



STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2026

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

December 11, 2020



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Mission, Vision, Values and Principles

(Approved by PPF Board of Directors on September 9, 2020)

MISSION:

PPFF's mission is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

VISION:

To be the trusted voice and advocate to sustain and enhance Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

VALUES:

Integrity

Excellence

Innovation

Collaboration

Conservation

Diversity

Inclusion

Sustainability

PRINCIPLES:

1. Develop fruitful collaborations and strategic partnerships in the Commonwealth.
2. Create future generations of park and forest supporters by engaging new and diverse audiences.
3. Focus on quality of services and long-term sustainability for the Foundation and our chapter friends groups.
4. Advance financial sustainability and diversification by seeking funding through a variety of initiatives – membership growth, cultivate individual donors, corporate sponsorships, events, foundations, and grants.
5. Inspire individuals to become donors, members, volunteers, and supporters.

Goal 1: Work with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and other partners to ensure a sustainable system of parks and forests.

Objective 1: Expand the number of friends or affiliate groups by two groups per year.

Significance

Friends have been able to successfully serve as stewards of our parks and forests. Expanding the number of friends groups empowers more people to engage in this stewardship and advocate for our parks and forests.

Resources

- Staff
- DCNR Park managers and district foresters
- Consultants/trainers
- Interns
- PPF Board of Directors
- Friends committee of the board
- Leadership programs

Tasks

1. By February of each year, identify key locations for friends groups or affiliate groups.
2. By March of each year, communicate with park/forest management to plan process.
3. Host friends organizational meetings/events in March/April or September/October.
4. Host virtual trainings for new chapter leaders—scheduled quarterly (except for treasurers, who are scheduled immediately.)
5. Monthly, distribute *Tidbits from Marci* newsletter to all chapter leaders.
6. When officers change, appropriate staff welcome new officers and update them on the PPF protocol and resources.
7. Staff or PPF board attend at least one meeting/event per year of each friends chapter and have a telephone conversation at least twice per year for each chapter. *Ongoing.*
8. Facilitate communication and collaboration between chapters that are in close geographic proximity or who are working on similar projects/goals. *Ongoing.*

Risks

In order to accomplish this growth, there will need to be a growth in staffing. If staffing does not grow commensurately, then this goal cannot be achieved.

Measurement Criteria

Ability to effectively set up new groups as defined by the plan.

Objective 2: Be a voice for government funding for state parks and forests to address infrastructure and maintenance needs, operations, and to staffing to meet demands.

Significance

Sustainability cannot be achieved without funding.

Resources

- Staff
- Conservation Heritage documentaries
- Park and forest managers
- PPF Board of Directors
- Friends chapters
- Sister organizations
- Hunting and Angling organizations
- Protect Our Parks and Forests Campaign Plan
- Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society (PRPS)
- Legislative Consultant

Tasks

1. Partner with Park and Recreation Caucus in the legislature to host four meetings annually to educate decision makers on park, forest, and recreation research and issues.
2. Meet with the Sportsmen's Caucus to educate on the use of sportsmen and women on park and forest lands.
3. Continue to hold meetings with key players/leaders and staff in the administration to discuss needs.
4. Provide monthly updates, through tidbits, on issues impacting parks/forests to keep friends apprised.
5. Create fact sheet advocacy roles for friends groups.
6. Use the new SoftEdge software to build a grassroots voice for state parks/forests.
7. Work with DCNR to increase visibility of PPF and friends in state parks/forests.
8. See Goal #2, Objective #4.

Risks

Loss of parks/forests.

Measurement Criteria

Funding.

Objective 3: Diversify the ways in which individuals, groups and businesses can engage in volunteerism in our parks and forests.

Significance

While the number of friends groups continues to grow, there remain many parks and forests that do not have a friends group but have needs in which an organized effort or single day large event would be beneficial. This objective looks to assist those special places with the intention of both building a program and creating support for additional friends groups.

Resources

- Staff
- PPF Board of Directors
- Friends Groups
- DCNR
- Partners
 - Sister Organizations, such as Sierra Club, Audubon, etc.
 - Colleges and universities
 - High school civic engagement programs
 - High school clubs
 - Businesses and corporations
 - Dick's Sporting Goods
 - Sheetz
 - Deloitte

Tasks

1. Work with the public relations and outreach coordinator to focus on volunteer expansion through corporate and group events.
2. Build the Stewards of Penn's Woods program through promotion of program and recognition of stewards.
3. Create volunteer incentive/recognition program.
4. PPF and Friends develop relationships with universities to create a stream of young adult volunteers.
5. Annually, encourage all board members to attend at least one volunteer event to understand the needs of parks and forests, as well as to build relationships.
6. Host a minimum of two volunteer days each year in parks and forests that do not have friends chapters to implement some of the project list ideas provided by DCNR.
7. Work with DCNR and chapter leaders to simplify the Conservation Volunteer Program, the online database for tracking volunteer hours and projects.
8. Provide training to friends chapters and DCNR employees on working with volunteers at their annual meetings, regional meetings, and/or when asked.
9. PPF and friends distribute information to park visitors about friends groups and volunteer opportunities, such as business cards to visitors, a flyers, attending events, etc.

Risks

Lack of volunteers to completed needed work.

Measurement Criteria

Marked increase in volunteerism of existing chapters.

Objective 4: Develop a corps of Leave No Trace Master Trainers and Leave No Trace champions by working with DCNR to host trainings and programs.

Significance

New visitors to state parks and forests have increased impacts to the natural ecosystems. By offering trainings in leave no trace, we can minimize these impacts

Resources

- Staff
- PPF Board of Directors
- Leave No Trace (LNT)
- Corporate partners
- Businesses
- Volunteers
- Schools
- DCNR

Tasks

1. Register to become a LNT partner, with the benefits that it provides.
2. Find an LNT sponsor to help underwrite costs of LNT program—launch with DCNR funds from Round 26.
3. Coordinate initial Master Trainer Session with DCNR for Spring 2021 with staff, interns, volunteers, and friends members who are interested.
4. Ensure that at least two training participants annually are bi- or multi-lingual.
5. Work with DCNR to design a series of articles and posts on LNT principles for PPF and friends social and print media. Follow LNT on social media and repost their posts.
6. Work with Bureau of State Parks to host a spring 2021 LNT program for chapter leaders who want to understand the principles but do not want to be trainers.
7. Master Trainers will host one workshop per year minimum.
8. Provide T-shirts for PPF LNT team members to brand them when doing programs.
9. Work with the Hiking and Backpacking PA Facebook page to engage users of parks and forests.
10. Coordinate with and actively recruit volunteers to sign up and participate in becoming trainers or attend workshops on LNT.
11. Recognize volunteers at our annual banquet and on the specially designated page of our website so that they are available for programs.
12. Develop press releases to announce when a new master trainer has become certified.

Risks

Continued negative impacts without funding to mitigate impacts.

Measurement Criteria

Growth of program. Number of programs/trainings completed.

Objective 5: Develop programs with retail businesses that enable consumers to contribute to recreation and conservation projects through donations when purchasing outdoor goods and services.

Significance

We need to diversify the ways in which funds are raised to address needs list projects.

Resources

- Board Members
- Explore opportunities for local/regional/state partnerships
- National Association of State Park Foundations
- List of potential retail businesses
 - Dick's Sporting Goods
 - Bass Pro Shops

Tasks

1. Review the model that was established with the PA Wilds to raise funds in that geographic area.
2. Look for other potential partners, such as the outdoor industry, businesses near parks/forests, RV dealers, etc.
3. Establish protocols for building relationships and how program would operate.
4. Consider national opportunities through National Association of State Park Foundations.

Risks

Someone taking the funds, not being successful.

Measurement

Amount of funds raised.

Objective 6: Expand relationships and communication within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources through a minimum of three annual meetings at the executive level and six annual meetings at the bureau level.

Significance

Building relationships and improving communication.

Resources

- Scheduling secretaries
- Calendar

- PPF Board
- Technology such as Zoom

Tasks:

1. Set up annual meeting with Secretary/Executive team to share goals and understand current events.
2. Set up bi-monthly meetings with Deputy Secretary for Parks and Forestry.
3. Set up tri-monthly meetings with Bureau Directors of Parks, Forestry and possibly Facility, Design and Construction.
4. Have at least one meeting with the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.
5. Have at least one meeting with DEIJ program within DCNR.
6. Host an annual meeting to review state budget proposal with DCNR Executive Team.
7. Public Relations and Outreach Coordinator will meet bi-monthly with communications team at DCNR to share ideas and coordinate messaging relevant to both entities.
8. PPF staff attend at least one Bureau of Forestry annual meeting and one Bureau of State Parks meeting, as well as one regional meeting in each region.

Risks

Miscommunication.

Measurement

Meetings occur and any necessary follow-ups happen.

Goal 2. Build a diverse stakeholder base for the sound investment in our parks and forests through messaging and education on the value of our parks and forests for outdoor recreation, the economy, the environment, and for physical, mental and emotional health.

Objective 1: Develop partnerships with national and state thought leaders in academia, sister organizations, health care industry, and the outdoor recreation industry to build stakeholder and informational relationship.

Significance

Through strategic partnerships, we will strengthen the ability to serve our mission and build the stakeholder base to conserve and enhance our parks and forests.

Resources

- PPF Board of Directors
- Staff
- Friends Chapters
- Academia
- Partners

- National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA)
- PRPS
- Pennsylvania Forestry Association (PFA)
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)
- National Association of State Park Foundations (NASPF)
- Outdoor Industry
- Tourism Agencies
- Chambers of Commerce
- Scouting

Tasks

1. Identify topics for study, research, or information sharing on an annual basis. Goals will be set by October of each year to inform the annual theme of the foundation, newsletter, and electronic content.
2. Identify potential partners by January of each year.
3. Collect data through meetings, conference calls, research, and partnership development.
4. Develop, as needed, means to interpret data for the lay person for inclusion in public materials such as fact sheets, newsletter, online, etc.
5. Utilize the research to inform our work. *Ongoing*.
6. Create statewide learning networks to share research and best practices online and at health summits (SCORP).
7. Attend at least one tourism or chambers of commerce meeting annually.

Risks

We cannot accomplish the work of the foundation without building viable partnerships and expanding access to fact-based information

Measurement Criteria

Expansion of relationships and increased demand for PPF publications and expertise.

Objective 2: Develop an annual communication strategy using to inform print and technology platforms to educate the public, promote outdoor recreation, inform on issues, and expand our base.

Significance

Providing fact-based information on the value and importance of parks, forests and recreation to health, the economy and quality of life builds a case for investment.

Resources

- Staff time
- Consultant fees-design and writing
- DCNR
- Friends groups
- Partners
- Cross and Crown
- Social Media Influencers
- Billboards

- Local media
- Websites
- Latino Connection info boards

Tasks

1. Annually, work with partners to compile and promote resources describing the physical, mental and emotional health benefits of outdoor recreation and spending time outdoors and to identify trends impacting park, forests and recreation.
2. Use the resources and information to inform the annual PPF PR/Communication Plan, which includes a clear needs statement and budget.
3. Use the plan to message and inform virtual learning opportunities, such as lunch and learns.
4. Deploy education campaigns on topics that prevent people from spending time in the outdoors, such as Lyme Disease, skin cancer, fears, etc.
5. Working with partners, create a statewide learning network to share research and best practices.
6. Develop an outline and budget for any communication pieces needed—fact sheets, infographics, paid advertisements, etc.
7. Share information across platforms and with friends by repurposing messages.
8. Tie our hashtags and handles to others that are relevant to our work, are trending, or to create a place to capture thoughts or images.
9. Create, statewide press opportunities or feature stories based on PR goals.
10. Enhance our search engine optimization to increase interaction with our website and increase access to fact-based data
11. Host monthly social media events that direct people to our website.
12. Monitor all campaigns to know what is successful and replicate.
13. Build traffic to our new webpage when it is unveiled through media releases, contests, social media, e-newsletters and dynamic content. *Ongoing.*
14. Develop a speakers' program to assist in providing programs and staffing tables at events.

Risks

If we do not increase the community's understanding of the value of parks and forests, investment in parks and forests may continue to decline.

Measurement Criteria

Cadre of fact sheets; increased hits on our website; requests for information related to our area of expertise; speaking engagements.

Objective 3: Take advantage of social momentum to message and build partnerships by annually identifying special days or weeks for messaging, volunteer opportunities, or engagement of the public and media and incorporating into communication plan.

Significance

Using the momentum of existing events or creating statewide events, we can attract partners and media feed, and utilize the events to engage more people.

Resources

- Staff
- Conservation Heritage Partners
- Documentaries
- State park and forest educators
- Conservation Heritage website
- DCNR
- Interns
- PRPS
- PFA
- Museum Associations
- NRPA
- PEC
- REI
- Earth Day Network
- Get Outdoors PA (GOPA)
- WeConservePA
- DEP
- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Social media influencers

Tasks

1. By October of each year, outline the special days on which we want to focus—significant anniversaries, statewide celebrations, etc.
2. Create a working calendar of events allowing for collaborations or edits and facilitate deadlines.
3. Identify who is playing a role in these events and delimit the role that we could have in partnership with others.
4. Allocate budget for social and/or print ads around priority days/months.
5. Annually, identify social media influencers and engage them in our messaging.
6. Set up an annual special celebrations committee with partners to keep communication and roles moving forward.
7. Work with DCNR and PRPS to establish a Love Your Park Week in Pennsylvania.
8. Use existing platforms to promote special days/register participants
9. When possible, use the resources of the Conservation Heritage Project to inform stories and social media posts.
10. Possible events: Martin Luther King Day of Service; Black History Month, Women's History Month, Rothrock Week, Earth Day, Walk in the Woods Day, Latino Month, Diabetes Awareness Month, 2021-50th anniversary of the Environmental Rights Amendment, National Public Lands Day, #OptOutside, etc.

Risks

The growth of movements in which you are not involved means you are left behind 😊

Measurement Criteria

Hits on website; number of programs hosted; engagement of participants.

Objective 4: Monitor and comment upon legislation and statewide policies that impact parks, forests, recreation and outdoor health as part of the advocacy/public policy committee.

Significance

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation is the only non-profit organization whose sole mission is our state parks and forests. In order to ensure that we meet our mission, we must monitor those legislative actions as well as agency initiatives that might have both a positive or negative impact on the resource.

Resources

- Staff
- PPF Board of Directors
- PPF Advocacy Committee
- Growing Greener Coalition
- PRPS Advocacy Committee
- SoftEdge Software
- DCNR policy office
- Friends groups

Tasks

1. Monitor legislation and initiatives that could impact state parks and state forests.
2. PPF President or delegate will attend the monthly PRPS meetings to benefit from their research on issues affecting parks and recreation. *Ongoing.*
3. Follow the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Growing Greener III, and state budget on an annual basis. *Ongoing.*
4. Remain an active and viable member of the Growing Greener Coalition. *Ongoing*
5. Comment on DCNR policy initiatives that impact state parks and forests. *As needed.*

Risks

Loss of funding for significant projects and/or impacts to parks and forests.

Measurement Criteria

Success in influencing policy and funding decisions that impact parks and forests, as well as recreation.

Objective 5: Advance Protect Our Parks and Forests Campaign to increase investments and staffing in our parks and forests by fiscal year 2025.

Significance

Our parks and forests are seriously understaffed and underfunded. If the state doesn't start to invest, it will only be a matter of time until some will need to close, portions will need to close, or accidents could occur.

Resources

- PPF Staff
- PPF Board of Directors
- PFA
- PRPS
- Sister Organizations
- Outfitters

Tasks

- I. See plan.

Risks

The Foundation needs board involvement to maximize its ability to build partnerships.

Measurement Criteria

Building of relationships.

Objective 6: Expand our current membership by 10% annually.

Significance

If we are the trusted voice and we expand our membership, we become a louder, stronger voice. It also increases the financial investment in the organization.

Resources

- Membership plan
- DCNR
- Board of Directors
- Website
- Religious institutions
- Social Media ads
- Community centers
- Ambassadors
- Scout groups
- Newsletter

Tasks

1. Work with DCNR to develop a joint communication system within the parks and forests for promoting PPF and Friends.
2. Create an Ambassador program to expand our reach across the state. (see that objective)
3. Utilize speakers bureau to expand our reach.
4. Annually, review membership plan and make adjustments.
5. Use the communication strategy to build connections to the work of the Foundation and Friends.

Risks

Disappearing

Measurement Criteria

Growth of membership.

Goal 3: Ensure a place and an experience for everyone in the outdoors.

Objective 1: Invest in four projects per year that expand access to outdoor recreation for those who have a temporary or permanent physical, mental and/or emotional disabilities or that addresses a need of an underserved population.

Significance

According to studies done by the Pennsylvania State University, approximately 15 percent of adult residents of Pennsylvania have some sort of disability and these disabilities can limit their outdoor recreation participation. Simultaneously, we have an aging population.

The Penn State User study found that Pennsylvanians clearly see a connection between health and outdoor recreation. More than three quarters (77 percent) of respondents to the resident survey agreed or strongly agreed that parks, trails and open spaces are an essential part of our health care system.

Resources

- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Technical Advisory Committee for SCORP
- PPF Staff
- DCNR
- GOPA
- PPF Board of Directors
- Needs list
- Chapters/friends
- Centers for Independent Living
- Schools
- Funding partners
- Volunteers

Tasks

1. Using the PPF barrier checklist, the ADA training worksheets, and the Needs List identify four projects each year on which to focus. Be sure that these projects are addressing a diverse set of needs by engaging diverse users in planning and design.
2. PPF and Chapters to incorporate universal design practices in all projects.
3. Identify potential funding sources and partners for projects each year.
4. Continue to be a voice for accessibility and creating welcoming environments in parks and forests.

5. Work with DCNR and Chapters to promote adaptive facilities and equipment.
6. Work with chapters and partners to develop easy trail loops for various populations and purposes, such as forest therapy, education, sensory, etc.
7. Work with AARP and local senior centers to develop tools to engage seniors while working with PPF volunteers to increase opportunities for seniors to become involved in volunteerism and recreation.
8. Identify partners and tools that may assist in providing services to user groups, such as sign language, language translation, mobility assistance, recreation equipment loans, and video.
9. Help chapters understand the barriers that they might address at their park/forest.
10. Assess transportation options for gaining access to parks and forests for those who are unable to drive.

Risks

In order to remain relevant to the general population of Pennsylvania, our parks and forests must provide for the needs of all potential users.

Measurement Criteria

Projects completed. Follow up assessments to review work accomplished. Attendance at events. Surveys of participants.

Objective 2: By Fall 2021, develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program within the Foundation to ensure welcoming environments in all that we do and in the places where we work.

Significance:

In 2000, minority populations made up 15.9% of the Pennsylvania population. This rose to 20.5% of the population in the 2010 census (Source: Pennsylvania State Data Center). According to research completed by Penn State for the 2015 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, between 2010 and 2030, the White population is projected to grow by less than one percent, while the Hispanic population is projected to grow 184 percent, to a total of 8.5 percent of the state's population. The African American population is projected to grow 26.6 percent and will remain the state's largest ethnic population. In fact, all other ethnic populations are projected to grow from 2010 to 2030. Given these growth rates, no ethnic population is projected to become the majority population in Pennsylvania by 2030.

The LGBTQ population makes up 4.1% of the population above 18 years old of Pennsylvania. Presented another way, the LGBTQ community ages 13 and above represents 490,000 Pennsylvania residents.

Our parks and forests belong to all of the people and by creating welcoming environments, we reaffirm this fact—our parks and forests belong to all.

Resources

- Staff
- DCNR
- Chapter Leaders
- Campground Hosts
- GOPA
- Communication Consultant
- Interns
- Create a board task force
- Trainers

Tasks

1. First quarter 2021: Staff and board participate in DEIJ training to include: defining DEIJ, understanding DEIJ impacts on relationships, and understanding ones' biases.
2. Second quarter 2021: Friends boards take bias training. Staff and board take empowerment training to move staff and board to being change agents.
3. Development of personal and organizational action plans that address recruitment of diverse staff and volunteers, better understanding of needs of diverse user groups on our public lands (listening sessions) and how to begin to address these needs
4. Establish a DEIJ team and set up monthly support calls.
5. Expand training to create regional DEIJ coaches to assist friends groups in setting up DEIJ teams.
6. Engage diverse users in the planning and design of outdoor recreation spaces and programs/outreach.
7. Hire four multi-lingual interns to do programs and outreach in parks/forests seeing diverse users. Pilot in summer 2021, with potential to replicate annually.
8. Develop a campground host and park/forest ambassador (guest liaison) training program to improve customer service and charge all hosts/ambassadors with creating welcoming and belonging environments.
9. Offer interpretive services to assist all visitors to our parks and forests.

Risks

User conflicts due to misunderstandings.

Measurement Criteria

Establishment of DEIJ teams, use of interpretive services. Feedback and observation.

Objective 3: Develop a “Back to Basics” educational campaign and programs by 2022 to provide skill building workshops and materials for new users or visitors wishing to have new experiences.

Significance

Not knowing how to engage in the outdoors is one barrier that exists for new users or potential users.

Resources

- Staff
- Friends Chapters
- DCNR
- Other Partners
- Consultant
- PPF Board of Directors
- Interns/university projects
- Leadership programs
- GOPA
- PRPS
- Outdoor Outfitters
- REI Staff
- Lunch and Learn programs

Tasks

1. Work with DCNR, chapters, GOPA, and PRPS to provide skills-based learning opportunities for outdoor recreation activities.
2. Utilize our resources to develop communication pieces and programs on “Back to the Basics” for those new to or interested in exploring outdoor recreation.
3. In partnership with parks/forests, hire interns for hosting educational programs.
4. Work with chapters/parks/forests to host two demo-days with local outfitters per year.
5. In partnership with parks/forests and friends, increase access to first time equipment kits for loan.
6. Work with DCNR and other partners to create a mentoring program and resources to encourage outdoor enthusiasts from diverse backgrounds to become program volunteers.

Risks

Losing new users due to lack of knowledge or access to equipment.

Measurement Criteria

Growth of program.

Objective 4: Increase youth participation and leadership in outdoor recreation and conservation through media, videos, leadership training and access to the outdoors.

Significance

Young people are also great entrepreneurs and can be extremely resourceful. Not to mention they are our future community builders, business owners, public servants, and decision makers. If we are to sustain our public lands, we need to engage the next generation of decision makers. By developing these relationships through fun and innovative programming and workdays, we can create a sense of stewardship, ownership, and pride. It could also lead to the creation of a future conservation workforce.

Resources

- Staff
- Chapters
- DCNR
- Academic and organizational partners
- Interns
- Research
- Granting Foundations
- Inner City Outings
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- GOPA
- Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education (PICE)
- Conservation Heritage Project
- Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps
- Scouting groups
- Preschool
- Department of Education
- Charter Schools

Tasks

1. Support DCNR in their goal to enlist 1,200 young people in the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps by 2024.
2. Utilize speakers' bureau to outreach to youth programs and online programming.
3. Promote the Wilderness Wheels Transportation Scholarship Program.
4. Work with Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education to develop stewardship programs and educational outreach with friends chapters, the Conservation Heritage Project, Stewards of Penn's Woods, and other PPF and Friends programs.
5. Explore platforms to attract youth and/or families to programs and volunteer days.
6. Work with local colleges to build partnerships with PPF and Friends groups.

Risks

Youth and non-traditional populations are the next decision makers for our natural assets. If they are disassociated from our parks and forests, or from conservation in general, our natural assets stand the risk of not having a protector.

Measurement Criteria

Growth of the program. Increase in number of youth participating in programs. Increase in number of youth engaged in conservation careers. Increase youth volunteerism with friends chapters.

Objective 5: Utilize the arts (photography, painting, music, food, etc.) to attract new audiences to parks and forests.

Significance

Artists tell stories. They help us make sense of our world, and they broaden our experience and understanding. The arts enable us to imagine the unimaginable, and to connect us to the past, the present, and the future, sometimes simultaneously. Source: Huffington Post

Resources

- Staff
- Friends Chapters
- Partners
- Parks and Forests
- Camera clubs
- Art Museums
- Art Departments at schools and colleges
- Tourism Bureaus
- Artists/musicians
- Art associations
- Camp programs
- After school programs
- Latino Connection
- Other diverse businesses

Tasks

1. Host annual photo contest and use the photos to tell a story.
2. Plan a minimum of one multi-cultural event each year in partnership with friends groups or other partners.
3. Develop a fact sheet on holding arts in the parks programs, such as the one done by Friends of Cowans Gap.
4. Sponsor an annual PPF concert series in parks where friends chapters need assistance building a base and to use as a foundation to launch a new friends group.
5. Research how to hold a food truck rally.
6. Encourage friends to expand the types of concerts held to attract different audiences.

Risks

Nature inspires art, and by engaging the arts in the outdoors, we build a stronger and broader base of support for our natural world, our state parks and state forests.

Measurement Criteria

Increased number of events. Friends group development. Reports from friends groups. Number and quality of photo contest entries.

Goal 4: Invest in transformative projects and opportunities to enhance and conserve our parks and forests.

Objective 1: Utilizing the needs list, identify a minimum of five projects per year and connect to a funding source or a partner to sponsor or complete the project.

Significance

The projects in which PPF invests improve the recreational experience for all user groups, reduces environmental impacts, or conserves special places.

Resources

- Staff
- Grant writer
- PPF Board of Directors
- DCNR
- Business leaders
- Friends Chapters
- Ambassadors
- Partners

Tasks

1. Ensure that new website show cases needs as well as completed projects to entice donors.
2. Identify five projects in the last quarter of each year for the following year.
3. When possible, bundle these projects into a larger 'ask' that has regional impact.
4. Annually, develop a funding and marketing strategy for the projects based on the projects and needs.
5. Depending on the needs, write grants, cultivate donors, or development partnerships to accomplish the projects.
6. Work with parks/forestry and local friends chapters to accomplish the projects.
7. Use social media, press releases, website and eblast to promote the projects and garner enthusiasm.
8. Invest in friends chapter events and projects through fundraising training, loaning of expertise and brain capitol, connecting to resources, and facilitating partnerships.

Risks

A growing list of incomplete projects.

Measurement Criteria

Completed projects.

Objective 2: Develop chapter leader and PPF board and staff fundraising skills through trainings, workshops, assistance and webinars through-out the year.

Significance

Friends, working at the local level, are better able to raise revenue from local businesses and individuals for improvements at the park or forest in which they are involved.

Resources

- Staff
- Friends Groups
- Webinars
- Articles in popular journals
- Grant writer
- PPF Board of Directors
- Consultants

Tasks

1. Host webinars and in-person training on fundraising. *Ongoing.*
2. Develop templates or fact sheets for fundraising, particularly if many groups are seeking funds for a similar project.
3. Work with Friends Chapters to seek grant funds for friends initiatives.
4. Utilize the PPF board of directors and their contacts when needed to leverage funds.
5. Invest in an annual professional fundraising speaker presentation for chapter training.
6. Showcase chapter fundraising successes in the PPF newsletter and chapter tidbits to encourage collaboration, celebration and excitement.

Risks

Unfunded projects.

Measurement Criteria

Increased funding to address friends activities.

Objective 3: Reinvigorate Corporate Membership Program by \$50,000 annually by 2023 to strengthen PPF's ability to implement transformational projects.

Significance

Increased membership ensures the community at large is engaged in our mission. Additionally, members are donors and help ensure we are sustainable financially long-term.

Resources

- Corporate and/or Development committee
- Staff
- Marketing materials
- DCNR

Tasks

1. Review with a panel of corporate leaders the terms of our corporate membership program.
2. Work with DCNR to identify ways to recognize corporate contributions to projects and programs within state parks and forests.
3. Identify five small, five medium, and five large businesses or corporations to reinvigorate the membership program.
4. Empower corporations to get outside by offering lunch and learns or outdoor volunteer opportunities as part of corporate membership package.

Risks

We limit our ability to reach our financial goals if we don't recruit new corporate members. If we don't effectively recruit new members, we may be in jeopardy of not reaching our financial goals.

Measurement Criteria

Reaching our membership goals by designated date

Objective 4: Host a minimum of twelve park and forest tours annually for the media and decision makers.

Significance

The public and decision makers need to understand the threats to our parks and forests, the funding and staffing needs, and the value of these places to ensure their protection.

Resources

- Friends groups
- Board members
- Media Contacts
- Legislators
- Stakeholders

Tasks

1. Assess key legislative areas annually for targeting tours.
2. Work with friends groups, when available, to host tours.
3. Continue to build the stakeholder database and invite stakeholders to tours.
4. Research online opportunities for when in-person options are limited.
5. Create virtual tours based on park/forest and/or by theme—dams, bridges, etc.
6. Host talks with local businesses, chambers, etc. on the value of investing in parks/forests.

Risks

Failing to build an awareness of the needs and the value could result in funding moving away from our parks and forests.

Measurement Criteria

Reports on visits, meeting 12 annually, with attendance and media coverage.

Goal 5: Strengthen the capacity of PPF, friends' chapters and volunteers through strategic investment of time, talent and revenue.

Objective 1: Increase board engagement in advancing PPF's mission through annual training and awareness building activities and strategic recruitment.

Significance

Board engagement is critical to the success of the Foundation. Not only are board members critical to raising the financial capital to invest in the organization, they can use their experience and connections to further the mission of the organization.

Resources

- Staff
- PPF Board of Directors
- Board committees
- DCNR
- Consultants

Tasks

1. Annually prepare a matrix of board skills and needs by June of each year to kick off board recruitment process.
2. Develop a pipeline of potential board members and engage with them prior to nominating them as board members.
3. Create an annual board self-evaluation for board members.
4. Assign a board mentor to every new board member, *annually*.
5. Capture new board member perspectives to inform current and future operations.
6. Develop a culture of engagement and friendship within the board through team building opportunities, mission-vision updates, and networking opportunities.
7. Review the board committees and create task groups based upon objectives and programs outlined in the strategic plan annually by May board meeting.
8. Encourage board members to visit parks and forests, as well as friends groups, to better understand the resources and challenges.
9. Encourage board members to participate in one volunteer opportunity each year.

Risks

Failure of the board to be advocates and fundraisers for PPF.

Measurement Criteria

Increased engagement of the board and long term sustainability of PPF.

Objective 2: Expand the development work of the board.

Significance

People give to who they know. By expanding our network, we can advance our development plan and raise revenue for needed projects and programs.

Resources

- Staff
- Consultants/contractors
- PPF Board of Directors
- Board committees
- Development Plan

Tasks

1. Implement the ambassador program.
2. Annually update and implement the development plan.
3. Increase unrestricted donations by 10% annually.

Risks

Lack of funding

Measurement Criteria

Funding diversification.

Objective 3: Build chapter boards to improve overall capacity on an annual basis.

Significance

Board engagement is critical to the success of any volunteer organization. As leaders of a friends chapter the board members are held accountable to their members, the park/forest, PPF and to the community as whole. Each board member brings experience, knowledge and connections to further the mission of the Friends chapter.

Resources

- Staff
- Consultants
- Volunteers
- Friends boards
- Online opportunities
- Local leadership programs
- Website
- Quarterly calls to chapter leaders

Tasks

1. Reestablish and expand the Friends Committee of the PPF board of directors to include more chapter leaders.
2. Train friends groups on board recruitment. Provide annual training for all chapter board members.
3. Create a briefing packet for newly appointed chapter officers specific to the responsibilities of the chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary.
4. Host annual new-leader trainings and pair with neighboring chapters for mentoring.
5. Develop a culture of engagement and friendship with and within the chapters through facilitated discussions and annual meetings.

6. Facilitate the networking of chapter board members at PPF retreats and informally in their regions.
 - a. Utilize the strategic planning survey results to develop trainings for friends groups.

Risks

Failure of the board to be advocates and fundraisers for chapters.

Measurement Criteria

Increased engagement of the board and long term sustainability of chapters.

Objective 4: Take advantage of and expand upon existing digital platforms to build volunteerism with friends and in parks and forests.

Significance

Need to reach wider audience

Resources

- DCNR
- Friends groups
- AARP
- Volunteer Match
- REI
- Meet UP
- Facebook
- GOPA
- PRPS

Tasks

1. Set up quarterly calls with partners.
2. Review existing platforms—present findings.
3. Recommend best platforms and establish protocol for using.
4. Establish roles in posting
5. Monitor platforms and make shifts on an annual basis.
6. Cross promote where possible.

Risks

Confusion. Missing or losing volunteers.

Measurement criteria

Increased participation

Objective 5: Annually, host a minimum of three volunteer trainings-in person or virtually based on needs identified by volunteers, friends, park or forest staff.

Significance

Builds the base of qualified volunteers while recognizing their importance to the overall success of our mission and DCNR's.

Resources

- Staff
- PPF Board of Directors
- Partners
- DCNR
- Chapter Leaders
- GOPA
- Park Maintenance Institute
- Contractors/qualified instructors
- Sister organizations, such as other volunteer programs, state park foundations, etc.

Tasks

1. Organize training—in person, webinars and fact sheets--as identified by PPF, DCNR, and Friends Chapters.
2. Recognize those trained with certificates either through the training entity or PPF.
3. When possible, include others in training to expand potential volunteer base.

Risks

Deterioration of amenities in parks and forests; lack of accessibility to accommodate a wider range of users.

Measurement Criteria

Number of trained volunteers implementing their knowledge through volunteer days and programs.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

DCNR: Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

DEIJ: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice

DEP: Department of Environmental Protection

GOPA: Get Outdoors PA

LNT: Leave No Trace

NASPF: National Association of State Park Foundations

NRPA: National Recreation & Park Association

PEC: Pennsylvania Environmental Council

PFA: Pennsylvania Forestry Association

PICE: Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education

POC: Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps

PRPS: Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society

SCORP: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

APPENDIX 1 – AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

WHY AN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM?

Pennsylvania has an award winning park and forest system. These special places receive over 40 million visitors a year and are engines for improving human and environmental health while also supporting and growing local economies.

As a result of inadequate state support, despite enormous public demand and affection, the parks and forests remain in continuous need of charitable support.

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) was formed in 1999 to, in part, promote private philanthropy for, and stewardship of, these special places.

Our parks and forests have a compelling and urgent message of value and need that must be widely shared to both raise their importance to decision makers and attract charitable support.

Countless Pennsylvanians have personal stories that we can share of time spent in our parks and forests and have friends and acquaintances who are eager to hear those stories. The best way to relay the message is person to person, one story at a time, by those who care for and appreciate these special places.

Ambassadors are those who are willing to share their stories and time, in concert with and with the support of the Foundation, to increase awareness of need and instill a willingness to give.

By providing Ambassadors with the right information and assisting their efforts, PPFF will expand its reach and resources with champions for our mission and the stewardship of our parks and forests.

WHO WILL BE AMBASSADORS?

- ❖ **CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS**
- ❖ Past board members
- ❖ Prospective board members
- ❖ Past DCNR or government employees
- ❖ Known friends and supporters of PPFF
- ❖ Park and forest enthusiasts
- ❖ Owners or managers of companies that rely on the parks and forests

Ambassadors would be recommended by staff and identified to the Board of Directors. Recognition as an Ambassador would be coordinated so that training could be organized in groups, e.g., no more than twice a year.

Ambassadors must be chosen for their passion for the parks and forests and their energy and enthusiasm; they should not be reluctant.

The number of Ambassadors is limited only by the number of people found who have a passion to develop resources for the parks and forests and a willingness to work on it.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AMBASSADORS?

To represent and promote Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) to the public in a concerted effort to significantly increase charitable giving.

More specifically:

Meetings and Time Commitment:

- Periodic meetings or phone calls with Ambassadors and PPFF staff
- Attend a reasonable number of events such as the annual PPFF Banquet and fundraising events
- Stay informed of the initiatives of PPFF through phone calls, PPFF website, reading emails, newsletters and other communications from the foundation

Expectations:

- Be familiar with the PPFF Fundraising/Friendraising Toolkit.
- Make an annual personal contribution at a meaningful level.
- Be responsive to staff requests for information or help.
- Work with staff to succeed at getting introductions and/or opportunities to make presentations to potential donors or businesses.
- Participate in annual development initiatives, as requested: calls, emails, annual appeal letter.
- Keep PPFF apprised of personal efforts and successes.

MENU OF TASKS AN AMBASSADOR MIGHT PERFORM

Thinking and Planning:

- Determine skillsets to share such as: speaking, writing, asking, compiling prospect contact information, introducing, social media promotion, organizing, attending events, etc.
- Think regularly about the potential for fund development and ways to generate awareness of PPF's impact in parks and forests.
- Compile a list of community contacts (philanthropists, business leaders, and foundation trustees) who have potential to fund PPF or projects on the parks and forests *Needs List*.
- Contact civic groups in your community to arrange speaking presentations.
- Seek opportunities for and/or staff free table display (trade groups, festivals, chambers of commerce).
- Have a short elevator speech and conversation-starters ready.

Reaching Out:

- Invite friends or prospects to a park or forest for recreation or an event.
- Share the story of our parks and forests each time you meet people or are in groups.
- Send potential donors a letter or info, have a coffee meeting, share an article about PPF, or a newsletter or other promotional PPF piece.
- Visit or accompany staff on visits to potential prospects and current donors.
- Promote the Extraordinary Give in October and November.
- Host an Extraordinary Give Party.
- Thank donors personally who responded to requests.
- Share PPF social media on personal social media pages.
- Wear PPF garb when out in the parks.
- Have each ambassador's picture and reasons they love our parks and forests ready for social media posts. Share one per week or month.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PPF STAFF?

- Learn and develop the particular "gifts" and talents that each Ambassador has for some aspect of the development process, e.g., introducing, asking, researching, meeting, events, so that they can work as a cohesive whole.
- Work with board and development committee to recruit and train ambassadors.
- Train ambassadors twice a year through WebEx or in person (when possible).
- Toolkit, PPF mission, information on parks and forests, personal style quiz, etc.
- Offer online training throughout the year through paid for and free webinars.

- Set up online or social channel for ambassadors to share information and meet for encouragement.
- Set up monthly Ambassador Updates to share information and quarterly WebEx call.
- Provide Ambassadors with items needed to complete meet their personal Ambassador goals such as: sample letters and emails, scripts, newsletters, handouts, etc.
- Someone on staff to be the point person and routinely reach out to the Ambassadors with either information or an ask.

KEEPING AMBASSADORS ACCOUNTABLE, ENGAGED AND MOTIVATED

- Keep track of and share the basic metrics of success: the numbers of the total donors, numbers of repeat donors, numbers of new donors, the average donated amount, the total amount donated.
- Reward and celebrate successes of Ambassadors? (Gifts? public recognition/introduction at events? Share progress of Ambassadors at board meetings, special ribbons at banquet)
- Simple “thank you” on a regular basis.
- Recognition on PPF Website, at banquets, events.
- Everyone has a different style / comfort level. Marci and staff need to understand individual motivations of Ambassadors.
- If Ambassadors work on a specific initiative such as funding for a new dock they should be kept informed as to the progress of the initiative.
- Invite an Ambassador to a Board meeting.
- Ambassadors share their successes; enthusiasm and success are contagious.

SOME INITIAL CANDIDATES FOR "AMBASSADORSHIP" (NONE HAVE BEEN ASKED):

- All Board members
- Paul Caulfield
- Jen Cruver-Kibi
- George Asimos
- Matt Haar
- Charlie Davidson
- John Oliver
- Joanne Raphael
- Rob Wonderling
- Gary Smith
- Bill Forrey
- Andy Mowen