

# Conservation Committee Report

Volume 24 Issue 2

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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## DCNR Highlights Economic Impact Of Snowmobiling, Winter Outdoor Recreation Safety Tips

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today joined members of the Saint Marys Snowmobile Club to highlight snowmobiling and to provide safety tips for outdoor recreation during winter months.

"We at DCNR believe it is important for people to safely en-

joy the outdoors year-round," Dunn said. "Whether you're riding on a snowmobile or going on a hike, be sure you model safe behaviors and take the necessary precautions when recreating outdoors this winter."

Dunn emphasized the importance of snowmobiling, noting that it adds \$65 million to Pennsylva-

nia's economy annually. There are more than 40,000 registered snowmobiles in the commonwealth, with 59 local

snowmobile clubs represented by 4,000 club members.

DCNR has supported snowmobiling in Elk County in the Pennsylvania Wilds,

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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 Announces More than \$1.7 Million to Fund Local Water Clean Up Projects in PA's Northwest

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that seven projects aimed at cleaning up waters in the state's northwest region have been selected to collectively receive more than \$1.7 million in fund-

ing through DEP's Growing Greener Plus program.

"Growing Greener awardees help keep Pennsylvania clean," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "It is imperative that communities in Pennsylvania receive the necessary funding to reduce

pollutants in area waterways."

Statewide, more than \$18 million has been awarded to fund over 60 projects to clean up waters. Grantees have up to three years to implement their

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## DCNR Highlights Economic Impact Of Snowmobiling, Winter Outdoor Recreation Safety Tips In The Pennsylvania Wilds (continued)

including \$600,000 in grants directed to planning and development of the West Creek Recreational Trail, which Secretary Dunn traveled Friday via snowmobile.

In total, the agency has supported outdoor recreation in Elk County through nearly \$1.6 million in grant funding for multiple projects during the administration of Gov. Tom Wolf.

The West Creek Recreational Trail extends into Cameron County.

Elk and Cameron counties are two of the 13 counties that make up the PA Wilds tourism region and conservation landscape.

The PA Wilds make up 2.1 million acres of the commonwealth's public lands.

This winter season, DCNR has responded to a number of incidents on its lands, prompting Dunn to encourage riders to practice safety at all times. Dunn offered the following tips Friday:

Wear a helmet, eye protection and suitable clothing

Don't use drugs or alcohol when you ride

Ride with others and let someone know where you are riding

Stay on trails designated for snowmobiles

Always ride at a safe and responsible speed

Know your abilities as a rider

Always obey the laws

State parks and forests offer an abundance of [activities during winter months](#) and DCNR encourages people to use engage in safe behaviors whether hiking, skiing, sledding, ice skating, snowshoeing, shoveling, or any other outdoor activity.

More broadly, DCNR offered additional safety tips:

Dress appropriately

Wear a helmet when applicable

Only recreate in approved areas

Wear sunscreen on areas not covered by clothing

Be aware of others' movements

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## **DCNR Highlights Economic Impact Of Snowmobiling, Winter Outdoor Recreation Safety Tips In The Pennsylvania Wilds (continued)**

Carry proper gear

Take breaks

Do not over work yourself during activities

Snow shoveling is can trigger heart attacks and while that isn't recreation it is an outdoor winter activity

Visit [DCNR's website](#) for more information on winter activities at state parks and forests.

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

## **DEP Announces More than \$1.7 Million to Fund Local Water Clean Up Projects in PA's Northwest Region (continued)**

projects from the award date.

DEP announced funding for these seven awards at the Erie County Conservation District Office, which received one of the seven grants and plans to utilize these funds for the Pennsylvania Vested in Environmental Sustainability program (PA VinES). The program works with viticulture and grape growing operations through a voluntary, proactive approach to assess agricultural operations for environmental and economic sustainability, fund best management practices identified by the assessments, and create a certification/recognition program.

“The Pennsylvania Lake Erie Grape Region boasts approximately 10,000 acres of juice and wine grapes, making it the largest agricultural land use in the PA Lake Erie Basin,” said Erin Wells, DEP Northwest Regional Director. “The PA VinES program is a vital asset to the region, as it promotes sustainable viticulture practices for Concord and Niagara grape production in the Lake Erie Watershed.”

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address Pennsylvania's critical environmental concerns of the 21st century.

It has helped to slash the backlog of farmland-preservation projects statewide, protect open space, eliminate the maintenance backlog in state parks, clean up abandoned mines and restore watersheds. It also provides funds for recreational trails and local parks, helps communities address land use, and provides new and upgraded water and sewer systems.

DEP is authorized to allocate these funds in grants for watershed restoration and protection, abandoned mine reclamation, and abandoned oil and gas well plugging projects.

Three other state agencies also received funds to distribute for appropriate projects: the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to administer farmland preservation projects, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for state park renovations and improvements, and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority for water and sewer system upgrades.

Growing Greener projects in the northwest region include projects addressing stream bank restoration and in-stream habitat improvements, assisting farmers to install best management practices to reduce agricultural runoff to streams and rivers, and reducing nutrient and sediment pollution in the Lake Erie Watershed.

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## **DEP Announces More than \$1.7 Million to Fund Local Water Clean Up Projects in PA's Northwest Region (continued)**

Northwest Region and Statewide Growing Greener Awardees:

### Erie

Erie County Conservation District, PA VinES Program (Vested in Environmental Sustainability) in the Lake Erie Watershed, \$249,500

City of Erie, McDannell Run Restoration Design and Construction, \$248,000

### Jefferson

Jefferson County Conservation District, Rattlesnake Creek Stream Improvement Project, \$276,150

### Venango

Northwest Pennsylvania Eminent Community Institute, Management & Continuation of the Northwest PA Greenways Implementation Block Grants, \$200,000

### Armstrong

Armstrong Conservation District, Mahoning-Redbank Creek Ag BMP Grant, \$294,061

### Indiana

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Yellow Creek Streambank Stabilization, \$51,374

### McKean

McKean County Conservation District, Upper Allegheny Ag. BMP Project, \$382,492

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **DEP Announces \$245,000 Growing Greener Grant for Kinney Run Watershed Improvements**

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Northcentral Region Acting Director Jared Dressler joined Columbia County Conservation District and Town of Bloomsburg leaders on Tuesday to announce \$245,000 in Growing Greener grant funding to improve water quality in the Kinney Run Watershed and view project sites.

Kinney Run, an impaired tributary to the Susquehanna River, is a small, urbanized watershed that frequently experiences flooding. The Growing Greener grant will fund three interconnected projects within the watershed to reduce stormwater runoff, non-point source pollution, and sediment erosion and deposition. The projects will enhance aquatic and pollinator habitats, increase ecosystem services, and establish a new public nature park with educational signage.

“The design for Kinney Run improvements is a wonderful example of creatively planning a series of interrelated projects to address multiple environmental and community goals, enhancing outdoor recreation, environmental education opportunities, and local water quality,” said Dressler. “I look forward to visiting again in the future to see the established best management practices and nature park.”

Portions of the Kinney Run work funded by this grant will satisfy the Town of Bloomsburg’s pollution reduction requirements under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program, achieving quantified pollution reductions and water quality improvements to benefit local waters, downstream communities, and the Chesapeake Bay.

The planned projects include:

- Sediment removal and conversion of high flow bypass channel to a bioswale;
- Installation of an infiltration basin to treat runoff from 4.44 acres by Town Park Village;
- Creation of 1,300 linear feet of in-stream fish habitat and stream stabilization structures;

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## **DEP Announces \$245,000 Growing Greener Grant for Kinney Run Watershed Improvements (continued)**

Extension of an existing 1,000 foot riparian buffer;

Conversion of 11 acres of lawn to a pollinator meadow and creation of monarch butterfly habitat; and

Establishment of a new public nature park with educational signs.

The Kinney Run projects will be coordinated and administered by Columbia County Conservation District staff in partnership with officials from the Town of Bloomsburg. Project partners also include the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Habitat Management Division, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Keystone Ten Million Trees Partnership.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

## **DEP Awards Borough of Jim Thorpe Growing Greener Grant for Stream Restoration Work in Carbon County**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that it awarded the Borough of Jim Thorpe a \$200,000 Growing Greener Grant for design work on the Silk Mill Run creek restoration project in Carbon County. The nearly two-mile creek is a Class A brown trout cold-water fishery popular for outdoor activities in the Pocono Mountains that runs on the outskirts of the borough and feeds into the Lehigh River.

“This restoration project will have significant environmental impact to the stream’s water quality, health and aquatic habitat, not to mention improving outdoor experiences for sportsmen and women,” said Shane Kleiner, watershed manager and grants coordinator for DEP’s Northeast Regional Office in Wilkes-Barre. “Having funding available through Growing Greener enables the project partners to begin the work needed to restore the creek to its natural habitat.”

The borough will partner with Wildlands Conservancy, a non-profit that works to preserve thousands of acres of land and waterways in the Poconos, to design the restoration project. Some of the work that is planned includes: demolition and removal of at least five dams, streambank restoration and improving wildlife habitat by restoring wetlands nearby. The dams present a significant danger to aquatic life as they prevent fish passage to approximately half of the stream, obstructing native trout from swimming upstream in headwater habitat where water temperatures would be cooler in the warm summer months. They also trap hundreds of tons of nutrients and sediment in the creek that could be released in the water should the dams breach.

DEP’s Growing Greener Grant Program provides funding for environmental projects that work to improve the natural beauty of the commonwealth. The program remains the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania’s history to address critical environmental concerns of the 21st century. For more information on Growing Greener go to DEP’s website: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/GrantsLoansRebates/Growing-Greener/Pages/What-is-Growing-Greener.aspx>

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)



## **Wolf Administration Announces \$4.7 Million for Watershed Restoration and Protection Projects in Southcentral PA**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that 13 projects in eight Southcentral Pennsylvania counties, aimed at watershed restoration and protection, have been awarded more than \$4.7 million in funding through this year's Growing Greener grants.

"Growing Greener is the single largest investment of state funds that goes directly towards addressing critical environmental concerns of the 21st century," said DEP Southcentral Regional Director Rod Nesmith. "Now in its third decade, DEP's Growing Greener continues to play an essential role in restoring and protecting the health of streams and rivers in communities across Pennsylvania. The grant program provides necessary funding for a variety of projects focused on creating a cleaner environment for all Pennsylvanians."

Growing Greener grants are awarded for projects in three categories: watershed restoration and protection; abandoned mine reclamation; and abandoned oil and gas well plugging projects. Statewide, this year's awards exceed \$18 million and will fund projects focused on design, construction, education, and outreach. The funds are distributed to non-profit organizations, watershed groups and county and municipal governments to address local and regional water quality issues. Grantees have up to three years to implement their projects from the award date.

Three other agencies also received funds to distribute for appropriate projects: the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to administer farmland preservation projects, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for state park renovations and improvements, and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority for water and sewer system upgrades.

For more information on Growing Greener go to DEP's website: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/GrantsLoansRebates/Growing-Greener/Pages/What-is-Growing-Greener.aspx>

Approved projects include:

### **Berks**

Berks County Conservation District: Little Cacoosing Creek Restoration, \$374,128

Fleetwood Borough: Willow Creek Streambank Restoration Phase 1, \$145,438

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## **Wolf Administration Announces \$4.7 Million for Watershed Restoration and Protection Projects in Southcentral PA (continued)**

### Blair

Altoona Water Authority: Kittanning Run Restoration Plan Assessment, \$50,537

### Dauphin

Capital Area Greenbelt Association: Spring Creek Ivey Apartments Site Streambank Restoration Project, \$230,150

Borough of Penbrook: Penbrook Borough Stormwater Management Basin, \$280,000

### Franklin

Franklin County Conservation District: West Branch Conococheague Tributary Floodplain Restoration—Design and Permitting, \$117,500

### Huntingdon

The Trust for Tomorrow: Tuscarora Creek Bank Stabilization Project, \$88,510

### Lancaster

Little Conestoga Creek Foundation: Little Conestoga Blue-Green Corridor Floodplain Restoration, \$2,246,580

Little Conestoga Watershed Alliance: Jackson and River Drive Floodplain Restoration Project, \$113,000

### Lebanon

South Londonderry Township: Killinger Creek Stream Stabilization and Riparian Forest Buffer, \$260,000

North Cornwall Township, Cleona Borough: Quittapahilla Creek Floodplain Restoration, \$110,500

### York

York County Rail Trail Authority: Oil Creek Floodplain Restoration—Design and Permitting, \$135,000

York County Conservation District: West Branch Codorus Creek Stream Restoration Phase 2, \$563,365

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **Wolf Administration Launches Student Art Competition To Raise Awareness About Ticks, Lyme Disease**

As the number of Lyme disease cases in the state and across the nation continues to rise, officials from the departments of Health (DOH), Education (PDE), and Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) today encouraged Pennsylvanians to participate in the 2022 Lyme Art Contest to promote awareness of the prevalence of ticks and the types of diseases they carry.

“Ticks that cause Lyme disease are found in every county and every green space, even in cities, which is why it is so important to know the proper steps to take to avoid getting a tick bite,” Acting Secretary of Health Keara Klinepeter said. “Through this art competition, we will be able to educate students and their parents on where ticks live and how to prevent getting a tick bite, furthering our commitment to promoting healthy behaviors and preventing diseases. This initiative serves as a consistent reminder to check yourself, your pets and your family for ticks after spending any amount of time outdoors.”

The art contest is open to children in first through sixth grade. Entries must be received by 5:00 P.M., Friday March 11, 2022. Contest materials can be found on the [Department of Health’s website](#).

The Lyme Art Contest was created in 2019 to educate children, scout troops, youth community programs, and their peers about where ticks are found and how to prevent encountering ticks in their habitat. This year’s finalists will be notified by mail and will be invited to an award ceremony in May 2022.

“Ticks are prevalent nearly everywhere in the commonwealth, even in your own backyard, and it’s important for Pennsylvanians to remain vigilant when they’re enjoying outdoor recreation,” said Secretary of Education Dr. Noe Ortega. “The Lyme Art Contest is a great way to raise awareness by engaging teachers and students and using the arts to educate their communities.”

In Pennsylvania, there are reports of up to 10,000 Lyme disease cases per year and more are likely unreported. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a short course of antibiotics. However, if the infection is left untreated, it can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system.

Ticks are usually found in shrubs, weeds, leaf litter, and tall grasses, but can be found anywhere there is grass. So, it is important to take the proper steps to decrease the chances of getting bitten. When outside, cover exposed skin, wear light colors to help detect ticks, and use insect repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET. Use permethrin spray on shoes, clothes and gear before spending time outdoors. After being outside, check yourself, your kids, and your pets thoroughly for ticks and remove any that are attached. Then, take a shower to help remove any ticks that you may have missed. You can also throw your clothes in the dryer using high heat to help kill any ticks that might still be left.

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## **Wolf Administration Launches Student Art Competition To Raise Awareness About Ticks, Lyme Disease (continued)**

DOH, PDE and DCNR encourage Pennsylvanians to be safe when enjoying the outdoors and want to remind people of the benefits of recreating outdoors despite the risk of tick-borne illnesses. Those benefits include:

- Improving cardiovascular health;
- Strengthening muscles and bones;
- Reducing chances of suffering chronic diseases;
- Reducing stress levels and improving mental health; and
- Becoming more socially connected.

“Raising awareness about ticks, Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses through this competition is a creative way to help address a major public health issue,” DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. “Ticks are prevalent on public lands, such as the state parks and forests DCNR manages, but they also can be found in places people frequently visit, including areas where children play. We are grateful for the partnership within our state agencies to help reinforce this important message.”

For more information on Lyme disease, visit the Department of Health’s website or follow the Department of Health on Facebook and Twitter.

Source: PA Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

## **Gov. Wolf Announces \$244.9 Million Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Investment to Cleanup Pennsylvania's Abandoned Mine Lands**

Governor Tom Wolf announced that Pennsylvania has been awarded \$244.9 million from President Joe Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to clean up abandoned mines across the commonwealth.

"We've long needed a solution to accelerate work to address the environmental and public health concerns of our legacy energy development, I'm pleased that the Biden Administration shares my commitment to reclaiming Pennsylvania's abandoned mine-land for productive use," said Wolf. "This bipartisan investment will address the dangers of abandoned mines while simultaneously supporting new, good-paying jobs, economic recovery, and community revitalization."

While Pennsylvania's more than 5,000 abandoned mines memorialize a period of great economic and industrial growth in the state and country, they're now scars to Pennsylvania's landscape with environmental and safety hazards. In addition to being at risk for fires, these abandoned mines have dangerous highwalls and open shafts and are sources for both water and air pollution.

The Wolf Administration looks forward to working with the Department of the Interior to put the resources announced today to work to enhance the state's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program and returning abandoned mine-land to productive use for things like recreation, farming, or clean energy production.

Today's \$244.9 million announcement is a small piece of the nearly \$4 billion Pennsylvania is estimated to receive over the next 15 years to address contamination and pollution caused by its coal mining legacy.

Source: PA. Dep