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Harrisburg PA 17101

717-230-8560
WeConservePA.org



Voting Member Organizations

Allegheny Land Trust
Armstrong Trails
Allegheny Valley Trails Association
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Armstrong County Conservancy
Berks Nature
Brandywine Conservancy
Brandywine Red Clay Alliance
The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation
Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
Centre County Farmland Trust
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chestnut Hill Conservancy
ClearWater Conservancy
The Conservation Fund, Pennsylvania Office
Countryside Conservancy
Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Earth Conservancy
Edward L. Rose Conservancy
Evergreen Conservancy
Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County
Foundation for Sustainable Forests
Fox Chapel Area Land Trust
French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust
French Creek Valley Conservancy
Glade Run Lake Conservancy
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
Heritage Conservancy
Hollow Oak Land Trust
Independence Conservancy
Keystone Trails Association
Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation
Lackawanna Valley Conservancy
Lake Erie Region Conservancy
Lancaster Conservancy
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Land Conservancy of Adams County
Land Trust of Bucks County
Lebanon Valley Conservancy
London Britain Land Trust
Manada Conservancy
Merrill Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy
Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy
Mokoma Conservancy
Montour Trail Council
Mountain Watershed Association
Natural Lands
Neighborhood Gardens Trust
North American Land Trust
North Branch Land Trust
Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy
Open Land Conservancy of Chester County
Pennsbury Land Trust
Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society
Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust
Pine Creek Land Conservation Trust
Pine Creek Valley Watershed Association
Pocono Heritage Land Trust
The Radnor Conservancy
Regional Trail Corporation
Schuylkill County Conservancy
Schuylkill River Greenways
Somerset County Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Wallace Trust
Tinicum Conservancy
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Westmoreland Conservancy
Westmoreland Land Trust
West Pikeland Land Trust
Wild Waterways Conservancy Inc.
Wildlands Conservancy

June 20, 2024

The Honorable Kim Ward
President Pro Tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate

Re. **Fund Healthy Outdoors for All Program**

Dear President Pro Tempore Ward:

On behalf of the 75 member organizations of WeConservePA and their more than 100,000 Pennsylvania members, I urge you to include a **one-time injection of \$80 – 100 million** into a **Healthy Outdoors for All Program** for the 2024-2025 budget year, as advocated for by the Growing Greener Coalition.

This focused boost in the **rehabilitation, upgrade, and strategic expansion of local park, trail, and other outdoor spaces** will attract and leverage substantial philanthropic dollars and volunteer energy. Such **local capital projects**, which are **well-proven** to deliver **substantial and long-term benefits** to communities, for the most part have not had access to the robust federal funding available for so many other efforts.

Investment results will include:

- Rehabilitation, restoration, and upgrading of infrastructure heavily impacted by increased public use of parks, preserves, trails, greenways, neighborhood gardens, and other public open spaces during both the pandemic and post-pandemic era.
- Strategic expansions of facilities to relieve overuse.
- Support for urban and rural disadvantaged communities alike.
- Closure of gaps in volunteer and local government trails and trail networks.
- More people getting the health benefits of recreating in safe and friendly spaces.
- Expansion and improvement of quality wildlife habitat.
- Reductions in flood damage and improved water quality.

The investment will be made via state grants to **local governments and nonprofits** that are vetted through DCNR's well-established, objective, accountable system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Loza, Executive Director

cc: member organizations