



## **2020 - 2021 Annual Report**



**Department of Conservation & Natural Resources**



Conservation &  
Natural Resources  
Advisory Council

**Pennsylvania Constitution  
Article I, Section 27**

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

**MISSION STATEMENT  
Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council**

*Drawing upon the diversity of experiences and perspectives of its appointed citizen members, the council will provide to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, to the Governor, to the General Assembly, and to the public, advice regarding the conservation and stewardship of the commonwealth's natural resources.*

*The powers and duties of the council will be carried out as legislatively mandated in Section 315(d), Act 18 of 1995.*

*On the Cover: Greenwood Furnace State Park in Huntingdon County, a site visit by some council members in spring 2021.*

October 15, 2021

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Office of the Governor 225  
Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) is pleased to present its 2020-2021 annual report of our activities in fulfillment of our obligations to provide advice and recommendations to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

While still several seats shy of a full Council due to appointment delays, existing CNRAC members continued to be very active participants and engaged in setting and achieving goals. Council members contributed their expertise and time to various work groups and issues of importance to DCNR. Reports and letters prepared are listed in the back of this report. Council took on new efforts to increase input from the general public and provide CNRAC -- and ultimately DCNR -- with ideas and suggestions for improving programs and services.

The challenges presented by the pandemic continued into this fiscal year, and CNRAC recognizes and appreciates the extraordinary efforts of DCNR staff to meet those challenges. State parks, forests and trails continued to see extraordinary visitation, as people make outdoor recreation an essential part of their daily lives. CNRAC appreciates your recognition of the importance of the outdoors on the physical and mental health of the people we serve. Outdoor recreation is an enormous, vital industry in Pennsylvania, generating \$29.1 billion annually in consumer spending and sustaining a quarter of a million direct Pennsylvania jobs. CNRAC has prioritized assisting DCNR with current infrastructure challenges totaling more than \$1.4 billion that threaten the enjoyment of these state parks and forests by Pennsylvanians and visitors. We look forward to continuing to work with your office and our General Assembly on this infrastructure backlog.

CNRAC plans to continue to actively participate in the development of strategic plans, policies and programs for state parks and forests, outdoor recreation, and motorized recreation. We are excited about the possibility of creative and innovative programs to continue to serve current users of our parks and forests and to encourage new users to take advantage of these unique resources.

We are committed to continuing to work with your office and DCNR staff to ensure the commonwealth's natural resources are protected while offering vital recreational opportunities to our citizens.

Sincerely,



Geralyn Singer  
CNRAC Chair 2020-2022

## CNRAC COUNCIL MEMBERS 2020-2021

### GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS



**Meredith Odatto Graham** -- Pittsburgh, PA; B.S. Natural Resources, Cornell University; J.D. University of Pittsburgh School of Law; environmental lawyer and community volunteer; term expires January 2022.

**Joanne C. Kilgour** -- Lancaster, PA; B.A. Philosophy, Carnegie Mellon University; J.D. University of Pittsburgh School of Law; Executive Director, Ohio River Valley Institute; term expires January 2022.



**GERALYN Umstead-Singer** -- Hershey, PA; B.A. in Communications, Lycoming College; Certification Elementary Education, Wilson College; community volunteer and family caregiver; term expires January 2024.

**Silas Chamberlin** -- York, PA; B.A. History, Temple University; M.A. History and Ph.D. Environmental History, Lehigh University; Vice President of Economic and Community Development of the York County Economic Alliance; term expires January 2023.



**Steve Stroman** -- Lancaster, PA. B.A., Political Science, Vassar College; M.A. Political Science, Duke University; conservation/environmental policy consultant and family caregiver; term expires January 2023.



### One Vacancy Pending Appointment

### PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE APPOINTMENTS



**Rocco S. Ali** -- North Apollo, PA; B.S. Biology and Chemistry, Geneva College; M.S. Orthopedics and Neurology, University of Pittsburgh; retired Physical Therapist and Clinical Supervisor, Nova Care Outpatient Rehabilitation; term expires January 2023.

**Robert E. Kirchner** -- St. Marys, PA; B.S. Health & Physical Education, Slippery Rock University of PA; Owner, WhyNotSafety, LLC; Past President, American Council of Snowmobile Associations; Board Member, West Creek Recreational Trail Association; term expires January 2023.



**Janet L. Sweeney** -- Luzerne, PA; B.A in Sociology, State University of New York; M.S. Science in Planning and Regional Development, University of Arizona; Director, Pennsylvania Environmental Council; awaiting reappointment.

**David Trimpey** -- Pittsfield, PA; B.S. in Forest Science, Penn State University; Retired Resource Manager, Kane Hardwood Division of Collins Pine Company; term expires January 2024.



### Two Vacancies Pending Appointment



## SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE APPOINTMENTS



**Greg Goldman** -- Philadelphia, PA; B.A. Northwestern University; Master of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago; Executive Director of Audubon PA and Vice President of National Audubon Society; awaiting reappointment.

**Sarah Hall-Bagdonas** -- Lake Ariel, PA; B.S. Biology, Millersville University; Manager, Landowner Assistance, Family Forest Carbon Program, American Forest Foundation; term expires January 2023.



**Dean Jackson** -- Columbia Cross Roads, Bradford County, PA; owner, Mt-Glen Farms; term expires January 2023.

**Gary M. B. Kribbs** -- Havertown, PA; B.A. Geology, University of Toledo; M.S. Geology, University of Toledo; President, AEON Geoscience, Inc.; term expires January 2023.



**Ted Tharan** -- Clarion, PA; Clarion County Commissioner; term expires January 2023.

**One Vacancy Pending Appointment**

## CNRAC OFFICERS AND STAFF

DCNR Secretary - Cindy Adams Dunn

Chair - Geralyn Singer

Vice Chair - Bob Kirchner

Secretary - Meredith Odato Graham

DCNR Council Adviser - Gretchen Leslie

Council Administrator - Katrina Harris (contractor)

## **CNRAC WORK GROUPS**

CNRAC Work Groups continued to meet and discuss current issues to provide input and recommendations to DCNR. Membership of each Work Group and highlights of activities for the past year are summarized below.

### **Motorized Recreation Work Group** **Bob Kirchner, Rocco Ali, Gary Kribbs**

The Motorized Recreation Work Group continued to work with DCNR staff on the recommendations contained in its original report issued in 2019. Of the original 15 recommendations, six have been completed, five have been agreed to by DCNR and are in progress, three are shared responsibilities with other agencies and not completely within DCNR's control, and one was partially rejected. The Motorized Recreation Work Group created an update to its original report with two additional recommendations which fall under DCNR and PennDOT's responsibilities. The recommendations relate to ATV changes and liability issues.

The Work Group provided comments on the proposed changes to DCNR's ATV Trail Development and Management Policy and is closely monitoring the ATV pilot program recently begun in the Susquehannock Forest District.

The Work Group also had an article published in *Sharetrails*, a publication of the Blue Ribbon Coalition based in Idaho.

### **Strategic Planning Work Group** **Meredith Odatto Graham, Janet Sweeney, Dave Trimpey, Silas Chamberlin, Sarah Hall-Bagdonas**

The Strategic Planning Work Group reviewed the Pennsylvania Forest Action Plan and prepared comments for the Council's review and submission to DCNR. The Strategic Planning Work Group also prepared comments for the Council's review and submission to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education on the proposed changes to the science standards.

### **Communications and Outreach Work Group** **Gary Kribbs, Greg Goldman, GERALYN SINGER, Sarah Hall-Bagdonas**

The Communications and Outreach Work Group continued to monitor relevant legislation and interact with members of the General Assembly.

A new initiative, *CNRAC Conversations*, kicked off in Spring 2021. These short, virtual discussions on specific topics allow the Council to hear from technical experts, as well as members of the public. The first discussion focused on "Equity in the Outdoors" and had more than 100 participants. CNRAC received very positive feedback on the discussion, including from park staff in other states. The recording was posted on CNRAC's website in response to the many requests for the recording. The next discussion in Fall 2021 will examine "Economics and the Outdoors" and look at the positive impact of Pennsylvania's natural resources on state and local economies, as well as the challenge of maintaining parks and forests infrastructure.

The Work Group also continued to grow its stakeholder list to maintain communication and notify interested groups and citizens of CNRAC meetings. With the continuation of virtual meetings, Council has continued to see increased attendance at each of its meetings. Council also responded to several questions/comments submitted by citizens through the website and at its meetings.

#### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Group**

**Joanne Kilgour, Janet Sweeney, Geralyn Singer, Greg Goldman, Steve Stroman**

In 2020, CNRAC formed a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Group to support DCNR's objectives in this area. As its first major initiative, the Work Group collaborated with the Communications Work Group on the first highly successful *CNRAC Conversations -- Equity in the Outdoors*. The Work Group is following up on suggestions and ideas from the discussion as it plans its next steps.

#### **Infrastructure Work Group**

**Geralyn Singer, Gary Kribbs, Janet Sweeney, Dave Trimpey**

The Infrastructure Work Group continued to focus on and highlight the tremendous funding need for infrastructure upgrades and maintenance at state parks and forests, now totaling more than \$1.4 billion. The needed investments range from bridges to wastewater treatment facilities, dams and invasive plant removal, and from roads to trails. The Work Group continued to monitor proposed legislation and discuss the needs with legislators. The Work Group is partnering with the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation in their outreach efforts, as well as initiating CNRAC communications and outreach activities.



*CNRAC Members and DCNR staff at Greenwood Furnace State Park from l to r: Bob Kirchner, Dave Trimpey, Rocco Ali, Geralyn Singer, Gretchen Leslie, Paul Fagley, Katrina Harris, Gary Kribbs, Steve Stroman*

# SUMMARY OF CNRAC MEETINGS

JULY 22, 2020 (VIRTUAL MEETING)

## PRESENTATIONS

### PROTECT OUR PARKS AND FORESTS CAMPAIGN

**Marci Mowery, President, PA Parks and Forests Foundation**

Ms. Mowery discussed the more than \$1 billion needed for infrastructure investments at parks and forests, noting 15 visits that her organization completed with state legislators, local officials and media to view the infrastructure needs of various parks. She noted how the record-setting visitation numbers seen during the pandemic will only increase the funding need.

### DCNR'S INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS AND PRIORITIES

**Alfred Uzokwe, Director, DCNR's Bureau Facility Design and Construction**

Mr. Uzokwe's presentation focused on DCNR's infrastructure funding streams and how infrastructure maintenance needs are prioritized. He explained the funding sources for upkeep of this infrastructure; the insufficient funding for all the infrastructure needs; and how DCNR prioritizes the needs due to the lack of funding: employee and visitor safety, compliance with regulations and codes, and mission criticality.

### DCNR COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

**Chris Novak, DCNR Director of Communications; Tara Ramsey, DCNR Digital Director**

Ms. Novak and Ms. Ramsey discussed DCNR's extensive digital media presence, which includes an electronic newsletter, a blog, website, and social media platforms. They noted that spike in growth of followers during the pandemic, and the efforts the DCNR Communications office took to engage new users with messages around conservation, stewardship, and places to recreate.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Randy Green asked why snowmobiles and ATVs are always grouped together in public surveys and reports despite having very different environmental impacts and different histories in the state parks and forests. Council Member and Motorized Recreation Work Group Chair Bob Kirchner noted the work group will address this comment in the update to their January 2019 Report.

## OTHER ATTENDEES INCLUDED:

John Norbeck, DCNR  
Nicole Faraguna, DCNR  
Eric Nelson, DCNR  
Sherri Anderson, DCNR  
Stacie Amsler, DCNR  
Sim Suter, DCNR  
Justin Royer, DCNR  
Ryan Madara, OA OIT  
Cliff David, Conservation Economics  
Ephraim Zimmerman, Western PA Conservancy  
Emily Gates, PA Recreation and Park Society  
David Hess, PA Environment Digest Blog

Robert Swift, Capitol Wire  
Liz Johnson, The Nature Conservancy  
Mabari Byrd, Sierra Club  
Jen Quinn, Sierra Club  
Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club  
Randy Green, DCNR Volunteer  
Linda Devlin, Allegheny Natl Forest Visitors Bureau  
Bernard Hoffnar, Pennsylvania resident  
Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club  
Nick Troutman, Office of Senator Gene Yaw  
Griffin Caruso, Research Analyst, PA House  
Environmental Resources and Energy Committee



## **SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **CARBON CAPTURE AND UNDERGROUND STORAGE**

**Kristen Carter, Asst. State Geologist, Pennsylvania Geological Survey**

Ms. Carter explained that Pennsylvania has significant and varied geologic resources that could be beneficially used and/or permanently store CO<sub>2</sub>. She noted carbon capture and underground storage is an important component of the portfolio of approaches to achieve worldwide climate goals. Ms. Carter stated Pennsylvania has sufficient reservoirs for carbon storage, equivalent to 500 million passenger vehicles being driven in a year. She noted Pennsylvania is one of seven signatory states (first in the Mid-Atlantic) supporting the regional CO<sub>2</sub> transport infrastructure action plan Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **UPDATE TO PENNSYLVANIA'S SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS**

**Jean Devlin, Natural Resource Program Specialist, Bureau of Forestry**

Ms. Devlin reviewed proposed changes to Pennsylvania's science education standards and explained how the standards are directly tied to DCNR's mission, including daily use by state parks and forests for programming for school groups and teach education. She noted DCNR supports separate environment and ecology standards with the inclusion of climate and local Pennsylvania environmental issues.

#### **UPDATE TO DCNR PLANT REGULATIONS**

**Rebecca Bowen, Division Chief, Conservation Science and Ecological Resources, Bureau of Forestry**

Ms. Bowen discussed the process for adding, deleting, or changing species classified as endangered, threatened, rare, extirpated, or tentatively undetermined. She advised Council that changes would be proposed in 2021 and stakeholder input would be solicited.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were offered at the meeting.

### **OTHER ATTENDEES INCLUDED:**

John Norbeck, DCNR  
Nicole Faraguna, DCNR  
Eric Nelson, DCNR  
Sherri Anderson, DCNR  
Stacie Amsler, DCNR  
Justin Royer, DCNR  
Aara Vinsh, DCNR  
Shea Zwerver, DCNR  
Meredith Hill, DCNR  
Ellen Shultzabarger, DCNR  
Cliff David, Conservation Economics  
David Hess, PA Environment Digest Blog

Emily Gates, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society  
Patrick Henderson, Marcellus Shale Coalition  
Jim Welty, Marcellus Shale Coalition  
Keith Salador, PADEP CAC  
John Walliser, Pennsylvania Environmental Council  
Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club  
William Kunze, The Nature Conservancy  
Ron Ramsey, The Nature Conservancy  
James Schmid

## **NOVEMBER 18, 2020 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **FINALIZED DCNR ATV POLICY**

**Nicole Faraguna, DCNR Policy Director**

DCNR chose to release its updated ATV policy at the Council meeting because of CNRAC's past involvement and interest in the issue. Ms. Faraguna noted the revisions to the policy included rescinding the 2003 moratorium to allow DCNR to explore opportunities for new trails on state forest lands. The policy continues to prohibit use of ATVs on state park trails and permits the DCNR Secretary to designate portions of forestry roads as temporary, seasonal or permanent ATV trails. Ms. Faraguna noted there will continue to be a community involvement process to involve stakeholders where there are opportunities or projects that may impact a community.

#### **SHALE GAS MONITORING UPDATE**

**Shawn Lehman, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Forest Program Manager**

Shawn Lehman gave an update on current field monitoring efforts for the Bureau of Forestry's Oil and Gas Program. Mr. Lehman provided monitoring results for the water sampling, road assessments, invasive species impact, and sound. He indicated that invasive species was the area of most concern in shale gas development.

#### **DCNR'S FALL WILDFIRE PROTECTION EFFORTS**

**Michael Kern, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Division of Forest Fire Protection, Chief**

Mike Kern provided an overview DCNR's wildfire protection efforts, which includes all forested landscapes in the commonwealth, not just state forestlands. The Forest Fire Protection Division is also tasked with managing prescribed burns, DCNR's radio program, search and research, supporting PEMA responses and programs, and providing personnel to assist with fighting wildfires in other states. He also noted that during COVID, staff provided support to local municipalities with logistics and command support, including drive-thru COVID testing.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sarah Chudnovsky asked if there is a way to incorporate the impact of emissions on state forests and the impact of the plastic and petrochemical production as part of the economic context of the report.

### **OTHER ATTENDEES INCLUDED:**

John Norbeck, DCNR  
Ellen Shultzabarger, DCNR  
Sherri Anderson, DCNR  
Stacie Amsler, DCNR  
Aara Vinsh, DCNR  
Nate Lotze, DCNR  
Meredith Hill, DCNR  
Shea Zwerver, DCNR  
Chris Novak, DCNR

Lauren Imgrund, DCNR  
Seth Cassell, DCNR  
Jake Newton, DCNR  
David Hess, PA Environment Digest Blog  
Loren Anderson, Marcellus Shale Coalition  
Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club  
David Cale, Laurel Caverns  
Susan Murawski, Presque Isle Audubon Society  
Kyle Shenk, The Conservation Fund

John Confer, California University of PA  
Debra Goldstein, Conservation Matters  
Carol DeWolf, Natural Lands  
Nick Troutman, Senator Yaw's Office

Sarah Chudnovsky  
Jack Clark  
Laura Jackson

## **JANUARY 27, 2021 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **INCREASING DEMANDS ON PA'S STATE PARKS AND FORESTS: LOOKING BEYOND THE PANDEMIC**

**John Hallas, Director, Bureau of State Parks**

**Ellen Shultzabarger, Director, Bureau of Forestry**

John Hallas and Ellen Shultzabarger discussed the incredible challenges parks and forestry staff faced during 2020, from adjusting to changing COVID health and safety protocols, to managing crowds, closures, and new users. Both systems experienced record-setting use, with nearly 47 million visits to state parks alone, a 26.6% increase over calendar year 2019. Both bureaus worked with other state agencies and law enforcement to communicate current information along highways, employ traffic control, and maintain safety. Mr. Hallas and Ms. Shultzabarger both discussed ways the lessons learned from 2020 will help them make improvements and create efficiencies to manage the increased use in future years.

#### **PA WILDS: USING THE OUTDOORS TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE RURAL ECONOMY**

**Meredith Hill, Director, DCNR Conservation Landscape Program**

**Ta Enos, CEO, PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship**

Meredith Hill provided an overview of the 15-year-old Conservation Landscape Program, a regional collaborative effort to drive strategic investment and actions around sustainability, conservation, community revitalization, and recreational projects. Ta Enos discussed the state's largest and oldest conservation landscape, the PA Wilds, which covers 2 million acres of public land in northcentral Pennsylvania. Ms. Enos said significant investments by DCNR and DCED have been critical in the economic recovery of this distressed region, inspiring young people to move back to the area to start businesses. Tourism is about 11% of the region's economy, and double-digit growth in visitor spending has been seen in every county over the last decade.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was offered at the meeting.

### **OTHER ATTENDEES INCLUDED:**

John Norbeck, DCNR  
Sherri Anderson, DCNR  
Nicole Faraguna, DCNR  
Aara Vinsh, DCNR  
Nate Lotze, DCNR  
Chris Novak, DCNR  
Jake Newton, DCNR

Peter Spadaro, DCNR  
 Justin Royer, DCNR  
 Shea Zwerver, DCNR  
 Joseph Herbstritt, DCNR  
 Michael Hoffman, DCNR  
 Matthew Crosbie, DCNR  
 Eric Rensel, DCNR  
 Natalie Shearer, Geosyntec  
 David Hess, PA Environment Digest Blog  
 Hannah Brock, PA Wilds Center  
 Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club  
 David Cale, Laurel Caverns  
 Fritz Lecker, Elk County Commissioner  
 Matthew Marusiak, Western PA Conservancy  
 Tim Herd, PA Recreation and Park Society  
 David "Otto" Kurecian, Columbia Montour Visitors Bureau  
 Buffie Boyer, Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau  
 Megan Filak, Luzerne County Convention and Visitors Bureau  
 Robert Stoudt, Montour Area Recreation Commission  
 Derek Eberly, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
 Clifford David, Conservation Economics  
 Emily Gates, PA Recreation and Park Society  
 Griffin Caruso, Research Analyst, PA House of Representatives  
 Elizabeth Krug, PSSA  
 Bob Shughart



*CNRAC officers GERALYN SINGER and  
 BOB KIRCHNER learn about the  
 history of Greenwood Furnace  
 State Park from Environmental  
 Educator PAUL FAGLEY.*

## **MARCH 24, 2021 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **LAND AND WATER TRAIL NETWORK STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Alex MacDonald, Chief of DCNR's Trails, Greenways and Statewide Planning Section, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation**

Alex MacDonald provided an overview of the Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan, a companion document to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which was released in the fall. The plan contains seven recommendations and 40 action steps divided into themes: closing trail gaps, completing major greenways, regional trail planning efforts, engaging and welcoming, and user groups. Mr. MacDonald said to carry out the plan's vision of developing a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation, and healthy lifestyles for all, we must ensure trails are welcoming and accessible. DCNR will use mapping data to examine whether grants are being distributed in an equitable manner and helping to ensure the areas of greatest need have access.

## **DCNR 2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET**

**Stacie Amsler, Director, DCNR's Bureau of Administrative Services**

Stacie Amsler presented highlights of DCNR's portion of the proposed Governor's budget, showing comparisons to the current funding levels. Ms. Amsler noted the budget includes approval for 25 additional ranger positions across parks and forests. Ms. Amsler also discussed the Keystone Tree Fund, a new restricted revenue fund that comes from a check-off box on driver's license renewals, and gifts, grants and donations. The fund is used for TreeVitalize, riparian buffers, and other tree planting efforts. Currently, an average of \$19,000 a month is being deposited into the fund.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was offered at the meeting.

### **OTHER ATTENDEES INCLUDED:**

Meredith Hill, DCNR, Director of Conservation  
Landscapes Program  
John Norbeck, DCNR  
Nicole Faraguna, DCNR  
Aara Vinsh, DCNR  
Nate Lotze, DCNR  
Chris Novak, DCNR  
Jake Newton, DCNR  
Shea Zwerver, DCNR  
Natalie Shearer, Geosyntec  
David Hess, PA Environment Digest Blog  
Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club

Jen Quinn, Sierra Club  
Megan Filak, Luzerne County Convention and  
Visitors Bureau  
Frank Maguire, PA Environmental Council  
Donna Iannone, Sullivan County Commissioner  
Glendon King, PA House of Representatives  
Marci Mowery, PA Parks and Forests Foundation  
Elizabeth Krug, PSSA  
Randy Green  
Ron Steffey  
Joseph Neville  
Jack Clark

## **MAY 26, 2021 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **DUKE LOW MOA**

**Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Advisor**

Ms. Leslie provided an update on the proposed Maryland Air National Guard plan to conduct low-levels flyovers down to 100 feet over the Pennsylvania Wilds area, an expansion of an existing Memorandum of Agreement allowing for flyovers at 8,000 feet. She noted an Environmental Assessment is expected in late summer or early fall. She said there have been some adjustments made from the original proposal which would limit the flyovers to 500 to 1,000 feet over sensitive areas. She noted a 45-day public comment period would also be held.



## **PUBLIC INPUT FOR CONSERVATION PLANNING**

**Ryan Szuch, DCNR Section Chief, Forest Resource Planning, Bureau of Forestry**

Ryan Szuch discussed how methods the Bureau of Forestry uses to gather stakeholder, staff and public input has changed over the years. Once reliant upon face-to-face public meetings, the bureau most recently deployed a mixed methodology approach, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather input for its next strategic plan. The bureau used two polling methods as well as cognitive testing, focus groups, and in-depth interviews to dig deeper into feedback. Mr. Szuch discussed results from all the methods used and how such information will be used to help develop the strategic plan as well as aid in future communications and outreach.

## **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT: HOW DCNR SERVES AS TRUSTEE**

**Cindy Dunn, DCNR Secretary; Audrey Miner, DCNR Chief Counsel**

Audrey Miner provided the historical context of environmental destruction that led up to the passage of the Environmental Rights Amendment to Pennsylvania's Constitution 50 years ago. The premise of Article 1, Section 27 is that Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. She said as trustee of these resources, the commonwealth needs to preserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people. The Environmental Rights Amendment was passed unanimously by both the House and Senate and was ratified by voters by a 4 to 1 margin.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A comment related to the Maryland Air National Guard topic discussed earlier was asked by Sarah Corcoran of The Sierra Club: Is it possible to request the Maryland Air National Guard develop an Environmental Impact Statement versus an Environmental Assessment?

## **OTHER ATTENDEES INCLUDED:**

Meredith Hill, DCNR  
Nate Lotze, DCNR  
Chris Novak, DCNR  
Nicole Faraguna, DCNR  
Matt Keefer, DCNR  
Alex MacDonald, DCNR  
Stacie Amsler, DCNR  
John Norbeck, DCNR  
Aara Vinsh, DCNR

Jake Newton, DCNR  
David Hess, PA Environment Digest Blog  
Sarah Corcoran, Sierra Club  
Elizabeth Krug, PSSA  
Jack Clark, DCNR ATV/Snowmobile Advisory Council  
Griffin Caruso, PA House of Representatives  
Nancy Baker

## Council Actions

- **American Rescue Plan Act Funds:** Letter to Governor Tom Wolf and Members of the PA General Assembly requesting the allocation of funding for state parks and forests infrastructure through Federal funds provided by the American Rescue Plan Act.
- **Science Standards:** Letter to PA State Board of Education regarding proposed changes to science standards supporting separate standards for science and technology and for environment and ecology, along with the inclusion of climate change and local Pennsylvania environmental issues.
- **Update to Motorized Report:** 2021 Update to CNRAC's 2019 Motorized Recreation Report adding several recommendations.
- **PA Forest Action Plan:** Letter to Bureau of Forestry supporting the Plan and providing comments.
- **Marsh Creek State Park Pipeline Spill Letter:** Letter to Secretary Dunn expressing concern over the significant impacts of the spill from the Sunoco/Energy Transfer pipeline.
- **COVID-Relief Stimulus Package:** Letter to PA Congressional Delegation requesting the quick passage of legislation providing stimulus funding to assist state government with the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **CNRAC Conversations:** Virtual discussion focused on "Equity In the Outdoors" held with more than 100 members of the general public and stakeholders.

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

If after reading this report you would like to receive more information about the Council or would like to be added to our electronic mailing list, please contact us at:

E-Mail: [gleslie@pa.gov](mailto:gleslie@pa.gov)

Website: [www.dcnr.pa.gov/cnrac](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/cnrac)



**Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC)**

**Rachel Carson State Office Building**

**P.O. Box 8767**

**Harrisburg, PA 17105-8767**

**Telephone: 717-772-9084**

**[www.dcnr.pa.gov/cnrac](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/cnrac)**