheads.
- Rehabilitation of 15 miles of non-motorized trails, including 5 bridges and 5 trailheads.
- Planning for 165 miles of new trails, including 5 bridges, and 3 trailheads.
- Acquisition of 28 acres of land for non-motorized trails.
- Purchase of 10 pieces of equipment to construct and maintain 231 miles of motorized trails.
- Support for ATV and Dirt Bike youth training and education at events across the state. Over 480 youth were trained at 8 ATV events and over 180 youth were trained at 3 Dirt Bike events.

Projects Awarded DCNR Funding:

- Received 113 trail applications requesting \$51,824,216.00.
- Awarded 60 trail projects with \$19,370,551.00 in grant funds that will leverage \$26,165,193.00 in local match.
- DCNR funded 8 projects in 2022 that will address Priority Trail Gaps.
- 15 projects will plan and design for 48 miles of new non-motorized trails, including 3 bridges, 3 comfort facilities, and 9 trailheads.
- 2 projects will plan and design new motorized trails and facilities
- 37 projects will construct 48 miles of new trails, including 6 bridges, 1 comfort facility, and 22 trailheads.
- 12 projects will rehabilitate 27 miles of trails, including 3 bridges and 4 trailheads.
- 5 equipment purchases will help maintain over 960 miles of motorized trails.

Additional Trail Related Funding:

- Commonwealth Financing Authority, Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program—\$2,205,982
- Commonwealth Financing Authority, Multimodal Transportation Program—\$3,639,139
- PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund—\$7,134,249
- PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside—\$22,613,000



TRAIL PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The [Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan, 2020-2024 \(PDF\)](#) provides a five-year blueprint for state and local governments, trail providers, and other stakeholders to guide Pennsylvania's trail stewardship and expansion. The plan's vision is to develop a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation, and healthy lifestyles for all.

The strategy for meeting that vision is presented in seven recommendations and 40 action steps.

1

PRIORITY ONE

Close Priority Trail Gaps in Pennsylvania's statewide land and water trail network with the overall goal of having a trail within 10 minutes of every citizen.

ACTION STEP 1A: Identify and close Pennsylvania's Priority Trail Gaps.

Accomplishment: Eleven projects completed that address Priority Trail Gaps. Forty-four Priority Trail Gaps are being addressed by ongoing DCNR grant projects.

ACTION STEP 1B: From the list of Priority Trail Gaps, identify and close the Top 10 Trail Gaps.

Accomplishment: Closed two Top 10 Trail Gaps: Safe Harbor Bridge and Martic Forge Bridge on the Enola Low Grade. Both projects were completed and opened to the public in 2022.

ACTION STEP 1C: Prioritize funding for projects that address Priority Trail Gaps.

Accomplishment: DCNR funded eight projects in 2022 that will address Priority Trail Gaps.

ACTION STEP 1D: Increase public awareness of Priority Trail Gaps and the importance of closing them.

Accomplishment: DCNR and Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) collected new and updated trail gap data. An article was published in E-newsletter.

ACTION STEP 1E: Close Priority Trail Gaps by relocating and rehabilitating historic metal truss bridges.

Accomplishment: PennDOT and DCNR collaborated to move the historic Messerall Truss Bridge from its long-standing location over the Pine Creek in Oil Creek Township, Crawford County to Pymatuning State Park. The refurbished bridge is now a part of the park's multi-use trail system.

Links for Photos, Videos, and More Information:

<https://pahistoricpreservation.com/messerall-road-bridge-the-next-chapter/>

ACTION STEP 1F: Support efforts for specialized trail user groups to define and identify vulnerabilities and opportunities that relate to their unique trails systems (e.g. mountain biking, ATV use, hiking).

Accomplishment: Mountain Creek Watershed Trail Project in Michaux State Forest. A trail assessment was completed in 2021, and in 2022 a story map was created. Social Pin Point was utilized to collect stakeholder feedback. DCNR Bureau of Forestry met with stakeholders and user groups: SAMBA, Friends of Michaux, Friends of Pine Grove Furnace.

ACTION STEP 1G: Increase opportunities for water-based recreation by identifying areas with the greatest need for public access and closing gaps in water trails.

Accomplishment: DCNR is collaborating with Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) to update the statewide water access strategy. DCNR is also developing mapping to highlight the on-water distance between water trail access sites.

2 PRIORITY TWO

Coordinate state and federal funding and programs to leverage maximum investment in priority trail projects.

ACTION STEP 2A: Continue to coordinate funding decisions for trail projects among agencies.

Accomplishment: DCNR and PennDOT coordinated on 2022 TASA awards for trail projects totaling approximately \$22 million.

3 PRIORITY THREE

Cultivate a variety of partnerships to build capacity to address local and regional trail needs.

ACTION STEP 3B: Further examine geographic areas identified as highly suitable for supporting ATV riding in the ATV Area Suitability Analysis.

Accomplishment: An ATV study was completed in Newport Township, Luzerne County, which examined 10,000 acres for ATV use. 10 ATV studies in 16 counties are underway to examine the feasibility of offering new ATV riding opportunities.

Accomplishment: DCNR and DEP partnered to purchase the Catawissa Recreation Area for motorized recreation and to establish an Acid Mine Drainage water treatment facility to clean up Catawissa Creek.

ACTION STEP 3D: Develop three pilot projects on Bureau of Forestry lands that demonstrate best practices on how to retire redundant roads to accommodate high-impact trail activities.

Accomplishment: 2022 Statistics from the ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot in northcentral PA: 306 miles & 3,650 permits issued ([see ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot, pg. 11](#)).

ACTION STEP 3E: Develop training modules that address the most significant trail issues.

Accomplishment: WeConservePA funded series of mini grants for training through the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Fund ([see Regional Trail Workshop Grants, pg 24–31](#)).

4 PRIORITY FOUR

Provide more opportunities and connections for everyone to regularly use a trail.

ACTION STEP 4C: Develop guidance for trail managers on strategies for handling e-bikes on trails.

Accomplishment: DCNR released an [E-Bike policy for Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests](#).

5 PRIORITY FIVE

Establish and expand regional trail networks to connect communities and community assets.

ACTION STEP 5A: Complete Pennsylvania’s Major Greenways, which will serve as the spine that connects communities and smaller trails systems.

Accomplishment: 9/11 Trail dedicated as a major greenway.

ACTION STEP 5C: Support trail planning efforts at the county and multi-county level and integrate with active transportation plans.

Accomplishment: Regional Greenway and Active Transportation Plans completed for 14 counties in northwest and northcentral PA.

6 PRIORITY SIX

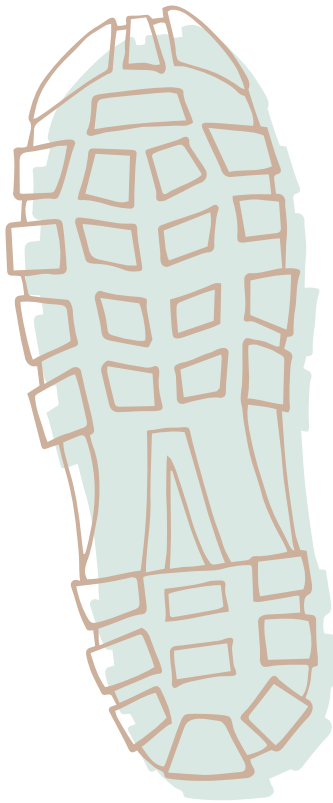
Maintain and improve existing land and water trails and related infrastructure.

ACTION STEP 6A: Enhance and promote GreenwaysandTrails.org as the one-stop resource center for best management practice resources for all trail needs.

Accomplishments: [GreenwaysandTrails.org](#) offers professionals within the Pennsylvania trail community access to a broad range of materials and resources, including:

- Requests for Proposals for session presenters at the Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit as well as other conference opportunities.
- Opportunities for public comment on a range of state-related policies and proposals related to trails, including items from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and other partnered organizations.

- Opportunities for input on trail-related reporting as well as access to the published reports themselves.
- Published news items from member and affiliated partner press releases across the commonwealth with trail-related project news.
- Funding opportunities for organizations of all sizes, including Regional Trail Grant opportunities and many more. Additionally, major funding announcements are often made about statewide accomplishments in this area.
- Professional development opportunities developed and promoted include highly accessible online lectures, workshop, and roundtable opportunities in subject areas such as trail easements, development and fundraising, program planning, and more. Additional professional development opportunities have been developed and offered in person for chainsaw safety and awareness.
- Technical guidance from the WeConservePA library ([ConservationTools.org](https://www.weconservepa.org/conservationtools)) is refreshed and publicized regularly, which includes numerous model documents and guides related to trail easements, trail management best practices, and trail stewardship.



7

PRIORITY SEVEN

Promote Pennsylvania's trails and their economic, environmental, and health benefits.

ACTION STEP 7A: Develop talking points and content material (infographics, videos, presentations, social media) that promote the benefits of trails.

Accomplishment: DCNR Coordinated 23 "Walk With a Doc" Programs.

Accomplishment: Video developed for the Delaware Canal State Park Towpath designated as the 2022 Trail of the Year (<https://youtu.be/KhdhOULnwVc>).

Accomplishment: See pages 38–44 for trails month activities highlights.



 Lancaster Conservancy Location: Delaware Trail

 BACK TO TOP

TOP 10 TRAIL GAPS UPDATE



Enola Lowgrade Rail-Trail Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge (gap #20)
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

ENOLA LOW GRADE RAIL TRAIL, SAFE HARBOR TRESTLE BRIDGE, LANCASTER COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #20

The Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge is a former railroad bridge spanning 1500 feet across the mouth of the Conestoga Creek as it empties into the Susquehanna River. Half of the trail is complete, with the other half to be completed in the next two years. The rehabilitation of this bridge would aid completion of

the Enola Low Grade Rail Trail for a total of 28 miles of trail in Lancaster County.

Status: Completed in the summer of 2022! Total engineering and construction costs, approximately \$9 million.

DELAWARE AND LEHIGH TRAIL, BRIDGE STREET GAP, BUCKS COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #125

The Delaware and Lehigh Trail is one of Pennsylvania's most complete long-distance trails, with 90 percent of its 165-miles completed. Trail users must currently turn around at Bridge Street in Morrisville, as its elevation makes the street impassable. Closing this gap would enable 30 miles of uninterrupted travel to Easton and restore full access to

nine miles of trail. The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor's [website](#) provides detailed information on current gaps and open sections of the trail network.

Status: Construction underway, completion estimated in summer 2023. Construction total estimated at \$1.3 million.

EAST COAST GREENWAY, SPRING GARDEN STREET, PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #127

The East Coast Greenway is a multi-use 2,900-mile trail from Maine to Florida with 30 percent already constructed on traffic-free greenways. The construction at Spring Garden Street in Center City Philadelphia would connect the Schuylkill River Trail with the Delaware River Trail. The project requires

2.2 miles of significant reconstruction of the roadway and surrounding transportation and stormwater infrastructure.

Status: Design and final engineering underway. The anticipated construction cost is \$50 million.

BUFFALO VALLEY RAIL TRAIL, LEWISBURG GAP, UNION COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #241

The Buffalo Valley Rail Trail is a 9.5-mile, multi-use trail that spans between Lewisburg and Mifflinburg boroughs. The current US Highway 15 crossing into Lewisburg Borough is unsafe for trail users. Closure of this gap will create a safer

connection between the majority of trail miles and the 0.5-mile section of trail in Lewisburg Borough.

Status: Early planning underway. The anticipated cost to close this gap is \$1 million.

ARMSTRONG TRAIL, BRADY TUNNEL, CLARION COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #130

The Armstrong Trail is a 36-mile, multi-use trail that follows the alignment of the former Allegheny Valley Railroad and is a part of the planned 333-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. The Brady Tunnel is currently closed due to its deteriorated state. Once rehabilitated, it will connect four miles of the Armstrong Trail to the north with

32 miles of trail to the south to create a fully connected 36-mile system.

Status: Design & stabilization complete. Scheduled to begin construction, late 2023. The anticipated total cost to close this gap is \$6.5 million.

ENOLA LOW GRADE TRAIL, MARTIC FORGE BRIDGE, LANCASTER COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #321

Martic Forge Trestle Bridge is a former railroad bridge that was turned into a pedestrian walkway for the Enola Low Grade Trail in 2017. In the summer of 2018, the bridge was severely damaged by arson. The bridge is located over Pequea Creek

between Martic and Conestoga townships, Lancaster County.

Status: Completed in the summer of 2022! Total engineering and construction costs, approximately \$3.2 million.

LYCOMING CREEK BIKEWAY, WILLIAMSPORT RIVERWALK AND SUSQUEHANNA STATE PARK CONNECTION, LYCOMING COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #132

The Lycoming Creek Bikeway and Williamsport Riverwalk are two local trails located within the Susquehanna Greenway, a 500-mile greenway of parks, trails, river access points and revitalized towns along the Susquehanna River. Currently, US Highway 15, Interstate 180 and Lycoming Creek present

barriers to connecting these two trails and the state park. Three miles of trail and one pedestrian bridge will need to be constructed to make this connected vision a reality.

Status: Design complete. The anticipated cost to close this gap is \$4.5 million.



Enola low grade trail, Martic Forge Bridge (Priority Trail Gap #321)
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

OIL CREEK STATE PARK TRAIL GAP, VENANGO COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #214

The Oil Creek State Park trail system includes 52 miles of hiking trails and 10 miles of multi-use trails and is also a part of the 333-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. Currently, travelers on the Oil Creek State Park multi-use trail must either end their trip or continue on road to reach 35 additional miles of multi-use

trail at the southern end of the park. Four miles of trail must be constructed within the State Park to create a continuous 49.5-mile trail.

Status: Planning underway. Anticipated cost to close this gap is \$8 million.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL, WISSAHICKON GATEWAY GAP, PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #238

The Schuylkill River Trail is a 130-mile multi-use trail that will one day link Pottsville, Schuylkill County with Center City Philadelphia, with 60 miles currently complete. The Wissahickon Gateway Gap presents one of the most challenging gaps. Multiple conflict points, including an active bus stop and eleven curb cuts, prevent many from continuing

on the trail. The completion of this gap will connect seven miles of trail east to Schuylkill Banks in Center City Philadelphia with 20 miles of trail west to Phoenixville, Chester County.

Status: Land acquisition process underway. The anticipated cost to close this gap is \$4.5 million.



Armstrong Trail, Brady Tunnel (Priority Trail Gap #130)
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

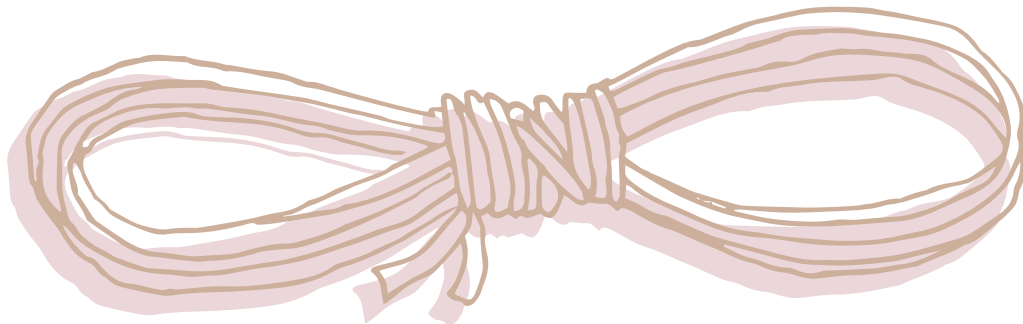
LOWER TRAIL TO CANOE CREEK STATE PARK GAP, BLAIR COUNTY

Priority Trail Gap #273

The Lower Trail is a 17-mile multi-use trail that is a part of the 320-mile Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway. Trail users could not travel between the Lower Trail and the multi-use trails within Canoe Creek State Park, including access to overnight accommodations. The connection required

construction of one mile of trail, crossing over the Juniata River and US Highway 22.

Status: Project completed in late 2021!



2022 TRAIL GAP CLOSURES

A Cause for Celebration



“ Nobody can boast the view we have of the river,” said Ryan Strohecker, Manor Township manager, in a recent article for Lancaster Online. “We believe it will be a nationwide draw. ”

 Enola Lowgrade Rail-Trail Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

2022 was a huge year for trails, and nowhere shows the impact of that work like Lancaster County. In the county’s southern half, the Enola Low Grade Trail now has 20+ miles of continuous multi-use trail thanks to the completion of two of Pennsylvania’s Top Ten Trail Gaps: The Safe Harbor and Martic Forge bridges.

Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge, Enola Low Grade Trail

The Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge is a former railroad bridge along the Enola Low Grade Trail in Manor Township, Lancaster County. The bridge spans 1,500 feet across the Conestoga River where it empties into the Susquehanna River.

The bridge has never been open to walkers and bikers—until now. As of June 2, 2022, the Safe Harbor Bridge officially opened to visitors. Opening the bridge required years of construction work at a total cost of \$9 million. Funding came from local donors, Lancaster County, PennDOT, and DCNR. DCNR’s contribution totaled more than \$1.3 million from the **Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund.**

The bridge deck is over a hundred feet above the Conestoga River and offers epic views of the lower Susquehanna River. Local officials believe the bridge will be a major boon for tourism.

More than 75,000 people use the Enola Low Grade Trail annually in Manor Township alone. The trail supports walking, biking, and cross-country skiing. The Safe Harbor Bridge was one of Pennsylvania’s Top 10 Trail Gaps. It links five miles of the Enola Low Grade Trail’s western length with more than 20 miles that are built, in design, or under construction.

 **BACK TO TOP**



 Martic Forge Trestle Bridge
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Martic Forge Trestle Bridge, Enola Low Grade Trail

The Martic Forge Trestle Bridge is also along the Enola Low Grade Trail and was one of Pennsylvania's Top 10 Trail Gaps. The new bridge replaces the wooden bridge deck that was destroyed by fire in 2018. It reopened a continuous 20-mile stretch of the Enola Low Grade Trail from Manor Township through Quarryville.

“We are very excited to be in the position of finally opening this trestle and section of the trail in our townships. We hope that it becomes a popular destination for Lancaster County, for the region, and for the state. Based on public input and the feedback we’ve received, we think it will be a big success,” said Carl Drexel, Martic Township Supervisor. ”

DCNR supported the project in 2019 with \$1.1 million in funding from both the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program and the **Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund**.

“Trails are key connectors to new outdoor recreation opportunities, communities, and experiences, which is why DCNR supports projects of this nature and prioritizes trail expansion across the commonwealth,” DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. “We are grateful for municipalities like Martic Township that prioritize this type of project, as well as our partners at the county and state level within the Wolf Administration. This is a collective success.”

The Martic Forge restoration project also received four grants totaling \$1.75 million through the Department of Community and Economic Development's Commonwealth Financing Authority in 2019 and 2021. These funds were used to make critical repairs and upgrades to the support structure.

The Martic Forge Trestle Bridge is the second Top 10 Trail Gap closed in 2022, following the opening of the Safe Harbor Trestle Bridge in June.

DCNR MOTORIZED RECREATION UPDATES

ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot Program

In 2021 DCNR began the [ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot Program](#) in northcentral Pennsylvania by seeking viable connections between the Whiskey Springs, Haneyville, and Susquehannock ATV trail systems. ATV enthusiasts are invited to purchase permits to experience these connections via combinations of PennDOT roads, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry roads and trails, municipal roads, and private roads and/or right of ways. These connections are designated with uniform signage used by all entities. Although municipal and township roadways can be utilized year-round, the ATV Pilot preferred route is marked with a series of directional arrows as well as the shared use ATV signs used within townships, state forest roads and trails, and approved sections of PennDOT right of ways.

Good resource management starts with planning: Before opening the ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot the DCNR team engaged in an extensive planning process to avoid conflicts with ecological resources, public safety, and other recreational users.

Monitoring is critical for adaptive management: DCNR is committed to monitoring any potential positive or negative impacts of the pilot to help us adjust management practices and communicate to the public.

The monitoring plan is based on the pillars of Sustainability: Environmental, Social, and Economic: DCNR is partnering with Penn State University to help understand noise impacts and impacts to other recreational users. DCNR also hopes to partner with Penn State and the Social Science Research Institute to evaluate economic impacts.



Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Location: Catawissa Recreation Area

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Public Engagement is Critical: An important part of monitoring this project is capturing public sentiment. Throughout the riding season and post-season, DCNR meets with all the municipalities involved to gather comments and suggestions, and to discuss future plans. DCNR will be looking to engage stakeholders, local partners, and advisory committees to understand potential impacts and opportunities to improve. The public may provide comments during the length of the pilot program to DCNR by emailing

(RA-NR-ATV-Pilot@pa.gov). DCNR is also working toward developing surveys to post online.

Connected statewide riding opportunities provide real nature-based experiences for motorized recreationists and serve as viable assets to communities. There is demonstrated stewardship from the ATV riding community to promote responsible, legal riding via education, self-policing, volunteerism, and promotion of Leave No Trace® principles.

Statistics

2021 TOTAL	2022 TOTAL	2023 TOTAL
264 miles 1,894 permits issued	306 miles 3,650 permits issued	374 miles (as of June)
Bureau of Forestry: 57 miles	Bureau of Forestry: 71 miles	Bureau of Forestry: 163.5 miles
PennDOT: 12 miles	PennDOT: 39 miles	PennDOT: 33.5 miles
Township: 195 miles	Township: 196 miles	Township: 177 miles

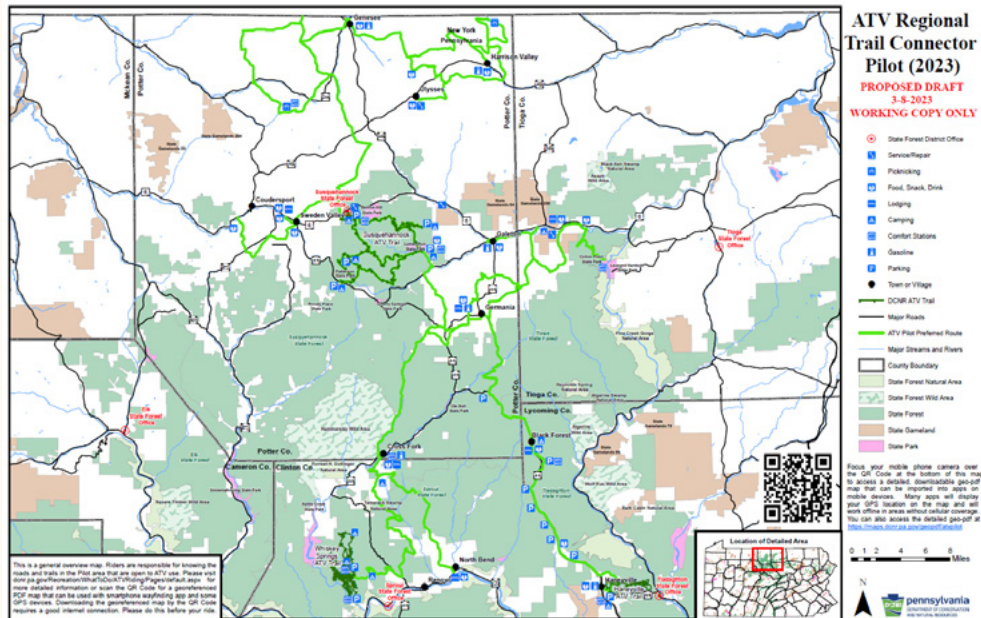
ATV Pilot Riding Season

- 2021**
Friday, July 16 — Sunday, September 26
- 2022**
Friday, May 27 — Sunday, September 25
- 2023**
Friday, May 26 — Sunday, September 24

Maps

[ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot Area Online GIS Map](#)

[Print-Ready ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot Area Map \(PDF\)](#)



ATV Pilot Map

Report on Pilot Program

DCNR anticipates publishing a report about the pilot by December 31, 2023, for further evaluation and stakeholder input.

Catawissa Recreation Area

A New Opportunity for Motorized Recreation in Pennsylvania

Over the past decade, PA DCNR has witnessed a growing interest in motorized recreation statewide. After years of planning efforts, DCNR reached an agreement with Butler Enterprises to purchase a 5,541-acre tract of property that is situated in Schuylkill and Luzerne counties. This property had previously been run as an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) facility known as the Paragon Adventure Park until 2007 when the park shut down. Through the Weiser Forest District, DCNR took ownership of this property, now named the Catawissa Recreation Area, in July of 2022. The Catawissa Recreation Area aims to address the growing demand for OHV opportunities by developing a variety of safe, legal, and sustainable riding experiences from new and existing trails.

Weiser Forest District currently offers a variety of recreation opportunities for biking, hiking, and kayaking in places like Roaring Creek. The forest district will now be able to add motorized recreation to this list with the acquisition of this property.

During the summer of 2022, DCNR contracted with Larson Design Group (Larson) through Markosky Engineering Group Inc. to prepare a motorized recreation master plan for the Catawissa Recreation Area. After the acquisition was complete, work on the master plan began in the fall of 2022 with Larson holding several informational sessions with stakeholder groups and launching a public survey to receive input and recommendations for the development of the recreation area. At the same time Larson's staff began surveying the property for existing trails and analyzing their current condition.

To date, a total of 105 miles of trails have been identified on the property.

With the current project schedule, DCNR anticipates receiving the final motorized recreation master plan from Larson in the fall of 2023. DCNR will utilize information from this master planning process to guide the future phased development of the property, as well as to eventually solicit a private third-party to run the daily operations of the motorized recreation area.

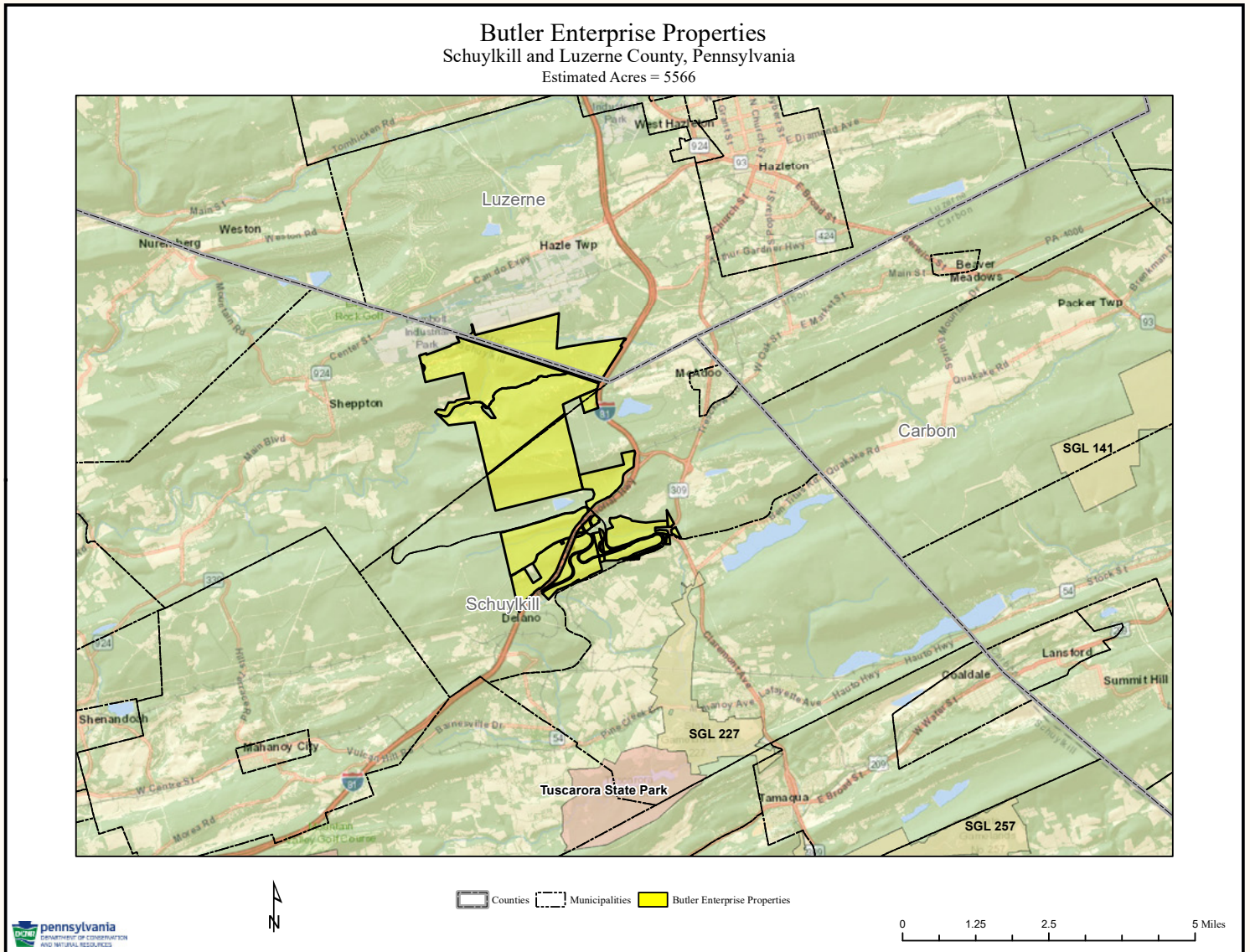
The acquisition of the Catawissa Recreation Area by the Commonwealth also offers opportunities for watershed and ecological restoration. Due to the impact of past anthracite coal mining activity on the property, three acid mine drainage (AMD) sites contribute to the majority of pollution of the



Department of Conservation and Natural Resources / Location: Catawissa Recreation Area

41-mile-long Catawissa Creek. Through a partnership with the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), DCNR received funding support from its sister agency in the acquisition of the property. This partnership would allow DEP to access several acres of the property to develop an AMD treatment facility to clean the Catawissa Creek. Once the treatment facility is up and running, the creek should begin to flourish and provide significant outdoor recreation and fishing opportunities to the public.

As a dedicated OHV riding destination, the Catawissa Recreation Area project is a new concept for the agency's use of Liquid Fuels Tax funds. Internal and external coordination will continue to be imperative in DCNR's planning efforts and ability to address the infrastructure needs of the property before opening it to the public. As work on the recreation area progresses, DCNR will maintain the responsibility of conserving and managing the land's natural resources and assess the site for opportunities to expand other forms of recreation for the public.



Catawissa Recreation Area

Circuit Trails Gap Analysis and the Potential for Equity Impact

Author, *Pennsylvania Environmental Council*

As a Circuit Trails Coalition (CTC) leader, PEC knows that trail development is often opportunistic (the proverbial “low-hanging fruit”) and is carried out by numerous trail builders. The result is discontinuous trails (gaps), and a lack of trail development in under-resourced communities. For this reason, while it is important to continue to build our trail networks outward, it is sometimes more important to fill gaps within the existing network — not just linking together isolated trail sections, but connecting users to parks, transit, and jobs as well.

To promote a more systematic approach and advance trails serving under-resourced communities, PEC launched an effort in 2021 to inventory and analyze the almost 300 trail segments yet to be completed within the Circuit Trails network. The result is the Circuit Trails Gap Analysis, a [report](#) and [online mapping portal](#) that ranks every unbuilt Circuit Trails segment according to its potential equity impact if constructed.

The Gap Analysis provides a framework for trail buildout that prioritizes benefits to lower-income, racially diverse communities. This makes it possible to generate lists of segments that (once completed) will have the greatest impact on Black and Brown residents, low-income communities, and densely populated areas; and/or that would enhance system connectivity, increasing access to transit, employment, and the outdoors.

This emphasis on equity and inclusion isn’t new for the Coalition. PEC’s [Inclusionary Trail Planning Tool Kit \(2018\)](#), and the CTC Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Task Force established in 2018 helped set the stage for further research into apparent disparities in trail use, maintenance, and development. Galvanized by nationwide protests in 2020 and the ensuing conversation on systemic racism and justice, the CTC redoubled its commitment with the [2020 Equity of Access to Trails report](#), which strongly informed the Circuit Trails’ strategic planning process in the summer of 2021.



Already, our Gap Analysis online mapping portal is being used by Coalition partners—including the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia and Mercer County (NJ) Action Team—to prioritize trail segments for their own organizations’ advocacy and development efforts. Additionally, in the summer of 2023 (and twice a year from here on out) PEC will be undertaking a refresh of the Gap Analysis mapping portal, including importing more current demographic data; trail segment status, naming, and alignments; and the inclusion of two new variables to further refine our trail prioritization process. These variables are public health indicators by census tract and traffic safety relative to nearby trails. Stay up to date by checking out our mapping portal, and feel free to forward any questions to [Zhenya Nalywayko](#) or [Helena Kotala](#).

Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition 10 Year Evaluation and Success Strategy

Author, Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition

Building off many years of prior collaboration among regional trail advocates, the [Industrial Heartlands Trail Coalition](#) (IHTC) was formed in 2013 and has been bringing people together on behalf of trails ever since. In the 10 years since IHTC’s founding, trail and community partners have been working toward a shared vision to establish the Industrial Heartland as a premier destination offering a 1,500-mile multi-use trail network experience.

Shorten “Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition” and you get “I Heart Trails.” This is fitting given that dozens of partners have stayed the course due to their shared love for trails. But the emergence of a multi-state community of trail advocates and a network of interconnecting trails signifies so much more than “heart.” Nick Hoffman of The Frank Varischetti Foundation recently said of the network, “Becoming part of a bigger idea is like the brain meeting the heart.”

In recognition of the IHTC having been in operation for nearly a decade, Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) engaged Cycle Forward to assess the coalition’s success to date. Working closely with the rest of IHTC’s Project Support Team (or PST, including Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the National Park Service’s RTCA Ohio Field Office), the project team queried the coalition at large in determining how to work even more effectively in the future. Coalition members contributed their ideas and feedback through a facilitated session during the 2022 Winter Webinar, through a survey, in stakeholder focus groups, and by reviewing and commenting on this document. In addition to hearing from coalition members, the project team referred to IHTC legacy documents to review and evaluate success to date.

The [resulting document is an interactive pdf](#), meaning that all links are live and will redirect readers to the

accompanying websites accordingly. The table of contents is linked throughout and can be used to navigate the document with ease.

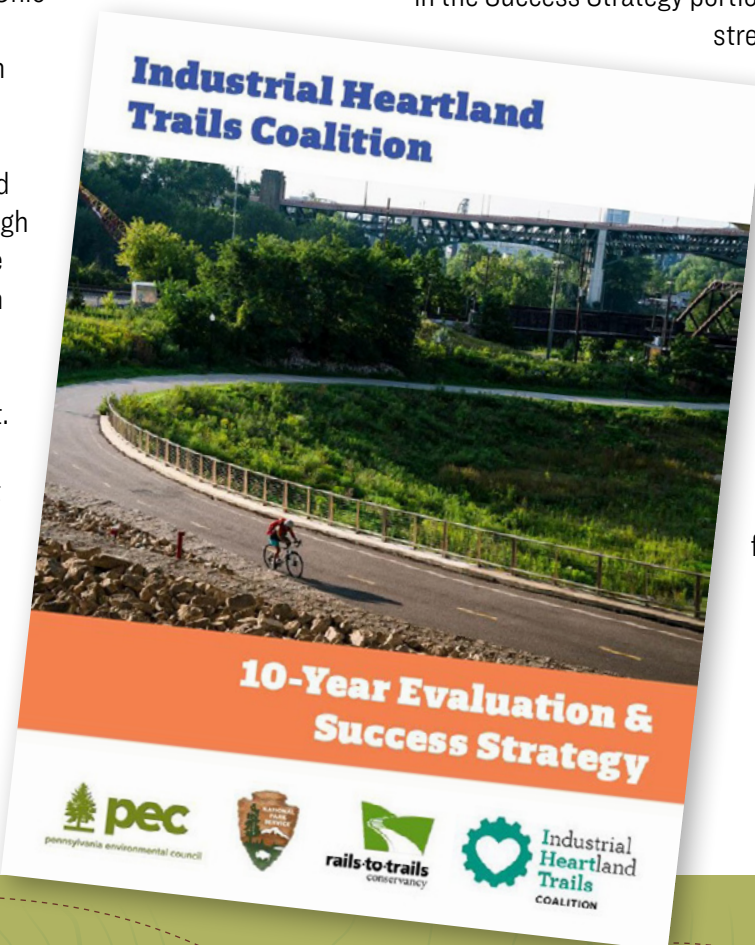
Key Findings & Recommendations

The most validating findings are those that point to the **coalition’s continued value** and its ability to sustain across such a large footprint. Other important findings are that the most pressing challenges in establishing the region as a premier trail destination relate to funding, land acquisition, and better connecting communities to trails.

A **world-class regional trail network** will ultimately depend upon improved community connections, transitioning from thinking about trails to thinking about complete active transportation networks, and positioning communities for tourism and meeting the demands of the outdoor recreation centers.

In the interim, **the most important thing is getting more trail miles built**, particularly in locations that result in longer segments of open trail. The recommendations that appear in the Success Strategy portion of the report are focused on strengthening the coalition as an entity and supporting trail development.

To reference Nick’s quote from earlier, there has been a lot of both brain and heart in the IHTC over the past 10 years (one needs only review the list of accomplishments beginning on p. 15). This report gives the coalition the opportunity to celebrate its many successes and move more assertively forward in fulfilling its vision.



Partners in the IHTC built on connections to cultivate shared values, resulting in:

- Formation of Ohio State Legislative Trail Caucus and WV TRAIL
- Award of ARC Planning and Implementation Grants
- Celebration of Climax Tunnel opening & advancement of Oil Creek State Park gap
- Promotion and execution of RTC's Rail-Trail Sojourns on the Parkersburg to Pittsburgh and Trans Allegheny Trails Corridors
- Organization of Coalition-wide Summits



The IHTC has connected people with each other and organizations by:

- Forming Corridor working groups, enabling and strengthening localized networking
- Facilitating Quarterly Meetings
- Disseminating regional communication
- Developing IHTC Tourism Strategy
- Hosting Trail Town Community Workshops



With a common foundation, IHTC partners organized to:

- Launch the GoToTrails mapping platform and iHearttrails.org website
- Design and distribute Trail Trips and Story Maps
- Produce 'Heart of Our Community' video and IHTC photo library
- Create corridor feasibility assessments, cost estimates, and recommendations
- Create Trail Traffic Count model, foundation for developing economic impact studies



Equity and Accessibility Assessment Along the Highlands Trail

The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) in the Mid-Atlantic region conducted an [Equity and Accessibility Assessment](#) to better understand which portions of the Highlands Trail in Pennsylvania are ADA-accessible.

Equity assessment, summary

AMC used the [PA DEP Environmental Justice Areas Map 2015](#) as a preliminary resource to prioritize where to focus the comprehensive assessment along the Highlands Trail in Pennsylvania. The socioeconomic data helped AMC to identify communities for outreach for public input in the recommendation process for improved amenities and to see how potential “interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage (intersectionality)” might be present in the city of Easton.

The approach was adopted from the Circuit Trails JEDI Task Force’s report, [Market Research: Equity of Access to Trails](#), whose study sought to “identify barriers to trail use in diverse and underserved neighborhoods that are adjacent to Circuit Trails.”

The data for all socioeconomic factors demonstrates that the city of Easton is varied and diverse in its populations adjacent to the D&L Trail and the co-alignment of the Highlands Trail in Pennsylvania. Gathering input from each group would inform a holistic set of recommendations to make this portion of the D&L Trail accessible and inclusive to more individuals. The larger report accounts for statistical analysis in terms of: non-white population proximity to the trail, older adults, English-speaking households, populations with disabilities, lower-income households, women, and more.

Accessibility assessment, summary

Overall, the 2.3-mile section identified in the comprehensive assessment is in fair condition with several recommendations. The most common deficiencies included,

in varying locations: slopes in accessing the trail; clearer, concise wayfinding signage; little to no built facilities; picnic table improvements; and little to no shade.

[Read the full assessment.](#)



Gravel Riding in Pennsylvania

Author, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Gravel (sometimes referred to as “mixed-surface”) riding is a form of cycling that mainly utilizes gravel and dirt roads, but also incorporates paved road connections, rail trails, singletrack and doubletrack to form routes. Gravel riding is currently one of the fastest growing forms of cycling, and for good reason – it is versatile, approachable, and offers a middle ground between road or rail trail riding and mountain biking. Routes can start anywhere, be any distance, and often take users through scenic forests, farmland, and small towns—sometimes all in the same ride. Events tend to be focused on camaraderie more than competition, and the gravel cycling community is known for being inclusive, fun, and not-too-serious. Gravel cycling is a great way to explore an area, get to know communities, and experience the world at a speed that is fast enough to cover a lot of ground but slow enough to enjoy. With over 25,000 miles of gravel roads, as well as countless more miles of rail trail, snowmobile trails, and mellow singletrack, Pennsylvania is an endless playground.

As the sport continues to gain popularity, there is a growing need for cooperation between riders, event promoters, tourism bureaus, land management agencies, and others involved in order to provide the best possible experience for cyclists and support the responsible continued growth of gravel riding. There is a lot going on across the state—dozens of events, promotional efforts, group rides, and solo or small group riders—but there is no go-to resource for information and no coordinated effort to align the interests and goals of the involved groups. With this in mind, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) has embarked on a mission to change that.

Report

The first step towards improvement is understanding the current state of gravel riding. In spring 2022, PEC worked with Amy Camp of Cycle Forward to put together a report, titled *Gravel: Another Great Cycling Option in Pennsylvania*. This report provided insight based on interviews with people from a variety of sectors in the gravel scene from Pennsylvania and nationwide, and identified some potential barriers and opportunities for increased growth of the sport in Pennsylvania.

Summit

PEC also convened approximately 30 stakeholders in-person in State College, PA on April 28, 2022 for a Gravel Summit. In attendance were riders, event planners and promoters, tourism bureaus, bike industry representatives, business owners, and public land management agencies such as DCNR Forestry and State Parks, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and Allegheny National Forest. The Summit began with presentations offering different perspectives on gravel riding



 Pennsylvania Environmental Council / Location: Elk County Game Lands

from the various groups. Later in the day, small breakout sessions and discussions provided an opportunity to identify and prioritize potential challenges and opportunities associated with the growth of gravel riding, as well as aspirations for the gravel riding ecosystem in Pennsylvania. The information gathered there, as well as PEC's own observations, helped inform five recommendations for enhancing gravel riding resources and supporting the sustainable growth of the sport.

The recommendations include:

- conducting research to improve the understanding of the economic impact of gravel cycling;
- establishing statewide coordination and communication between land managers, route planners, event promoters, and the riding public that will increase responsible gravel cycling on public lands and help mitigate user conflicts;
- creating a statewide resource for riders that recommends vetted routes and high-quality experiences;

- leveraging the growth in gravel riding to further support PA's multi-use trails;
- and, positioning rural economies to flourish by taking part in the outdoor recreation economy.

More details on potential action items for each of these recommendations and background on the Gravel Summit can be found in the resulting publication—[*Gravel: Recommendations for Supporting the Growth of Gravel Riding in Pennsylvania*](#).

Moving forward in 2023, PEC plans to host another, larger Gravel Summit in the fall, continue coordination and communication with various stakeholders, and work towards creating a cohesive resource for gravel riding in Pennsylvania. PEC also hosts a non-competitive gravel cycling event annually at Black Moshannon State Park and Moshannon State Forest. This year's event will be on September 30, 2023.

More information on PEC's gravel work can be found at pecpa.org/gravel.



Inset: Colerain Vista
Both Images: Pennsylvania Environmental Council

EASTERN PA GREENWAYS & TRAILS CONFERENCE



 Discover Lehigh Valley | Location: Easton's State Theatre

Author: Northampton County Parks and Recreation

The 2022 Eastern PA Greenways & Trails Conference was held at the iconic State Theatre in downtown Easton, PA.

Located feet away from the Two Rivers Trailway, September 11th National Memorial Trail, and the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, the site offered a unique experience to host educational sessions and provide walking and biking opportunities. Over two days in September, the Summit offered 15 educational sessions, plus two panel discussions. A short walk from the State Theatre, Easton Public Market was the site of lunch, allowing Summit users to get out and walk, with ample time provided to explore Easton, the trails and rivers.

The Summit was sponsored by Northampton County, City of Easton, Lehigh Valley Greenways/DCNR, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, State Theatre, Nurture Nature Center, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Discover LV, and eight others. Thanks are due to all 22 members of the steering committee for bringing together the speakers, panelists, sessions, events,

and tours. A summit/conference using various spaces in a downtown setting was unique and had its planning constraints, but in all, it was a complete success and an opportunity for others to see how it could be done differently.

Evening Reception at the Nurture Nature Center

The Nurture Nature Center provides a range of ongoing programs for the surrounding community, including science and art presentations and workshops, documentary film series, garden programming, community dialogue forums, youth activities, and field trips. Nurture Nature Center was honored to receive the 2022 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for the Watershed-Friendly Property Program (established through a grant from PA DEP's Environmental Education Program).

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Conference attendees enjoyed the opportunity to explore the **Nurture Nature Center's Science on a Sphere® (SOS) exhibit**, developed by the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**, featuring breathtaking visualizations of earth and space science. The exhibit is a centerpiece of NNC's visitor area, filled with local artwork.

Plenary Speaker

Gretchen Snethen, PhD—Park RX

Gretchen Snethen is an associate professor in the Recreational Therapy program within the department of Rehabilitation Sciences and the assistant director for the NIDILRR-funded Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion. Her research focuses on: understanding the relationship between environmental factors and community participation; using the community to promote physical activity engagement; and, developing interventions that use recreation and leisure as a means to promote independence in the community.

Mobile Workshops

- **D&L Trail Corridor** – explored the newly constructed and opened sections of the D&L Trail within Northampton and Lehigh Counties. Participants walked approximately 1.5 miles from Northampton to North Catasauqua along the Lehigh River, passed active construction in Catasauqua and Hanover Township, and saw how these historic Boroughs are revitalizing their downtowns around the D&L Trail and September 11th National Memorial Trail corridors.
- **Two Rivers Area Trail Corridor** – explored how multi-municipal planning, environmental restorations and development is playing a direct link into the 18-mile Two Rivers Area Trail, Northern Tier Trail, and September 11th National Memorial Trail corridors. Participants stopped at a few locations in Bushkill and Plainfield Townships and the Borough of Stockertown. Participants walked approximately 2 miles in the Ballas Meadow Preserve and the Bushkill Township Recreation Trail.

Panel Discussions

- The Impact of Green Spaces on Well-Being: An interdisciplinary discussion on how parks and trails help us thrive.
- Outdoor Recreation, Tourism & Economic Development.



Northampton County Parks & Recreation



The Nurture Nature Center

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2023 | SCRANTON



PENNSYLVANIA Greenways&Trails SUMMIT

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area, based in Scranton, has been named as the host site for the 2023 Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit, bringing hundreds of outdoor recreation experts and enthusiasts to Lackawanna County for the education, advocacy and networking forum September 17-19.

Register [here](#).



 BACK TO TOP

REGIONAL TRAIL WORKSHOP GRANT PROGRAM

The Regional Trail Workshop Grant program provides funding to conservation-oriented non-profit organizations for the purpose of developing, marketing, and presenting trail education programs across the state, and in support of recreational trail outreach efforts. To support local trail and greenway outreach and education efforts in 2022, WeConservePA offered grants of up to \$5,000 to conservation-oriented non-profit organizations or local/county governments. Regional Trail Workshop Grants are funded through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and administered by WeConservePA.

A total of 24 applications were received for the 2022 grant round. In total, nine organizations received funding:

- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Erie to Pittsburgh Trail
- Keystone Trails Association
- Impact Corry
- Landforce Pittsburgh
- Northcountry Trail Association
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council
- Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
- Wildlands Conservancy

D&L National Heritage Corridor

Program Title:

Regional Trail Workshops

Program Dates:

June 29, July 13, September 14, September 29

Program Description:

D&L National Heritage Corridor organized a series of four training workshops for their Trail Patrol and Adopt-a-Section program volunteers. Through these programs, D&L was able to engage 43 new volunteers. Attendees left with the tools and training necessary to become a member of the Trail Patrol team, or volunteer to Adopt-a-Section of the trail.

June 29: Trail Patrol training at Hugh Moore Park in Easton

Eleven participants committed to becoming active trail patrollers during this first session. The evening included presentations by D&L staff, as well as a current volunteer who shared their experience as a patroller. Presentations were followed by field training on data collection using online tools. All attendees were provided with first aid kits for their use when patrolling the trail.



D&L Trail Patrol

July 13: Adopt-a-Section training at Hugh Moore Park in Easton

Nine participants received training on D&L's Adopt-a-Section program, with seven ultimately signing adoption agreements. Training included a presentation by D&L staff overviewing the program, as well as field training on the proper cleaning methods for trail signs. Adopter's were provided with cleaning

kits including all the necessary supplies for proper care of signs along the trail.

September 14: Trail Patrol training at Lehigh Gap Nature Center

This session attracted 17 participants, including 3 existing trail patrollers. Fourteen new patrollers committed to joining the program after this evening. The evening included presentations by D&L staff, as well as a current volunteer who shared their experience as a patroller. Presentations were followed by a field training on the proper cleaning methods for trail signs. Participants were provided with cleaning kits including all the necessary supplies for the proper care of signs along the trail.

September 29: Adopt-a-Section training at Lehigh Gap Nature Center

Smaller than the other sections, six participants received training on D&L's Adopt-a-Section program, with five ultimately signing adoption agreements. Presentation by D&L staff was followed by field training on data collection using online tools. All attendees were provided with first aid kits for their use when performing required tasks along the trail.

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

Program Title:

Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Summit

Program Dates:

September 16, 2022

Program Description:

The 2022 Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Summit, held on Friday, September 16 at The Inn at Lenape in Ford City, brought together 48 individuals for discussion, networking, and training on issues facing trail builders, managers, and stewards. Summit activities covered many topics, including the future of trails, volunteer engagement, building strong trail communities, and planning for sustainability and longterm maintenance.

Attendees were involved in discussions about how trails have changed over the years (and what the future might look like), and how trail owners, managers, advocates, volunteers, and communities can adapt to these changes to be better prepared moving into the future, ensuring that they are available for generations to come. Another important topic of discussion was e-bikes. Although attendees did not all agree on their use,



EPT Symposium outdoor classroom

discussions such as these help participants better understand the concerns and opinions of others. Finally, as the effects of climate change continue to manifest, trail builders are seeing issues that were not as apparent in the past, issues such as

stormwater washout, and increased heat along trail corridors. Participants enjoyed a presentation on methods to better plan in the engineering phase by including green principles such as the use of native plants, installation of raingardens, high canopy tree cutting, and including better stormwater management facilities at locations where water could potentially damage trails.

Due to a local outbreak of COVID, summit organizers opted to provide the mobile workshop virtually using drone video. The workshop focused on two unique projects in the Allegheny Valley in Armstrong and Allegheny Counties on the Erie to

Pittsburgh Trail, the acquisition of the Kiski Rail corridor and the Iron City Brewer. The Kiski acquisition brought together numerous project partners and will add 14-miles to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (EPT). The bridge itself is also an integral piece for the EPT and its connection to the Mainline Trail. The Iron City Brewery trail project provided an example of how a private developer saw the trail as an asset, and will be working with the local trail organization and municipality to construct trail through their property that will eventually become part of the EPT.

Keystone Trails Association

Program Title:

Trail Care Training 101

Program Dates: March 25-27

Program Description:

Keystone Trails Association hosted a 3-day intensive training on trail care for six participants. Classroom training and meals were held at Camp Nawakwa in Arendtsville, with field training occurring in the Micheaux State Forest. The training included a broad introduction to trail maintenance techniques and considerations, as well as best practices for risk management. Following classroom instruction, participants received applied hands-on training along a short section of the Beaver Trail in Micheaux State Forest, and completed an evaluation along the adjacent Rocky Knob Trail.

Guest instructors for this training included Tom Moutsos, Northcountry Trail Association; Jenn Ulmer, Mid-State Trail and Keystone Trail Association; Brook Lenker, Keystone



Keystone Trails Association construction training

Trail Association; and Rachel Lettre of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Ad Crable from the Chesapeake Bay Journal also joined, developing a follow up story regarding the event.

Impact Corry

Program Title:

Trail Assessment for Volunteers

Program Dates:

April 9 – May 24 (multiple sessions)

Program Description:

Impact Corry held a series of four workshops between April 9 and May 24, attracting a total of 40 participants. Topics included trails 101, basic trail maintenance, year-round maintenance best practices, and how to successfully set the stage for a new trail project. All training was provided by Ron Steffey of Steffey Trail Connections.

Steffey Trail Connections has extensive experience with coaching volunteers to improve their knowledge and skills to manage and maintain trails in an environmentally friendly manner. This coaching is centered on establishing trail basics and building a foundation. Each layer of the foundation is a fundamental step for the next level. These fundamentals are used to establish an assessment of where you are and help map out where you want to go.

Session 1: Trails Basics

This workshop/walk addressed basic trail terminology, key design considerations of street crossings and construction, and evaluation methods while participants walked the circuit from Mead Park to the planned trails of the Mead Connector and extension of the Corry Junction Greenway Trail. The importance of connections to nature and the larger trail network was also discussed.

Session 2: Basic Trail Maintenance for Volunteers

A train-the-trainer program focused on teaching trail managers who will in turn train volunteer stewards on basic methods of trail assessment and maintenance. Specific topics addressed included: (1) how to work safely and efficiently with hand tools, (2) trimming brush and canopy for a clear line of sight, (3) removing invasive plants and bushes and trimming remaining bushes, and (4) building splash dams to improve drainage runoff and protect drainage tubes from eroding or becoming clogged with debris.

Session 3: Year-Round Maintenance Best Practices

This workshop focused on best practices for year-round maintenance activities utilizing a backdrop of the Corry Junction Greenway Trail. Participants were shown the Tri-County Snowblazers' inventory of maintenance equipment, including a new tractor funded by local and DCNR contributions. Discussion included each piece of equipment's capabilities and limitations, the seasonal conditions and needs of the trail, and best practices for the efficient and safe utilization of the equipment. Participants had the opportunity to put practice to work with hands-on maintenance projects.

Session 4: Setting the Stage for Trails

The final workshop in the series invited participants to interpret Robert Frost's poem, *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening*, and envisioning a trail loop based on this interpretation. Topics of discussion included why trails are fundamentally important to people, how to connect stakeholders to trails (and how to frame a picture of that trail to gain support). After discussion, participants worked through exercises in designing, marking, and implementing a half-mile trail.



Impact Corry, Steffey Trail Connections training



Impact Corry, Steffey Trail Connections training



LandForce Pittsburgh

Program Title:

Workforce Development: Trail Structures and Carpentry

Program Dates:

April 14 & 15 and May 18-20

Program Description:

Landforce's 2022 training cohort began their Trail Structures and Carpentry training during their seven week long training and orientation period. The cohort was split into two groups of eight trainees, each receiving training in basic math and



LandForce Pittsburgh, trail structures and carpentry training

fractions, taking measurements and reading a tape measure, reading site plans and cross section drawings, using a circular saw, power drill, impact gun, level, and hand tools used for digging. Each trainee practiced safe cutting and assembly techniques in addition to taking measurements of items and rooms in our office's classroom space where an overview of fractions and basic math was facilitated.

The second half of the classroom training was a review of the first-half, along with a review of the materials they would go on to use in the construction of a foot bridge for the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania (ASWP). Over the final two days, our crew members then put training into practice by excavating and grading the project site before constructing a 16' long by 4' wide foot bridge, allowing for seasonal drainage below. In addition, the team also constructed six natural material check steps on the same trail as the bridge, about 50 feet away.

A total of 16 trainees participated in the classroom and warehouse portion of the training session, which was led by full-time LandForce staff members, with 12 trainees also completing the on-site portion. Inexperienced trainees were provided with extra attention from trainers, and a slower pace so that they could gain confidence. They worked as a team to use their strengths to contribute to the training project so that constructing the bridge and natural check steps was a team effort. This included problem solving around less than ideal conditions, disassembling a portion of the bridge, reassembling it correctly, and using the proper tools and equipment safely during every step of the process.

Northcountry Trails Association

Program Title:

PA Trail Council Training; Trail Adopter Training (Virtual); PA Outdoor Corps Rock & Rigging Training

Program Dates:

April 10; April 28; June 27-28

Program Description:

Northcountry Trails Association provided a series of trail centered trainings geared towards specific groups across the spring and summer of 2022. A total of 156 individuals participated in one or more of these training opportunities.

PA Trail Council: April 10, Cook Forest State Park

Five individuals took part in the PA Trail Council training offered April 10 at Cook Forest State Park. Despite rain and cold weather affecting portions of this training, participants learned skills of trail survey and design as well as maintenance techniques for clearing corridor and dealing with tread and drainage issues. Following the classroom presentations, participants practiced hands-on trail maintenance along a section of the North Country Trail in Cook Forest.

Trail Adopter Virtual Training: April 28 (virtual)



Northcountry Trails Association, PA Outdoor Corps training

This virtual training opportunity was open to all Northcountry Trail Association (NCTA) volunteers, including those based in Pennsylvania. In total, 137 participants logged in for the hour-long call. Participants were split into two 'rooms', the first for new/interested trail adopters, and the other for current adopters looking for the next level of instruction. New and interested adopters received a basic overview of the

program. Tom Moutsos, NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator for Pennsylvania and Ohio, moderated the discussion for current adopters, the focus of which was an in-depth look at tread and drainage issues. Specifically, trail grade requirements, berm build-up and removal, drainage structures, complications of using old roadbeds as trails, and other related topics.

PA Outdoor Corps: June 27-28, McConnell's Mill State Park

The Student Conservation Association's (SCA) PA Outdoor Corps (PAOC) was requested by the Park Manager of McConnell's Mill State Park to build a rock wall on a new section of trail that an NCTA Chapter had recently roughed-in. The SCA contacted NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator, Tom Moutsos, to provide rock work and rigging training to the PAOC Crew. In addition to the three-person crew, the SCA sent two additional staff to the two-day training, and an official from DCNR's headquarters in Harrisburg joined the training on the second day. The training included moving rocks with hand tools (rock bars, pick mattocks) and grip hoist rigging systems. Construction of rock walls and the proper setting of rocks was also taught and demonstrated.

Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Program Title:

NEPA Trails Symposium

Program Dates:

May 5 and August 25

Program Description:

The NEPA Symposium was split into two sessions and marketed to an audience of trail managers, volunteer coordinators, state, county, and municipal staff, and consultants. The first session was held on May 5 at the Pittson Memorial Library in Pittson, and was attended by approximately 40 people. The second session was held on August 25 at the North Pocono Trails Association trailhead in Moscow, and roughly 25 people participated.

The first session included speaker presentations on multiple topics, including utilizing volunteer efforts for trail maintenance, and methods of trail design with sustainability in mind. Speakers for this session were Bill Kern, Executive Director, Countryside Conservancy and Dave King, owner of Dirtsculpt. The second session was formatted as a train-the-trainer session, allowing trail managers and volunteer coordinators to put into practice

some of the skills learned during the first session. Attendees



Pennsylvania Environmental Council, NEPA Symposium

brought tools and learned firsthand how to work with and engage their volunteer workforce, and how to teach them the proper techniques for building sustainable trails. Trail maintenance and building activities were directed by Dave King.

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership

Program Title:

Paddlers Toolkit Workshops

Program Dates:

May 21, June 25, July 9

Program Description:

The Paddler’s Toolkit series consisted of three, single-day workshops spread throughout the Susquehanna River Water Trail system in Pennsylvania. The workshop itinerary was divided into two parts: 1) the morning sessions offered two presentations: a 1.5-hour presentation from the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership and a 1.5-hour presentation from the Pennsylvania Master Naturalists. The presentation from the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership covered paddling preparation, gear/equipment selection, navigation, trip planning & permits, safety protocols, and minimal impact practices, while the presentation from the Pennsylvania Master Naturalists focused on identifying the flora and fauna paddlers may see on their next outing on the water trail. The morning classroom sessions were then followed up by a half-day paddle to provide a platform for participants to put their learning into action. Attendees either paddled the Susquehanna River or Lake Chillisquaque depending on the location of the workshop and river levels on the day of the event.

Workshop #1: May 21, Dietrich Theatre, Tunkhannock

The Tunkhannock Workshop was held on May 21, 2022. The morning session was located at Dietrich Theatre in downtown Tunkhannock from 9:00 am to 12:45 pm. The afternoon paddle was located on a section of Susquehanna River Water Trail - North Branch from Tunkhannock Riverside Park Borough Access to PFBC Whites Ferry Access from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The workshop had a total of thirteen registrants with nine attendees on the day of the event. Of the attendees who participated within the pre-event assessment, 16.7% identified as ‘new paddlers,’ 33.3% self-identified as ‘novice paddlers,’ and 50% self-identified as ‘experienced paddlers.’

Workshop #2: June 25, Montour Preserve Visitors Center, Danville

The Danville Workshop was held on June 25, 2022. The morning session was located at the Montour Preserve Visitors’ Center from 9:00am to 12:45pm. The afternoon paddle was located on the adjacent Lake Chillisquaque from 1:00pm to



Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Paddlers Toolkit Workshop

3:00pm. The workshop had a total of 25 registered for the event with 23 day-of attendees. This event sold-out and had a waiting list of an additional five paddlers. Of the attendees who participated within the pre-event assessment, 15.4% identified as ‘new paddlers,’ 61.5% self-identified as ‘novice paddlers,’ and 23.1% self-identified as ‘experienced paddlers.’

Workshop #3: July 9, Columbia Crossing River Trails Center, Columbia

The Columbia Workshop was held on July 9, 2022. The morning session was located at Columbia Crossing River Trails Center from 9:00am to 12:45pm. The afternoon paddle was located on the Susquehanna River from PFBC Columbia Access to Blue Rock Access from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. The workshop had a total of 29 registered for the event with 18 attendees. Of the attendees who participated within the pre-event assessment, 26.7% identified as ‘new paddlers,’ 66.7% self-identified as ‘novice paddlers,’ and 6.6% self-identified as ‘experienced paddlers.’

Wildlands Conservancy

Program Title:

Adventure Camp Program

Program Dates:

August – September

Program Description:

Wildlands Conservancy's Adventure Camp, held at locations along the D&L trail, the Lehigh River Water Trail, Lake Nockamixon, and Camp Fowler, provided nature-based programming to 34 middle school students from the Lehigh Valley. This opportunity was delivered at no cost to students and provided a place-based connection to green and blue spaces within an hour of students' homes.



Wildlands Conservancy's Adventure Camp

Environmental education programs, hiking, biking, canoeing, rock climbing, and teambuilding focused on safely traversing the outdoors, increasing stewardship of our natural resources, emphasizing a fun and healthy lifestyle while promoting intellectual and ethical development, personal growth, civic and social responsibility, and career exploration. Teens were introduced to outdoor adventures on local trails in a safe, welcoming environment, leading campers down a path of a life-long connection to a healthy, outdoor lifestyle.



Wildlands Conservancy's Adventure Camp

Wildland's Conservancy's staff-led activities allowed campers to learn and practice many skills, including: how to properly prepare for a day of hiking; safely navigating a canoe along the Lehigh Valley River Trail; proper trail etiquette when biking and sharing the trail with other users; recognizing the importance of Leave No Trace outdoor ethics to maintaining a safe and sustainable trail system; and building confidence in rock climbing, including use of proper climbing techniques and safety gear.



Wildlands Conservancy's Adventure Camp

HIKING COLLABORATION RECOGNIZES LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK



Latino Hispanic American Community Center
Location: Boyd Big Tree Preserve Conservation Area

Author, Keystone Trails Association

Latino Conservation Week supports the Latino community getting into the outdoors and participating in activities to protect our natural resources. This celebration began in 2014 and is recognized annually in July.

Keystone Trails Association hosted a guided 3-mile hike exploring trails in a state-protected forest spanning over 1,000 acres on Blue Mountain. The trek was made possible through a partnership with the Latino Hispanic American Community Center (LHACC), based in Harrisburg.

“We are grateful to the Keystone Trails Association for initiating and leading the hike and providing snacks and transportation,” said Gloria Vazquez Merrick, Executive Director of LHACC. “Our sincere thanks go to the Association for including LHACC in this wonderful excursion which was a ‘breath of fresh air’ for our youth, and adult members who equally enjoyed themselves.”

Twenty teens and adults investigated the lush forests of DCNR’s Boyd Big Tree Preserve Conservation Area, learning about local flora and fauna along the way. Participants had the opportunity to learn more about the plants and animals that are our neighbors while enjoying the health benefits of hiking.

Pawpaw, spicebush, pileated woodpeckers, and wood thrushes were among the many natural wonders that sweetened a memorable, multi-mile experience. The hushed grounds made a most special space to get to know one another and appreciate diversity - in both human and ecological contexts.

KTA thanks all the organizations involved in supporting Latino Conservation Week on a local level—including KTA member organizations like Blue Mountain Eagle Climbing Club—who also host Latino Conservation Week activities in their respective areas. KTA hopes that this is the beginning of many more adventures to come with our new friends at LHACC.

More event information can be found at www.kta-hike.org.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL REROUTE COMPLETED



Author, Keystone Trails Association

The Appalachian Trail was rerouted back onto the trail corridor just east of the Lehigh River between Palmerton and Walnutport, PA as of June 2022. This reroute falls within the 10-mile section of the A.T. maintained by KTA's A.T. Section Committee.

This reroute completes a process of remediation that began several years ago. This section of the A.T. goes through a federal Superfund site that was damaged by a zinc processing plant in Palmerton. The Trail was temporarily rerouted so that a team led by the federal Environmental Protection Agency could remediate the damaged soil and plant new trees and vegetation.

"KTA is excited to announce this portion of the reroute," shares Jim Foster, Chair of the KTA A.T. Section Committee. "Hikers in the Lehigh Valley have long known about the spectacular views of the Lehigh Gorge available on the North Trail. Now, hikers from all over the world who hike the Appalachian Trail will be able to see it!"

The 3.25-mile section was rebuilt by the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps and a crew led by a professional designer and trail builder Peter Jensen. The work was supervised by Bob Sickley,

Regional Manager of the Trail from the Susquehanna River to the Hudson River.

This year, Foster guided a group hike in April to showcase this newly rerouted section of the A.T. that drew a crowd with a broad spectrum of new hikers to A.T. end-to-end finishers. Hikers were excited to be among the first to traverse this fresh trail and were wowed by the breathtaking new vistas.

The reroute, along with the rest of the A.T. section maintained by KTA's A.T. Section Committee, is located in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, near Palmerton, approximately 25 miles north of Allentown. KTA also maintains two adjoining trails in this area, the Winter Trail and the North Trail.

KTA is grateful for the outstanding work performed by our volunteers and partners in making this relocation possible. Trail maintenance is what preserves and revives Pennsylvania's historic and treasured hiking trails. Volunteer opportunities are available through KTA's Trail Care Program at <https://www.kta-hike.org/>.

TRAIL OF THE YEAR



Delaware Canal Towpath
Friends of the Delaware Canal Towpath

2022 Trail of the Year: Delaware Canal State Park Towpath

Each year, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) **Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee** designates a Trail of the Year to help build enthusiasm and support for both large and small trails, and raise public awareness about the value of Pennsylvania's trail network. On March 3, 2022, DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn announced that the Delaware Canal State Park Towpath was named Pennsylvania's 2022 Trail of the Year.

The 58.9-mile Delaware Canal Towpath passes through 18 municipalities in Bucks and Northampton counties. The towpath, where the mules once trod pulling the canal boats along the Delaware Canal, provides a level trail for walking, jogging, biking and horseback riding. Boat access allows for canoeing and kayaking. In winter, ice skating and cross-country skiing are also popular along the towpath and canal.



[BACK TO TOP](#)

TRAIL OF THE YEAR CONTINUED

The Towpath is part of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, which is 165 miles long and traverses five counties in eastern Pennsylvania. The Towpath is also in the Lehigh Valley Greenways and Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscapes.

The Friends of the Delaware Canal, the award recipient, works in partnership with Delaware Canal State Park, which manages the canal and towpath. The friends group assists with development and maintenance along the towpath, as well as helping to raise funds and awareness for the canal and towpath. They utilize the Canal Tenders volunteer program to watch over and care for sections of the towpath, and they also initiated a Canal Action Team to work on larger maintenance projects along the trail. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Friends of the Delaware Canal.

Visit the [Friends of the Delaware Canal](#) website for more information.

“It is my pleasure to announce that this diverse, historic trail has been selected to be Pennsylvania’s 2022 Trail of the Year. Today, we celebrate the Delaware Canal State Park Towpath and the multitude of outdoor recreation opportunities it has provided for generations, as it continues to be a destination for so many people. With this honor, I am hopeful that even more people seek out this gem of a trail and the larger region to which it connects its users.”

—DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn



RIVER OF THE YEAR



 French Creek
French Creek Valley Conservancy

French Creek Named 2022 River of the Year Following Public Vote

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and Janet Sweeney of the Pennsylvania Organization for Waterways and Rivers (POWR) announced that **French Creek in northwestern Pennsylvania had been selected as the state's 2022 River of the Year.**

“The River of the Year highlights Pennsylvania’s amazing waterways annually and we are excited to recognize French Creek as the 2022 winner,” Dunn said. “Our waterways are a great way to connect to nature for recreation and relaxation. They are also a great opportunity to learn about the regions they flow through. I am hopeful that more people will consider experiencing French Creek and its beauty because of this prestigious honor.”

French Creek is one of the most biologically diverse waterways of its size in the United States, meandering 117 miles from its headwaters in southern New York through four Pennsylvania counties to the Allegheny River. The creek is home to 27 species of freshwater mussels and over 80 species of fish, as

well as waterfowl and songbird species, including bald eagles and four Audubon-designated Important Bird Areas (IBAs). French Creek is also home to the Eastern Hellbender, the largest species of salamander in North America, which was recently named the official Pennsylvania State Amphibian.

The public was invited to vote online, choosing from among four waterways nominated across the state. A total of 13,972 votes were cast, with French Creek receiving 6,604; the Monongahela River, 3,311; Catawissa Creek, 3,188; and Conoquenessing Creek, 869.

“POWR would like to commend everyone across the commonwealth for their support for the nominated waterways,” said POWR’s Janet Sweeney. “The River of the Year program is a great way to highlight the opportunities and challenges facing our waterways, raise awareness and connect Pennsylvanians to the water, as well as highlight the great work being done in Pennsylvania communities on these valuable resources.”

The French Creek Valley Conservancy will receive a \$10,000 Leadership Grant to help fund a slate of year-long 2022 River of the Year activities. DCNR and POWR will work with the French Creek Valley Conservancy to create a free, commemorative poster celebrating the French Creek River as the 2022 PA River of the Year.

French Creek Valley Conservancy (FCVC) is an accredited land trust dedicated to protecting the French Creek Watershed. FCVC currently protects more than 3,000 acres of land throughout the watershed, helping to conserve French Creek, its tributaries, critical riparian areas, and provide recreational access. FCVC manages French Creek as an official Pennsylvania Water Trail and will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2022.

“We are delighted to have French Creek selected as Pennsylvania River of the Year. Many thanks to DCNR and POWR for this program and this honor. French Creek has incredible biodiversity, flowing through beautiful natural landscapes, and it provides many wonderful recreational opportunities. It is a common thread that joins so many small communities in northwest PA with a sense of pride and passion, and we are grateful to the thousands of people who voted for French Creek”, said French Creek Valley Conservancy’s Executive Director, Brenda Costa. “People often share stories with me about their experiences and family memories surrounding French Creek, and I look forward to having more people discover our community treasure.”

In cooperation with DCNR, selection of public voting choices was overseen by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR), an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC).

A commemorative River of the Year sojourn is among many paddling trips supported by DCNR and POWR each year. An independent program, the Pennsylvania Sojourn Program, is a unique series of a dozen such trips on the state’s rivers. These water-based journeys for canoeists, kayakers and others raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism and heritage values of rivers.



SEPTEMBER IS #PATRAILSMONTH

SEPTEMBER IS FOR EXPLORING PA'S TRAILS



Trails Month Activities and Resources, 2022

Before You Explore
STATE PARK TRAILS

- ✓ Stop by the park office for a free map and talk with staff about the best trails for you.
- ✓ Find out how the trail is rated for difficulty and be realistic about your endurance.
- ✓ Wear properly fitting footwear with a good grip and socks to avoid injuries and blisters.
- ✓ Bring more water than you think you will need – it's very easy to get dehydrated.
- ✓ Don't hike alone. If you do, let someone know where you are going and when you'll be back.



Know Before You Go

Pennsylvania state parks have more than 1,500 miles of trails to explore.

Before heading out, make sure to follow these tips to help keep you safe.

“ There are, it is often said by the more ecumenical prophets, many paths up the mountain. So long as it helps a person navigate the world and seek out what is good, a path, by definition, has value. ”

—Robert Moor, *On Trails: An Exploration*

 BACK TO TOP



Why is Pennsylvania a Top Trail State?

Why is Pennsylvania a Top Trail State? 

DCNR is working to provide a trail within **10** minutes of every Pennsylvanian

Pennsylvania has **2,165 miles of rail trails** and **2,355 miles of water trails**

In addition, there are

-  **7,100 mi.**
-  **6,221 mi.**
-  **2,641 mi.**
-  **2,500 mi.**
-  **908 mi.**

DCNR awards about **\$10M annually** to support trail projects and designates a **"Trail of the Year"** to promote trails in PA

What makes Pennsylvania a great place for outdoor recreation? Our abundance of trails and our commitment to providing trails. We are proud to be a top trail state.

Pennsylvania State Forest Hiking Trails

Pennsylvania State Forest Hiking Trails



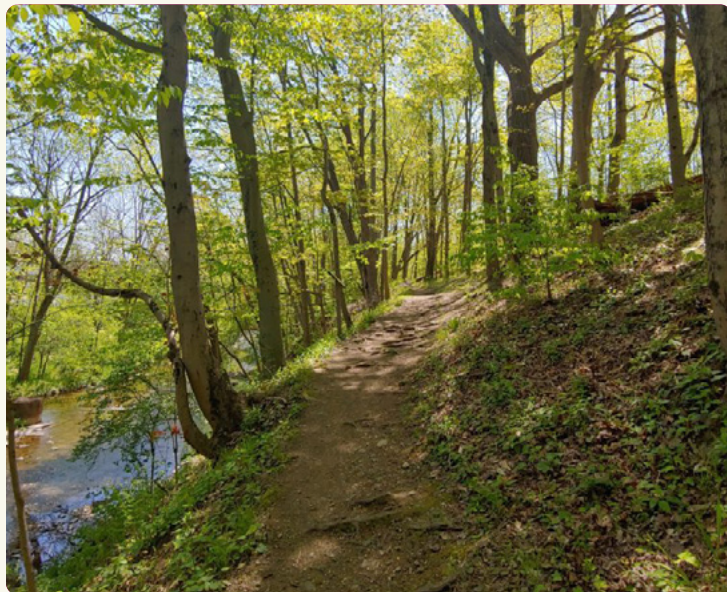
Premier Hiking Destinations **Variety of Terrain and Difficulty** **Around 800 Miles to Explore**



Did you know there are 18 trails that are designated as State Forest Hiking Trails?

Pennsylvania state forests are premier hiking destinations and offer trails that cover a variety of terrain and difficulty levels.

They are great trails if you want to escape the crowds and enjoy the canopy and cover of a forest hike.



Evans Mumbower Mill, Green Ribbon Trail | Wissahickon Trails

◀ Green Ribbon Trail and Preserve Wins Award

The Green Ribbon Trail and Preserve was designated by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association as one of the 2022 Great Places in Pennsylvania in the category of Greenways and Trails. [Read More.](#)

Rushton Conservation Center Hosts Leave No Trace Workshop



Leave No Trace Workshop

Carol Grayshaw, WeConservePA's Director of Education, just finished hosting a "Leave No Trace" workshop at the beautiful **Rushton Conservation Center** in Newtown Square, PA. The 2-day workshop was led by presenters Marian Orlousky and Ryan Seltzer of **Appalachian Trail Conservancy**. The Leave No Trace Trainer Course emphasizes the skills and techniques essential to Leave No Trace minimum impact outdoor recreation practices and education.

New Water Trail Announced: Perkiomen Creek Water Trail (Montco)

The Executive Partners of the Pennsylvania Water Trail



Program—the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Fish and Boat Commission, the National Park Service, and the PEC—are pleased to announce the Perkiomen Creek is now an officially-designated Water Trail.

The Perkiomen Creek Water Trail in Montgomery County offers approximately 14.5 miles of boatable waters from the Crusher Road access just south of Green Lane Park to the Hoy Park/

Arcola Road access at the confluence of Skippack Creek and Perkiomen Creek.

Along the water trail corridor, there are numerous public parks and preserved lands. The 20-mile multi-use Perkiomen Trail parallels the creek and provides a framework for access to the water trail.

Northwest Lancaster County River Trail Celebrates Completion



Northwest Trail

DCNR and multiple Lancaster County partners celebrated the opening of the final section of the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail. Often called the "Northwest River Trail," this 14-mile, shared-use trail spans five municipalities in northwestern Lancaster County along the Susquehanna River.

The **Northwest River Trail** provides access to the Susquehanna River Water Trail for walking, pedal, and paddle opportunities. It links the rivertowns and villages of Marietta, Wrightsville, Columbia, Bainbridge, and Falmouth, and provides wayfinding signage to users identifying local businesses in these communities.

Long-distance trails like this one don't just happen. Completing the project took decades, along with vision, perseverance, and passion on the part of many partners. The Northwest River Trail has been a 20-year partnership between Lancaster County, the municipalities, DCNR, and the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority.

This interconnected trail system is a major goal of Pennsylvania's **Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan**. Such a trail system benefits Pennsylvanians by reaching more communities, increasing quality of life, allowing long distance travel, and creating economic development opportunities.

Celebrating the Delaware Canal State Towpath, 2022 Trail of the Year



2022 Trail of the Year, Delaware Canal State Park Towpath

Congratulations to the **Delaware Canal State Park** Towpath — Pennsylvania's 2022 Trail of the Year!

Thousands of walkers, bikers, anglers, and winter enthusiasts use the trail's nearly 60 miles to access nature and recreation.

This historic towpath trail offers a glimpse into the past and the industries that built the communities along the Delaware River that are now connected by the trail.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Ending at the Beginning—Loop Trails

Snippets from the Good-Natured Blog, September 7, 2022

Here in the commonwealth, you can find long or short hikes, trails to paddle or ride, treks that used to be used by trains, and also, loop trails. (A loop trail is any path that takes you forward, all the way back to the beginning.)

What's the attraction/benefit of loop trails?

Loop trails provide a continuous trail through new terrain, without having to backtrack on the same trail or set up a car shuttle. Loop trails can be easier to follow, and multiple loop options allow people to choose longer, or shorter, distances from a single trailhead parking area.

How does Pennsylvania compare with other states/destinations on the amount and quality of loop trails?

Pennsylvania has many excellent loop trails that utilize the ridge and valley topography of the central region, as well as the Allegheny Plateau topography of the western part of the state. Trails that follow ridges, valleys, streams, or rivers for long distances are beautiful to explore, but without a loop option the only way to see them is by turning around and returning on the same trail.

Under the Recreation for All priority in the statewide outdoor recreation plan is an action item that says: Develop and promote easy trail loops in community and state parks.

Read more about loop trails at the blog [here](#)



Mount Jewett trailhead, Knox & Kane Rail Trail



Trail Tuesday—Get to Know PA Trails

#1 Bullet Trail, William Penn State Forest



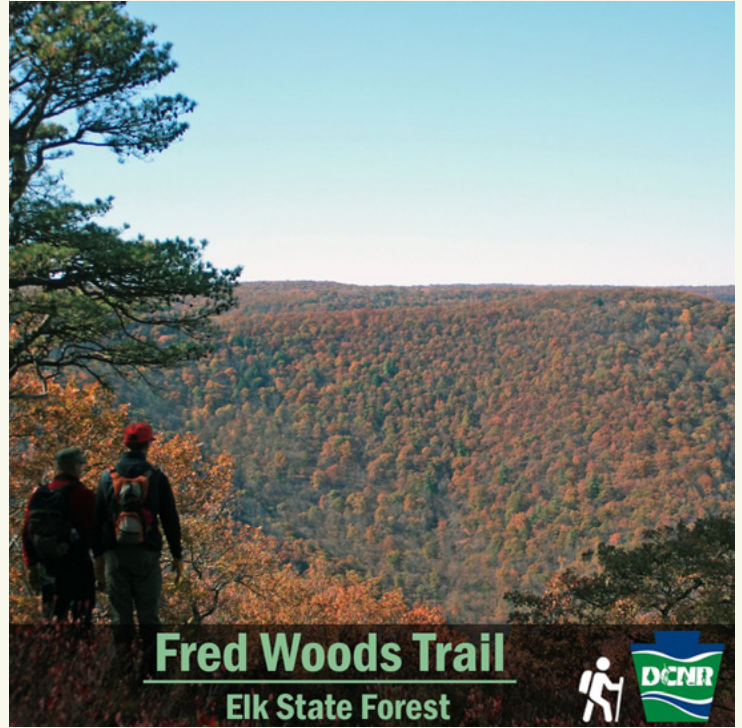
Bullet Trail

William Penn State Forest



The two-mile Bullet Trail travels steeply uphill onto a rocky ridge before flattening out and looping back to the trailhead. Hikers will explore a diverse forest, including some of the best stands of tulip poplar in **William Penn State Forest**.

#2 Fred Woods Trail, Elk State Forest



Fred Woods Trail

Elk State Forest



The Fred Woods Trail is a 4.57-mile loop in **Elk State Forest** that meanders through huge boulders that make a “rock city,” and offers two breathtaking vistas.



© Sean Kenny, Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County

BACK TO TOP

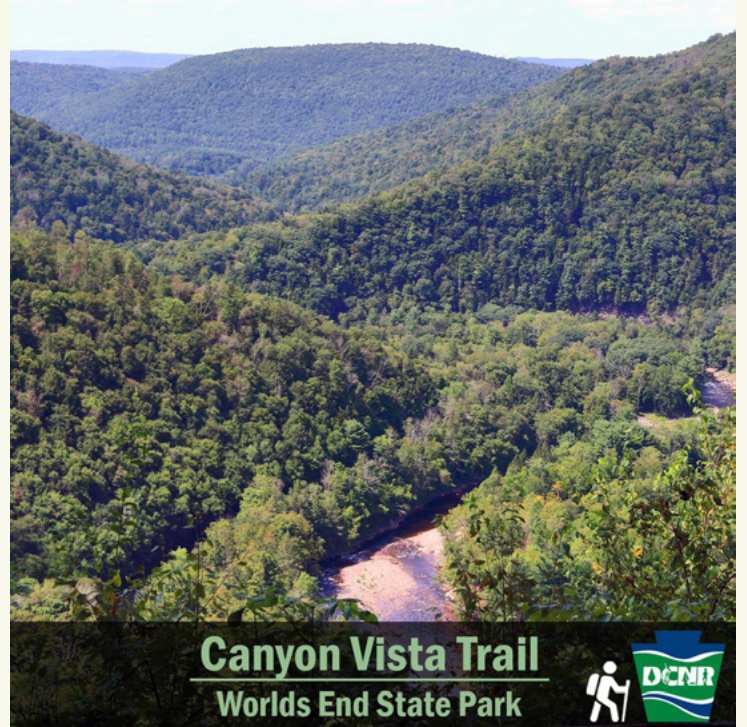
#3. Lake Loop Trail, Black Moshannon State Park



The Lake Loop Trail at Black **Moshannon State Park** is a peaceful, .7-mile stroll that connects the dam and the beach around a quiet part of the lake.

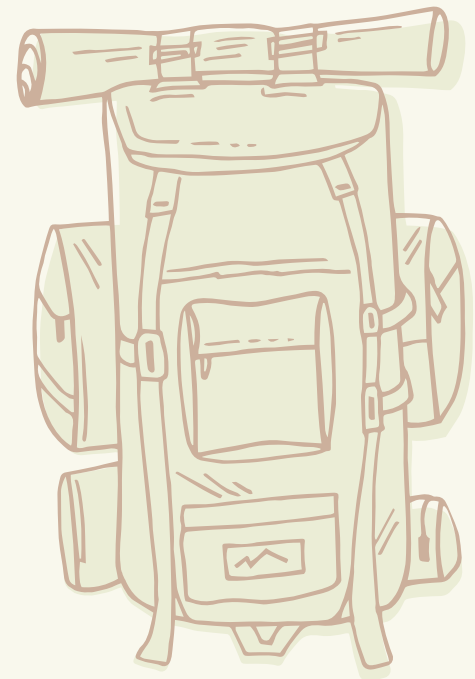
Look for wildlife along the shores and downstream along Black Moshannon Creek.

#4. Canyon Vista Trail, Worlds End State Park



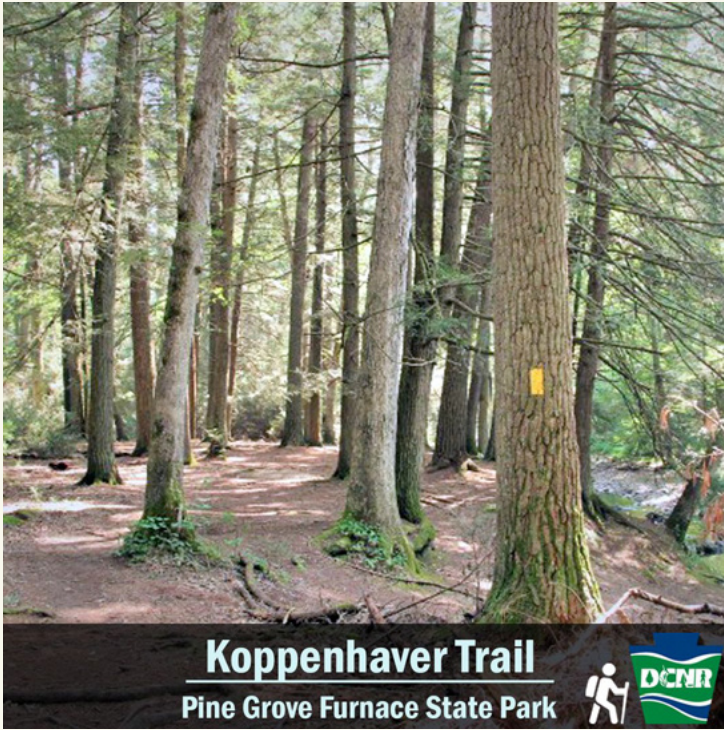
The four-mile Canyon Vista Trail loops around the eastern half of Worlds End State Park and rewards hikers with a spectacular view of the Loyalsock Creek Gorge from an elevation of 1,750 feet.

Be sure to explore the towering rock garden adjacent to the vista.



 Mae Axelrod, Natural Lands

#5. Koppenhaver Trail, Pine Grove Furnace State Park

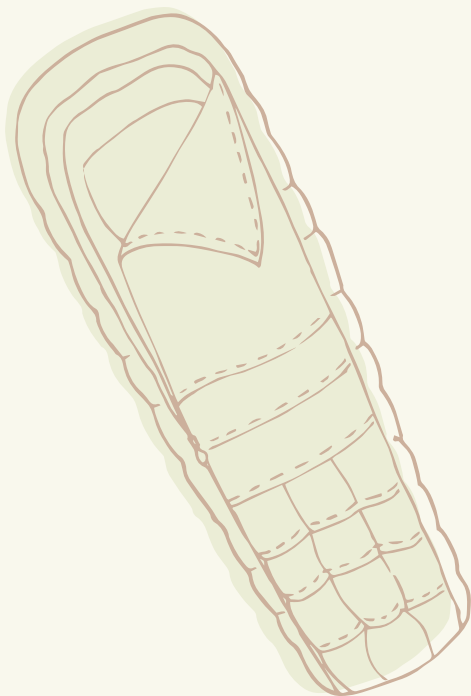


Explore tall pines and hemlocks along Tom's Run and Mountain Creek on the Koppenhaver Trail at Pine Grove Furnace State Park.

This 1-mile scenic loop trail winds through shaded forests where hikers can see and learn about ruins of the park's past.

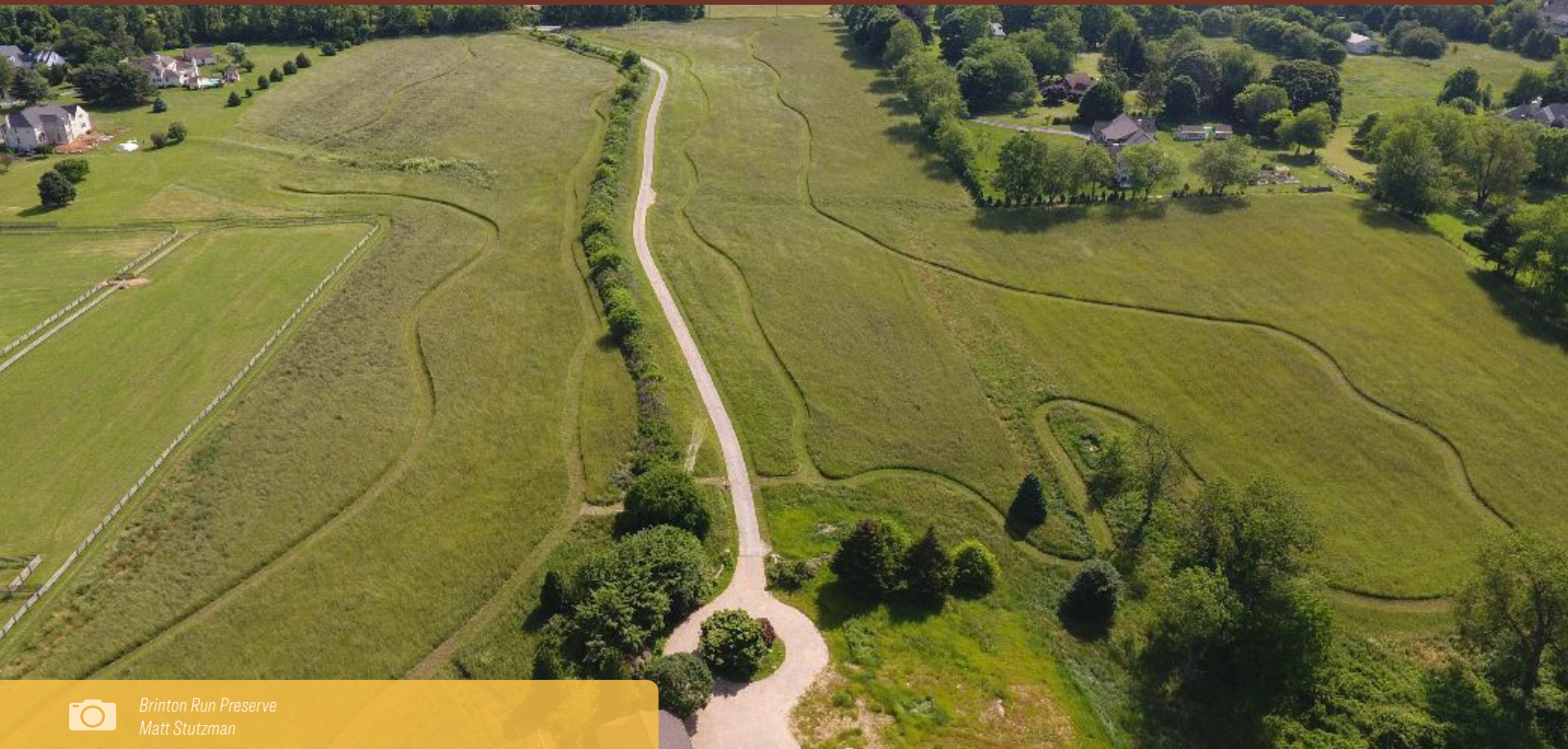


Wildlands Conservancy



Wildlands Conservancy

TRAIL RESOURCES



 Brinton Run Preserve
Matt Stutzman

WeConservePA maintains a comprehensive list of trail resources at [WeConservePA.org/trails](https://weconservepa.org/trails).

Technical Resources

[Trails and Greenways Library Collection at ConservationTools.org](#) (WeConservePA)

[Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and Inclusive Design](#) (WeConservePA)

[America's Rails-with-Trails Report](#)
(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

[Manuals and Guides for Trail Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Operation, and for Signs](#)
(Federal Highways Administration)

[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Resource Library](#)
(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

[Towns and Trails Toolkit](#)

[Trail Crossings: Signs, Markings, and Lights](#)
(PennDOT Local Technical Assistance Program)

[Pennsylvania Trail Design and Development Principles: Guidelines for Sustainable Non-Motorized Trails](#) (DCNR)

[Protect the View](#) (Appalachian Mountain Club)

Trail Maintenance

[Routine Trail Maintenance Costs Per Mile](#)
(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

[Trail Maintenance Budget Worksheet](#)
(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

Funding for Trails

[Community Conservation Partnerships Program Trail Grants](#)
(DCNR)

[Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program](#) (DCED)

[Multimodal Transportation Fund](#) (PennDOT)

[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Acquisition Funding](#)
(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Maintenance Funding](#)
(Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

TRAIL RESOURCES CONTINUED

[Regional Trail Workshop Grants](#) (WeConservePA)

[Pennsylvania RecTAP Grants](#)

(Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society)

[Transportation Alternatives Program](#) (PennDOT)

[Pennsylvania Environmental Council Mini-Grant Programs](#)
(PEC)

Finding Trails

[ExplorePATrails.com](#)

[GoToTrails.com](#)

[TrailLink](#)

[AllTrails.com](#)

[AmericanTrails.org](#)

Plans

[Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan](#)

[Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections](#)

Map-Based Reports

[Exploring Pennsylvania's Top Ten Trail Gaps](#)

[Outdoor Recreation Access Interactive Maps](#)

[Pennsylvania Major Greenway Corridors](#)

[Pennsylvania Conserved Lands Map](#)

Miscellaneous PA State Government Resources

[Pennsylvania Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan](#)

[Pennsylvania Annual Trail Reports](#)

[DCNR Greenways Webpage](#)

[Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee](#)

[PennDOT Historic Bridges for Sale](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) for Stormwater Permitting and Trail Development](#)



[BACK TO TOP](#)

THE PENNSYLVANIA TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

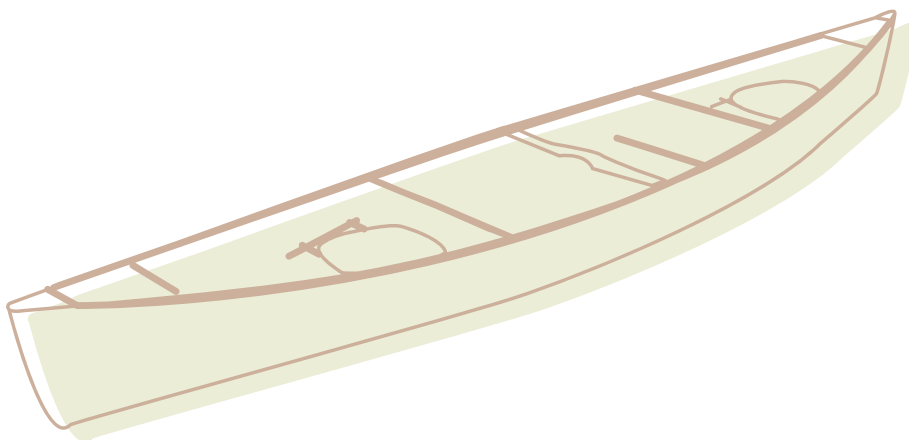


Safe Harbor Bridge
Mark Kissinger

The Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee is charged with implementing the recommendations of the 2020–2024 Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan to develop a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation, and healthy lifestyles. The 20-member DCNR-appointed committee represents both motorized and nonmotorized trail users and advises the commonwealth on use of state and federal trail funding.

The committee also fulfills the federal requirement for Pennsylvania's use of federal Recreational Trails Program and is administered by DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

For more information about the Trails Advisory Committee, please visit their website: [PA Trails Advisory Committee](#).





pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Josh Shapiro, Governor

Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary,
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

