



50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Environmental Rights Amendment to Pennsylvania's Constitution, throughout 2021, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation hosted special incentives to engage the public and raise awareness about this monumental piece of legislation. The following is a collection of poems, essays, photos, and songs shared with us from Pennsylvanians all over the state about what the ERA means to them.



Pennsylvania Constitution

ARTICLE I, SECTION 27

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

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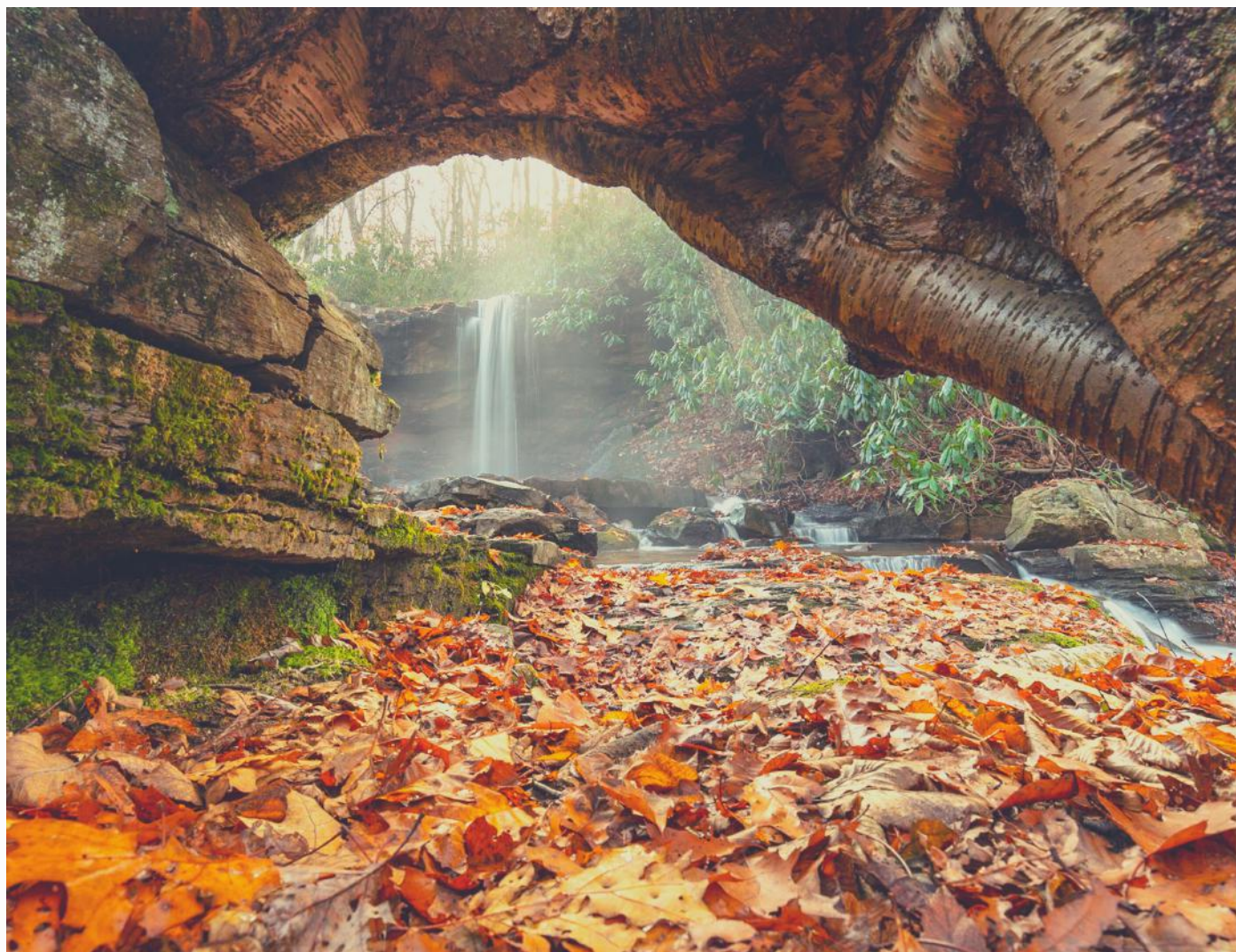
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Inhale and exhale with no fail.
- Mary Joy Greg

Clean air means life and breath.
- Kim Hoover

Natural state, good health birthright.
- Brad Mallory

Breathe deeply, Clear, Refreshing, Invigorating Essence.
- Jennifer Printy



Best in Show - Judges' Choice Award
Bob Fescemyer, Forbes State Forest

Clean Air: Need for fresh air.
- Gloria Benfer

Aah - smell this clean air... COUGH!
- Jeff Wartluft

No more smog, asthma *cough cough*
- Jenna Behringer

Fresh, refreshing, invigorating,
yet still calming.
- Tina Molski

Clean air, it's what's for life.
- John N.

Reducing the risk of respiratory diseases!
- Sue Adams

Enjoying the Outdoors for Our Existence!
- Lisa C. Bush

Clean air rights, breath it in.
- Don Sullenberger

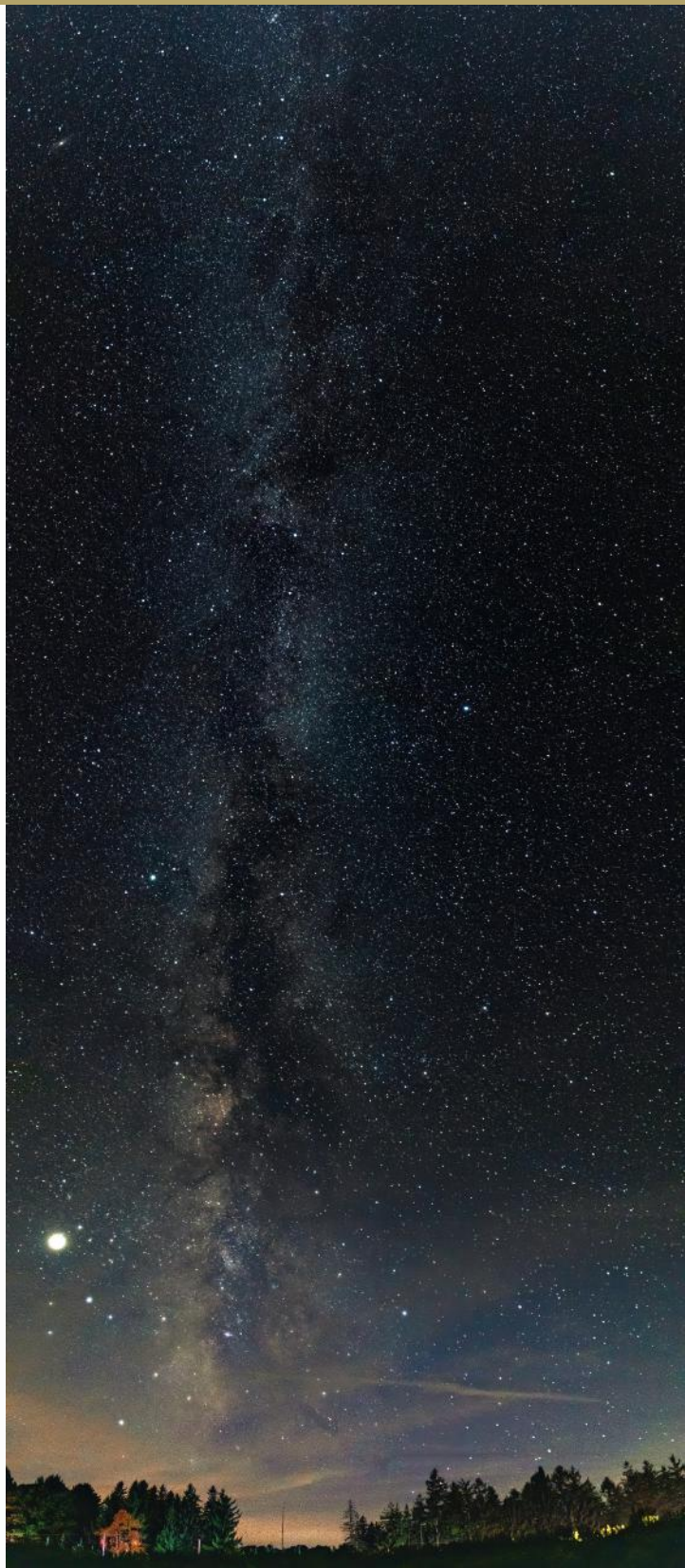
All of creation needs clean air.
- David A. Imgrund

Pennsylvanians deserve clean, beautiful
nature...always!
- Ami Dalkner

Clean air. What other choice works.
- Charles Van Auken

Pink lungs are healthy lungs. Breathe.
- Cathy Jackson

Easy breathing, easy viewing, healthy lungs
- Marci Mowery



Clean Air - Judges' Choice Award
Matt Mann, Cherry Springs State Park

Breathe, and smell trees,
flowers, Earth.
- Mary Ann Pike

Moved to mountains.
Wanted clean air.
- Carol Schnaiter

Breathing clean,
outside air is invigorating.
- Bev Martin

Clean air
for every creature's
existence.
- John Lahr



Clean Air - Runner Up Award
Bruce Walkovich, Canoe Creek State Park



Best in Show - People's Choice Award
Sarah McAfee, McConnells Mill State Park

Stand outside.
Breathe deeply.
No virus here.
- Krista Henry

Taking a breath,
gives me freedom.
- Alice Kreider

Clean air keeps my lungs alive.
- Nancy Kurtz

Air. We need it for life.
- Dorothy M. Krupa

It's good to breathe clean air.
- Tom Campbell

Ensuring clean water, air uplifts us.
- Mark Lichty



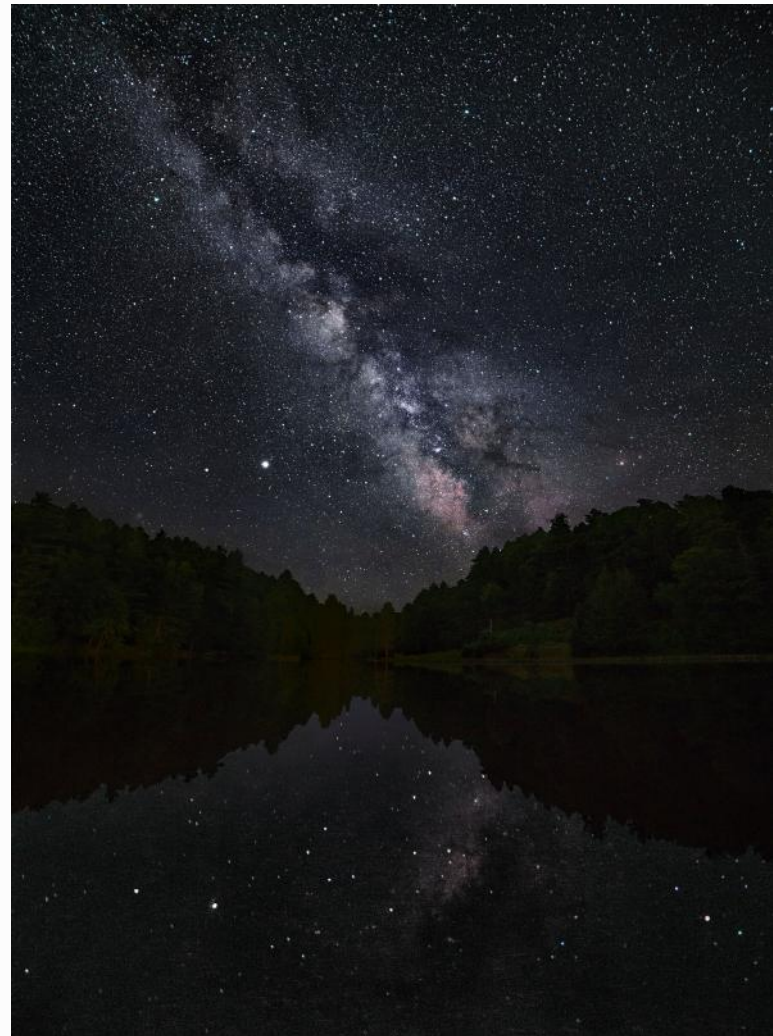
(Left) Pure Water
People's Choice Award
Liz Mickley,
Codorus State Park

(Below) Clean Air
People's Choice Award
Bill Sission,
R.B. Winter State Park

River
Susquehanna
Polluted far upstream
This is not nature's
intention
FIX IT!

Swimmers
Boaters, anglers
Sightseers, residents
Please demand we have
clean rivers
FIX IT!

SEWER
RUNOFF
OVERFLOW
Polluting industries
Dumped into our
Beautiful river
FIX IT!
- @IamERIC9



Life
Flourishes
With
Clean
Water!
- Carol Saylor

Water
Water is life
Hear its flow sweetly clean
Generous gift from One unseen
Treasure
- Wolodymyra Gesford

Water
The life giver
Home to many species
Provider of drink and food
Water
- Mark A. Walters

Capsize
Ramcat Rapid
Distorting, distilling
Bright sunlight, Wave of trout envy
Roll up
- Eddy Line

Breathe in...
Not just for thirst.
Ah, the sound of peaceful harmony;
the Earth in balance.
Refreshed.
- Ami Dalkner



Pure Water - Judges' Choice Award
Sabrina Hilpert, Presque Isle State Park

Water
On a hot day
Fresh and clean from the tap
Been through the system to remove
Fish poo
- Lynda Schoenecker

Flowing
Water for life
Cooling, cleansing, quenching
Given from God to sustain man
Cherish
- Daniel Snyder



Water
Aquatic Fun
Sparkling, Splashing,
Flowing
Rivers, Streams and Lakes
are dancing
Clean joy
- Gloria Benfer

My Dad,
he fished the rivers,
took us to Shawnee Lake.
He taught us to enjoy water,
with care.
- Mary Ann Pike

(Above) Pure Water - Runner Up Award, Rick Baker,
Presque Isle State Park (Below) Scenic Value - Runner Up
Award, Dave Kile, Little Pine State Park

Ice hangs
In long sickles
Longing for me to break
And taste that refreshing coolness
Inside.

- Dave Coover

Water:
Life sustaining
The beauty we seek out
Refreshing on hot summer days
Clean fun

- Joyce Jackson

Earth's blood...
Clean, pure water
Free-flowing, life-giving.
All along the food chain, they
wait...

For life.

- Lynda Ihrig



Seasons, One by One.
The same park trail I cherish,
Both same and brand new
PA parks are now
A vision of our state's past,
How it all once was.
- Art Williams

Cool, clear water flows.
The trees rustle in the wind.
They do this for all.
- Hunter Kaufman

Misty early morn
Serenity of the hike
Mountain peace and quiet

Serenity here
in the stillness of nature...
noise is forbidden

hike in the mountains
through the splendor of nature
traffice nowhere near
- RC Heckert

Clean water, clean air
Public lands, fish and wildlife
This is your birthright
- Jerry Hassinger

Starlight trails of schist
Bounded by wood-pulp spires
Beneath the crow's caw
- Jack Ryan

Kindness to our Earth
the "other than human world"
Reciprocity
- Michele Burton



Natural Value - Runner Up Award
Cathy Straub, Elk State Forest



Penn's Woods are alive -
History in four seasons,
Beguiling beauty!
- Michelle Patterson

Public lands renew
Our bodies and our spirits.
Best to reinvest!
- Sarah Nicholas

See bald eagle soar
bear, elk, deer, turkey graze free
shared clean air, water
- Mark Huncik

Natural Value - Judges' Choice Award
Krystal Blake, Laurel Hill State Park

Please be still my mind,
nature whispers
to your soul,
your true home revealed
- Jim Bobeck

Starlight trails of schist
Bounded by wood-pulp spires
Beneath the crow's caw
- Jack Ryan

Rise up with the Sun
Chase the vision into night
Gift for tomorrow
- Doug Holscher

Stroll by Sylvan stream
Inhale deeply: Fresh, crisp air
Our keystone treasure
- Mike Patterson

Natural Value - People's Choice Award
Dot Monahan, Presque Isle State Park





Scenic Value - Judges' Choice Award
Kyle Yates, Cook Forest State Park

The sun rises o'er
A stand of ancient pin oaks
and warms felled acorns
Rain falls from gray clouds
Creating streams that give life
To all God's creatures
- Sue Martin



Scenic value - People's Choice Award
Sabine Panzner-Kaelin, Laurel Summit State Park

Two Mile House Interpretive Project

BY TRISTIN MILAZZO, DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR AT PCN

In December 2020, the Cumberland County Historical Society, located in Carlisle, PA, received a grant for \$14,230 from the South Mountain Partnership for the interpretation and preservation of the landscape of the historic Two Mile House owned and operated by the Cumberland County Historical Society.

The project undertaken by the Cumberland County Historical Society was a proactive initiative by ensuring the historic integrity of the site by:

- Creating an assessment to ensure the long-term preservation of the wooded landscape on the nearly 6-acre Two Mile House property
- Using preservation as a learning resource to interpret and tell the history of the changing landscape of the Cumberland Valley
- Tying the Two Mile House into the growing commercial plans for the Walnut Bottom Corridor to show that the House is a historical and community asset
- Installing signage at the front and back of the property to advertise the property as a public space, including six educational interpretive panels on the property
- Extending the UPMC walking trail onto the Two Mile House property to encourage use of the space as a reflective space

As a property surrounded by growing commercial and residential interests, the Cumberland County understood the important of preserving and maintaining the landscape of the property while also opening it up for public use. One overlooked aspect of the property was the care and maintenance of trees on the property, which have recently begun to die, fall, or suffer from spotted lanternfly infestation. As the Cumberland County Historical Society looks to future preservation of the property, the Society also aims to educate the public on the importance of such regular maintenance and preservation.



Historic Value - Runner Up Award
Beth VanHorn, Greenwood Furnace State Park

Tracks and Trails

BY DR. ALLEN DIETERICK-WARD, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY

In the 1920s, the Pennsylvania Railroad set the standard for the world and we had 12,000 miles of track. By the time the Environmental Rights Amendment was passed with overwhelming legislative and public support in the spring of 1971, the Pennsylvania Railroad was no longer an independent company and the industry was in the midst of a contraction that would see more than half of that trackage abandoned by 1990. It is a testament to the foresight of our civic and political leaders that the preservation of this legacy of the state's historic development, which was inscribed into the natural environment itself by countless thousands of engineers, laborers, and trainmen and women, has resulted in a system of rail-trails that again establishes Pennsylvania as a leader on the world stage. From the Mon River overlook above the Edgar Thomson Works to the Connellsville coke fields and to the Laurel Highlands and beyond, I can think of no better way to experience the proud history of bituminous mining and steel-making in our state than by riding the Great Allegheny Passage along the former route of the Western Maryland and Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroads. And, how could one better understand the diversity of experiences that has marked the history of Penn's Woods than to move virtually through time from the early Quaker settlement in Philadelphia to the pivotal winters at Valley Forge, the birthplace of Daniel Boone, and onto the heavily-mined landscape of anthracite country than by travelling the route of the Schuylkill River Trail.

In a way, rail-trails serve as miles-long, linear museums that allow long-time residents and new visitors alike to experience and explore the histories of the Keystone State for themselves. And, every one of our scenic rail-trails came about by a unique and wonderful combination of public and private investment that generally includes state support, such as DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Program, DCED's Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program, or PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside, matched by county and local government funds, philanthropic and corporate grants, and donations from residents who simply love their trails. The people's right to the preservation of the historic values of the environment can thus perhaps find no better expression than in the history of lumber told by the Pine Creek Gorge Trail, agriculture on the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail, iron-making on the Ghost Town Trail, or the stories told by any of the dozens other rail-trails in Pennsylvania.



Nature and History in the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area

BY CHRIS J. MAGOC, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY

From the fabled Ohio, Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, to the coal-laden, forested Appalachian Mountains, to unsung natural resources like salt brine wells, it was the nature of western Pennsylvania that fueled the rise of America as the world's greatest industrial power by the end of the nineteenth century. Labor and capital combined to produce explosive industrial production, but in the process rendered the Pittsburgh region “hell with the lid taken off,” as one travel writer put it in 1868.

In the historic industrial river valleys of southwestern Pennsylvania—much of which is now encompassed by the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area—artists have been working in creative partnerships with local communities to honor and celebrate the renewal of the natural world. In the Iron Garden at the Carrie Blast Furnaces National Historic landmark, Rivers of Steel has forged a remarkable collaboration with artists, traditional metal workers and master gardeners to honor the recovery and biodiversity of the natural landscape. The beauty of the Iron Garden offers a striking juxtaposition with the history and sublime industrial power of the Carrie Furnace site.



Nature and History in the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area (continued)

A wilderness of huge, queer-looking buildings of stone, brick, and wood, with a core of towering chimneys, from which vast clouds of smoke and steam rise heavenward.” That was how one observer in the late nineteenth century described Natrona, a town 21 miles northeast of Pittsburgh along the Allegheny River that owed its existence to the Pennsylvania Salt Manufacturing Company—better known as “Penn Salt.” The company town was founded in 1850 by a group of German scientists and entrepreneurs from Philadelphia, who seized on the abundant salt brine wells in the area, as well as the adjacent Pennsylvania Canal that snaked its way through the Allegheny Valley. The natural properties of the site made possible Penn Salt’s production of a wide array of chemical products, including the insecticide DDT that became the subject of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962); ironically, Carson grew up in Springdale just a few miles downriver from Penn Salt. Company founders made the most of the narrow strip of land they occupied, erecting a sprawling industrial complex as well as vernacular worker housing inspired by Gothic and Greek Revival architectural styles prominent in the era. Decades after the company terminated operations in 1959, the surviving worker homes formed one of America’s largest and most unique industrial National Historic Districts—the first step in what has been a decades-long effort to breathe new life into the town.

Natrona’s industrial and ethnic history, captivating built landscape, and complex environmental legacy have inspired “Natrona Comes Together,” a local revitalization organization, to create a series of public art and environmental restoration projects. These include beautiful community gardens that honor both the area’s rich industrial-labor history, and the recovery of the natural world.



Earth dreams of oneness,
Silent words shared together.
Trees connect to all forest beings and humans,
Holding space with this beautiful earth.
Encouraging others to share the forest joy
Tremors of aliveness between all beings begin to be felt.
Interconnectedness of all life awoken to Earth dreams,
Calling out to all.
- Michele Burton



Baby,
It's cold outside
But there's plenty to do.
Ski, sled, hike, fish, skate,
birds to watch
Webinar watching too
Plan your next trip
PA
- Suzanne Gamber

(Above) Esthetic Value Judges' Choice Award, Clare Kaczmarek, Laurel Mountain State Park

Many people.
Many kinds.
Enjoying nature.
- John Jakoby

(Right) Historic Value - Judges' Choice Award, Angelo Mamone, McConnells Mill State Park





Epic beauty
Sights unseen
Truly breathtaking
Hear sighs
Each more beautiful
Truly
Inspiring
Cherish
- Irene Spisake

Esthetic Value - Runner Up Award
Jenn Stillman, Lyman Run State Park

Trunks and branches covered in bark,
Rustling leaves in the breeze,
Edible delights grow abundantly,
Enjoyable shade from the sun,
Shelter for many woodland animals
- Michelle Brzuz

Everyone,
Should,
Treasure,
His or her,
Environment,
Through,
Intimate,
Contact with nature
- Jeff Wartluft



Esthetic Value - People's Choice Award
Patti Keller, Pine Grove Furnace State Park

Our environment
Belongs to all our children
Borrowed from the past

Used and abused
By those came before us
Let's "Pay It Forward"

- Andre Weltman



Young Photographers - Judges' Choice Award
Trent Stross, Sinnemahoning State Park



Young Photographers - People's Choice Award
Gwendolyn Sobkowiak, Laurel Ridge State Park



Young Photographers - Runner Up Award
Vincent Bratton, Cowans Gap State Park



Historic Value - People's Choice Award
David Raymond, Point State Park

In 2021, musicians from around the state were invited to submit their original songs about what the Environmental Rights Amendment means to them for PPF's first-ever song contest. Three awardees were selected who expressed the importance of the amendment, how it empowers citizens with rights to healthy natural resources and, at the same time, charges us all with their stewardship.

Find recordings of their songs on PPF's website or YouTube channel and listen as Grand Prize winner Ed Holcomb performs his song "The Amendment" with harmonica accompaniment; Youth Entry winner Brooke Buser sings her song "Pick Up Trash" strummed to the tune of her ukulele; President's Choice winner Debra Wolf Goldstein sings "People Have the Right".

Recordings of their songs, set to a background of historic photos and photos from PPF's Environmental Rights Amendment-themed photo contest, can be found on our website at <https://paparksandforests.org/our-work/education/era50/song-contest> or YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/PAParksandForests>.

[Click here to listen to the playlist.](#)



The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation supports 121 state parks and 2.2 million acres of forest by coordinating volunteers, activities, and donations through its 48 chapters to inspire stewardship of the state's parks and forests.

Conserve. Protect. Enhance.

paparksandforests.org

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The official registration and financial information of Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundations may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within PA, 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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