

# CNRAC



Conservation &  
Natural Resources  
Advisory Council

## **2021 - 2022 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: Cook Forest State Park*

September 15, 2022

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 2021-2022 annual report of our activities in fulfillment of our obligations to provide advice and recommendations to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

CNRAC welcomed two new members this year, and while still several seats shy of a full Council due to appointment delays, existing CNRAC members continued to be very active and engaged participants. 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 continued its efforts to increase input from the general public, including offering both an in-person and a virtual meeting option, in order to provide CNRAC -- and ultimately DCNR -- with ideas and suggestions for improving programs and services.

CNRAC is excited about the hiring of Nathan Reigner as PA's first Outdoor Recreation Director. Members of CNRAC will be working closely with Dr. Reigner as he continues to formulate his plans for this important sector of Pennsylvania's economy, as well as the physical and mental health of Pennsylvania citizens. Outdoor recreation is an enormous, vital industry in Pennsylvania, generating \$12 billion annually directly to Pennsylvania's GDP.

CNRAC continued to prioritize assisting DCNR with current infrastructure challenges totaling nearly \$1.5 billion that threaten the enjoyment of these state parks and forests by Pennsylvanians and visitors. CNRAC continued communicating with your office and members of the General Assembly on this infrastructure backlog as deliberations occurred on the spending of American Rescue Act Plan funding and the 2022-2023 budget. We appreciate the funding provided and look forward to the results of the many projects that can now move forward while work continues on identifying an ongoing funding stream for the infrastructure backlog.

We remain committed to ensuring the Commonwealth's natural resources are protected while offering vital recreational and wellness opportunities to Commonwealth citizens.

Sincerely,



Geralyn Singer  
CNRAC Chair 2021-2022

## CNRAC COUNCIL MEMBERS 2021-2022

### 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 2025.

**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 2025.



**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.

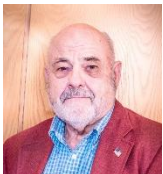


**Steve Stroman** -- Lancaster, PA. B.A., Political Science, Vassar College; M.A. Political Science, Duke University; conservation/environmental policy consultant and family caregiver; term expires January 2023.

**Jerry Walls** - Montoursville, PA; B.A. Western Maryland College; Master of Urban Planning, Wayne State University; Executive Director of the Lycoming County Planning Commission (retired); term expires January 2025.



### PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE APPOINTMENTS (two vacancies pending)



**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.

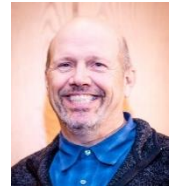






**Janet L. Sweeney** -- Luzerne, PA; B.A in Sociology, State University of New York; M.S. Science in Planning and Regional Development, University of Arizona; Director, Pennsylvania Environmental Council; awaiting reappointment.

**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.



## 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.



**Matt Gabler** - Mechanicsburg, PA; B.A. Bucknell University; Executive Director, Pennsylvania Forest Products Association; term expires January 2025.

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



## 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 (Chair), 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 and an update completed in 2021. DCNR has made good progress with regard to implementing a significant number of the recommendations. The Work Group has also been closely monitoring the ATV pilot program recently begun in the Susquehannock Forest District and looks forward to reviewing the report to be issued after the pilot program is completed.

**Strategic Planning Work Group: Meredith Odatto Graham (Chair), Janet Sweeney, Dave Trimpey, Silas Chamberlin, Sarah Hall-Bagdonas**

The Strategic Planning Work Group finalized comments to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education on the proposed changes to the science standards and supported separate standards for science and technology and environment and ecology. The Strategic Planning Work Group continued monitoring the development of the Bureau of Forestry Strategic Plan, which will be the next plan the group will be reviewing.

**Communications and Outreach Work Group: Sarah Hall-Bagdonas (Chair), Gary Kribbs, Greg Goldman, GERALYN SINGER**

The Communications and Outreach Work Group continued to support *CNRAC Conversations* webinars. These short, virtual discussions on specific topics allow the Council to hear from technical experts, as well as members of the public. The Work Group also continued to grow its stakeholder list to maintain communication and notify interested groups and citizens of CNRAC meetings. The Work Group distributes an e-newsletter prior to each meeting to more than 400 stakeholders and media representatives. Recent newsletters have highlighted favorite state parks of CNRAC members with information on the infrastructure needs at these parks; the articles from the past fiscal year are included on the following page. With the continuation of a virtual meeting option, Council has continued to see increased attendance at each of its meetings.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Group: Joanne Kilgour (Chair), Janet Sweeney, GERALYN SINGER, Greg Goldman, Steve Stroman**

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Group was formed in 2020 to support DCNR's objectives in this area. The Work Group continued to engage in discussions with DCNR's DEI Coordinator regarding the newly formed NextGen Council and other ways the Work Group can contribute.

**Infrastructure Work Group: GERALYN SINGER (Chair), Gary Kribbs, Janet Sweeney, Dave Trimpey, Ted Tharan, Steve Stroman, Meredith Graham**

The Infrastructure Work Group continued to focus on the tremendous funding need for infrastructure upgrades and maintenance at state parks and forests, now totaling nearly \$1.5 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 communicated the needs to state legislators and the PA Congressional Delegation. The Work Group organized two CNRAC Conversations webinars focusing on *Economics and the Outdoors* with a panel of experts, Council members, and members of the public who discussed the economic value of outdoor recreation, the challenges and benefits of maintaining natural resources and infrastructure, and investment opportunities.

**RECREATION DESTINATION & INFRASTRUCTURE SPOTLIGHTS  
MARCH AND MAY 2022 CNRAC NEWSLETTERS**

**Meredith Graham, CNRAC Secretary & Strategic Planning Work Group Chair**

**Favorite Destination:** Ohiopyle State Park

**Favorite Activities and Features:** Ohiopyle State Park is a great place to get outdoors with young children. The DCNR Visitor Center offers interactive exhibits for kids and an ADA accessible view of the



Youghiogheny River. Free parking is available in close proximity to easy hiking and biking trails. Meredith's family also enjoys eating lunch "in the woods" in the Cucumber Run Picnic Area.

**Infrastructure Needs at Ohiopyle:** In addition to Meredith and her family, Ohiopyle hosts more than a million visits each year. But with that service to the public comes an extensive infrastructure that needs constant maintenance and improvement to provide a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. As with most of the 121 state parks within the system, Ohiopyle's list of projects is

long and without sufficient funding. From replacing the campground shower house and water and sewer systems, to rehabilitating bridges and the Great Allegheny Passage, the more than 100 projects on Ohiopyle's needs list totals more than \$57 million.

**Steve Stroman, CNRAC Member & Infrastructure Work Group Member**

**Favorite Recreation Destination:** Gifford Pinchot State Park

**Favorite Activities and Features at Pinchot:** From hiking in Rothrock State Forest and Greenwood Furnace



State Park, to long bike rides on the Great Allegheny Passage and the Pine Creek Trail, to quiet stroller walks with his daughter at Tyler State Park, our parks and trails have brought great joy and enjoyment to Steve and his family.

Gifford Pinchot State Park in York County has been a very special place for Steve. In 2009, Steve and his wife Judie bought a house several miles from Pinchot. Their house was very close to where Governor Gifford Pinchot on July 23, 1931, dedicated the first of what became known as paved "Pinchot Roads" that helped "get the

farmer out of the mud" and facilitated transportation across rural Pennsylvania.

Shortly thereafter, Steve joined the Friends of Gifford Pinchot State Park. Steve proposed and organized the first volunteer trail workday at the park, a collaboration of the Friends, park staff, the Keystone Trail Association, and the Mason-Dixon Trail. The event has taken place nearly every year since 2010.

**Infrastructure Needs at Pinchot:** Gifford Pinchot State Park is a 2,338-acre full-service park consisting of reverting farm fields and wooded hillsides with the 340-acre Pinchot Lake serving as a prime attraction. Pinchot State Park is named for Governor Gifford Pinchot, who is credited as being the foremost American apostle of conservation. To maintain his legendary service to the citizens of Pennsylvania and commitment to our natural resources, the extensive infrastructure of Pinchot needs constant maintenance and improvement to provide a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. Pinchot's infrastructure needs list tops \$13 million, including replacing its water distribution system, water treatment plant, sewage collection, new wells, dam repairs, ADA compliance upgrades, and other green infrastructure needs.

## **SUMMARY OF CNRAC MEETINGS**

**JULY 28, 2021 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **ATV PILOT PROGRAM**

**Chris Nicholas, Susquehannock Forest District Manager, DCNR**

Mr. Nicholas provided Council with an overview of the ATV Pilot Program, which is designed to expand DCNR's trail system by connecting with other legal riding opportunities in the region, primarily existing approved township roads. Mr. Nicholas discussed the monitoring program and the research being conducted by Penn State's Recreation Department with users, camp owners, and businesses along the route. He advised the fiscal code requires a report to legislators in early 2023.

#### **LARGE-SCALE SOLAR SITING IN PENNSYLVANIA**

**Robert Young, Energy Programs Office, PA Dept. of Environmental Protection**

**Nicole Faraguna, Director of Policy, DCNR**

This presentation reviewed Pennsylvania's Solar Future Plan and the different scales of solar. Mr. Young advised grid-scale solar is a new emerging market being driven by access to the transmission infrastructure, technical advances, availability of open land, and policy and regulatory requirements such as the Governor's Executive Order to reduce carbon emissions. Ms. Faraguna outlined DCNR's role of using solar to address climate change in small-scale projects targeted at supporting on-site park/forest operations. DCNR is working to provide solar siting guidance and the impact on natural resources.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A property owner near Marsh Creek State Park asked CNRAC to consider holding a public hearing regarding improper treatment by DCNR employees of adjacent landowners to Commonwealth property.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** In addition to DCNR and other Commonwealth staff, the meeting was attended by members of the public and media and included individuals representing the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Penn Future, PA Parks and Forest Foundation, Sierra Club, PA State Snowmobile Association, contractors and consultants, PA businesses, as well as staff from several tourism bureaus and offices of the General Assembly.

**SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **PREPARING FOR NATURAL DISASTERS AND THEIR AFTERMATH**

**Heather Bollinger, DCNR, Bureau of State Parks**

**Mike Mumau, DCNR, Park Manager, Laurel Hill State Park**

**Mike Kern, DCNR, Chief of Fire Protection, Bureau of Forestry**

**Chuck Lutter, DCNR, Bureau of Facility Design and Construction**

**Helen Delano, Bureau of Geological Survey**



With September being National Preparedness Month, this presentation focused on what DCNR does to keep employees and visitors and resources safe before, during and after severe weather events. As the largest land manager in Pennsylvania, DCNR is facing more severe weather events and damages to facilities and resources as the result of climate change.

Past natural disaster examples were discussed, as well as a recent events including Tropical Storm Ida and a July 2021 tornado which impacted Laurel Hill State Park. DCNR staff reviewed training and procedures, as well as the needed relationships with other agencies such as PEMA and County emergency management agencies. CNRAC also heard how DCNR conducts post-storm event assessments of infrastructure after natural disasters, and best management practices in place to minimize damage, including management of stormwater run-off and management impacts from flooding.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public comments were offered at this meeting.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** In addition to DCNR and other Commonwealth staff, the meeting was attended by members of the public and media and included individuals representing the Sierra Club, PA State Snowmobile Association, contractors, consultants, PA businesses, and offices of the General Assembly.

#### **NOVEMBER 17, 2021 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

##### **TIMBER HARVESTING ON STATE FORESTS UPDATE**

**Seth Cassell, Bureau of Forestry**

Mr. Cassell provided CNRAC with an overview of forest types in Pennsylvania and the timber harvest plan needed to maintain habitat diversity and the health and regeneration of the forest. He reviewed timber revenues over the past 10 years, which have ranged from a high of \$50 million in 2003 to the current \$20 million. He referred those with interest in more information to the publication *Woods that Work*, which was developed by the Governor's Green Ribbon Task Force.

##### **DUKE LOW MOA UPDATE**

**Nicole Faraguna, DCNR Policy Director**

Ms. Faraguna discussed a proposal by the Maryland National Guard to review the existing Duke Low Military Operations Airspace (MOA) to allow for low flying as low as 100 feet over portions of the PA Wilds region in northcentral Pennsylvania. Ms. Faraguna discussed the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and then either a Finding of No Significant Impact or moving forward with a more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement. She advised the Maryland National Guard had issued a draft Finding of No Significant Impact with the Environmental Assessment.

Ms. Faraguna reviewed some of the potential impacts on the region's quality of life, resource protection, and economic impact. Ms. Faraguna advised DCNR is in the process of preparing extensive comments, including requesting an Environmental Impact Statement and more public involvement opportunities.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Several individuals offered comments regarding the Maryland Air National Guard proposed low flyovers—some in support and most opposed.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** In addition to DCNR and other Commonwealth staff, the meeting was attended by members of the public and media and included individuals representing the Forestry Commission, Western PA Conservancy, Susquehanna Watershed, Marcellus Shale Coalition, Sierra Club, PA State Snowmobile Association, contractors and consultants, PA businesses, as well as staff from several tourism bureaus and offices of the General Assembly.

## **JANUARY 26, 2022 (VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **BROADBAND AND CONNECTIVITY IN STATE PARKS/FORESTS**

**Mike Walsh, DCNR Deputy Secretary for Administration**

**Nicole Faraguna, DCNR Director of Policy and Planning**

Mr. Walsh provided CNRAC with the background and current status of cell towers on state park/forest lands, noting the majority of the 335 towers are on state forest lands. He advised Secretary Dunn's policy had replaced the 2000 moratorium, which did not allow for additional towers except for reasons of public safety. The current policy expanded the exception to include a specific need by a community for connectivity.

Ms. Faraguna discussed the impact of the COVID pandemic, which has prioritized the need for greater broadband connectivity and discussed funding sources. She also provided information on recent bi-partisan legislation signed by Governor Wolf to create the PA Broadband Development Authority, whose overall purpose is to ensure the unserved and underserved populations are prioritized. She stated DCNR is reviewing its broadband policies as private interest is increasing.

#### **INTRODUCTION TO PA'S NEW DIRECTOR OF OUTDOOR RECREATION**

**Dr. Nathan Reigner, PA Director of Outdoor Recreation**

CNRAC had the opportunity to meet PA's new Director of Outdoor Recreation, Dr. Nathan Reigner, and learn more about his plans for building PA's outdoor recreation economy, currently the sixth largest in the country in terms of value added but 22<sup>nd</sup> in growth rate. He discussed the many benefits of outdoor recreation including economic benefits to retailers, local communities and the tourism/hospitality industry; workforce recruitment and retention; infrastructure benefits; and physical and mental health benefits. Dr. Reigner emphasized the importance of investment in outdoor recreation to realize the full return on investment and ensure PA's natural resources are ready to welcome the even larger next generation of outdoor recreationists. CNRAC looks forward to working closely with Dr. Reigner to expand the benefits for all Pennsylvanians.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public comments were offered at the meeting.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** In addition to DCNR and other Commonwealth staff, the meeting was attended by members of the public and media and included individuals representing SAAC, Sierra Club, PA State Snowmobile Association, Delaware Division of State Parks, PA Parks and Forests Foundation, FedEx, contractors and consultants, PA businesses, as well as staff from several tourism bureaus and offices of the General Assembly.

## **MARCH 23, 2022 (HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **DCNR's PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY22-23**

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

Ms. Amsler presented highlights of DCNR's portion of the proposed Governor's budget, showing comparisons to the current funding levels. Ms. Amsler noted the proposed budget includes a request for 31 new positions across parks, forests and General Government Operations; \$5 million for forest pest management; \$27 million for operations; and, \$135 million in new Federal appropriation for parks and forests rehabilitation work. She also provided charts showing a three-year history of the other sources of funding for DNCR.

#### **STATE PARKS FOREST STEWARDSHIP**

**Rachel Reese and Mike DiRinaldo, Bureau of State Parks**

Ms. Reese and Mr. DiRinaldo provided CNRAC with an overview of dynamic forest restoration program that hopes to restore and sustain trees and forests in the state parks system. Mr. DiRinaldo discussed forest ecosystem issues and challenges within the state park system and the need to more actively manage forests to protect their long-term health.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A representative from the Pike County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs requested support for limiting changes by the National Park Service to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** In addition to DCNR and other Commonwealth staff, the meeting was attended by members of the public and media and included individuals representing SAAC, Sierra Club, PA State Snowmobile Association, Pike County Federation of Sportsmen's Club, Allegheny Hardwood Region, contractors and consultants, PA businesses, as well as staff from several tourism bureaus.

## **MAY 25, 2022 (HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING)**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **BUREAU OF FORESTRY CAMPING RESERVATIONS & POINT OF SALE SYSTEM**

**Michael Hoffman, Bureau of Forestry, Chief of Recreation Section**

Mr. Hoffman announced the Bureau's intention to move to an online permitting and point-of-sale system for forest camp sites, which will require a small fee for each reservation. He noted that camping permits have been increasing significantly—132% since 2014. He stated self-registration for camping permits will help DCNR meet public demand and expectations and improve the availability of information to users, in addition to reducing staff time spent on issuing permits. Mr. Hoffman noted there will still be some campsites for which permits and reservations are not needed, primarily rustic sites.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

### **Gretchen Leslie, DCNR Liaison to CNRAC**

#### **ATV Pilot Program**

Ms. Leslie advised the second year of pilot program would be starting in a few days in the central region of the state. She stated feedback from the first year was positive, and some changes were made for the second year to address riders' needs. She noted public input is being gathered, along with local, social and environmental impacts being evaluated by Penn State University.

#### **Recreation Stakeholder Engagement**

Ms. Leslie advised that Nathan Reigner, PA's new Outdoor Recreation Director, will start a stakeholder engagement process in late summer/early fall that will include a leadership coalition representing various sectors of outdoor recreation. She noted the coalition's work would last about nine months and will include regional input from stakeholders. She encouraged CNRAC's involvement in the project. Two members of CNRAC, Bob Kirchner and Silas Chamberlin, will be serving as members of the coalition.

## **NEXT GEN COUNCIL UPDATE**

### **Emily Hendrickson, DCNR DEI Coordinator**

Ms. Hendrickson discussed the recent recruitment of young individuals to serve on the Next Gen Council, a new group intended to engage with younger generations and understand the diversity of their needs. More than 100 applications were received; 26 slots were offered. The Council had their first meeting in April and identified three top topics: climate change, equity, and storytelling. Ms. Hendrickson said she is working with CNRAC's DEI work group on how best the two Councils can exchange ideas.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were offered at this meeting.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** In addition to DCNR and other Commonwealth staff, the meeting was attended by members of the public and media and included individuals representing SAAC, Sierra Club, PA State Snowmobile Association, Allegheny Hardwood Region, contractors and consultants, PA businesses, as well as staff from several tourism bureaus and offices of the General Assembly.



## CNRAC CONVERSATIONS

CNRAC continued to host *CNRAC Conversations* webinars to gain ideas, comments and suggestions from stakeholders and users of public lands across Pennsylvania. Two webinars on *Economics and the Outdoors* were held in the past year. CNRAC is using the input from *CNRAC Conversations* to help DCNR create better outdoor experiences for all Pennsylvanians.

The first discussion on *Economics and the Outdoors* in October addressed the impact public assets like parks, forests, rivers, and trails have on our economic and community health and vitality. Discussion also included the increased growth in outdoor use and visitor expectations and the concern with aging infrastructure. CNRAC member Silas Chamberlin moderated the panel of speakers, who included:

- **Kevin Schreiber, CEO, York County Economic Alliance**
- **Piper Lindell, Owner, Allegheny Outfitters**
- **Jim Rodgers, Chief Strategic Officer, Dawood Engineering**
- **Alex Michaels, President and CEO, Discover Lehigh Valley**
- **Shireen Farr, COO, Cumberland Area Economic Development Corp**
- **Chris Perkins, Senior Director, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable**

### Our Speakers



**Kevin Schreiber, CEO, York County Economic Alliance:** Since 2016, Kevin has served with the county's primary business resource for facilitating expansion, funding, redevelopment, networking, business-to-business promotion, advocacy and workforce development among many other services. Kevin's previous experience includes serving as a PA State Representative.

**Piper VanOrd, Owner, Allegheny Outfitters:** After eight years as an air traffic controller in the US Navy, Piper moved home to Warren in 2006 to make a go of AO. She is Leave No Trace Master Educator and ACA Level II Kayak Instructor certified. She is a published author and one of the founding members of the annual Allegheny River Clean-Up.



**Jim Rodgers, Chief Strategic Officer, Dawood Engineering:** Jim is responsible for managing Dawood's strategic growth and brand development. He has been recognized as a visionary, both in his job and his service work within the community.

**Alex Michaels, President and CEO, Discover Lehigh Valley:** While Alex knows the ins and outs of all the Lehigh Valley has to offer, when asked about his favorite local destination, he'll tell you it's a park.



**Shireen Farr, COO, Cumberland Area Economic Development Corp:** As COO, Shireen is responsible for overseeing finance, administration, operations, marketing and strategic planning for Cumberland County's designated economic development agency, real estate subsidiaries and destination marketing organization.

**Chris Perkins, Senior Director, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable:** As Senior Director at the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, Chris works to promote the sustainable growth of the outdoor recreation economy. This work focuses on rural economic development through outdoor recreation, outdoor recreation infrastructure, and building a more inclusive outdoor recreation community.



Dr. Nathan Reigner, PA's new Director of Outdoor Recreation, moderated the second *CNRAC Conversations* webinar in April, which focused on outdoor recreation and conservation funding needs and opportunities, and how communities can make the case for securing dollars to support these vital needs.

Panelists included:

- **Becky Bradley, Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission**
- **Marci Mowery, President, PA Parks and Forests Foundation**
- **Tim Herd, CEO of the PA Recreation and Park Society**
- **Silas Chamberlin, Ph.D., Vice President of Economic and Community Development, York County Economic Alliance, and CNRAC member**
- **Bradley Barkdoll, Advocacy Manager for WeConservePA**

**CNRAC Conversations:  
Economics and the Outdoors, Part 2**

**Moderator:**  
**Nathan Reigner, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director, Pennsylvania's Director of Outdoor Recreation

**Becky Bradley**  
Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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

**Tim Herd**  
CEO, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society

**Silas Chamberlin, Ph.D.**  
Vice President, Economic and Community Development, York County Economic Alliance

**Bradley Barkdoll**  
Advocacy Manager, WeConservePA

**CNRAC** Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council

Both webinars were well attended and engaged a broad cross-section of park and forest users, recreation industry representatives, local economic development and tourism staff, business community members, elected officials, and government staff. Recordings of both webinars are available on CNRAC's website.

## Council Actions

- **7/1/2021-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.
- **11/11/2021-Duke Low MOA:** Letter to Maryland Air National Guard requesting extended public comment period and that public meetings be held.
- **12/31/2021-Duke Low MOA:** Letter to Maryland Air National Guard commenting on Environmental Assessment for changes for low flying training exercises.
- **1/12/2022-Solar Siting:** Letter to DCNR commenting on draft guidance for siting low impact solar projects.
- **6/3/2022-American Rescue Plan Act Funds and 2022 Budget:** 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.

### **AND....A GOOD DAY ON THE TRAIL**

On February 4, 2022, Bob Kirchner, CNRAC Vice Chair, had the good fortune to spend a beautiful winter day with Secretary Dunn, Deputy Secretaries John Norbeck and Mike Walsh, PA Wilds Director Meredith Hill, PA Outdoor Recreation Director Nathan Reigner, Elk State Forest Supervisor Joe Kellert, Ranger Johnson, Press Secretary Wesley Robinson and Deputy Digital



Director Al Germann. The day began at the clubhouse attended by State Representative Mike Armanini, Elk County Commissioners, St. Marys city officials, interested stakeholders and the media. After safety messages, Mr. Kirchner guided the DCNR team on a tour of the 18-mile West Creek Recreational Trail, which passes through Elk and Cameron counties. The active volunteers of St. Marys Snowmobile Association provided logistical support and safety instructions, a role these caring volunteers often fill.



*Council Member Ted Tharan (4<sup>th</sup> from left) joined DCNR officials and others at a dedication of the Cook Forest Office and Visitor's Center*

## 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:



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

**Rachel Carson State Office Building**

**P.O. Box 8767**

**Harrisburg, PA 17105-8767**

**Telephone: 717-772-9084**

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

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