

# Conservation Committee Report

Volume 24 Issue 8

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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## The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

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## DEP Submits Final Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Watershed Plan with New State Funds Supporting Partners' Progress

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) submitted the [final state Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan](#) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It includes significant new funding from the 2022-23 state budget to support and accelerate the progress partners

are making on water quality improvement.

“This well-grounded plan reflects and advances the extraordinary actions to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution launched by local partners across Pennsylvania’s share of the watershed during the Wolf Administration,” said DEP

Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh.

[Evaluating the previous version of the plan](#), EPA highlighted the need for more state funding to enable farmers to modernize to best management practice

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## DEP Assesses \$100,000 Civil Penalty for Waste Management Violations in Armstrong County

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that it has executed a [consent order and agreement \(COA\)](#) with Harsco Corporation (Harsco) for violations of the Solid [Waste Management](#)

Act that occurred from 2010 to 2018. DEP assessed and collected a \$100,000 civil penalty, and the company has agreed to corrective actions.

At its facility in Butler County, Harsco processes metal alloy slag generated by the production of

steel to recover metal for reuse by steel producers. This process generates residual aggregate, which Pennsylvania regulations classify as a residual waste. While this material has beneficial uses

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## DEP Submits Final Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Watershed Plan with New State Funds Supporting Partners' Progress (continued)

es (BMPs) that reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution in streams, rivers, and lakes.

The state budget provides \$320 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to the Commonwealth Financing Authority to enable municipalities statewide to carry out water and sewage treatment projects. It provides \$220 million in ARPA funding for a new Pennsylvania Clean Streams Fund.

The Pennsylvania Clean Streams Fund will establish a new Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program to help farmers implement water quality best management practices (BMPs). The Clean Streams Fund will also enable DEP to reinvigorate [the Act 167 Stormwater Management Planning Program](#) to provide grants to municipalities to plan and carry out stormwater runoff reduction measures. The fund will support DEP's abandoned mine drainage reclamation, the Department of Agriculture's [assistance to farmers for development and implementation](#) of nutrient management plans, and urban tree planting by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

All these initiatives will help improve the health of Pennsylvania streams and rivers, preserve topsoil and farm viability, lessen flooding in fields and neighborhoods, and support outdoor recreation and tourism and their considerable related economies.

"The significant budget funding is a tremendous boost to Pennsylvanians who are working to reduce water pollution and all who enjoy the benefits of healthy waters," said Ziadeh. "We hope future administrations will sustain this unprecedented momentum."

In addition to including the new state funding, the final Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan reinforces that [Countywide Action Plans](#) are the keystone of Pennsylvania's pollutant reduction strategy, achieving the largest nitrogen reduction in the plan: 16.8 million pounds.

The final plan also quantifies nutrient and sediment pollution reductions attained by several state programs that, until now, have not been fully counted. More than 15 million pounds

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## DEP Submits Final Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Watershed Plan with New State Funds Supporting Partners' Progress (continued)

of sediment, 611,000 pounds of nitrogen, and 19,000 pounds of phosphorus have been removed from local waters through the [DEP Nutrient Credit Trading Program](#); Chapter 105 construction-related wetland restoration, establishment, or preservation; [industrial and construction stormwater management](#); the [DEP Act 537 Sewage Facilities Program](#); [municipal waste landfills](#); and [land recycling](#).

The final plan continues to call for EPA computer modeling of bay pollution levels to be updated to include BMPs that Pennsylvania landowners put in place over 10 years ago and BMPs that have been installed in Pennsylvania on a geographic scale larger than what the model currently accommodates.

Monitoring and other data show water quality improving in Pennsylvania. [The U.S. Geological Survey 2020 Nutrient Report](#) shows long-term improving trends on nutrient levels in the Susquehanna and Potomac river basins.

[Recent EPA research on nutrient-use efficiency](#) over time shows Pennsylvania's nutrient use is moving in a positive direction: Levels of agricultural surplus nutrients are decreasing, as farmers are applying fertilizer more effectively and efficiently.

[The draft 2022 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Report](#) shows 77 stream miles in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed restored to standards for drinking water, aquatic life, fish consumption, or recreation. This includes 32 miles of aquatic life use restoration in the Bennett Branch Sinnemahoning Creek, a tributary to the West Branch Susquehanna River, which is the largest recorded acid mine drainage restoration in Pennsylvania history.

Like the other jurisdictions in the watershed — New York, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia — Pennsylvania committed to having programs and practices in place to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution levels by 2025. Pennsylvania committed to reduce nitrogen by 32.5 million pounds and phosphorus by 0.85 million pounds.

Under the Wolf Administration, Pennsylvania has made unprecedented progress. The Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Plan reports nitrogen reduced by 6.77 million pounds and phosphorus by 300,000 pounds as of 2020.

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## **DEP Submits Final Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Watershed Plan with New State Funds Supporting Partners' Progress (continued)**

Nutrient pollution and eroded sediment enter streams, rivers, and lakes from dispersed human actions on the land, such as using too much fertilizer, plowing and tilling farm fields, stripping away trees and vegetation, and expanding concrete and pavement.

[Pennsylvania takes a Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities](#) approach to improving the health of the watershed, inviting county teams to take control of local water quality improvement, with state and other partners providing as much data, technical assistance, funding, and other support as possible. State partners encourage and equip counties to develop strategies and determine project sites and types that will benefit their communities and farmers, municipalities, businesses, and other landowners, while restoring the environment.

To follow Pennsylvania's progress in the watershed, subscribe to the [Healthy Waters monthly newsletter](#).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **DEP Assesses \$100,000 Civil Penalty for Waste Management Violations in Armstrong County (continued)**

under specific conditions (such as application rates, constituent levels, and defined uses), these activities must be approved by DEP and the conditions followed by the user of the material. Otherwise, the residual aggregate must be handled as residual waste.

When the violations occurred, Harsco was approved for coverage under a [WMGR047 general permit](#) that allowed the material to be applied to the ground in appropriate engineered lifts, compacted after placement, and then covered with soil, concrete, or asphalt.

DEP found that during an approximately eight-year span, Harsco violated state law and its permit when it transported and deposited approximately 375,618 tons of residual aggregate material on land owned by Steven W. Shaffer in East Franklin and Washington Townships, Armstrong County. The property had previously been strip-mined in the 1940s but never restored.

Shaffer, with Harsco's knowledge, used the material to fill open pits in order to level an area and bring the area to grade without following the requirements in the general permit concerning placement, compaction, application of cover material, or prompt commencement of construction activities.

During an inspection in response to a complaint, a DEP inspector observed several violations for mishandling of waste. Through its investigation, DEP representatives conducted several subsequent inspections and observed large piles of residual aggregate that had been dumped on the Shaffer property, some of which were near a wetland and showed signs of erosion.

Under this COA, Harsco is required to remediate the site under [Pennsylvania's Land Recycling Program](#) (Act 2 of 1995), apply for and conduct work under the necessary environmental permits, and remediate wetland areas to address the continuing threat of pollution. Harsco must also pay a civil penalty of \$100,000 to the Solid Waste Abatement Fund.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **DEP Demonstrates Oil Recovery System that Reduces Pollution to the Susquehanna River**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) visited the Berwick Seep Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA) project site in Columbia County today to view a recently installed oil recovery system and discuss how the HSCA program mitigates the release of contaminants into the Susquehanna River.

DEP's Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program and the project contractor, Amantum, demonstrated the system components, discussed the volume of oil collected, answered questions about the oil recovery system and the HSCA project, and viewed the area where oil has been seeping into the Susquehanna River.

"This HSCA-funded project is now successfully addressing a longstanding issue of concern to the Berwick community," said DEP's Northcentral Acting Regional Director Jared Dressler. "DEP is grateful to the multiple property owners where the investigation has taken place and the Borough of Berwick for their coordination and cooperation through a complex and challenging process to make this accomplishment possible."

The oil recovery system consists of three pump-on-demand (POD) skimmer systems that reduce the amount of oil entering the Susquehanna River by drawing in groundwater containing an oily layer of floating petroleum product. The oil is separated into a drum where it is stored until taken offsite for proper disposal.

"This is an important interim step as DEP continues our investigation, with the ultimate goal to remediate the source or sources of the contamination," said Cheryl Sinclair, environmental group manager with DEP's Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields Program.

A representative from the Berwick Industrial Development Association (BIDA) also observed the demonstration. A significant portion of the HSCA investigation took place within BIDA's Berwick Industrial Park.

DEP first received a report in 2004 of an unidentified liquid leaking into the Susquehanna River, causing an oily sheen. Many reports of sheen, bubbles, and odors coming from the river bank have followed intermittently over the years.

## **DEP Demonstrates Oil Recovery System that Reduces Pollution to the Susquehanna River**

**(continued)**

The Hazardous Site Cleanup Fund (HSCF) has been utilized in multiple phases to attempt to identify the source or sources of the petroleum product, including the use of groundwater monitoring wells. The scope of the investigation encompasses numerous historical industrial activities and underground storage tanks in the adjacent area.

The HSCF provides funding for DEP to carry out investigation, cleanup, and monitoring activities to address the release of hazardous substances from contaminated sites to the environment. In many cases, the HSCF allows DEP to address legacy contamination resulting from past industrial activity where there is no longer a viable responsible party to fund cleanup activities.

More information about the HSCA Program is available at [www.dep.pa.gov/HSCA](http://www.dep.pa.gov/HSCA).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## DEP Notices Draft Air Quality Plan Approval for Leachate Evaporation System at Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill

### DEP to Hold Two Public Hearings and a Public Comment Until September 12, 2022

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) [has published](#) a draft air quality plan approval [65-00767C] to allow the construction and initial temporary operation of a leachate evaporation system at Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill, located in Rostraver Township, Westmoreland County. DEP is accepting public comments until September 12, 2022, and will hold two public hearings, one in-person hearing and one virtual, to collect testimony from the public on the draft air quality plan approval.

Each hearing will begin at 6:00 PM. The dates and locations are as follows:

Wednesday, August 31, 2022 at Rostraver Central Fire Department, 1100 Fells Church Road, Rostraver Township, PA 15012

Thursday, September 1, 2022 held virtually via the Webex platform

Air quality plan approval is required prior to the start of construction of an air contamination source and may allow for temporary operation. A plan approval is not the same as an operating permit, which is required for long-term operation. Publication of a draft air quality plan approval and notice of intent signals that DEP has performed its evaluation of the application and begins the regulatory public participation process. The draft air quality plan approval and more information is available on the DEP's community information webpage for Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill at [www.dep.pa.gov/WSL](http://www.dep.pa.gov/WSL).

Individuals who wish to observe or present testimony at either hearing are asked to register in advance by contacting DEP's Southwest Community Relations Coordinator Lauren Fraley at [lfraley@pa.gov](mailto:lfraley@pa.gov) or 412-442-4203. Registration for the hearing will be taken through 4:00 PM the day before each hearing. Testimony will be limited to three minutes for DEP to receive as many comments as possible. Time may not be relinquished or shared, and organizations are asked to designate one speaker on its behalf.

To accommodate all interested parties, the virtual hearing will be accessible both by internet and phone. Those wishing to participate in the virtual hearing will receive the link and instruc-



## **DEP Notices Draft Air Quality Plan Approval for Leachate Evaporation System at Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill (continued)**

tions for how to join via e-mail. Video demonstrations and screen sharing by testifiers will not be permitted during the virtual hearing.

All comments, whether provided orally at a hearing or in writing, carry equal weight and consideration before DEP. All presenters should provide at least one copy of their written comments and exhibits for submission to the DEP either at the in-person hearing or via email to the email account below following the virtual hearing. DEP will accept written comments on the draft air quality plan approval through close of business on September 12, 2022. Comments on the applications can be e-mailed to [RA-EPSWROAIRPERMNOTE@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EPSWROAIRPERMNOTE@pa.gov) or mailed to the DEP's Southwest Regional Office, Air Quality Program, 400 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 and should contain the name, address, email, and telephone number of the person submitting the comments, identification of the proposed Plan Approval (PA-65-00767C), and a concise statement and the relevant facts upon which the comments are based.

If you are a person with a disability wishing to attend either hearing and require an auxiliary aid, service or other accommodation to participate in the proceedings, please contact Lauren Fraley to discuss how DEP may accommodate your needs. If necessary, you may use the Pennsylvania Hamilton Relay Service by calling (800) 654-5984 (TDD Users) or (800) 654-5988 (Voice users) and request that your call be relayed to Lauren Fraley at 412-442-4203.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## LOOK WHAT'S ON THE CONSERVATION HORIZON

### 15 things biodiversity protectors are watching out for in 2022

It's no secret that the diversity of life around us is plummeting fast. In 2020 alone, scientists declared [more than 100 species to be extinct](#). And that's bad news not only for the creatures themselves, but for those of us (that would be all of us) who rely on them for food, to produce oxygen, to hold soil in place, to cleanse water, to beautify our world and so much more. According to the World Economic Forum, nature plays a key role in generating more than half of global GDP.

So, what can we do to reduce future harm? One big thing is to identify emerging threats and opportunities to protect biodiversity and proactively shape policies and actions to prevent harm early on. To this end, a group of scientists and conservation practitioners led by William Sutherland, professor of conservation biology at the University of Cambridge, each year creates and publishes a "[horizon scan](#)" of global trends with impacts for biodiversity. Read on for this year's top picks, and see our coverage of previous years' horizon scans [here](#) or at the bottom of this page.

#### Floating Solar

One of the big challenges for solar power is finding a place to put large arrays of photovoltaic panels. In recent years the notion of siting them on water rather than land has taken off dramatically, with more than 300 installations in place around the world today. The approach offers a number of benefits to biodiversity. For one, it saves land resources that might otherwise be covered with solar panels. It can reduce algal blooms on waterways. It can reduce the demand for other habitat-harming energy sources such as hydropower, and the evaporative cooling water offers makes the panels more efficient. All that said, still to be determined are the potential implications — positive and negative — for aquatic and marine ecosystems.

#### Energy Through the Air

Powerlines and the poles and towers that hold them are staples of civilization. Imagine being able to replace them with devices that transmit electricity through the air instead of along wires? That vision is closer to becoming reality, thanks to innovations in materials and in technologies that create and direct beams of energy — think wireless smartphone charging writ large. Deployment of long-distance wireless energy infrastructure could reduce the harms that conventional hardware pose to wildlife, such as collision risks for birds and bats. On the downside, it could also stimulate energy use and make it easier to live in remote locations, hastening the destruction or disruption of our planet's few remaining untrammelled areas.

#### Soaring Satellites

Think human impacts on biodiversity are limited to the biosphere? Think again. More than 2,000 communications satellites currently orbit our planet, and with current plans, the total could reach 100,000 in the next 10 years. The process of deploying and decommissioning

## LOOK WHAT'S ON THE CONSERVATION HORIZON (continued)

these extraplanetary objects can disrupt the stratospheric ozone layer; deposit aluminum in, and otherwise modify the chemical composition of, the upper atmosphere; and alters Earth's albedo — its ability to reflect sunlight. These alterations in turn affect the amount and type of radiation that hits the surface of our planet. As satellite deployment soars, implications potentially loom large for climate, exposure to ultraviolet light and other conditions that affect the well-being of living things.

### Nitrogen Boom?

The pursuit of alternative transportation fuels has taken many twists and turns, all with ancillary costs as well as benefits. Recent attention has turned to ammonia as a fuel for shipping. It can power fuel cells or engines. It has almost doubled the energy density of hydrogen, and poses fewer issues related to storage and transporting fuel to where it's needed. The problem? Ammonia takes lots of energy to produce and can cause environmental harm if not burned completely. As interest in ammonia fuel grows, the authors warn against false claims of it being a "[zero carbon](#)" fuel and potential downsides, such as increased air pollution, that might accrue from its use.

### Airborne DNA Detection

Increasingly sophisticated tools for detecting and identifying DNA are able to pinpoint the presence — or even past presence — of all kinds of organisms from bits of their genetic material floating through the air. This capability opens the door to a wide range of conservation-assisting endeavors, from characterizing the members of a particular ecological community, to locating rare or endangered species, to tracking the expansion of the range of invasive organisms, to nailing perpetrators of illegal wildlife trade. So-called "eDNA" biomonitoring is already in use for detecting the presence of microorganisms, plants and fungi, and it appears to be feasible for tracking some animals as well. As the technology expands, so likely will the applications to efforts to understand and protect biodiversity.

### Refrigerant Redux

Widespread efforts have taken place in recent decades to reduce use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in air conditioners, refrigerators and other cooling systems due to their capacity to contribute to global warming. Unfortunately, one of the top kinds of replacement chemicals, hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs) appear to have plenty of environmental issues of their own. As they decompose, HFOs form chemicals that pollute water and air. Some produce potent greenhouse gases. Environmental contamination with this long-lasting HFC substitute appears to be on the rise. Unless regulation related to the deployment and decommissioning of refrigerants quickly and dramatically improves, we risk further contributing to climate change with a shift in practice intended to help reduce its risks.

### Volcanoes, Meet Cement

Production of clinker, a key ingredient of cement, is bad for the climate and bad for biodiversity. It requires mining limestone, harming habitat for living things. And the process of turning lime-

## LOOK WHAT'S ON THE CONSERVATION HORIZON (continued)

stone into clinker releases huge amounts of planet-warming carbon dioxide — both from the energy required to heat it up, and from the carbon dioxide limestone releases in the process. [Cement production](#) already is responsible for some 8% of global carbon dioxide emissions, and demand for cement is expected to grow. Using volcanic material in place of limestone could reduce greenhouse gas impact and would have additional benefit of possibly improving the ability of cement resist cracking. However, the authors write, we need to weight the environmental costs of mining and transporting volcanic material against the benefits of reducing limestone use.

### Insecticide Whack-a-Mole

Neonicotinoids are a class of chemicals that kill insects by disabling their nervous systems. Used to control pests in agriculture, they have come under fire in recent years for threatening populations of bees and other desirable insects. As neonicotinoids have been banned in the European Union and elsewhere, other, similar-acting insecticides have emerged. These substitutes, including sulfoxaflor and flupyradifurone, appear also to harm bees and some other desirable insect species, potentially posing new threats to insect biodiversity.

### Spreading Without Sex

Some insects and other invertebrates have evolved a novel solution to their “can’t find a date” problem: They can reproduce without sex. The process, known as parthenogenesis, allows them to make more of their species when mates are scarce or absent. It also dramatically enhances their ability to gain a foothold in new territory if accidentally introduced there. At least one invertebrate, the marbled crayfish, evolved the ability to reproduce asexually in captivity and is now spreading rapidly across Europe, Africa and Asia, carrying with it disease that harms native species. As we cultivate other invertebrates for food or hobbies, we raise the risk that something similar might happen with other species.

### Plant-Forward Food

Animal agriculture is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, and “plant-forward” diets are gaining increased attention as a way to not only be healthier ourselves but to help our planet be healthier as well. China, for one, is taking it a step further: Rather than simply touting meals heavy on fruits and veggies, it has committed to cut its citizens’ meat consumption in half by 2030. Media campaigns and meat bans in some settings already have contributed to a decline in meat consumption, and the initiative has boosted innovations around [synthetic meats](#), with the country’s plant-based meat industry expected to grow 20–25% per year in the foreseeable future.

### All Together Now

Volunteer groups, nonprofit organizations, small-town governments and other local entities can be a valuable source of support for people living in rural areas. It turns out they can be a valuable source of support for other living things, too. Globally, the number of social institutions has

## LOOK WHAT'S ON THE CONSERVATION HORIZON (continued)

grown from half a million in 2000 to 8.5 million in 2020, providing support for sustainable management of some 300 million hectares (700 million acres) of forests, farmland and waterways. If this trend continues, it bodes well for biodiversity conservation as more lands are managed in ways that keep them — and the plants and animals that inhabit them — thriving.

### Wetland Attitude Adjustment

The East Asian–Australasian Flyway, which extends along the eastern coast of Asia and Australia through New Zealand, is one of the top hot spots in the world for diversity and sheer numbers of waterfowl and other water-loving birds, including critically endangered species. With massive development underway in China — one of the top wetland-containing nations in the world — it's also among the most threatened: In the past decade, many wetland areas have been transformed into farmland and cities. Recently, however, several changes are starting to shine an optimistic light. The United Nations has provided a new level of protection to highly significant wetlands in Korea and China by adding them to its roster of World Heritage Sites. And China itself has begun investing in protecting key wetlands. If this trend continues and other countries follow suit, it could spell welcome relief for water birds throughout much of eastern Asia and the western Pacific.

### Mangrove Revival

The mangrove forests that coat coastlines in the tropics and subtropics harbor abundant plant and animal species that thrive at the intersection of land and sea. In past decades development has decimated many, destroying the biodiversity-nurturing and carbon-sequestering services they provide. But in recent years that tide has turned. Conservationists' efforts to restore and preserve these rich habitats have helped reduce loss. In addition, these wetlands are also the accidental beneficiaries of other ecosystem changes: As inland forests are cut, erosion moves soil toward the coast where it can nurture new mangroves, and climate change is creating more of the warm habitat they need. Together, these changes have reduced mangrove loss to near zero, though local areas of depletion continue.

### Tide Zone Tribulations

Intertidal zones — the portions of the ocean's coast across which water advances and recedes with the tides — experience daily fluctuations in temperature, water level, salinity, physical disruption and predation. Now, they are seeing another variable: heat waves. Record temperatures in Pacific Northwest in June 2021 left mussels, clams, oysters, barnacles, sea stars, rockweed and more dead along thousands of miles of coastline. And that's not all. Climate change threatens to change salinity of these complex and fragile ecosystems as well, as precipitation patterns change and polar ice melts. If this keeps up we'll have more than a stinky mess: The complex ecosystems and the services they provide — stabilizing coasts, providing food, providing habitat, protecting water quality — will be fried, too.

### Treasure — and Trouble? — Beneath the Seas

## LOOK WHAT'S ON THE CONSERVATION HORIZON (continued)

The seabed beneath Earth's oceans harbors abundant bounties of precious metals and other mineable materials. New technologies have now made it possible to mine such materials, and one country, Nauru, recently announced plans to permit [deep-sea mining](#). This announcement means that the International Seabed Authority must either set up specific ocean mining regulations or commit to reviewing applications under established, more general United Nations conventions. Ocean mining may reduce pressure to disrupt land habitat — but it also opens the door to new assaults on unique deep-sea ecosystems and the living things they harbor.

### SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR NONPROFIT JOURNALISM!

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Source: [Mary Hoff](#) Science writer & editor

## DCNR Announces \$1 Million Grant For Spring Garden Street Greenway In Philadelphia

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced a \$1 million grant to the city of Philadelphia to assist in completing the final design for the Spring Garden Street Greenway.

"DCNR is thrilled to join other partners supporting this project, which helps us close one of our Top 10 Trail Gaps and achieves our goal of a trail within 10 minutes of every Pennsylvanian," Dunn said. "This project will serve all Philadelphia residents by providing a safe, walkable/bikeable route across town and connecting all to the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers, the East Coast Greenway, SEPTA stations, businesses, schools and more."

The [Spring Garden Street Greenway](#) is a 2.1-mile walking/biking path that is part of the East Coast Greenway. In Philadelphia the East Coast Greenway crosses Center City via Spring Garden Street on the planned segment. It will link the Schuylkill River Trail to the Delaware River Trail.

"On behalf of the City of Philadelphia, we are thrilled to be a part of this historic collaborative effort for the Spring Garden Street Connector project," said Michael Carroll, Deputy Managing Director of the City of Philadelphia's Office of Transportation, Infrastructure & Sustainability. "The project will ultimately improve safety and accessibility in Philadelphia and get us closer to our Vision Zero goals. I am excited to see this corridor transform into an equitable and environmentally sustainable roadway for all Philadelphians in the near future."

The Spring Garden section is part of greater Philadelphia's Circuit Trails network of more than 800 miles.

Underserved residents of the adjacent Chinatown neighborhood, residents of two large public housing complexes along the corridor as well as senior housing at the Guild House on Spring Garden Street will be able to utilize the greenway to access trails and parks along both the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, including Fairmount Park, Philadelphia's largest park, and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

"The level of collaboration and support at the city, state and federal levels and by a private funder like the William Penn Foundation is testament to the fact that the Spring Garden Street Connector is a project that is vital to a vast cross-section of city residents and organizations – from businesses, to neighborhood associations, to educational institutions – and all who call this city home," said Sarah Stuart Clark, chair of the Circuit Trails Coalition and executive director of the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. "By completing this priority trail gap for both the Circuit Trails and the East Coast Greenway, we help make travel safer whether on foot or on wheels, and we improve access and connectivity across the city, and that's good for everyone."

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## **DCNR Announces \$1 Million Grant For Spring Garden Street Greenway In Philadelphia (continued)**

DCNR's \$1 million commitment leveraged \$2.1 million from the William Penn Foundation, \$1.4 million from the City of Philadelphia and \$500,000 from the PennDOT.

"The William Penn Foundation has supported greenways and trails for many years to connect people to green spaces and to our region's waterways," William Penn Foundation Executive Director Shawn McCaney said. "Our commitment to that important work continues with an investment of more than \$2 million toward this transformative project, which will connect Philadelphia's two beautiful riverfronts, and will do so incorporating green stormwater infrastructure that will help keep those rivers clean for the long term."

"Connecting Philadelphians to green spaces, trails and outdoor recreation is a priority of mine which is why advocating for this funding was so vital to me," state Representative Mary Isaacson (D-175) said. "This historic investment in the district and people I represent is a proud and significant moment for all of us who have been fighting for these transformations for so many years. Closing this trail gap is a step forward for current and future generations who will benefit from its access, and it serves as a catalyst for increased environmental stewardship across our city and Commonwealth."

"Since taking office in 2012, I recognized the importance of the Spring Garden Street Connector for the Circuit Trails and, therefore, am very excited for this announcement!" City Councilperson Mark Squilla said. "We now have the funding needed to connect the Schuylkill River Trail to the Delaware River Trail, and I am grateful for the public private partnership that brought this project to fruition. The long planning process, inclusive of many constituencies, has led to a design for bicyclists and pedestrians to access and recreate safely, in a beautiful environment, for many years to come."

DCNR previously provided \$500,000 toward feasibility studies for the project. All grants are supported by the [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#) through the Keystone Fund, generated from a portion of the real estate transfer tax.

With support for design, the project team anticipates leveraging opportunities to construct the Spring Garden Street Greenway in the next five years.

**Source:** Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)



## Nearly a Million Dollars in Grant Funding Available for Environmental Educational Projects

Live webinar in September on how to apply

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that \$900,000 in grant funding is available for environmental education projects.

[Environmental Education Grants](#) are available to schools, colleges, nonprofit community and environmental organizations, county conservation districts, and businesses.

“This grant supports environmental education projects that engage teachers, youth and residents in actions that help protect Pennsylvania’s abundant natural resources and preserve its beauty,” said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh.

While all education project topics are considered, priority areas are water quality, climate change, and environmental justice. Project examples include tours, demonstrations, and hands-on learning experiences, and workshops on stream monitoring, rain gardens, wetlands, green infrastructure, and other watershed stewardship; solar and other renewable energy, alternative transportation, energy conservation, and other approaches to address climate change; and improving air quality and community and municipal partnerships to address local environmental challenges. For more examples, see the list of [2022 EE Grant Awards](#).

Projects with a local focus may receive up to \$5,000 and regional or statewide initiatives may receive up to \$30,000. Projects that engage students and teachers at three levels, local, state, and national, may be awarded up to \$85,000.

DEP will hold a live webinar on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM regarding this grant funding. Program staff will review the application process, offer tips, and answer questions. The webinar is free, but registration is required. Registration details are forthcoming.

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## **Nearly a Million Dollars in Grant Funding Available for Environmental Educational Projects (continued)**

Electronic applications must be submitted through the Keystone Login (first-time users will need to register.) This grant round has an application deadline of Friday, December 9, 2022, by 4:59 PM. Instructions are available at [Environmental Education Grants](#).

The Environmental Education Grants program was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993, which mandates setting aside 5% of the pollution fines and penalties DEP collects annually for environmental education in Pennsylvania. Since the program began, more than 2,100 projects totaling over \$12 million have been awarded grant funds.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## DCNR Helps Celebrate Completion Of The Northwest River Trail In Lancaster County

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Deputy Secretary Mike Walsh today helped cut the ribbon on the final section of the 14-mile Northwest River Trail that spans five municipalities in Lancaster County.

DCNR supported the project with more than \$3-million in [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#) grants.

"Trails connect places. They connect people to the outdoors. They bring visitors to communities to help keep economies vibrant, and in the case of the Northwest River Trail also connect people to the river," Walsh said. "So, it's a great day when we can celebrate a trail being complete, moving us closer to our goal of a trail within 10 minutes of every Pennsylvanian."

The [Northwest River Trail](#) provides access to the Susquehanna River Water Trail for both walking, pedal, and paddle opportunities. It links the rivertowns and villages of Marietta, Wrightsville, Columbia, Bainbridge, and Falmouth, and provides wayfinding signage to users identifying local businesses in these communities.

Completing the project took decades, and vision, perseverance, and passion on the part of many partners.

"Don't tell us something can't be done. Let's figure how it can be done. And that is what we have done," said Conoy Township Supervisor Stephen Mohr.

Development of the trail has led to significant reinvestment in local businesses and creation of new businesses that support outdoor recreation.

"We started our outfitting business in Columbia because we bought into the vision of local leaders that the river is a resource that should be protected yet capitalized on to bring people to town and expand the economy through ecotourism," said Jim Cox, owner of Chiques Rock Outfitters in Marietta.

The trail follows the route of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and uses some of the original towpath that remains along the corridor. Along the trail are numerous industrial archaeological remains such as abandoned canal locks; the iron furnaces at Chickies Rock; and the old quarry operation at Billmeyer.

The Northwest River Trail is located in the [Susquehanna Riverlands Conservation Landscape](#) and the [Susquehanna National Heritage Area](#). It also lies in the [Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network](#).

Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

## Pennsylvanians Encouraged to Fight the Bite and Protect Themselves from Mosquitoes

Summertime is for swimming pools and lemonade, not for mosquito bites and diseases like West Nile Virus, so the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is encouraging residents to Fight the Bite and protect themselves.

“The best parts of summer aren’t itchy bites and being sick, so we want people to protect themselves from mosquitoes and mosquito-borne illnesses,” said Acting DEP Secretary Ramez Zia-deh. “It doesn’t take much to Fight the Bite and protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes. Common sense and insect repellent can go a long way towards a safe and happy summer.”

One human case of [West Nile Virus \(WNV\) has already been reported](#) in Pennsylvania this year. Symptoms of WNV in humans are typically like those of a mild flu, but the virus can lead to a more serious condition that includes swelling of the brain, muscle convulsions, coma, paralysis, and death. Since DEP first began monitoring for the virus in 2000 there have been 48 fatal cases of West Nile Virus in Pennsylvania.

There are many things people can do to protect themselves from mosquitoes.

- Eliminate standing, stagnant water near your home – bird baths, kiddie pools, and other outdoor decorations can be mosquito breeding grounds if the water sits for a few days.
- Keep gutters clean of debris.
- Wear insect repellent or long sleeves when mosquitoes are active, usually around dawn and dusk.
- Repair window screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Clean up litter in your neighborhood. Just a single cap from a plastic bottle can be home to 300 mosquito eggs.

“Standing water is where mosquitoes breed, and it doesn’t take much for mosquitoes to lay eggs,” said Jennifer Stough, Water Program Specialist for DEP’s Vector Management Program. “Mosquitoes are weak flyers and won’t travel far from where they are born – if there are mosquitoes in your backyard or neighborhood, they are likely laying eggs there as well. If you’re being bitten by mosquitoes, they are 9 times out of 10 coming from your property. Get rid of even small amounts of standing water around your home.”

“It doesn’t take much for several hundred mosquitoes to be born. The small pool of water that collects in a single upturned bottle cap is an incubator for as many as 300 mosquito eggs,” said Stough. “Mosquitoes acquire the virus by biting infected birds and transmit the virus to people through a subsequent bite.”

Use of commonly sold insect repellents, like those using DEET, Picaridin, or other EPA-registered repellants, can also cut down on mosquito bites, and possible exposure to the virus. Long pants and sleeves are also an important way to cut down on possible exposure to mosquitoes.

## **Pennsylvanians Encouraged to Fight the Bite and Protect Themselves from Mosquitoes (continued)**

“With the right precautions it’s possible to be safe and still get all of the physical and mental health benefits that having fun outdoors provides,” Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said.

“Pennsylvanians should take proper precautions when outside and in high-risk areas where mosquitoes tend to congregate such as places with stagnant pools of water,” Acting Secretary of Health and Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson said. “Simple awareness and a few self-protective measures are the best ways to protect yourself and keep your loved ones safe.”

DEP conducts regular surveillance and control to manage mosquito populations around the state. As of July 15, 2022, DEP and county vector programs have detected 68 WNV-infected mosquito pools in 19 counties.

DEP and county partners throughout the state will also conduct routine, localized spraying to control infected adult populations of mosquitoes. These operations are conducted when and where deemed necessary based on recent population survey results.

“Control operations are a strong tool, but they are not a substitute for preventive measures like eliminating standing, stagnant water,” said Stough.

DEP will continue to survey affected communities to monitor mosquito activity and WNV. DEP biologists have initiated a survey of the mosquito population to determine the risk for further human illness. If necessary, adult mosquito populations will be reduced. These efforts will continue through October.

More information on mosquitoes, WNV, and other mosquito-borne diseases can be found at [dep.pa.gov/westnile](https://dep.pa.gov/westnile).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## Wolf Administration Highlights Commitment to Clean Transportation

Strong partnerships and planning will help PA leverage new federal funds

The Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation (PennDOT) and Environmental Protection (DEP) – along with partners from Pittsburgh Region Clean Cities, Sheetz, and PPL – highlighted Pennsylvania’s forward momentum in its work related to electric vehicles (EV), putting the commonwealth in a solid position to maximize new funds available to support EVs through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

“Transportation is changing every day,” said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. “The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has given us a great opportunity, and I’m proud of the progress that we – along with our partners – have made to prepare Pennsylvania for a future filled with electric vehicles.”

As part of the BIL, PennDOT will receive and distribute \$171.5 million in National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) formula funds for EV charging infrastructure over the next five years. Additionally, \$2.5 billion is available in discretionary grant funding. There are more than 31,000 EVs registered in Pennsylvania, nearly triple the roughly 9,700 that were registered in March 2019.

“Pennsylvania has made tremendous progress towards making electric vehicles and EV chargers more accessible to more people,” said DEP Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Joe Adams. “Every EV on the road reduces the amount of air pollution coming from tailpipes, which makes for cleaner air and a healthier environment.”

The BIL requires all state DOTs to submit a state EV infrastructure deployment plan to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) by August 1, 2022. [The Pennsylvania NEVI Plan](#) has been submitted, and it outlines PennDOT’s approach to the strategic deployment of a convenient, reliable, affordable, and equitable EV charging network to support range confidence for Pennsylvanians and visitors over the course of the NEVI Formula Program.

The Pennsylvania NEVI Plan was informed by a [public survey](#) which garnered over 4,400 responses and public comments, which led to the development of an entirely new goal to address environmental benefits and consider multiple transportation modes for electrification. In addition, the feedback received spurred additional consideration for first responder training in EV

## Wolf Administration Highlights Commitment to Clean Transportation (continued)

response, appropriate signage and location identification, ensuring small and diverse businesses are included as potential partners or sites, and ensured early utility coordination.

PennDOT, along with stakeholders, also developed the [EV Mobility Plan](#), which lays out the existing EV infrastructure in PA and makes recommendations on moving forward with a 5-year plan, incorporating the Pennsylvania NEVI Plan as the first phase of development. The plan recommends the installation of at least 5,000 new EV charging ports at 2,000 sites in Pennsylvania by 2028 leveraging public-private partnerships, cost sharing mechanisms, and funding through the BIL.

Additionally, PennDOT – following guidance issued from U.S. DOT – will use the EV [Equity Guiding Principles](#) developed collaboratively with DEP to help the department evaluate EV proposals in accordance with the federal guidance. The principles aim to increase accessibility to the infrastructure and maximize benefits for all Pennsylvanians and fall into five categories:

- Make EVs more affordable;

- Make EV charging more accessible;

- Invest in fleet electrification;

- Invest in traditionally underserved, low-income, persons of color and otherwise vulnerable population areas; and

- Increase EV awareness, education, and technical capacity.

“The transportation sector produces the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.,” said Pittsburgh Region Clean Cities executive director Rick Price. “Considering many of these emissions are sourced from passenger-duty vehicles, driving electric is one of the best ways to combat this issue. This NEVI funding will help Pennsylvanians to drive electric cars almost anywhere in the state.”

The BIL funding supports the commonwealth goal of expanding EV charging along the previously designated [Alternative Fuel Corridors](#) (AFCs) (list) and Interstate lookalikes. Federal AFC criteria was updated earlier this year to require AFC designated corridors to have charging stations no more than 1 mile from an Interstate exit or highway intersection (previously 5 miles) and no more than 50 miles apart.

## Wolf Administration Highlights Commitment to Clean Transportation (continued)

Currently, Pennsylvania has over 1,800 miles of AFCs. Per the guidance from U.S. DOT, any EV charging infrastructure installed with NEVI formula funds shall be located along a designated AFC and meet U.S. DOT minimum standards and requirements. Should PennDOT determine, and U.S. DOT certifies, that the AFCs are fully built out, then Pennsylvania may use funds to build EV charging equipment on any public road or in any publicly accessible location, including but not limited to parking facilities at public buildings, public schools, and parks.

Since 2018 DEP has installed more 1,500 plugs, with another 500 in development, through the [Driving PA Forward program](#). Since July 1, 2015, DEP has awarded 8,384 Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebates, totaling \$10.6 million, to Pennsylvania residents, predominantly for electric vehicles. DEP has awarded grants totaling \$28.7 million to 205 projects by municipalities, businesses, and organizations for alternative fuel vehicles and fueling infrastructure, including a growing number of electric vehicle and charging projects.

To enhance traveler information for the growing number of EV drivers, the state's traveler information system – [511PA](#) – now also includes EV charging station locations as an option on its traffic map. Using data from the [U.S. Department of Energy](#), the map shows locations across the state by connector type, including CCS, J1772, CHAdeMO, Tesla, and NEMA. Currently, there are over 2,800 public charging ports at over 1,200 locations across Pennsylvania.

“Since our founding in 1952, Sheetz has been committed to being a ‘one-stop-shop’ for customers – a promise that has extended to electric vehicle chargers, which are now offered at 90 of our store locations,” said Eric McCrum, Energy and Sustainability Manager at Sheetz. “With the support of PennDOT and the funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we intend to give customers the ability to choose Sheetz as a preferred charging destination, wherever they are in the Commonwealth.”

“We anticipate EV adoption to increase significantly over the next several years,” said PPL Electric Utilities Regional Affairs Director Maggie Sheely. “We’ve been providing input to PennDOT and DEP on EV charging plans for Pennsylvania and we are members of multiple EV coalitions, including the EEI National Electric Highway Coalition — which is made up of 17 U.S. utilities committed to supporting the development of a seamless network of rapid EV charging stations connecting major highways. As this technology develops, we’re staying engaged with our customers, helping them understand how we can provide reliable power, and giving them the support they need.”



## **Wolf Administration Highlights Commitment to Clean Transportation (continued)**

Learn more about EV's in Pennsylvania on both the [PennDOT](#) and [DEP](#) websites.

Source: The Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation (PennDOT) and Environmental Protection (DEP)