

Penn's Stewards

News from the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

Summer 2024 Newsletter



The mission of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation 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.

In this Issue:

#LeapIn to New Opportunities	1
President's Message	2
What's the Buzz on Pollinators	6
2024 Annual Awards Banquet	8
What is a Qualified Charitable Distribution?	9
The Seven Deadly Swims	10
Partnerships	11
Leave No Trace Award	12
Bring Your Voice	13
Healthy Lands Week	13
Strong Bipartisan Majorities	14
We Will Miss	15
Friends in Action	16
List of Friends	17
You Made it Happen	18

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PAParksAndForests.org



meetup



Photo Credit: Marci Mowery

#LeapIn to New Opportunities

When you think about state parks and forests, does your mind go to picnicking, hiking, kayaking or boating, fishing, cross country or downhill skiing, hunting, camping, and perhaps swimming? All of these are true, but Pennsylvania's state parks and forests also offer a myriad of other activities that may not readily come to mind.

Hang Gliding, Anyone?

You know we are spending this leap year encouraging you to #LeapIn to something new and I daresay there's nothing more literal to the leap than hang gliding. While this activity does require special training and equipment, properly trained enthusiasts find their passion in Pennsylvania. And I can speak from experience - watching also provides a thrilling experience!

Hang gliders take off from the popular Hyner View State Park, where they ride the air over the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. The launch is maintained by the Hyner Hang Gliding Club, who also maintain authorization to use the launch. If you are thinking about giving hang gliding a go, contact the park for additional information and to inquire about the authorization for usage process.

Continued on page 3...

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President's Message

Marci Mowery

As I write this, the house is quiet, as it is the wee hours of the morning. My mind was busy making checklists and writing articles, so I decided to grab a cup of tea and clear my mind by putting a checklist to paper and words to the final pieces of the Summer newsletter.

The checklist is for a weeklong camping trip to Chapman State Park, where my husband Joe, puppy Phoebe, and I will be serving as volunteer campground hosts. While there, I will be helping with a women in the outdoors event, launching a new friends group for the park, and taking in some of the local attractions (Anders Run Natural Area here we come!).

Campground hosting is just one of the ways that people volunteer in state parks and forests. Recently, we held our annual banquet celebrating the many volunteers, as well as state park and forest staff, who are making a difference in conservation, historic preservation, and access to recreation. You can read about the winners on page 8.

Perhaps the lead article of the newsletter caught your attention, as we continue to provide you with ideas on new ways to explore state parks and forests. Intern Martha is working on a fact sheet of historical locations in and near state parks and forests—look for that soon on our website.

Speaking of websites, have you been to PaParksAndForests.org recently? The publications page is chock full of resources to help you enjoy the outdoors, including monthly bucket lists. Or check out Fun for Families, with children's coloring sheets, the expanding selection of paint-by-number offerings, and a recommended conservation book list. Or find yourself on the news page, enjoying the diverse array of blogs, covering everything from the restoration of the historic African American Midland Cemetery to geologic features of Pennsylvania to the influence of art!

As the next few weeks roll out, keep an eye on our social media and website for actions that you can take to support investments in state parks and forests through the budgeting process. PPFF supports the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, including \$8.5 million for trails and \$5 million for the youth employment program, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps. A recent poll of Pennsylvania voters found that you, too, were supportive of investing in trails—see page 14.

The puppy has found me and has curled up in my lap, making typing challenging. She has a way of letting one know when it is time to rest. May you find rest and renewal in the outdoors.

Yours in the Outdoors,
Marci



Marci and Pam stopped by to check out the Hickory Run State Park visitor center during a visit to the park to attend the park managers meeting.

Continued from page 1...



Photo Credit: Marci Mowery

Two state forests offer opportunities to soar like a bird. First is the Haldeman Tract in Weiser State Forest. While this site is open only to current members of the U.S. Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association who display a current helmet sticker for the launch site issued by the Hyner Hang Gliding Club, the area also serves as a vista overlooking the scenic Susquehanna Valley.

Buchanan State Forest also boasts two hang gliding launch sites.

Remote Control Airplanes

If launching yourself into the air seems a little daunting, perhaps launching a remote controlled airplane is more to your liking!

Hillman State Park provides a radio-controlled model airplane field—the K. Leroy Irvis Radio Control Model Airport. The airport offers a covered shelter; asphalt runways, taxiways, and pit areas; windsock poles; a frequency board; and both parking and spectator areas. The airfield is operated and maintained by the Greater Pittsburgh Aero Radio Control Society. All users must have an FAA certificate, maintain and display an AMA membership, and preregister with Raccoon Creek State Park.



On the opposite side of the state, Benjamin Rush State Park provides a radio-controlled model airplane field including a 400-foot runway and surrounding fly zone. Additional information is available from the Northeast Philadelphia Radio Control Club. Additional approved long-term flying sits are Beltzville, Lackawanna,

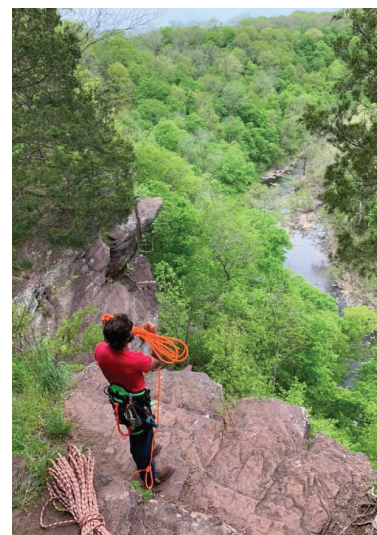
Prompton, and Tuscarora state parks. Note that the airfields are also the only locations in state parks that recreational usage of unmanned aerial systems (drones) are permitted, as well.

While we are talking about Benjamin Rush State Park, did you know that the park contains one of the largest community gardens in the world? According to the Benjamin Rush Community Garden's website, the area has been used by European settlers since the Comly Family farmed it in the early 1700s. The area has been used as a farm to support the Philadelphia State Hospital which was located across Roosevelt Boulevard prior to being decommissioned. It provides the opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds to garden together. Each gardener leases a garden plot to tend and contributes some volunteer hours to help run the garden.

Rock Climbing

According to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources website, there are few activities more challenging than rock climbing. Climbing is permitted on many state forest lands—contact the forest in which you are interested in climbing. In state parks, the following parks permit climbing:

McConnells Mill State Park hosts two climbing and rappelling areas—Rim Road and Breakneck Bridge, with Breakneck Bridge being the more advanced and rugged area. Rappelling is prohibited from bridges or from rocky areas onto park roads—limit climbing, within your ability, to the designated areas.



Ohiopyle State Park sports numerous climbing areas, including Meadow Run, Bruner Run, and four walls along the Lower Youghiogheny section of the Great Allegheny Passage. All areas have a combination of top-roping and sport routes for climbers of all abilities.

Ralph Stover State Park climbing is limited to technical climbing only and requires climbing safety equipment in the High Rocks Climbing Area.

Continued on page 4...

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Did someone say Scuba Diving?

Scuba Diving in state parks is only permitted within approved state parks as well as Lake Erie at Presque Isle State Park. Divers must contact the park office before diving to be notified of certification requirements, park diving areas, and park-specific diving information. While scuba diving is a unique and interesting way to explore a state park, safety precautions must be followed, and solo diving is discouraged.

Fore!

Both golfing and disc golfing are available in state parks, with two parks (Caledonia and Evansburg) home to 18-hole golf courses and fifteen state parks hosting at least one disc golf course. The newly formed Friends of Chapman State Park are hoping to add one to the park in the coming years.



Photo Credit: Marci Mowery

Take in a Show

Did you know that four state parks have performing arts centers or playhouses?

- The Totem Pole Playhouse has provided shows during the summer months at Caledonia State Park since 1952.
- The Verna Leith Sawmill Theater at the Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the Arts will be celebrating their 40th anniversary with a musical celebration on June 22, 2024.
- Tyler Park Center for the Arts at Tyler State Park enriches the community through fine arts, crafts, and music.
- The Playmasters Theater Group at Neshaminy State Park, PPFF's 2024 Park of the Year, was established in 1959 to give themselves and others an outlet for creativity and communication with those who enjoy live theater.



Parks on the Air

Sure, everyone's all about cell phones and the joy of instant communication using your thumbs. But you can put those thumbs to other uses with the ham radio operators of the Parks on the Air (POTA) program. Amateur operators can operate their radio station either from their homes or in a portable location like a park or vehicle. Some hams like to only operate in parks or contact hams operating in parks. Hams also like contests where they get awards for contacting other hams. Combining contesting and a love of parks gave rise to the Parks on the Air (POTA) program in ham radio.

Parks on the Air hams are a subset of amateur radio operators who enjoy setting up their radio stations in a park. Their communication can be by voice, computer, or Morse Code. Next time you see someone with curious looking antennae or other equipment at a park shelter or on a bench, stop by and say hello. You might have just found a fun new hobby.

Did we tweak your interest in exploring Pennsylvania state parks and forests with new eyes? When we say there is something for everyone, we truly believe that there is!



Resources for Further Information:

Hang Gliding in PA State Parks and Forests:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/HangGliding>

US Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association:

<https://www.usHPA.org>

Hyner Hang Gliding Club:

<http://www.hyperclub.com>

K. Leroy Irvis Radio Control Model Airport:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/HillmanStatePark/Pages/Radio-ControlledFlying.aspx>

Greater Pittsburgh Aero Radio Control Society:

<https://www.gparcs.org>

Academy of Model Aeronautics:

<https://www.modelaircraft.org>

Benjamin Rush State Park Model Airplane Field:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/BenjaminRushStatePark/Pages/Radio-ControlledFlying.aspx>

Northeast Philadelphia Radio Control Club:

<http://www.neprcc.com>

Benjamin Rush Community Garden:

<https://www.benjaminrushgardens.org/>

Rock Climbing in PA State Parks and Forests:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/RockClimbing>

Scuba Diving in PA State Parks and Forests:

Learn more about where you can dive and safety protocols at:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/ScubaDiving>

Totem Pole Playhouse:

<https://totempoleplayhouse.org>

Verna Leith Sawmill Theatre:

<https://sawmill.org/theater>

Tyler Park Center for the Arts:

<https://tylerparkarts.org>

Playmasters:

<http://playmasters.org>

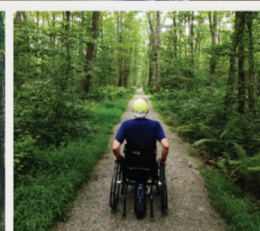
Parks on the Air:

<https://parksonthear.com>



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
YOU INVEST IN PPFF?

You help ensure a place and
an experience for everyone in
the outdoors



2024 PPFF Virtual Book Club

Grab your lunch and join us at 12pm for a book discussion online
at <https://paparksandforests.org/event/ppff-virtual-book-club-2/>

June 26: "Susquehanna, River of Dreams"

by Susan Stranahan (participating!)

July 31: "Coyote America" by Dan Flores

Aug. 28: "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson

Sept. 25: "On the Trail"

by Silas Chamberlin

Oct. 30: "Blue Highways"

by William Least Heat Moon

Nov. 20: "Cradle of Conservation"

by Dr. Allen Dietrich-Ward

Dec. 18: "My Side of the Mountain"

by Jean Craighead George





Photo by Danielle Ruggiero

What's the Buzz on Pollinators

By Lauren Taylor Rovelli

What is a Pollinator?

Every plant that flowers requires pollination to reproduce. In Pennsylvania, the main pollinators are bees, butterflies, beetles, moths, flies, and hummingbirds.

Why Do They Matter?

At least 75% of all the flowering plants on earth are pollinated by insects and animals!

Scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of pollinators

That's 1,200 different food crops and 180,000 different types of plants.

These plants help stabilize our soil, clean our air, supply oxygen, and support wildlife... and they need pollinators, so we need pollinators!



Bee on Aster



Photo by kgflow

How are They Doing?

For the past 25 years, many species of pollinators have experienced large drops in numbers. Because...

Fewer places to feed and breed: Habitat that pollinators need in order to survive are shrinking. As native vegetation is replaced by roadways, manicured lawns, crops and non-native gardens, pollinators lose the food and nesting sites that are necessary for their survival. Remaining patches of prairie and meadow have become more disconnected. That makes it harder for pollinators to reach new breeding sites or find better habitat.

Migratory pollinators face special challenges: If the distance between the suitable habitat patches along their migration route is too great, smaller, weaker individuals may die during their journey.

Imported species and diseases: Invasive plants crowd out native ones, reducing food and shelter for pollinators. Other stressors, such as poor nutrition and pesticide exposure, may intensify the effect of diseases.

Pesticides: Improper and excessive use can harm pollinators and other wildlife. Use pesticides only when absolutely necessary. Use the minimum amount required to be effective and target the application so that only the intended pest is affected.

Climate change: Flowers are blooming earlier as temperatures warm, costing some pollinators the opportunity to feed. Some insects feed only on specific plants; if these blooms die before insects arrive, the insects go hungry and fewer plants get pollinated.

Rising temperatures may be contributing to a decline in bumblebees. Numbers of North American bumblebees have fallen nearly 50 percent since 1974. The biggest losses have occurred in places where temperatures have risen the highest.

Other climate change effects — more flooding, shorter fire cycles, and the spread of invasive species threaten native habitats. This may directly affect pollinators if the host plant that a pollinator needs to survive is overtaken by another plant species.

As of 2020, there are more than 70 species of pollinators currently listed as endangered or threatened.



Turks Cap Lily

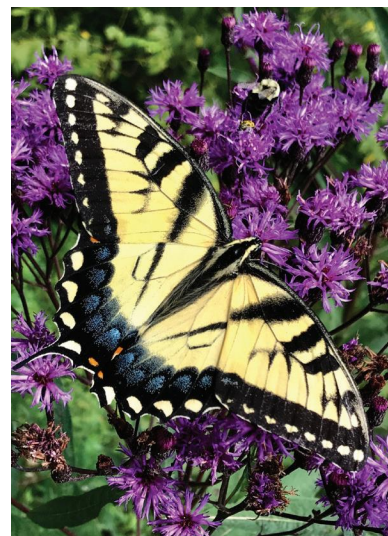


Photo by Caudia Porter

What You Can Do for Your Pollinators

There are 2,100 native plants in PA, many are flowering.

- Grow mostly native flowering plants as they are adapted to local soils and pollinators seek them out... but certain non-native plants can fill the blooming gaps like lavenders and sedums!
- Plant a variety to prolong the season.
- Plant in groups as clumps of flowering plants attract more pollinators
- Do not use insecticides/herbicides anywhere in your yard or garden if possible!!

A few pollinator favorites that look great in your garden: Coneflowers, Milkweed, Bee balm, Salvia, Butterfly weed, Black-eyed Susan, Blazing Star, Catmint, Coral Bells, Foxglove, Goldenrod, Lavender, Penstemon, Phlox, Russian Sage, Sedum, Yarrow

Resources

Native Plant Garden Templates

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/LandscapingwithNativePlants/NativeGardenTemplates/Pages/default.aspx>

Native Plants by State

<https://nativebackyards.com/native-plants-by-state/#pennsylvania-native-plants>

Native Plants

<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>

2024 Annual Awards Banquet

The annual awards banquet is a highlight of the year for the Foundation, as we celebrate the excellence in conservation, education, and recreation.

The event would not be possible without the volunteers and the sponsors. This year's sponsors included:



Table sponsors included: Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Eric Madden, Purple Lizard Maps, and Stahl Sheaffer Engineering.



Chair Award:

Barbara Barksdale, Midland Cemetery

Front – Sharon Harris, Barbara Barksdale, Elizabeth Jefferies, Tina Molski (PPFF Board Chair; REI); Back – Fiona Knoster (REI), Roman Weyant (REI), Kyle Ellingston (REI), and Tom Porreca (REI).



Cliff Jones Keystone Legacy Award: Pennsylvania Forestry Association

Front – Julianne Schieffer, Matt Sampson, Linda Finley, and Celeste Powell; Back – Gene Odato, Randy White, Mark Ott, Richard Lewis, and Ken Manno.



Volunteer Education (Individual):

Mike Teeter

Paul Fogal (PPFF Board Member), Mike Teeter, and Rob Boulware (Seneca Resources).



Forest of the Year: William Penn State Forest

Joe Frassetta (Inspired by Nature Woodworking), Rick Hartlieb, Steve Wacker, and Richard Deppen.



Volunteer Education (Group): French and Indian War Officers' Corps

Mary Hirst (PPFF Board Member), Linda Shaner, Dale Luthringer, Bob Shaner, and Rob Boulware (Seneca Resources).



Joseph Ibberson Government Award: Wayne Kober

Brad Mallory (PPFF Board Member) and Wayne Kober.



Volunteer Improvement (Group): Friends of Michaux State Forest

Representative Jim Struzzi (PPFF Board Member) and Don Horn.



Improvement (Individual):
Gary Kirk, Friends of White Clay Creek Preserve

Kristie Asimos, Gary Kirk, and George Asimos.



Park of the Year:
Neshaminy State Park

Sherry Ryndycz, Kaitlyn Gundersen-Thorpe (Park Manager), and sponsor/board member Kate Harper, Esq.



President's Award:
Purple Lizard Maps

Marc Mowery (PPFF President), Justine Andronici, Mike Hermann, Jeffery Sheaffer (Stahl-Sheaffer Engineering), and Rod Stahl (Stahl-Sheaffer Engineering).



Volunteer (Group):
Lackawanna State Park Trail Care Crew

Joe Tierney accepts the award for the Lackawanna State Park Trail Care Crew.



Volunteer (Individual):
Margarita Caicedo

Matthew Blair (Kate's Real Food), McKenzie Blair (Kate's Real Food), Margarita Caicedo, and Marci Mowery (PPFF President).



Young Volunteer Award:
Hung Pham

Amber Borrelli (Color & Culture), Carlos Centeno (Color & Culture), Hung Pham, Dana Lomma (Teacher, Club Advisor, and Nominator), and Marci Mowery (PPFF President).

What is a Qualified Charitable Distribution?

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) can be a great tax planning tool. A QCD is generally a nontaxable distribution made directly by the trustee of your IRA (other than a SEP or SIMPLE IRA) to an organization that is eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. You must be at least age 70 ½ when the distribution was made. Also, you must have the same type of acknowledgement of your contribution to that non-profit organization that you need in order to claim a deduction for a charitable contribution. The maximum annual exclusion for QCDs is \$105,000 for 2024. Any QCD in excess of the \$105,000 exclusion limit is included in income as any other distribution. If you file a joint return, your spouse can also have a QCD and exclude up to \$105,000. The amount of the QCD is limited to the amount of the distribution that would otherwise be included in income.

You can't claim a charitable contribution deduction for any QCD not included in your income.

Once you attain the age of required minimum distribution from your IRA (age 73 in 2024), you can then use a QCD to offset the taxable income from the RMD.

If you have the luxury of not needing your IRA funds currently, but are trying to deplete them before your death, you could start taking advantage of the QCD at 70 ½. You could use the two years prior to RMD age to withdraw funds from the IRA and make a charitable donation directly from the IRA, therefore avoiding tax consequences.

Please consult your tax advisor or financial planner to discuss your personal circumstances as it relates to this article before making any decisions.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SWIMS

While a refreshing swim on a hot day adds to summer fun, time in the water can also end in tragedy. Be safe in the water by avoiding the deadly swims outlined below.



1 Swimming outside a designated swimming area

2 Jumping into unknown or fast moving waters

3 Challenging someone to swim across a cove, lake or pond to an object such as a buoy.

4 Holding your breath too long while swimming or swimming in cold water.

5 Swimming without a life jacket and/or in an area/depth beyond your ability

HELP!



6 Swimming under the influence of drugs or alcohol

I'm so scared!

7 Swimming to rescue a person, boat, beach ball, or some other object.

ALSO AVOID...

Swimming alone or allowing children to swim unsupervised.

Mommy, Where are you?

Partnerships

Susquehanna River Trail Association

Emily Myers joined PPFF as an AmeriCorps member focused on the Susquehanna River Water Trail, in partnership with the Susquehanna River Trail Association. In this role, Emily is engaging volunteers in the Weiser State Forest islands that are available for camping, inventorying the campsites and launches, and helping to improve the visitor experience to the trail.



Photo Credit: Marci Mowery

I Love My State Parks Beer

In time for the celebration of state parks across the nation, New Trail Brewing unveiled their latest beer in the state park beer series—I Love My State Parks!



Angler Magazine

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation is excited to be working with the Fish and Boat Commission to provide information for anglers with a park and forest flavor. Enjoy the most recent article on Camping Considerations for Clean Water by scanning the QR code to the right.



Outdoors for All

Your support is empowering both youth and seniors to engage in outdoor learning through a working relationship with the Bloomsburg YMCA. The Seniors of the Bloomsburg Area YMCA & N4Cs met at the Hickory Run State Park Visitors Center and were introduced to the park and its history with a short PowerPoint that included information such as the 16,000 acres and 40 miles of hiking that Hickory Run has to offer, and the park's origins dating all the way back to the Civilian Conservation Corps era in the 1930s. The group then followed park staff to the Boulder Field for an interpretive presentation learning interesting facts such as how the Boulder Field was created about 20,000 years ago as Pennsylvania's last Ice Age glacier began to melt, and how some of the rocks span up to 26 feet in length!



Wilderness Wheels

Your donations of funds to the PPFF Transportation Scholarship Fund support students from the Susquehanna Township Hiking Club to take their first overnight camping trip to Worlds End State Park. For many of the attendees, this was their first state park camping experience!



Memorial or Honorary Gifts

You can honor the memory of a special person or joyous occasion while supporting PPFF's work in conservation, recreation, education, and volunteerism in our state parks and forests.

Download a form at www.PAParksAndForests.org/support/ways-to-give



Leave No Trace Award

We are proud to announce being a 2023 Leave No Trace Award Recipient. According to the Leave No Trace (LNT) website ([LNT.org/leave-no-trace-awards/](https://lnt.org/leave-no-trace-awards/)), “The Leave No Trace Awards honor individuals, agencies, businesses, and organizations who are dedicated to furthering the [LNT] mission. Through these awards, we celebrate the members of our community who go above and beyond for the Leave No Trace movement and inspire others to do the same.”

“Through a years-long community partnership, the PA Parks and Forests Foundation has worked to include Leave No Trace in all their efforts. This includes utilizing Bigfoot’s Playbook in events with over 3,000 Scouts and implementing Leave No Trace into their Chapter partnerships. “By becoming a Leave No Trace partner, and sharing this partnership with our 47 Friends Groups, we can not only reduce human impacts on our public lands but also help keep visitors and users safer.”

‘Leap In’ to the 2024 Through the Seasons Photo Contest!

Our categories for 2024 are related to PPFF’s salute to the Leap Year. We’re encouraging our photographers (and everyone) to celebrate the places and experiences that bring an immersive – or new – experience.

- Awe
- Beyond the Edge
- ‘Leap In’ to New Experiences
- ‘Leap In’ to the Lesser Known
- ‘Leap In’ to Volunteerism
- Young Photographers (ages 12 to 17)



The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers alike. All photos must be taken in a Pennsylvania state park or forest. The submission deadline is September 30, 2024. For full contest details, please visit PAParksAndForests.org or scan the QR code above.



Bring Your Voice

PPFF has been active in Harrisburg and around Penn's Woods on behalf of its members and volunteers, and on behalf of the state parks and state forests that are at the core of our mission.

We want to thank everyone who lent their expertise and/or their voice to the concerns of the proposed U.S. Air Force and National Guard Bureau proposal to establish the Duke Low Military Operations Area (MOA) over the Pennsylvania Wilds. PPFF was one of many partners who expressed concern regarding this proposal. We recently learned that the proposal was rescinded.

The Foundation expressed concern regarding several bills that would expand Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania's state parks and forests. Our concerns stem from potential user conflicts, the number of potential Sundays that could be impacted, and the lack of input from the public. The Foundation encouraged a review of the proposal as well as suggestions for preserving and expanding the tradition of hunting in Pennsylvania. PPFF has actively worked to improve habitat for game species and provide access for hunters and anglers, as well as educate on the opportunities available in Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

We continue to work in concert with other organizations on legislation to provide limited liability reforms for volunteers who do so much for parks, forests, trails and other public assets across the Commonwealth.

Our focus for the next month (or possibly more) will be on the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The proposed budget supports DCNR's outdoor recreation and conservation initiatives and includes \$8.5 million for state park and forest trails and \$5 million to expand the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps. Some of this funding includes staff to provide needed human-power to improve outdoor recreational amenities in Pennsylvania.

A recent poll found that the investment in trails has solid support among the voters of Pennsylvania (see infographic). Not surprisingly, both the poll and preliminary data from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan show that walking/running and hiking/backpacking were the top outdoor pursuits. We also know that others enjoy trails—equestrians, mountain bikers, bird and wildlife watchers, hunters and anglers. The investment in trails would not only provide more and improved recreational opportunities, but trails can connect communities to parks and open space, and result in increased property values for homeowners and towns.

Keep an eye on the PPFF website for action alerts related to the budget.

Healthy Lands Week

Healthy Lands Week is a statewide initiative to strengthen volunteer activities and raise awareness of stewardship of public lands. Through clean-up and beautification events, invasive species removal and maintenance projects, volunteer recognition, educational programs, and other initiatives, it is an annual "rallying cry" for public stewardship of Pennsylvania's cultural and natural assets.

If you are an organization hosting an event between September 23 and October 6th, join the movement by adding your event to the Healthy Lands Week website at PaHealthyLandsWeek.org.

Looking to participate in an event?
Keep your eye on the website for activities near you!



Strong Bipartisan Majorities Believe Investments in Trail Improvements Are Important to Quality of Life and Economic Development in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation commissioned Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc., to conduct a scientific statewide poll with Pennsylvania voters to assess their overall opinions and attitudes regarding investments in trails [including expansion of trails] in Pennsylvania state parks and forests. A few key highlights follow.



81%

of Pennsylvania likely voters say investments in trail improvements, including expansion of new trails in state parks and forests, is important to both quality of life and economic development in Pennsylvania.

24% say investments in trails are “**very**” important.

57% believe they are “**somewhat**” important.

84%

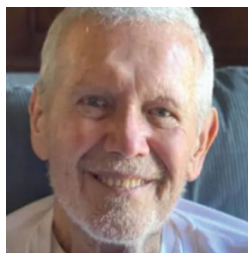
Who consider themselves outdoor enthusiasts, say these improvements are either “**somewhat**” or “**very**” important.

Moreover, the percentage who believes investments in trail improvements are important is broad based, bipartisan and includes strong majorities of voters in most key cohorts of the population.

We Will Miss

Michael Brennan 8/1/1939—4/17/2024

Mike served as Park Superintendent at Little Buffalo for 35 years. It was during his time at Little Buffalo, that Shoaff's Mill was restored to working condition. Also, Clay's Covered Bridge was relocated during Mike's tenure as Holman Lake was created.



Stephen Farrell 3/4/1950—4/23/2024

Steve began his career with DCNR in 1970 and worked there until retirement in 2004. Along the way he helped to establish the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps, then became a Park Manager at the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon from 1986 until 1999, before retiring as Manager of the Cook Forest and Clear Creek Complex.



Michael Schultz 8/12/1931—5/16/2024

CCC historian Dr. Michael Schultz could always be counted on to share his research and expertise on the CCC; he authored several books about the "Boys." His *From the Forest to the Battlefield* was available for a time from our online store. It focused on the 40 CCC Boys who went on to win the Congressional Medal of Honor for service in World War II.



Ed Charles 9/25/1942—5/5/2024

Ed was one of the conservation heroes featured on the PA Conservation Heritage website where you can read much more about him. His work in education and conservation especially at Mechanicsburg Area School District Trails & Trees Environmental Center, which includes a "heritage forest" among its features, made him much loved. (I have two pictures in the Drive; pick one!)



Jack Keith 7/15/1943—9/25/2020

We learned only recently of the 2020 passing of Col. John F. "Jack" Keith, PPFF's first President, in Chattanooga, TN. He was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Jack (shown here on the left with then Secretary of DCNR Michael DiBerardinis and PPFF Board Chair Tom Norris from the second issue of the "Penn's Stewards" newsletter in summer 2003) came to the Foundation in 2002 and immediately set about helping to establish friends groups. Quite a few of them are still a part of the PPFF family!



Plan Ahead! Continue the legacy of conservation of our state parks and forests for future generations through a bequest or life income gift to PPFF.

Did You Know? PPFF is able to accept your TAX DEDUCTIBLE donations of stock to support our work and/or projects in state parks and forests.

For more information visit www.PAParksAndForests.org

Friends in Action

Friends of Ridley Creek

High on the to-do list for many of our Friends is upgrades or installation of a park playground. The Friends of Ridley Creek began their quest in 2023 with an eye toward installing the popular swings and slides combo. Then Park Manager Lexi suggested they consider a “sensory playground” instead. This innovative style consists of panels that invite young children, for example, to hunt for treasure, listen for natural sounds, and solve some motion puzzles. Fast forward to a cold and rainy day in March when the cleared and graded site at Picnic Area 8 became a hive of equipment installation activity. A festive ribbon-cutting followed in April; all it needs now is the laughter of visitors.



Cherry Springs Dark Sky Association

The Dark Sky members have instituted a Dark Sky Ambassadors program for the night sky events. Look for these light blue vests when you visit the viewing field and they can direct you on where to go and where to look (UP!) to best enjoy your visit.



Photo Credit: Marci Mowery

Friends of Michaux

You know what they say about “all work and no play.” The Friends of Michaux do indeed work hard but they also know that a 5th birthday is the perfect time for a celebration. A silent auction, good food, refreshing adult beverages – and a snowy evening – combined to make for a great party. Congratulations to the FOM on this wonderful milestone!



Friends of Caledonia

It always seems that chapters who aren't working on playgrounds are working on bridges! It is pretty amazing the amount of expertise and skill that these Friends volunteers demonstrate on complex projects like this new bridge on the Midland Trail.



Friends of Weiser-Roaring Creek

National Bike Month (May) kicked off with a Welcome to Weiser event hosted by the Friends of the Roaring Creek Tract. It is reported that the rain held off long enough to introduce a lot of new folks to the riding opportunities available in the Forest.



Friends of Lyman Run

It was tough digging through limestone and gravel but the first of the Friends' Little Free Libraries has been installed at the Daggett Campground. The other one will go in the Lower Campground as soon as schedules permit.



Photo Credit: Maxine Harrison

List of Friends

Cherry Springs Dark Sky Association
 Friends of Beltzville
 Friends of Big Pocono
 Friends of Black Moshannon
 Friends of Buchanan
 Friends of Caledonia
 Friends of Canoe Creek
 Friends of Colonel Denning
 Friends of Cook Forest
 Friends of Cowans Gap
 Friends of Davis Hollow Cabin
 Friends of Goddard
 Friends of Greenwood Furnace
 Friends of Kings Gap
 Friends of Laurel Hill
 Friends of Little Buffalo
 Friends of Lyman Run
 Friends of Michaux
 Friends of Milton
 Friends of Mont Alto
 Friends of Mount Pisgah
 Friends of Nockamixon
 Friends of Nolde Forest
 Friends of Oil Creek
 Friends of Ole Bull
 Friends of Parker Dam
 Friends of Pinchot
 Friends of Pine Grove Furnace
 Friends of Prince Gallitzin
 Friends of RB Winter
 Friends of Ridley Creek State Park
 Friends of Ryerson Station
 Friends of Shawnee & Blue Knob
 Friends of State Line Serpentine Barrens
 Friends of Trough Creek & Warriors Path
 Friends of Tuscarora & Locust Lake
 Friends of Varden Conservation Area
 Friends of Weiser - Haldeman/Greenland
 Friends of Weiser - Roaring Creek
 Friends of White Clay Creek
 Friends of Worlds End
 Friends of Yellow Creek
 Lackawanna State Park Trail Care Crew

New State Park Patches

available now

in the PPFF online store



You Made it Happen

Blogs Exploring Untold History

Like history? Interns at the Foundation have been writing blogs about the people and places shaping conservation in Pennsylvania. Stories include an exploration of the Underground Railroad, the preservation of Harrisburg's Midland Cemetery, and the work of ornithologist Keith Richards to popularize bird-watching and conservation to young people of color in Philadelphia while also addressing the impacts of cities on bird migration. All can be found in the news section of the PAParksAndForests.org website.



Trees Provide Life

We continue to plant trees with funds raised from New Trail Brewing's Replenish IPA and the participation of virtual runners in the Bob Ross Happy Little 5K. The most recent tree recipient was Chapman State Park, where trees lost to age, storms, and disease were replaced. Nine other parks are currently slated to receive trees this year.



Photo Credit: Marci Mowery

Trail Maintenance and Passage Made Easier

Your support, and a grant from the Stackpole Hall Foundation, makes trail maintenance in the Moshannon Forest District easier. A new trail mower was purchased, along with lumber to replace footbridges. From Forester Zachery: "I wanted to write you a quick note and thank you on behalf of Moshannon State Forest for the 2023 Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation grant money. The lumber and hardware for footbridges and boardwalks and the DR Mower have been purchased. The DR Mower has even made its maiden voyage on the trails! The materials and equipment will be put to good use and will result in better enjoyment of the state forest by all users."



Photo Credit: DCNR

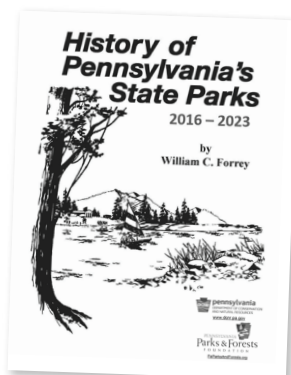
Shaping the Future of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps

With support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, leaders from a variety of backgrounds—education, green jobs, youth employment programs, state parks and forests, and conservation, to name a few—have been providing their input into a strategic planning process for the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps. The plan, which is set to be released later this summer, will guide the program for the next 3-5 years.

You Made it Happen

History of Pennsylvania State Parks

When former state park director and PPFF founding board member Bill Forrey reached out to PPFF to work in partnership to complete the most recent installment of the now three-part series on state park history, we jumped at the chance. The most recent book, which covers 2016-2023, is available on the PAConservationHeritage.org website under resources/articles.



National Fuels Days of Doing

Two parks and one forest district partner joined with PPFF to host National Fuel employees as part of National Fuel's Days of Doing initiative. At Goddard State Park volunteers planted trees and removed invasive vegetation in day use areas. On the second day, they joined with the PA Outdoor Corps, PA Fish and Boat Commission, and Friends of Goddard to build lake habitat structures for Lake Wilhelm.

At Moraine, National Fuel volunteers assisted with trail maintenance on the Sunken Garden Trail on the south shore of Moraine. The second day they worked with Pittsburgh Flying Disc to spread gravel on trails and perform a general clean up of the disc golf course on the park's North Shore.



Photo Credit: DCNR



Isaac's Deli

PPFF was excited to work with Isaac's Deli, with over a dozen locations across the South Central PA Region, to coordinate a Corporate Volunteer Day at Kings Gap Environmental Education Center. The Isaac's Deli team dove into the muddy task of relocating and clearing rocks for trail maintenance.



Photo Credit: Tasha Ferris

Problem Solving at its Finest

You may recall that PPFF is a fan of the value of play—which helps children learn social and problem solving skills, boosts creativity, and reduces stress. With support from the Franklin County Commissioners and assistance from the Friends of Mont Alto, PPFF was able to place a new playground at the state's oldest state park still in the system.



Photo Credit: DCNR

Out and About Celebrating Earth Day

Attending festivals and events is just one tool for educating attendees on the value of spending time outdoors and in being stewards of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests. During the months of April and early May, PPFF staff and interns reached over 1200 people during Earth Day and Health Fair events.



Photo Credit: Tasha Ferris



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**THANK
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to all who participated
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For PA tree-planting efforts



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