

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 25 Issue 6

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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EPA Announces \$52 Million WIFIA loan to Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority

Water infrastructure projects slated to create 500 jobs in Pittsburgh; When combined with other funding sources, the WIFIA program has supported more than \$38 billion for America's water infrastructure

In Pittsburgh, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox, joined by U.S. Representative Summer Lee, Mayor Ed Gainey and local leaders announced a \$52 million Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan to the

Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA). This investment will help upgrade and replace aging water infrastructure to ensure that residents and businesses can rely on safe drinking water. When combined with other funding sources, the WIFIA

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HOW TO FORAGE RESPONSIBLY

Among the treasures that forests provide for us are wild plants that we can eat.

The practice of collecting plants, fungi, fruits, and nuts to eat is called

foraging and is becoming popular.

During the pandemic, we flocked outdoors for our health and discovered a new interest in home cooking.

The cost of food also has people looking for options, since wild plants can be

tasty, nutritious, and more-or-less free.

Social media has made foraging more accessible in terms of knowledge and education.

In Pennsylvania, some common

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EPA Announces \$52 Million WIFIA loan to Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (continued)

program has supported more than \$38 billion for America's water infrastructure. EPA estimates that associated infrastructure projects will create 500 jobs.

"Here in Pittsburgh, decades-old water infrastructure threatens drinking water that is essential to healthy residents and thriving communities," **said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox**. "EPA's \$52 million WIFIA loan alongside an investment from the state revolving fund (SRF) will support critical infrastructure upgrades to help the city achieve long-term water resilience. Under President Biden's Investing in America agenda, EPA is strengthening water infrastructure and creating jobs in communities across the country through an additional \$50 billion under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support the SRFs and water grant programs."

President Biden's Investing in America agenda is rebuilding infrastructure and boosting U.S. competitiveness while creating good-paying jobs. EPA's WIFIA loan will help modernize Pittsburgh's drinking water distribution infrastructure, including upgrading the Bruecken Pump Station, replacing two water mains, and rehabilitating the Highland II Reservoir liner and cover.

These projects are also critical for the eventual replacement of the city's 115-year-old clearwell that stores treated water before it is distributed throughout the city. The Clearwell Replacement Project will improve the reliability and redundancy of the drinking water supply system, support compliance with regulatory requirements, and improve water quality.

"Every Pennsylvanian has the right to clean, safe water," **said U.S. Senator Bob Casey (PA)**. "This major federal investment in Pittsburgh's water infrastructure will upgrade or replace aging water mains, water storage facilities, and more to expand access to clean drinking water for children and families across the city—and create jobs while doing it."

"This federal funding will help Pittsburgh provide clean and safe water to residents and businesses across the region," **said U.S. Senator John Fetterman (PA)**. "We've got to do everything we can to make sure our communities everywhere, no matter how rural, urban, or suburban, have clean drinking water. This critical investment, combined with unprecedented funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will upgrade aging infrastructure and help get us there."

"I'm proud to help deliver a \$52 million WIFIA funding award to Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority to make sure every household has clean water and to modernize the drinking water infrastructure in the city," **said U.S. Representative Summer Lee (PA-12)**. "A few months ago, we celebrated a significant milestone, the replacement of 10,000 lead service lines in Pittsburgh, which is a testament to accountability, action, and the acknowledgment of past wrongs. This funding represents a monumental effort in partnership across all levels of government, demonstrating our commitment to righting an injustice and ensuring clean and safe water for every single household and every one of our communities."

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EPA Announces \$52 Million WIFIA loan to Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (continued)

In addition to EPA's \$52 million WIFIA loan, PWSA secured \$93 million for this project through the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (also known as the state revolving fund). These low-cost funding programs allow PWSA to make critical infrastructure investments while supporting water affordability goals. EPA's WIFIA loan itself will save the city approximately \$20 million.

"Every Pennsylvanian has a constitutional right to clean air and pure water, and the Shapiro Administration is working with our federal partners to safeguard this right all across the Commonwealth," **said Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Rich Negrin**. "This WIFIA loan will allow Pittsburgh to protect its water infrastructure and deliver clean water to residents and business owners while saving taxpayer money. We're grateful for the EPA's critical investment in the Pittsburgh community and look forward to working together to improve infrastructure across the Commonwealth as we ensure every Pennsylvanian has access to a clean water supply."

"We thank the EPA for recognizing the importance of our infrastructure investments and supporting the series of large-scale upgrades to Pittsburgh's water system in the coming years," **said CEO for Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Will Pickering**. "Pursuing alternative funding methods for system improvements is crucial for water utilities to make needed investments while saving ratepayers money. This funding will allow us to move from a reactive mode to a proactive one, ensuring safe and reliable water service for future generations."

Learn more about EPA's [WIFIA Program](#) and water infrastructure investments under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#).

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the [WIFIA program](#) is a federal loan program administered by EPA. The WIFIA program's aim is to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. The WIFIA program has an active pipeline of pending applications for projects that will result in billions of dollars in water infrastructure investment and thousands of jobs. EPA is currently accepting letters of interest for WIFIA and SWIFIA loans. Learn more about [submitting a letter of interest for a WIFIA loan](#).

In addition to WIFIA loans, there are many federal funding resources available for communities and utilities to improve vital water and wastewater resources. It's been almost 19 months since President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure and competitiveness. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a historic \$50 billion investment in upgrading critical water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

HOW TO FORAGE RESPONSIBLY (CONTINUED)

forest foods collected include:

- Blueberries, raspberries, and other small fruit
- Mushrooms
- Ramps or wild leeks
- Hickory nuts, walnuts, acorns, and hazelnuts

Foraging in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

In Pennsylvania state parks and forests managed by DCNR, you can gather edible wild plants or plant parts **for your personal or family consumption**, unless the plant is listed in as [threatened, endangered, rare, or vulnerable](#).

For instance, **ginseng** is listed as vulnerable and cannot be collected on state lands.

Collection for business or commercial purposes is not allowed.

It's important to note that the guidelines may be different on other public lands, such as in local parks, state gamelands, and the Allegheny National Forest, so always check first.

And always seek landowner permission before searching on private lands.

Help Protect Pennsylvania Forests When Foraging

Treat nature with the importance it deserves. Plants and trees are part of a larger interconnected system, including wildlife and people, that depend on each other.

Removing plants or parts of them (berries, mushrooms, and nuts) can impact their ability to reproduce and thrive.

Foragers need to help sustain populations of wild plants while they are harvesting. Here's what to do:

- Take only what you can eat yourself. For example, the U.S. Forest Service limit for ramps found in the spring is up to two gallons per person, or about the amount that fits in a plastic grocery bag.
- Always leave plants to mature and produce next year's harvest.
- Harvest in a way that minimizes harm -- never take the first, never take the last.

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HOW TO FORAGE RESPONSIBLY (CONTINUED)

- Use everything that you take.
- Return soil, rocks, and wood disturbed to their original position.
- When digging bulbs, use a soil fork or small hand trowel and a knife, rather than a large shovel.
- Pinch off mushrooms at the ground level while leaving the roots and base.
- Take pressure off wild populations of plants by propagating them and growing them on your property or as part of a community project.

Tips to Forage Safely

Some plants are poisonous and shouldn't be eaten. Sometimes they look like what can be eaten.

Never eat any wild food without first being 100 percent sure of its identity. Some tips:

- Get a good guidebook.
- Don't be overly ambitious.
- Spend time getting to know your local area.
- Tag along with an expert or take a class.
- Make sure the area has not been treated with herbicides.
- Harvesting along roads is not a good idea.

Source: PA DCNR

The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced funding for 16 environmental restoration projects on abandoned mine lands, totaling \$7.8 million dollars. These projects, which are being funded as a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), primarily focus on the reclamation of abandoned mine land (AML), abatement of acid mine drainage (AMD) through reclamation, and/or treatment of AMD through the construction, operation, and/or maintenance of an AMD treatment facility.

In his budget address, **Governor Shapiro** made clear he rejects the false choice between protecting jobs and protecting our planet. He believes we can do both – we can embrace the Commonwealth’s role as an energy leader, create good-paying jobs, and fulfill our constitutional obligation to protect Pennsylvania’s clean air and pure water. Today’s announcement builds on the Governor’s commitment to do both.

“Restoring these minelands and streams is a critical part to improving Pennsylvania’s environment and growing our economy. Every penny we invest into projects like these results in a better Pennsylvania for all of us,” **said DEP Secretary Rich Negrin**. “These newly approved projects are just the first of many that are now possible as a result of the new IIJA funding, and we are going to continue to put these dollars to work in Pennsylvania.”

The new AML/AMD Grant Program that began in the fall of 2022 will continue with three more application rounds in 2023. A total of at least \$96 million total for the year is available under the 2023 AML/AMD Grant Program, with at least \$32 million available to award in each of the three grant program rounds. In addition, any unused funds from the previous grant program round for the year will roll over to the next program round.

The AML/AMD Grant program prioritizes:

- Reclamation of serious human health and safety problems resulting from abandoned coal mines.
- Reclamation or AMD treatment that will continue restoration efforts that were identified or begun under the AMD Set-a-side Program.
- The operation and maintenance needs and/or upgrades of existing AMD treatment systems where the failure to do so will result in loss of restored stream miles.

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

- Significant measurable water quality improvements that will contribute towards watershed restoration.

The DEP - Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation is able to announce the following projects:

Allegheny County:

Chalfant Run

Treating the abandoned mine drainage (AMD) discharge that is impacting Chalfant Run is the first step in a broader scope of plans provided by the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) to restore the Chalfant Run Watershed. ALT will gather data to be used in the design of a passive treatment system to be located on the Churchill Valley greenspace. Upon completion of the Project, the AMD discharge will be treated prior to entering the stream and act as a central point for visitors to the greenspace and will allow ALT to move on their plans of streambank stabilization and restoration of three miles of Chalfant Run before entering the tributaries of Thompson Run and Turtle Creek.

Cambria County:

Point Stadium

The reclamation design of four abandoned mine land (AML) features, located along the access road to Johnstown Inclined Plane and the proposed Sliver Park area, will be completed. The reclamation design will include: recapping a vertical mine shaft, installing a permanent

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

bat gate

over a mine entry, and stabilizing a rock highwall and an existing haul/access road. The future reclamation of the AML features will allow for public access to existing and proposed recreational trails as well as access for maintenance of the Johnstown Inclined Plane.

Clearfield County:

Hawk Run (Moshannon Creek/Osceola Mills Treatment Development)

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) will be assessing three areas of mining impact, which are thought to be the main drivers of abandoned mine drainage loading within the Osceola Mills area. The Hawk Run discharge and others which impact Sulfur Run by adding large amounts of acidity, iron, and aluminum will be reviewed and considered for treatment. As a result of the assessment, a plan will be developed convey the discharges to convey to a centralized treatment plant site near the Borough of Osceola Mills.

Beccaria South

The Project includes the design of a water main extension for 13 residential homes in Beccaria

Township. The extension has been requested by Beccaria Township residents due to concerns of onsite well degradation and poor water quality caused by abandoned mine lands. The water main will be extended along Cross Roads Boulevard for approximately three miles

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

and along Utahville Road for approximately one-half mile.

Newton Southwest (MR7/MR8 Reclamation & Treatment)

To provide maintenance to the Morgan Run 8 passive treatment system necessary to continue effectively treating acid mine drainage (AMD) and to construct Morgan Run 7, currently an experimental passive treatment system, treating a partial flow of MR-7A, the primary AMD source. Construction of a full-scale system will be completed as a part of the Project to fully treat four separate AMD discharges impacting Morgan Run.

Clinton County:

Robbins Hollow (Swamp Area PTS Rehab)

Routine maintenance of the Swamp Area passive treatment system will be performed to assure proper function of the system and continued treatment the Twomile Run, a Class A Trout Stream. The maintenance will include improvements to the access road, cleaning the collection and conveyance methods, replacing limestone in the drainable limestone beds, replacing and or patching liners and organic material in three vertical flow ponds (VFP), cleaning and deepening the treatment wetlands, clearing unwanted vegetation, and postconstruction monitoring.

Elk County:

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

Porcupine Hollow I (Lime Dosers)

Includes three years of continued operation and maintenance of two lime silos treating two acid mine drainage discharges impacting Dents Run. The operation of the silos has helped restore six miles of Dents Run from Porcupine Hollow to the Bennett Branch Sinnemahoning Creek. Dents Run is now labeled a Stocked Trout Water and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has been stocking the stream since 2019. Discontinuing operation and maintenance of the silos will result in losing the environmental improvements to Dents Run and a loss of \$280,620 per year in recreational use as reported by the PFBC.

Fayette County:

Phillips North (Phillips Discharge Project Development)

An initial assessment, data collection, and conceptual reclamation design of up to 16 miles of affected streams in the Redstone Creek Watershed will be completed. The objective of the Project is to characterize baseline contaminant loading and physical controls of the associated source mine pool(s) and identify candidate sites and conceptual design for the future construction of an active abandoned mine drainage (AMD) treatment plant that would eliminate over 4,000 gallons per minute of AMD into Redstone Creek and Rankin Run, both tributaries of the Monongahela River.

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

Melcroft (Treatment System Rehabilitation Design)

To complete a redesign of the existing Melcroft passive treatment system (PTS). The Melcroft PTS was originally constructed, as part of a larger project, to lower the associated deep mine pool for safety reasons and treat the discharge before allowing it to flow to Champion and Indian Creeks. The PTS has been successfully treating the discharge for nearly 12 years but is recently declining in effectiveness due to the inability to effectively rehabilitate the system. The redesign will incorporate newer technologies successful in passively treating mine drainage to continue to effectively treat one mile of Champion and Indian Creeks.

McKean County:

West Scaffold Lick (Scaffold Lick Run Assessment)

This project will fund an updated assessment and implementation/restoration plan by McKean County Conservation District of up to 520 acres of abandoned mine land and abandoned mine drainage features that will be the basis for future reclamation and water treatment projects for over 16 miles of affected watershed and a cumulative 1,800 linear feet of existing dangerous highwalls in Norwich Township.

Schuylkill County:

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

Oneida West (Oneida #3 Second Limestone Tank)

The Project will provide continued treatment of the Tomhicken and Catawissa Creek Watersheds to include treating 4,000 gallons per minute of acid mine drainage emitting from the Oneida #3 discharge. The continued treatment of these Watersheds will help to remove over two miles of stream from the “impaired waters list.”

Somerset County:

Murdock (Kimberly Run)

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy will complete a localized watershed assessment to determine eligibility of abandoned mine drainage seeps and abandoned mine land features for future development work. The assessment will include a thorough monitoring program, archived mine mapping reviews, and an updated biological survey along Kimberly Run in Somerset Township.

Venango County:

Bullion South (Venango County Implementation Plan)

The development of an implementation plan to guide future remediation project proposals in the Scrubgrass Creek and South Sandy Creek Watersheds. Objectives of the Project include
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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

the collation of existing abandoned mine land (AML) and abandoned mine drainage (AMD) information, development of a spreadsheet and mapping-based inventory of AML and AMD features, confirmation atonal water quality sampling, development of a project prioritization method, identification of possible remediation projects and funding mechanisms, recommendation of potential Project sponsors, and collaboration with local watershed associations, county and state government, and public and private stakeholders. The result of the Project will guide the Venango County Commissioners and their conservation partners in facilitating future AML and AMD reclamation and remediations efforts.

Washington County:

Muse (Cecil Township Municipal Park)

The reclamation design and required permitting of a 26-acre abandoned mine land site in Cecil

Township will be completed through this Project. Once designed, a future phase of the Project

includes the reclamation and development of the property for commercial use in order to provide new jobs in the local and surrounding community.

Westmoreland County:

Crabtree (Pumping & Treatment Alternatives)

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The Shapiro Administration Awards \$7.8 million dollars in Grants for Environmental Restoration Projects (continued)

An additional and more comprehensive study of the Crabtree Discharge will be completed. This study will be used to expand the understanding of the geologic, hydrologic, and historic mining conditions underlying the discharge and any connections to the Jacks Run Discharge located approximately 7.4 miles to the southwest. The information gained will be used to issue a final report to thoroughly vet the most promising treatment options and locations to access and treat the discharges. Successful treatment of the Crabtree and Jacks Run Discharges will have a direct impact on over 9 miles of stream, over 8 acres of the Loyalhanna Reservoir, and the Jacks Run/Sewickley Creek Watershed to the south.

Newlonsburg South #1 (Lyons Run Passive System)

Construction of a passive abandoned mine drainage treatment system to collect three acidic, high iron and aluminum contaminated discharges. The construction will include a successive alkalinity producing system (SAPS), flushable limestone beds, settling ponds, and treatment wetlands. As a result of the construction, the ecosystems in the upper portion of Lyons Run will be recovered and ecological function and aesthetics will improve in the Lyons Run and larger Turtle Creek watershed.

An additional 5 projects from the 2022 Round of the AML/AMD Grant Program have been recommended for funding from the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program but cannot yet be announced due to additional vetting required by the Federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (AMLER)

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, [please visit the website](#)

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Cindy Adams Dunn Confirmed To Serve As Secretary Of Department Of Conservation And Natural Resources

The Pennsylvania Senate confirmed Cindy Adams Dunn to serve as Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Governor Josh Shapiro nominated Dunn, who previously served as DCNR Secretary under Governor Tom Wolf.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to continue to serve the Commonwealth under Governor Shapiro's commitment to excellence," Dunn said. "I appreciate the Governor's dedication to creating government that works for Pennsylvanians, as well as his love of Pennsylvania's beautiful natural resources. I have spent my career in conservation and public service, working to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to the majesty of Penn's Woods, and look forward to the opportunity to continue this work as secretary of DCNR."

Since being nominated by Governor Shapiro in January, DCNR, under Secretary Dunn's leadership, has:

Highlighted Governor Shapiro's proposed [\\$112 million budget](#) investment in state parks infrastructure, encouraged Pennsylvanians to enjoy the outdoors this summer, and celebrated completed work on a \$7.4 million infrastructure project at Lehigh Gorge State Park

Toured [Priority Bicycles](#) in Montgomery, Lycoming County to demonstrate the value of Pennsylvania's \$14 billion outdoor recreation economy, alongside Deputy Secretary for Community Affairs and Economic Development with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Rick Vilello, and Pennsylvania Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner

Reported [two successful independent audits](#) of Pennsylvania's 2.2 million acre state forest system, which included high marks for DCNR's proactive work;

Distributed \$290,734 in [Wild Conservation Resource Program grants](#) for eight projects aimed at protecting the state's native biodiversity

Emphasized the importance of [connecting older adults to the outdoors](#) with Aging Secretary Jason Kavulich and Acting Health Secretary Dr. Debra Bogen, which is a part of the Shapiro Administration's push to serve older adults;

Expanded a [free sunscreen program](#), which covers 46 state parks to serve an estimated 2.6 million visitors this year

Sprayed more than 290,000 acres of public lands to [combat spongy moth outbreaks](#) in the Commonwealth

Uplifted the importance of trees as natural purifiers of our air and water during a [2023 Arbor Day celebration](#)

Celebrated the induction of the [Snyder Middleswarth Natural Area](#) in Bald Eagle State Forest into the national Old-Growth Forest Network

Honored the Mount Jewett to Kinzua Bridge Trail as the [2023 Trail of the Year](#)

Cindy Adams Dunn Confirmed To Serve As Secretary Of Department Of Conservation And Natural Resources (continued)

Joined the Pennsylvania Organization for Waterways and Rivers (POWR) in naming the Susquehanna River North Branch the 2023 River of the Year

Under Dunn, DCNR launched the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps Program](#) in 2016. This signature workforce development program that follows in the footsteps of the [Civilian Conservation Corps \(CCC\)](#) in the 1930s, has given more than 1,000 of young Pennsylvanians ages 16-25 the opportunity to develop workforce skills on public lands through various projects including building and trail maintenance, tree inventories, archeological work, and more.

The agency also hired Pennsylvania's [first director of outdoor recreation](#) and recently conducted a series of stakeholder meetings in nine cities that examined how to grow Pennsylvania's \$14 billion outdoor recreation economy.

Find [Dunn's portrait and biography](#) on DCNR's website.

DCNR manages 124 state parks, 2.2 million acres of state forest land, and works with local governments and municipalities to provide grants, planning, and other resources to communities across Pennsylvania.

Visit [DCNR's website](#) for more information about the agency and check out [DCNR's Calendar of Events](#) for events on public lands.

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

DCNR Celebrates Susquehanna River North Branch As The 2023 River Of The Year

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn recently celebrated the Susquehanna River North Branch as [Pennsylvania's 2023 River of the Year](#) during a celebration at Vosburg Neck State Park.

"I am very excited to honor the North Branch of the mighty Susquehanna River as the 2023 River of the Year," Dunn said. "This incredible water trail is a tremendous asset to this region, and I am thrilled to be back at one of our newest state parks, Vosburg Neck, celebrating this special body of water."

DCNR and the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR) worked with the [Endless Mountains Heritage Region](#) to create a free, commemorative poster celebrating the North Branch as the 2023 Pennsylvania River of the Year, which was unveiled at Tuesday's celebration.

The heritage region, which nominated the North Branch of the Susquehanna River, was awarded a \$10,000 Leadership Grant to help fund a slate of year-long 2023 River of the Year activities.

Dunn participated in a part of a week-long commemorative River of the Year sojourn on Wednesday.

The sojourn is among many paddling trips supported by DCNR and POWR each year.

Governor Josh Shapiro signed a proclamation acknowledging June as Rivers Month, as a part of the River of the Year celebration.

The governor has committed his administration to protecting clean water in Pennsylvania through multiple [budget initiatives](#).

The Susquehanna River North Branch flows from the New York state line to Sunbury near Shikellamy State Park at the confluence with the Susquehanna River West Branch.

It meanders through eight Pennsylvania counties, including Susquehanna, Bradford, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Columbia, Montour, and Northumberland.

The river is a water trail widely used by paddlers, anglers, recreational boaters, and wildlife enthusiasts.

Recreationalists enjoy the calm, class-I waters which serve as both a playground for experienced boaters to explore the area's natural and historic offerings, as well as a learning ground for new paddlers to develop their skills.

The public was invited to vote online for the [River of the Year](#), with more than 11,000 votes cast.

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DCNR Celebrates Susquehanna River North Branch As The 202 River Of The Year (continued)

The Susquehanna River North Branch beat out Perkiomen Creek, the Conestoga River, and the Schuylkill River to earn top honors.

“POWR would again like to commend everyone for their support for the nominated rivers, especially for the strong showing of support for the Susquehanna River North Branch,” POWR Executive Director Janet Sweeney said. “The River of the Year program continues to engage our communities by providing a wonderful opportunity to showcase all the nominated rivers and the great work being done in Pennsylvania on these resources. We are excited about the opportunity to highlight the Susquehanna River North Branch.”

An independent program, the [Pennsylvania Sojourn Program](#) is a unique series of a dozen such trips on the state’s rivers.

These water-based journeys for canoeists, kayakers, and others raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism, and heritage values of rivers.

Visit [DCNR’s website](#) for more information about the agency and check out DCNR’s [Calendar of Events](#) for events on public lands.

Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

EPA Announces Winners of the ‘Pollution Prevention Works: A Storytelling Challenge for Students

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the winners of the “Pollution Prevention Works: A Storytelling Challenge for Students.” The winning stories include essays, infographics, videos and a mock newspaper article and highlight how pollution prevention (P2) practices that were implemented at businesses benefitted communities, the environment and the businesses themselves. More than 50 high school and college students from across the nation submitted stories for consideration.

“It is exciting to celebrate these students that will help shape our future. With their stories, we are increasing awareness of the benefits and practice of pollution prevention,” **said EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Deputy Assistant Administrator Jennie Romer.** “I congratulate these talented students for their creativity in highlighting innovative pollution prevention solutions that can help protect human health and the environment.”

To increase awareness and showcase P2 activities, the Challenge invited high school and college students to use EPA’s [Toxic Release Inventory \(TRI\) P2 Search Tool](#) to identify an industrial facility or set of facilities in the U.S. that have reported implementing P2 practices that reduced, eliminated or prevented pollution at its source. The students then were challenged to tell a compelling story about how those P2 practices resulted in positive benefits for the business and the surrounding community and environment. By sharing these stories of [real life examples](#) on YouTube and EPA’s website, students as well as the public, can learn about pollution prevention activities in their community. These stories also provide businesses insight into how others are continually improving their business practices to help protect our environment.

The 2023 winners of the Pollution Prevention Works: A Storytelling Challenge for Students are:

First Place (\$5,000)

- **Shreya Daggolu**, Stuyvesant High School, New York, created a video that focuses on the Ravenswood Generating Station in Long Island City, New York. The video details efforts to reduce toxic chemical emissions at the facility and improve the health of the 1.2 million people who live within three miles of the plant - including many low-income and minority residents.
- **Annaliese Persaud, Francisco Suriel, Jasmin Tiong-Smith, Samaya Lindo-Smellie, and Jordyn Faria**, Baldwin School, New York, created a mock newscast that highlights P2 practices implemented at the Ravenswood Generating Station in Long Island City, New York. In the video, a mock news reporter interviews students playing a host of characters including local residents and a scientist about

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EPA Announces Winners of the 'Pollution Prevention Works: A Storytelling Challenge for Students (continued)

how the P2 improvements positively impacted the public and environmental health in nearby neighborhoods.

- **Noah Arbuckle**, Lincoln Academy, Maine, created a video that features the semiconductor manufacturing company GlobalFoundries and the P2 activities implemented at its facility in Essex Junction, Vermont. The video describes activities to reduce releases of chemicals on the TRI list including ethylene glycol, fluorine, hydrochloric acid and ammonia, resulting in reduced impacts on the environment, especially on local waterways.
- **Athitiya Singhapan**, Michael E. DeBakey High School for the Health Professions, Texas, created a video that illustrates P2 practices implemented at the Danone Milk Manufacturing Facility in Fort Worth, Texas. The video explains how Danone reduced its nitric acid releases, benefiting local communities.

Second Place (\$2,500)

- **Angela Zhan**, Logan High School, Utah
- **Kelvin Zhang**, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, North Carolina
- **Tahmina Emu**, Fairfield University, Connecticut

Third Place (\$1,500)

- **Nirja Trivedi**, Westview High School, California
- **Calla Shosh**, Natrona County High School, Wyoming
- **Aditi Adapala**, Lynbrook High School, California
- **Joseph Bartash**, Samueli Academy, California
- **Miranda Moreno, Jesus Moreno, Stefany Duran Rios, Vanessa Martinez, and Carolina Naranjo**, Garey High School, California
- **Arin Harkawat**, Watchung Hills Regional High School, New Jersey
- **Charlotte Walton**, Lloyd C. Bird High School, Virginia
- **Arun Sood**, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
- **Diane Frola**, Christopher Newport University, Virginia
- **Fatou Mbaye**, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, North Carolina

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EPA Announces Winners of the ‘Pollution Prevention Works: A Storytelling Challenge for Students (continued)

[See the winning entries and read more about the winners.](#)

Read more about EPA’s [Pollution Prevention program](#).

Read more about EPA’s [Toxics Release Inventory program](#).

Details on the [Pollution Prevention Works: A Storytelling Challenge for Students](#).

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA Proposes Ban on All Consumer and Many Commercial Uses of Perchloroethylene to Protect Public Health

Strict workplace safety requirements would allow for numerous key uses to continue

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced another action to protect public health under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), proposing a ban on most uses of [perchloroethylene \(PCE\)](#), a chemical known to cause serious health risks such as neurotoxicity and cancer. Today's proposal would protect people from these risks by banning all consumer uses while allowing for many industrial/commercial uses to continue only where strict workplace controls could be implemented, including uses related to national security, aviation and other critical infrastructure, and the Agency's efforts to combat the climate crisis.

"We know that exposure to PCE is dangerous for people's health, and today's rule is an important first step to keeping communities and workers safe," said **Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff**. "We've proposed to ban the uses we know can't continue safely, and we've made sure that stringent controls are in place to protect workers for the uses that remain."

PCE is a solvent that is widely used for consumer uses such as brake cleaners and adhesives, commercial applications such as dry cleaning, and in many industrial settings. For example, PCE is used as a chemical intermediate in the production of two chemical substances regulated under the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act. This rule proposes to allow for continued processing of PCE to manufacture hydrofluorocarbons (HFC)-125 and HFC-134a in tandem with strict workplace controls, as the two can be mixed with other substances to make more climate-friendly refrigerants. Additionally, the rule proposes to continue to allow the industrial and commercial use of PCE in petrochemical manufacturing, the manufacture of coatings for aircraft skins, and vapor degreasing with PCE to make aerospace parts and engines, as examples of other uses not proposed for prohibition.

EPA determined that PCE presents unreasonable risk to health, driven by risks associated with exposure to the chemical by workers, occupational non-users (workers nearby but not in direct contact with this chemical), consumers, and those in close proximity to a consumer use. EPA identified risks for adverse human health effects, including neurotoxicity from inhalation and dermal exposures as well as cancer effects from chronic inhalation exposure. While EPA identified potential risks to fence-line communities in a small number of instances, the prohibitions and other requirements in EPA's proposed rule are expected to mitigate to a great extent the potential risks to the neighboring communities.

EPA's proposed risk management rule would rapidly phase down manufacturing, processing and distribution of PCE for all consumer uses and many industrial and commercial uses, most of which would be fully phased out in 24 months. The uses subject to the

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EPA Proposes Ban on All Consumer and Many Commercial Uses of Perchloroethylene to Protect Public Health (continued)

proposed prohibitions represent less than 20% of the annual production volume of PCE. For most of the uses of PCE that EPA is proposing to prohibit, EPA's analysis also found that alternative products with similar costs and efficacy to PCE are reasonably available.

EPA is proposing a 10-year phaseout for the use of PCE in dry cleaning, with compliance dates depending on the type of machine in which PCE is used. The proposed phaseout of PCE in dry cleaning would eliminate unreasonable risk for people who work at or spend considerable time at dry cleaning facilities. This phaseout period would provide dry cleaners, many of which are small businesses, time to transition to an alternative process, and stakeholders have already noted an overall year-to-year decline in the use of PCE in dry cleaning. In addition, [President Biden's Fiscal Year 2024 budget](#) request proposed funding for new pollution prevention grants that would support small businesses with transitioning to TSCA compliant practices and mitigate economic impacts. If implemented, these grants could be used to support small businesses like dry cleaners in their transition away from PCE.

For the industrial manufacturing, industrial processing and other uses of PCE that EPA is not proposing to prohibit, EPA is proposing a workplace chemical protection program with a strict inhalation exposure limit and requirements to prevent skin exposure to ensure protection for workers. EPA has received data from industry that indicate many workplaces already have controls in place that may reduce exposures sufficient to meet the inhalation exposure limit in the proposed rule or to prevent direct skin contact with PCE.

EPA encourages members of the public to read and comment on the proposed rule. EPA is especially interested in hearing perspectives on the feasibility and efficacy of the proposed requirements for worker protections from entities that would be required to implement the proposed program and the timeline for the phaseout of PCE use in dry cleaning. In the coming weeks, EPA will host a public webinar targeted to employers and workers, but useful for anyone looking for an overview of the proposed regulatory action to discuss the proposed program. The date, time and registration information will be announced soon. EPA will accept public comments on the proposed rule for PCE for 60 days following publication in the Federal Register via docket EPA-HQ-OPPT-2020-0720 at www.regulations.gov.

[Learn more about today's proposal.](#)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

PA Ice Cream Trail Sweetens Summer with Record Number of Stops

PA Tourism and Agriculture Team Up Once Again for Sixth Annual Trail

This summer, Pennsylvanians and visitors can beat the heat and get a sweet treat by visiting any of the 42 creameries that make up the [2023 Scooped: An Ice Cream Trail](#). Secretary Redding and Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Executive Director of Tourism, Michael Chapaloney, visited [The Lands at Hillside Farms](#) in Shavertown, Luzerne County to announce the sixth annual PA Ice Cream Trail.

Launched in 2018, Scooped: An Ice Cream Trail is a partnership of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and its [PA Preferred@ program](#), DCED's Tourism Office, and the [Center for Dairy Excellence](#). The trail offers a delicious way to support Pennsylvania's more than 5,200 dairy farm families and the small businesses that source from them while offering a unique opportunity to explore the commonwealth by the scoop.

Source: PA DCNR

Shapiro Administration Awards \$1 Million to Projects to Educate and Engage Youth and Adults in Improving the Environment in Their Communities

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today awarded over \$1 million in Environmental Education Grants to 73 projects that will engage youth and adults in improving water quality and climate change resiliency in their communities. Fifty-five projects will serve environmental justice communities.

Schools and colleges, environmental and community organizations, and county conservation districts received funding for a broad range of educational hands-on programs for students, training and community projects for adults, and teacher training workshops.

“The Shapiro Administration is committed to delivering practical solutions to the environmental and safety issues our communities face from climate change and water pollution,” said **DEP Acting Secretary Rich Negrin**. “Pennsylvania’s environmental educators help provide these solutions. Through impactful work in the field, classroom, and neighborhood, they engage Pennsylvanians of all ages and backgrounds in projects that can have immediate local impacts and spark lasting environmental stewardship.”

The DEP Environmental Education Grant program prioritizes projects that engage youth or adults who live, work, or attend school in environmental justice areas. Funding focuses primarily on educating participants to develop and carry out practical solutions that help communities become more climate change resilient or reduce pollution to improve local water quality.

“Fully 83 percent of this grant funding supports educational projects that will benefit environmental justice communities,” said **Negrin**, “as we continue to expand our work to help Pennsylvanians most at risk from pollution, climate change related hazards, and other environmental impacts.”

The newly funded projects range from a farm-to-school food program in Erie to a Philadelphia faith organization’s program to train residents in cool roof coating application and solar panel installation, and many more.

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Shapiro Administration Awards \$1 Million to Projects to Educate and Engage Youth and Adults in Improving the Environment in Their Communities (continued)

For the complete list of projects funded by region, see the [grant awards web page](#).

The [Environmental Education Grants Program](#) was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993, which mandates setting aside 5 percent of the pollution fines and penalties DEP collects annually for environmental education in Pennsylvania. DEP has awarded \$13.3 million in Environmental Education Grant funding to support 2,199 projects to date.

For more information on the [Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection](#), please visit the website.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Announces Funding for Environmental Education Projects for Youth and Adults in Southwest Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today awarded a little over \$1 million in 2022 Environmental Education Grant funding to 73 projects statewide, including 18 projects in the southwest region.

“The Shapiro Administration is committed to delivering practical solutions to the environmental and safety issues our communities face from climate change and water pollution,” said **DEP Acting Secretary Rich Negrin**. “Pennsylvania’s environmental educators help provide these solutions. Through impactful work in the field, classroom, and neighborhood, they engage Pennsylvanians of all ages and backgrounds in projects that can have immediate local impacts and spark lasting environmental stewardship.”

The Environmental Education Grant program prioritizes projects that engage youth or adults who live, work, or attend school in environmental justice areas. It also prioritizes projects that educate participants to develop practical solutions and take action to help their communities become more climate change resilient or reduce water pollution to improve local water quality.

“Fully 83 percent of this grant funding supports educational projects that will benefit environmental justice communities, as we continue to expand our work to help Pennsylvanians most at risk from pollution, climate change related hazards, and other environmental impacts,” said **Negrin**.

Funding was awarded to schools and colleges, environmental and community organizations, and county conservation districts for a range of hands-on programs for students, community projects for adults, teacher training workshops, and more.

Ranging from a 100 percent outdoor hands-on science curriculum to workshops for adults on household waste and its impacts on the environment, 18 projects in southwest counties received a total of \$278,468.

Multiple counties

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DEP Announces Funding for Environmental Education Projects for Youth and Adults in Southwest Pennsylvania (continued)

Pennsylvania Resources Council: \$19,525 to conduct eight backyard composting workshops designed to reach 250 households in Allegheny and Delaware counties. Participants will learn about waste minimization in the home and make connections between waste and broader issues such as climate change, water pollution, soil health, and gardening. Participants will receive a compost bin and instructions.

Watersmith Guild: \$25,815 to provide educational workshops that empower underserved youth in Cambria and Indiana counties with skills and knowledge to improve their lives and create lasting positive impacts on the environment. Students will work with professional instructors and mentors to become proficient river surfers, paddlers, and waterway stewards, through activities including tree planting, water sampling, stream biology, and whitewater paddle boarding. Through hands-on education in filmmaking and digital media, students will create videos about their experiences to inspire in others an appreciation for watersheds and the power of outdoor connections to enhance our personal lives and communities.

Allegheny

Allegheny County Conservation District: \$4,999 to host field workshops for municipal managers to elevate their knowledge of watersheds, watershed planning, and best management practices to remedy non-point source pollution and impacts of climate change, such as localized flooding.

Chalfant Run/Thompson Run Watershed Association: \$4,494 to hold four classroom workshops and four outdoor sessions for third through sixth grade students. Content will address causes of local water pollution, including litter, stormwater, and abandoned mine drainage, and explore solutions for improving water quality, such as stream restoration projects.

Communitopia: Two grants— \$29,995 for an institute that will prepare grade 7-12 teachers to engage students in local hands-on climate change learning and solutions and will provide student field trips, including interactive STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning stations on local climate change causes, effects, and solutions; \$5,000 for workshops to train K-12 teachers on creative expression as an effective teaching strategy

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DEP Announces Funding for Environmental Education Projects for Youth and Adults in Southwest Pennsylvania (continued)

for exploring climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. Participants will learn how to initiate small-scale (home or classroom) or large-scale (school, district, or community) climate solutions using creative expression.

Michael Brothers Hauling, Inc.: \$4,540 to hold seven workshops led by industry experts and environmental justice community members on urban ecology issues. Workshop topics will include urban water infrastructure, compost, green building, vermiculture, permaculture, recycling, and solar energy.

Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light: \$29,965 to engage 40 to 50 students through hands-on workshops and urban farming experiences. Students will increase their understanding of watershed protection and energy, water, and waste conservation and will be encouraged to take actions with their family and friends to reduce the effects of climate change and improve community and individual health.

Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy: \$25,533 to implement state standards, climate change education, and meaningful action projects in the parks with students at five high schools in Pittsburgh in the fall, winter, and spring. Topics will highlight habitat improvement, tree planting, and stormwater mitigation strategies.

Venture Outdoors: \$20,000 to provide 20 environmental education activities and field trips to 120 students from kindergarten to eighth grade. The lessons will engage students in watershed, climate change, and environmental education through activities such as hiking, kayaking, biking, gardening, and environmental STEM.

Beaver

RiverWise: \$18,900 to conduct a countywide summer sustainability institute for high school students from six environmental justice areas in Beaver County. Teaching, field trips, group discussions, and activities will be captured through photos and video that will be shared via social media and web-based platforms to extend the reach of the project.

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DEP Announces Funding for Environmental Education Projects for Youth and Adults in Southwest Pennsylvania (continued)

Fayette

Connellsville Area School District: \$4,370 to hold bimonthly afterschool club meetings for fourth and fifth grade students on local watersheds and waterways. Hands-on activities will include STEM focused lessons and visits to local sites to learn about the importance of waterways to the community and region.

Mountain Watershed Association: \$29,999 to expand outdoor education in the greater Connellsville area by offering a monthly afterschool program for third to fifth grades, a monthly community workshop, and two professional development trainings for formal and non-formal educators. Topics will include watershed conservation, basic ecology, climate change, and local environmental impacts.

Somerset

YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh: \$4,895 to provide teacher training and middle school student instruction about watersheds. Participants will travel to an outdoor location to plan and execute a service project. Students will present their experience to an elected official and the community.

Washington

California Area School District: \$30,000 to create an outdoor science school curriculum for sixth grade that aligns with the new Pennsylvania state science standards. The curriculum will be taught entirely outdoors, providing students 100 percent hands-on experiences. Students will incorporate STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) environmentally sustainable practices into their local environmental civic action projects.

Westmoreland

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DEP Announces Funding for Environmental Education Projects for Youth and Adults in Southwest Pennsylvania (continued)

Brandywine Conservancy and Museum of Art: \$4,813 to coordinate a Pennsylvania master naturalist training in the Laurel Highlands. After a 13-week training, up to 10 adults will complete 30 hours of service to conservation organizations, municipalities, schools and more as they become trained volunteers and leaders to address conservation needs and challenges.

Seton Hill University: \$5,000 to provide three professional development workshops for faculty to incorporate sustainability topics into their disciplines and to provide staff with education on sustainability practices to help reduce the campus's environmental footprint.

Westmoreland County Conservation District: \$5,000 to provide stormwater education to 40 students in the Mosaic Community Development Center's afterschool program. The conservation district will present two in-person educational programs for the students and work with the students and center to develop a demonstration rain garden that incorporates the lessons learned.

The [Environmental Education Grants Program](#) was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993, which mandates setting aside 5 percent of the pollution fines and penalties DEP collects annually for environmental education in Pennsylvania. To date, DEP has awarded \$13.3 million in Environmental Education Grant funding to support 2,199 projects.

For more information on the [Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection](#), please visit the website.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Announces \$500,000 of Brownfields Funding to Revitalize Sites in Brooke and Hancock County, West Virginia

Communities in Brooke and Hancock County, West Virginia will benefit from a \$500,000 Brownfields assessment grant to the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC). The grant funds will be used to assess former industrial properties for re-development and revitalization projects.

EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Adam Ortiz joined a contingent of public and business officials today for a ribbon-cutting at the new Pure Watercraft electric pontoon boat production facility at the Beech Bottom Industrial Park in Beech Bottom, West Virginia, where Brownfields funding was used as a catalyst for leveraged funds. Working with the BDC, EPA Brownfields funding was essential in remediating the site into what is now the Beech Bottom Industrial Park. The new facility will employ 100 workers which will contribute to the revitalization of the area.

“I’ve been to West Virginia more than a dozen times in the past two years and have seen firsthand how Brownfields funding is cleaning the land, changing lives, and helping to jumpstart local economies here,” said Ortiz. “West Virginia has contributed so much to the foundation of this country. This area deserves an economic resurgence, and projects like this can help build that momentum. With your great location on the Ohio River and easy access to larger metropolitan areas, I believe Brooke and Hancock County are creating the foundation for considerable opportunities ahead. The Biden Administration is making a huge investment in revitalizing communities like these in the northern panhandle. With the talent, commitment and personal pride of the people here on the ground, this partnership will continue to make communities cleaner, healthier, and stronger and more economically competitive, and more people are going to discover West Virginia is a great place to live. This is an exciting day.”

Since 1997, EPA has awarded more than \$48 million through 114 Brownfields grants in 43 West Virginia communities. To date, this funding has leveraged an additional \$1.7 billion in public and private investment, returning 1,798 acres to readiness for reuse, and creating more than 5,400 new jobs.

For further information on the grants, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields website at <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>.

For further information: r3press@epa.gov

Source: U.S. EPA