



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT on Programmatic Accomplishments 2023

(This report does not cover WeConservePA's substantial public policy advocacy work.)

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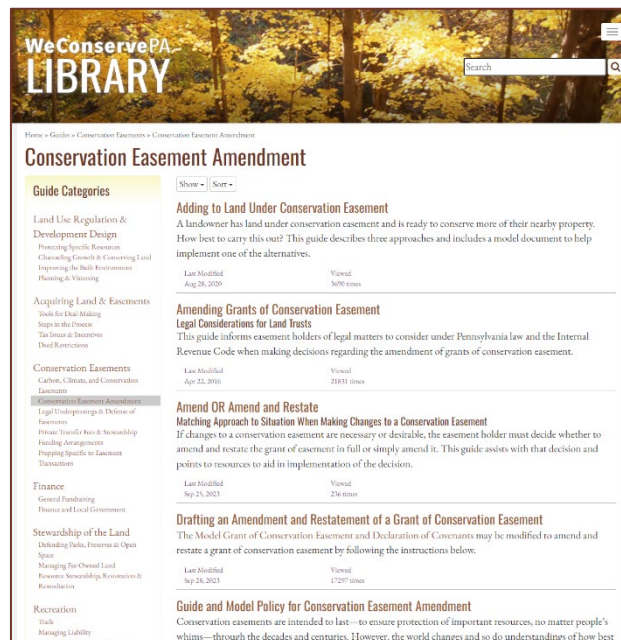
Researching and Developing Guidance

WeConservePA published five new guides this year (and began development of several more). Each new guide is briefly described below.

Amend OR Amend and Restate: Matching Approach to Situation When Making Changes to a Conservation Easement

The three-page guide [Amend OR Amend and Restate: Matching Approach to Situation When Making Changes to a Conservation Easement](#) builds on

WeConservePA's collection of guides and model documents that address the myriad issues associated with managing and changing conservation easements. If changes to a conservation easement are necessary or desirable, the easement holder must decide whether to amend and restate the grant of easement in full or simply amend it. This guide assists with that decision and points to resources to aid in implementation of the decision.



Separate Entity to Hold Riskier Properties

The three-page guide [Separate Entity to Hold Riskier Properties](#) builds on WeConservePA's expansive suite of materials that address liability issues. The guide's short description reads as follows:

Some real property is substantially riskier than other property for an organization to hold and manage, perhaps because of environmental contamination (or suspicion of the same), perhaps because of more intense public use, perhaps for some other reason. Depending on just how great the perceived risk, the organization may want to consider isolating its exposure to that risk by establishing a separate organization—wholly controlled by the founding organization—to hold the riskier property.

The Intersection of Carbon Offsets and Conservation Easements

The six-page guide [The Intersection of Carbon Offsets and Conservation Easements](#) addresses the controversial subject of carbon offsets as they relate to conservation easements. The guide's short description reads as follows:

A number of carbon offset programs are problematic. Nevertheless, it is sensible to ensure that newly drafted grants of conservation easement clearly permit offset projects (whether or not such projects ever materialize).

Addressing Climate Change and Carbon Sequestration in Conservation Easements

The 12-page guide [Addressing Climate Change and Carbon Sequestration in Conservation Easements](#) is one of three pieces developed by WeConservePA in 2023 to address carbon issues as they relate to conservation easements. The guide's short description reads as follows:

The reality of climate change brought on by increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere presents challenges to conservation practitioners. This guide examines how conservation easements may be better planned to deliver good conservation outcomes even as a changing climate affects the physical conditions on the land. The guide also reviews opportunities to boost carbon sequestration on lands under easement.

Carbon Rights and Assignment of Carbon Credit Sale Proceeds: Providing Conservation Easement Holders the Potential to Receive Carbon-Related Benefits

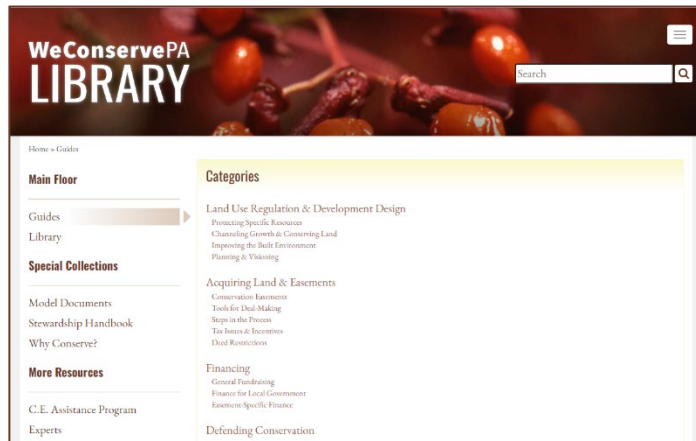
The three-page guide [Carbon Rights and Assignment of Carbon Credit Sale Proceeds: Providing Conservation Easement Holders the Potential to Receive Carbon-Related Benefits](#) is one of three pieces developed by WeConservePA in 2023 to address carbon issues as they relate to conservation easements. The guide's short description reads as follows:

The possibility of granting carbon rights to the easement holder may be considered during the development of a conservation easement. This presents substantial complexity that can be avoided by instead giving the holder control over the entity that may receive carbon credits or assigning to the holder some or all of the proceeds of sale of carbon credits.

34 Guides Refreshed

WeConservePA has developed more than 150 guides—most featuring wholly original content—in the past fifteen years. Keeping them accurate, relevant, and helpful requires regular review of their subject matter and updates to address changes in the law, gaps identified in the guidance, and new research and understandings in the field.

WeConservePA refreshed 34(!) of these guides in 2023 to improve their utility, their titles being:



- [Authorization of Real Estate Transactions: Rules and Process for Nonprofits](#)
- [Bridge Loans for Conservation Purchases: Borrowing from Revolving Loan Funds](#)
- [Community Visioning](#)
- [Costs of Owning and Operating Preserves](#)
- [Donation Agreements](#)
- [Donation by Will: Options and Issues Regarding Gifts of Cash, Land and Other Property](#)
- [Donation of Stock and Other Securities](#)
- [Drafting an Amendment and Restatement of a Grant of Conservation Easement](#)
- [Farmland Preservation Options for Landowners: Government and Private Approaches to Conservation Easements in Pennsylvania](#)
- [Gift of a Future Interest in Real Estate: Reserved Life Estates Keep Owners in Control During Their Lifetimes](#)
- [Indemnity Agreements and Liability Insurance](#)
- [Investment of Nonprofit Financial Assets](#)
- [Land Trust Accreditation](#)
- [Land Trust Standards and Practices: Guidelines for the Responsible Operation of a Land Trust](#)
- [Legal Considerations for Stewardship Funding Arrangements: Binding Present and Future Landowners to Present Promises](#)
- [Local Land Use Planning and Controls in Pennsylvania](#)
- [Management of the Document Preparation Process](#)
- [Not a Public Trust: The Land Trust-Held Conservation Easement in Pennsylvania](#)
- [Option to Sell \(Put Option\)](#)
- [Planned Giving](#)
- [Pre-Existing Mortgages in Easement Transactions: Using Non-Disturbance and Subordination Agreements to Prevent Extinguishment and Comply with Tax Law](#)
- [Recordkeeping for Conservation Easement Stewardship](#)
- [Reducing Federal Estate Tax: A Conservation Easement Benefit for Large Estates](#)

- [Sign Ordinance](#)
- [Social Media Basics for Conservation Organizations](#)
- [Steep Slope Ordinance](#)
- [Stewardship Funding Arrangements: Options for Financing the Obligations of Conservation Easement Holders](#)
- [Street and Sidewalk Design](#)
- [Succession Planning for Nonprofits](#)
- [The Nature of the Conservation Easement and the Document Granting It](#)
- [Using the Model Conservation Easement](#)
- [Volunteers: Guidance for Recruiting, Training, Managing, and Retaining Unpaid Workers](#)
- [Why Preserve Farmland?](#)
- [Working Forest Conservation Easement: A Property Rights-Based Tool for Conservation](#)

Building and Improving Models for Conservation

WeConservePA has developed and maintains more than 20 model legal documents to help nonprofits and governments be effective and efficient in their endeavors. The easily adaptable models and their expansive commentaries enable attorneys to focus their time (and billings) on customizing the models to specific situations rather than reinventing the wheel for their clients. Each model involves extensive research and analysis of best practices, scrutiny by legal professionals, and user review.

In response to user feedback, changes in law, and new understandings stemming from ongoing monitoring and research regarding the subject materials, WeConservePA updates the models and commentaries as appropriate. In 2023, WeConservePA focused attention primarily on one model, the [Model Grant of Conservation Easement and Declaration of Covenants](#).

WeConservePA identified and developed—in consultation with various users—several possible changes to the [Model Grant](#) to address developments and improved understandings in the field. Consistent with WeConservePA's standard practice, the proposed changes were publicized via *Conserve Land Update* and posted for peer review over the summer. [The changes](#) were unanimously supported by reviewers and incorporated into the model in the fall. A number of additions and improvements were also made to the nearly 100 pages of commentary.

Mapping, Analyzing, and Reporting

WeConservePA developed, expanded, and refined our conservation-related databases, analytical tools, and other mapping and GIS information, which are available for all to use via the [GIS & Mapping page](#) at WeConservePA.org. In addition to providing more general education and help

**Model
Grant of Conservation Easement
and Declaration of Covenants**
with Commentary



Seventh Edition
Model updated 10/4/2023
Commentary updated 10/4/2023

to organizations in 2023, WeConservePA directly assisted nine organizations with mapping and geographic analysis needs in 2023.

Contact Irina Beal, WeConservePA's GIS analyst, at ibeal@WeConservePA.org for assistance.

Public and Privately Conserved Lands

WeConservePA updated our immense, comprehensive [geodatabase of publicly and privately conserved lands](#) on an ongoing basis. We also made improvements to the [interactive, public interface](#).

Mapping Areas of Interest, Service Areas and Projects

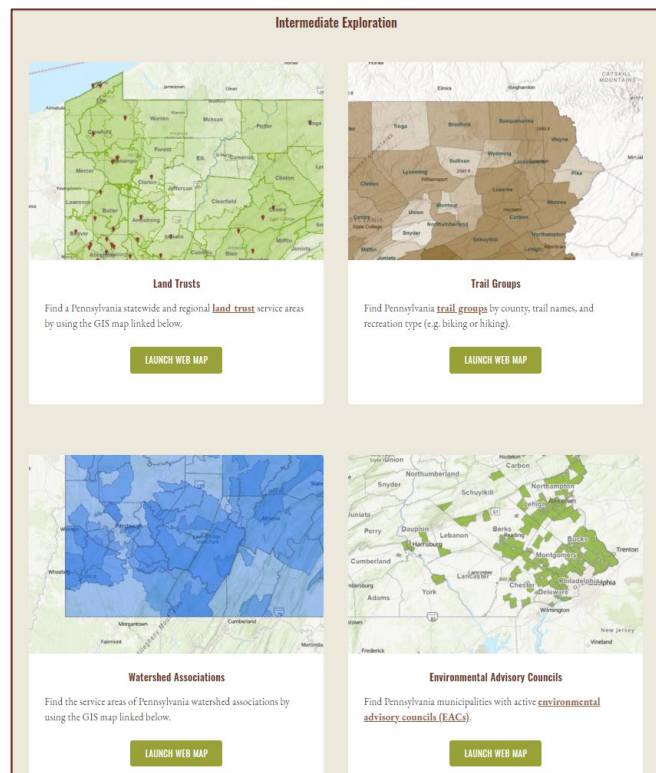
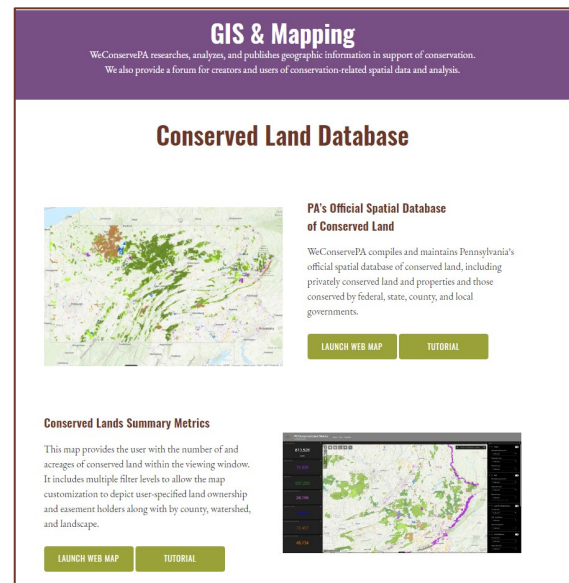
WeConservePA gathered data and developed or expanded on mapping of a variety of open space lands of interest for conservation analysis including:

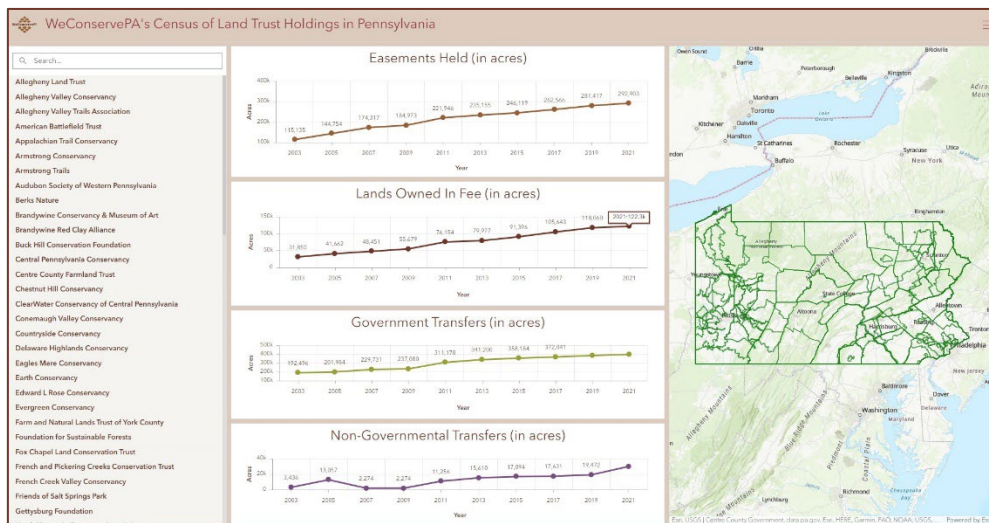
- Hunting clubs
- Scout camps
- Golf courses
- Water authority lands

WeConservePA updated our mapping of the service areas of land trusts, watershed associations, environmental advisory councils, and other organizations. We updated the project information in the [grant project finder](#) for the [Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund](#) and the [grant finder](#) for the [Environmental Stewardship Fund](#). We also launched a [Conservation News map](#) that displays the locations of conservation projects with links to their associated news stories.

Tracking Conservation Progress

WeConservePA created a new tool—a [GIS dashboard](#)—to enable visitors to easily see the growth in conservation accomplishments of Pennsylvania land trusts (in aggregate and individually) over the past two decades. Data from twenty years of *Pennsylvania Land Trust Census Reports* underpin the tool.





Connecting, Educating, and Inspiring People

In 2023, WeConserve organized 29 educational conferences, seminars, workshops, roundtables, and lectures—six of them in-person and the remainder online. WeConservePA records many of these events, particularly the online ones, when appropriate to the context and agreeable to the presenters.

WeConservePA tracks far more detail—multi-page reports for some events—than what is presented below.



Contact Carol Grayshaw (cgrayshaw@weconservepa.org) for these reports, for access to recordings, to suggest a topic for a workshop, roundtable, or other educational program, or to volunteer to present.

2024 AND 2025 MAJOR EVENT DATES

February 24, 2024: EAC Network Conference (virtual)

April 3-5, 2024: Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference in Bethlehem

April 2-4, 2025: Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference in State College

September 21-23, 2025: Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit in Harrisburg

See all published, upcoming events at [WeConservePA.org](https://www.weconservepa.org)'s [Learn & Network page](#).

Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference

The 2023 [Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference](#) engaged 357 attendees over its three days, April 26 – 28 in Reading (Berks County). Thirty-six classroom sessions and five mobile seminars provided more than sixty hours of instruction.

Attendees rated the conference a 4.6 on a 1-5 scale (with 5 meaning “excellent”). The average session score was 4.7.

The attendees were affiliated with 123 unique organizations including 46 land trusts, 28 other nonprofit organizations, 29 government entities, and 20 businesses (with 16 people not listing affiliations).

One hundred sixty six of the 357 attendees (46.5%) had either never attended the conference or had not attended in the prior four years.

The event was hosted by Berks Nature, Berks County Department of Planning, Berks County Conservation District, and Berks County Department of Ag Preservation.

Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit

The [2023 Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Summit](#) engaged 256 attendees over its three days, September 17 – 19, at the Hilton Scranton Conference Center (Lackawanna County).

Thirty-seven classroom sessions provided more than 60 hours of instruction and six mobile seminars provided more than 20 hours of off-site training and entertainment.

The event was hosted by Lackawanna Heritage Valley National and State Heritage Area, summit partners included: DCNR, PennDOT, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Endless Mountain Heritage Region, University of Scranton, Lackawanna River Conservation Association, Countryside Conservancy, and the Anthracite Bicycle Coalition.



Attendees rated the conference a 4.5 on a 1-5 scale (with 5 meaning “excellent”).

Conservation Easement Seminar

WeConservePA organized the two-day Conservation Easement Seminar, which was held at Aldie Mansion in Doylestown on October 17 – 18, to build and strengthen connections amongst those involved in conservation easement work. Designed to both introduce newcomers and refresh experienced folks on the intricacies of conservation easements, this program offered 13 hours of total training. Instructor-led sessions on day one gave way to panel presentations on day two to ensure the sharing of different approaches and experiences.

Registration for this event was 48, and all registrants attended one or both days. Organizational affiliations included 19 land trusts and 10 others. PA CLE credits were provided to eight attorneys.

Attendees rated the seminar 4.6 on a 1-5 scale (with 5 meaning “excellent”).

Environmental Advisory Council Fall Gathering

The [2023 EAC Network Fall Gathering](#) engaged 97 individuals, representing 55 unique organizations (including 35 environmental advisory councils.) It was held on Saturday, October 21, at West Chester University in Chester County. The morning plenary included an EAC Lightning Share session. Afternoon breakout sessions addressed the topics of energy transition and sustainability planning, local action to improve water quality, and actions to reduce single-use plastics.

Attendees rated the conference a 4.7 on a 1-5 scale (with 5 meaning “excellent”).



Chainsaw Safety Training

Originally planned for March 10-11 at Lancaster Conservancy's Holtwood Garage and Kelly's Run Nature Preserve, the Saturday portion was re-scheduled to May 6 due to high winds on March 11. The course was delivered by Mike Powell of Penn State Extension. Course registration was limited to eleven participants for safety, and registration quickly maxed out. The course received an average rating (1-5 scale) of 5.0 with three completed evaluations.

Delaware River Watershed Land Protection Group Gathering

On Friday, July 28 from 10am – 2:30pm WeConservePA hosted the Group at McCoole's Arts and Events Place in Quakertown. Thirty-seven individuals attended this meeting, representing sixteen land trusts, three government entities and various others.

Online WeConservePA Educational Events

In addition to six online roundtables, WeConservePA held 16 online educational events in 2023.

Environmental Advisory Council Network Conference

The 2023 [EAC Network Conference](#) was held virtually on Saturday, February 25, from 9am to 3:30pm. Registrants had access to 7.5 hours of training provided by 17 speakers. All sessions were recorded and shared after the event.

The overall rating for the event was 4.6.

Registration totaled 93 individuals affiliated with 31 EACs, seven non-EAC municipalities, four county and state representatives, two land trusts, and one business. (Seven individuals provided no affiliation.) Workshop attendance ranged from 28 to 37 attendees, with an average of 30 in each session. The plenary session had 66 attendees.

Getting the Most Value from Fundraising Events

On Tuesday, January 24 from 1pm – 2:30pm

Led by: David Allen of Development for Conservation

19 registrants; 15 attendees

Average rating (on a 1-5 scale): 4.6 with 7 completed evaluations.

The 2023 Farm Bill

Tuesday, January 31 from 1pm – 2pm

Led by: Lori Faeth and Nikki Nesbary from the Land Trust Alliance's policy office

19 registrants; 16 attendees representing 14 land trusts.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 5.0 with 2 completed evaluations.

Keeping Pennsylvania's Privately-Owned Forests Intact and Working: Opportunities for Land Trusts

Thursday, February 2 at 10am

Led by: Allyson B. Muth of the James C. Finley Center for Private Forests at Penn State

98 individuals registered for this event, representing 55 unique organizations, including 39 land trusts. Sixty-six individuals attended the WeConservePA Annual Membership Meeting, which preceded the lecture, and 75 joined for the lecture.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.8 with 12 completed evaluations.

How Protected Are Municipal Parks and Open Space (And How Do You Ensure Permanence?)

Tuesday, March 7 at 1pm

Led by: Andy Loza and H. Fintan McHugh, Esq.

27 individuals registered for this event (representing six land trusts, five government entities, three non-profit organizations, two EACs, and two unaffiliated attorneys.) Of these, 23 ultimately attended.

Six attorneys received CLE credits.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.7 with 17 completed evaluations.

Responding to Emerging Threats to Water Quality in the Poconos

Tuesday, March 28 at 1pm

Led by: PennFuture

24 registrants (representing nine non-profit or community organizations, three land trusts, and four government entities. Seven individuals listed no affiliation) Of these, 17 ultimately attended.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.7 with three completed evaluations.

Pennsylvania Game Commission Program Update

Tuesday, April 11

Led by: Bryan Burhans, Executive Director with the Pennsylvania Game Commission

44 registrants (representing 16 land trusts, seven non-profit or community organizations, and five government entities. Three individuals listed no affiliation;) 41 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): No evaluation survey was distributed for this program.

Indigenous Peoples in Pennsylvania History – Intro to the Penn State Library Research Guide

Thursday, April 13 at 1pm

Led by: Librarians from Penn State

129 registrants; 85 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.2 with 13 completed evaluations.

The Mechanics of Land and Easement Transactions

Tuesday, May 23

Led by: Todd Sampsell, Vice President of Conservation with Natural Lands

24 registrants; 20 attendees. Registrants represented 12 land trusts, two government entities, two nonprofits, and one consulting firm.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.7 with six responses.

Components of a Well-Rounded Development Program

Thursday, June 1

Led by: Noah J. Roufos-Abbey

13 registrants; 9 attendees. Registrants represented six land trusts, three nonprofits, and one local government.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.5 with two completed evaluations.

A Pragmatic Approach to Social Media

Wednesday, June 21 at 10am

Led by: Lindsay Dill of Allegheny Land Trust and Robert Campbell of WeConservePA

22 registrants; 22 attendees—an exceedingly rare 100% attendance! Registrants represented eight land trusts, five EACs, five nonprofits, government entities, and 2 businesses.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.0 with six completed evaluations.

The Healthy Forest Initiative: Opportunities for Strategic Forest Conservation

Tuesday, August 1 at 1pm

Led by: Joshua Rittenhouse with Audubon Mid-Atlantic's Healthy Forest Initiative

45 registrants; 28 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.3 with three completed evaluations.

Agency Update: DCNR, Bureau of State Parks Land Management Program

Wednesday, August 16 at 1pm

Led by: Mike Reading from the Resource Management and Planning Division of DCNR's Bureau of State Parks

13 registrants, representing two land trusts, two state agencies, two government entities, and two businesses (three unaffiliated); nine attendees.

Dream Big: Strategic Planning for Success

Tuesday, September 26 at 1pm

Led by: Kim Murphy, President of Berks Nature

16 registrants; 14 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.6 with five completed evaluations.

From EAC Recommendation to Ordinance Adoption: Productively Attaining Official Action by Local Government

Thursday, October 5 at 7pm

Led by: Steven Nelson of Eastwick Solutions

82 registrants; 29 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.6 with 12 completed evaluations.

Living with Logistics: PennFuture's Model Zoning Ordinance for Logistics Facilities

Tuesday, October 10 at 1pm

Led by: Brigitte Meyer of PennFuture

33 registrants; 19 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.5 with four completed evaluations.

Pennsylvania's Solar Future

Wednesday, October 25 at 1pm

Led by: Brook Duer of Penn State Law, Center for Agricultural and Shale Law

PA CLE credits were provided to six attorneys.

99 registrants; 46 attendees.

Average rating (1-5 scale): 4.6 with seven completed evaluations.

Free-Standing Roundtables

WeConservePA held six roundtables (not counting those associated with larger events) in 2023 on various topics. A central purpose underlying all of them is building networks among the people engaging in the sessions. (Note that WeConservePA does not record roundtable discussions.) The roundtables included:

Trail Roundtable: Maintenance and Volunteer/Staffing Issues

Thursday, February 23 at 10am

34 registrants; 24 attendees.

Land Protection and Stewardship Roundtable

Tuesday, February 28 at 10am

77 registrants representing 29 land trusts, six government entities, four 'other', and five unaffiliated.); 60 attendees.

Trails Roundtable: Trails in Natural Areas

Tuesday, May 2

34 registrants; 24 attendees.

Roundtable: Urban Acquisition and Stewardship Issues

Thursday, August 24 at 10am

36 registrants; 24 attendees.

Communications Roundtable

Tuesday, November 14 at 10AM

24 registrants; 19 attendees.

Land Protection and Stewardship Roundtable

Tuesday, November 28 at 10AM

56 registrants (affiliated with 45 land trusts nine other entities); 48 attendees.

Recognizing Conservation Excellence: Lifetime Leadership Award



WeConservePA's Lifetime Conservation Leadership Award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to conservation in Pennsylvania over the course of their life. Since its establishment in 2004, the award has honored both conservation professionals and volunteers for their commitment to and leadership in conservation.

In 2023, owing to a pause in award-making brought about by the covid-19 pandemic,

WeConservePA honored two individuals with this award rather than the traditional one:

- Karen Martynick, executive director of Lancaster Farmland Trust for 17 years and a three-term Chester County commissioner and open space champion; and
- David Shields, who devoted 38 years to the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art, conserving more than 50 square miles through easements and fee acquisitions.



Karen and David were honored by colleagues during a dinner ceremony at the 2023 Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference in Reading.

Directly Assisting Organizations and People

One-on-One Assistance

WeConservePA staff directly assisted people from many dozens of conservation organizations, trail groups, and local governments in 2023. This assistance took place via phone, email, or in person depending on the need and context. Whether a matter took seconds, minutes, or days to resolve, no request was left unaddressed. The matters addressed covered a broad range of issues, questions, and problems, topics including but not limited to: fundraising, strategic planning, staffing, landowner outreach and relationships, real estate transactions, easement and land stewardship, standards and practices, accreditation, liability, mapping, and operation of open space programs.

Conservation Easement Assistance Program

In 2023 through November 30, WeConservePA awarded 34 Conservation Easement Assistance Program (CEAP) grants, providing organizations the means to use best practices in their easement projects. WeConservePA administers CEAP to increase the quantity of special places

protected as well as increase the quality and long-term viability of easements. The grants are broken down as follows:

- 19 grants to complete new easement projects
- 2 grants to amend/restate conservation easement projects
- 4 grants to upgrade baseline documentation
- 2 grants to install signs on an eased property

Since 2004, CEAP has helped create 381 new easements protecting 29,332 acres. For these projects, landowners donated \$67.7 million in easement value and land trusts secured \$3.1 million for stewardship. CEAP has also supported upgrades to 38 baseline documentations and 20 easement amendments and restatements.

WeConservePA made the following CEAP grant awards in 2023:

Organization	Project Name	Project Type	County	Amount (\$)
Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York Co.	Raub Property	Acquire New	York	7,475.00
Manada Conservancy	Horvath (ACUB) Conservation Easement	Acquire New	Dauphin	8,000.00
French and Pickering Creeks Conserv. Trust	Nesspor Conservation Easement	Acquire New	Chester	8,000.00
Heritage Conservancy	Emerson	Acquire New	Bucks	3,000.00
Heritage Conservancy	Grove Valley	Acquire New	Bucks	3,000.00
Berks Nature	K. Wright Property	Acquire New	Berks	7,500.00
French and Pickering Creeks Conserv. Trust	White Vernal Pool	Acquire New	Chester	8,000.00
North Branch Land Trust	Bear Creek Camp	Amend/Restate	Luzerne	2,928.29
Lancaster Farmland Trust	McKonly, Michael L. & Patricia B.	Acquire New	Lancaster	2,529.78
Manada Conservancy	Shirk Family Farm	Acquire New	Dauphin	8,000.00
Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York Co.	Zortman	Acquire New	York	7,500.00
Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York Co.	Stiffler	Acquire New	York	7,500.00
Lebanon Valley Conservancy	Palmyra & N Londonderry Twp	Install Signs	Lebanon	659.22
Lebanon Valley Conservancy	Pine Grove	Install Signs	Lebanon	700.00
Brandywine Red Clay Alliance	Wawaset Wetland/Open Space	Acquire New	Chester	8,000.00
Edward L. Rose Conservancy, Inc	Gordon Easement	Acquire New	Susquehanna	3,790.30
Manada Conservancy	Dougherty Conservation Easement	Acquire New	Dauphin	8,000.00
Lancaster Farmland Trust	Baldwin, Selana A.	Acquire New	Chester	2,300.75
Allegheny Land Trust	Armstrong Easement	Acquire New	Allegheny	8,000.00
Tinicum Conservancy	Yak#1 CE Baseline Update	Baseline Doc	Bucks	1,086.00
Tinicum Conservancy	Shandri CE Baseline Update	Baseline Doc	Bucks	1,262.72
French Creek Valley Conservancy	Lutz Conservation Easement	Acquire New	Crawford	5,677.31
Tinicum Conservancy	Henkin CE Baseline Update	Baseline Doc	Bucks	1,173.42
Tinicum Conservancy	Yak #3 CE Baseline Update	Baseline Doc	Bucks	1,248.64
Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York Co.	Waldman	Acquire New	York	7,500.00
Lebanon Valley Conservancy	Rugh Henderson	Acquire New	Lebanon	2,869.13
Land Conservancy of Adams County	Smiths on Crooked Creek	Acquire New	Adams	4,629.77
Land Conservancy of Adams County	Kuhns Forested Wetlands	Acquire New	Adams	4,179.29
Centre County Farmland Trust	Litke	Acquire New	Centre	8,000.00

Manada Conservancy	Straw Conservation Easement	Acquire New	Dauphin	1,760.80
Manada Conservancy	Lehman Amendment	Amend/Restate	Dauphin	8,000.00
Brandywine Conservancy	East Bradford Township-Starr Farm	Acquire New	Chester	5,421.86
Berks Nature	Traylor Conservation Easement	Acquire New	Berks	7,500.00
Brandywine Conservancy	Fenimore Estate	Acquire New	Chester	6,881.00

Conservation Law Program

In 2023, WeConservePA set about to expand its technical assistance delivery to better address matters of conservation law. In mid-November, WeConservePA welcomed its first director of conservation law, Justin Hollinger, to the WeConservePA team. Planning WeConservePA's "conservation law program" with Justin will continue into early 2024, setting the stage for robust service delivery moving forward.

Communicating News and Information

Email Communication

WeConservePA's mass email communications include e-newsletters and, for matters benefitting from particularly focused attention, single subject emails. The frequency and timing of these emails are largely governed by current events, but staff follow a rough guideline of producing each of the e-newsletters once a month and using single-subject emails sparingly.

WeConservePA presently has 6,839 unique, confirmed mass email subscribers (in other words, no double-counting of people subscribed to multiple newsletters and only people actually receiving the emails). This is up 8% from last year's 6,351. WeConservePA sends e-newsletters under several banners:

- **Conserve Land Update** reports news of significant new tools, guidance, events, issues, or other matters impacting conservation statewide.
 - 2,978 subscribers (as compared to 2,952 in 2022)
 - 13 issues through 2023
- **Project & People News** reports on land conservation projects and the people working and volunteering in conservation throughout the state.
 - 2,982 subscribers (as compared to 2,937 in 2022)
 - 12 issues through 2023
- **Greenway & Trail News** reports on what's happening regarding greenways and trails in Pennsylvania.
 - 2,224 subscribers (as compared to 2,106 in 2022)
 - 12 issues through 2023
- **EAC Network** reports to environmental advisory council members and other EAC supporters on WeConservePA news of interest.
 - 904 subscribers (as compared to 785 in 2022)
 - 12 issues through 2023

In addition, WeConservePA sends out **Conservation Advocate** action alerts to 2,236 subscribers (as compared to 2,173 in 2022). Our **Growing Greener Coalition** list reaches another 495 subscribers (as compared to 494 in 2022). Conservation Advocate subscribers receive all Growing Greener Coalition alerts; Growing Greener Coalition subscribers generally receive Conservation Advocate messages that address state funding matters.

Social Media

WeConservePA continues to post regularly on social media, sharing conservation-related news and resources to its audiences on:

- Facebook – 3,484 followers (as compared to 3,414 followers in 2022)
- Instagram – 2,124 followers (as compared to 1,797 followers in 2022)
- LinkedIn – 605 followers (as compared to 205 in 2022 and 65 in 2021)

Not seeing adequate return for the effort involved, we stopped posting to Twitter/X midyear.



The Growing Greener Coalition social media accounts managed by WeConservePA continue to provide content about broader coalition advocacy matters to its audiences on:

- Facebook – 2,602 followers (as compared to 2,551 in 2022)
- Instagram – 1,226 followers (as compared to 1,161 in 2022)

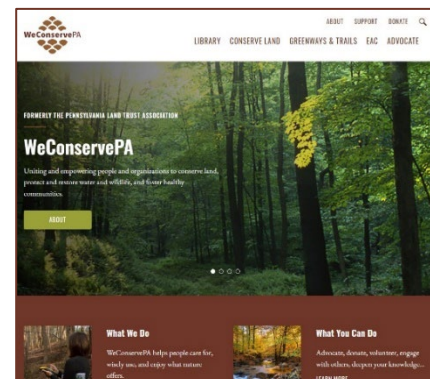
WeConservePA's Art & Design Intern designed the World Bee Day graphic shown above, the land trust graphic that closes out this report, and numerous other pieces this summer. They also helped refresh Growing Greener Coalition social media content, developing evergreen infographic-driven materials to support our campaigns to educate about the positive impact of state investments in conservation.

Websites

[WeConservePA.org](https://www.weconservepa.org)—now three years old—was updated almost every weekday of 2023 with the latest news and information.

In 2023, WeConservePA completed a major refresh of the [WeConservePA Library](https://www.weconservepa.org/library), formerly known as (and still accessible via) ConservationTools.org. The changes included improving security, navigation, and the user experience. They also set the stage for major new content expansion in 2024.

[The Library](https://www.weconservepa.org/library) is directly accessible via the first link on the [WeConservePA.org](https://www.weconservepa.org) menu.



WeConservePA maintains [KeystoneFund.org](https://www.keystonefund.org) and [ESfund.info](https://www.esfund.info) as distinct educational sites without WeConservePA branding. (We do not want to give the impression that

WeConservePA controls the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund or Environmental Stewardship Fund.) Likewise, we maintain PaGrowingGreener.org as a distinct site to avoid confusing WeConservePA with the Growing Greener Coalition partnership that we lead and facilitate.

Supporting Trail Education

With support from DCNR and Federal Highway Administration funds, WeConservePA provides trail education to advance trail development and maintenance as well as encourage public use. In addition to the trail-oriented work described earlier in the report, WeConservePA conducts the following activities.

Trail of the Year

DCNR's Trail Advisory Committee selected the Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail (a 7.8 mile section of the larger Knox & Kane Rail Trail) as the 2023 [Trail of the Year](#). WeConservePA oversaw the manufacture of the Trail of the Year trail head marker, as well as development of posters and postcards in recognition of the designation.



Trail Grants

WeConservePA awarded \$22,994.09 in “Regional Trail Workshop Grants” as well as a “Trail of the Year” grant to the following organizations in 2023:

Grantee	Award
Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority	\$3,457.97
Eastern Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers	\$4,998.00
Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor	\$4,999.65
LandForce Pittsburgh	\$5,000.00
MJ2KB Trail Club (Trail of the Year grant)	\$4,538.47



Trail Annual Report

As it has done for the past several years, WeConservePA produced Pennsylvania's [Annual Trails Report](#) for DCNR. The report summarizes advances in expanding and improving the state's networks of trails, highlights the “Top Ten Trail Gaps,” and shares stories of how trail projects have benefited communities.

