

Penn's Stewards

News from the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

Fall 2025 Newsletter



The mission of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

Vision: To be the trusted voice and advocate to sustain and enhance Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

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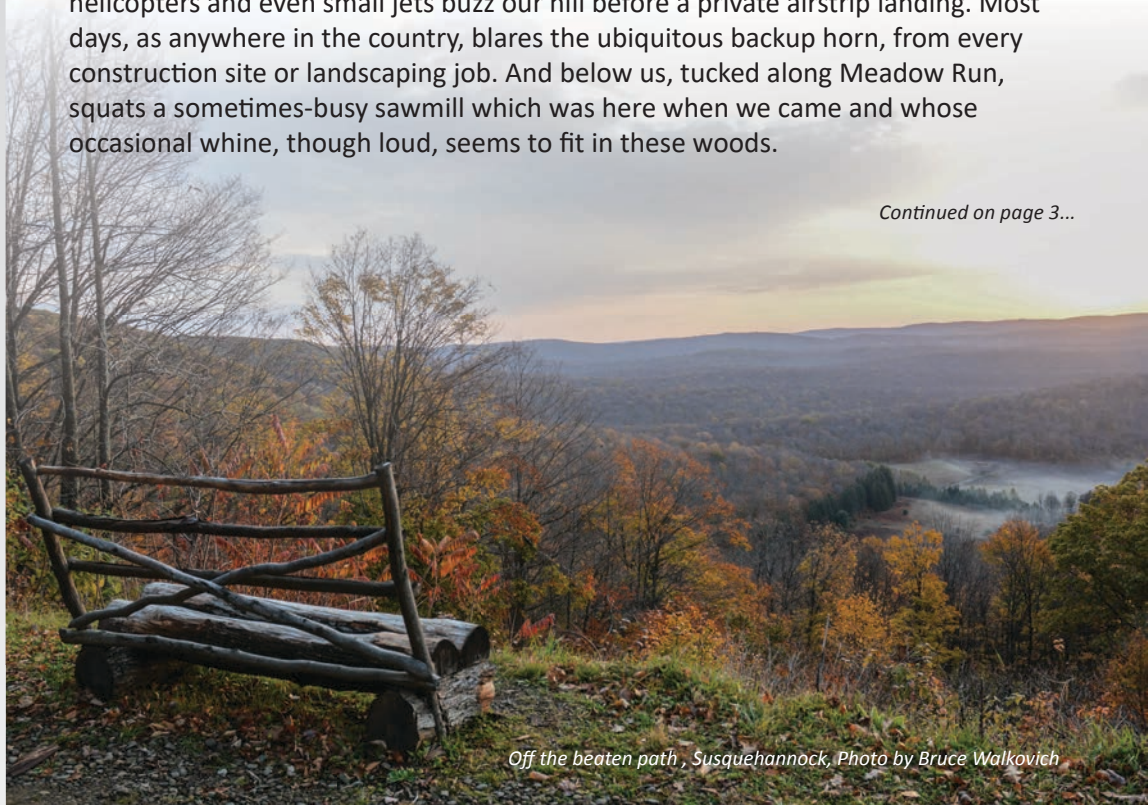
Quiet; Natural Resource in Our Lives and Time

By Ben Moyer

My home presents a 21st century paradox of place. It's rural by choice, a cottage/camp tucked within forest, improved over years to our own needs. Ohiopyle State Park and the Quebec Wild Area, Forbes State Forest are minutes away in opposite directions with diverse choices for outdoor experience. At home, there's room for a garden, firewood at hand, and we enjoy seeing deer, turkeys, woodland songbirds, and the occasional bear. We know we're fortunate to live here.

It's also noisy, noticeably more so than when we bought the place in 1984. Route 40 is a mile south, and when eastbound trucks gear down for the long down-grade to the stoplight, their air brakes unleash a seismic bellow. Past the foot of our lane, Rte. 381 carries thousands seeking contact with nature to Ohiopyle. It's also a favorite route for thunderous motorcycles and big throaty pickups, rending the mountain air in their wake. We endure unannounced fireworks and amplified parties from the resort across the hollow, where helicopters and even small jets buzz our hill before a private airstrip landing. Most days, as anywhere in the country, blares the ubiquitous backup horn, from every construction site or landscaping job. And below us, tucked along Meadow Run, squats a sometimes-busy sawmill which was here when we came and whose occasional whine, though loud, seems to fit in these woods.

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Off the beaten path , Susquehannock, Photo by Bruce Walkovich

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President's Message

Marci Mowery

Fall is slowly creeping in after a long, dry, hot spell. As I write this in mid-September, the trees outside my window are already beginning to turn.

My summer took an unexpected turn after a misstep in the field left me with a broken fibula. While I literally saw stars in the moment, the pain quickly subsided and I managed to walk out and drive home—only to learn days later that it was, in fact, broken. Suddenly, my summer shifted from camping trips and hiking plans to figuring out how to stay active while staying off my foot. The knee-high boot gave me mobility, but it also wore me out quickly.



I am deeply grateful to neighbors, coworkers, and friends who stepped in to help—driving me to work and the grocery store, mowing the lawn, walking the dog. My husband even carried on with our commitment to host in July, letting me experience the park through his stories.

Asking for help for our parks and forests comes naturally. Asking for help for myself? Not so much. Yet this experience reminded me of the importance of not only asking for support but also receiving it with grace and gratitude. It offered me the chance to slow down, rest, renew, and embrace quiet—the theme of this newsletter.

Slowing down, sitting in stillness, moving gently—it may feel like a luxury in our busy lives, but it can also be a gift. My hope is that you, too, find moments of quiet this fall, whether in your backyard, your neighborhood, or out on the trails of our beloved state parks and forests. And that you don't require a broken leg to achieve it!

Yours in the Outdoors,
Marci

Memorial or Honorary Gifts



You can honor the memory of a special person or joyous occasion while supporting PPFF's work in conservation, recreation, education, and volunteerism in our state parks and forests.

Download a form at
www.PAParksAndForests.org/support/ways-to-give

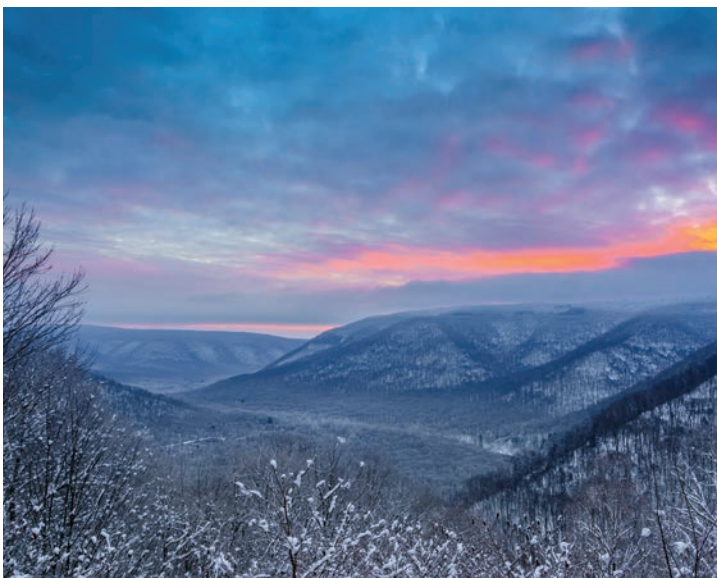
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The paradox of this appealing place is that despite its rural appearance, its distance from urban congestion, our society creates a lot of noise as it does its work, visits here or passes through to elsewhere. Quiet, whenever it returns, is obvious and welcomed.

That society, I believe, would benefit if we could think of quiet as a natural resource, something of value that we might collectively conserve within our environment, like timber, water, and wildlife. In one sense quiet is a renewable resource because when, if, noise subsides, quiet can reclaim a place, the way a stream reclaims its bony bed after rain, at least temporarily. But in a practical demonstrable sense, quiet is non-renewable. A clear-cut forest will grow back, but once our culture probes a quiet place with its clamor, it never fully retreats.

Contemplating quiet within society's rising noise points to a passage from writer Barry Lopez's book "Arctic Dreams." Lopez advises that our most appropriate posture toward landscapes, wild things, all nature, is from "an attitude of regard." What he means by this is being open to what natural places can reveal, acknowledging that landscapes hold "a kind of wisdom to be experienced."

Quiet serves this "attitude of regard" well. Conversely, deliberate excessive noise, noise that serves no purpose, declares there is nothing else in a surrounding space worth knowing, nothing beyond the din that merits our senses' perception. We all lose much as that mindset deepens and spreads among us.



Beauty all around, Ohiopyle, Photo by Clare Kaczmarek.



Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, Photo by Ben Moyer

Our culture tends to trivialize quiet, to view quiet-advocates as a philosophical fringe. But artificial noise is a recent phenomenon, part of our ambient surroundings for less than .0005% of our species' history. Humans evolved within quiet. Our brains learned within quiet how to relate to the world and to one another. Researchers in the emerging field of human auditory ecology are only beginning to grasp the importance of even occasional quiet, including natural animal vocalizations and geophysical sounds of water and wind, to our physical and emotional well-being, and the quality of interpersonal relationships.

We Pennsylvanians, alive at this point in time, are fortunate to still have quiet within our reach, though some of us, due to background circumstance, need more help to know and access quiet places. Our topography preserves oases of quiet on ridgetops and plateaus, where the racket of commerce is below you, or in the heart of hollows where quiet, which is not the same as silence, embraces the murmur of streams.

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Off the Beaten Path, Rothrock State Forest, Photo by Tarrea Potter

Articulating the worth of quiet can be challenging. I believe that quiet opens an emotional path to reverence, which is in too-short supply in our culture. Reverence is the starting-point for mutual respect, empathy, and for stewarding the environment which sustains our own existence. As humans, we are innately capable of feeling reverence toward the natural world, to the deity of our choosing, a concept or ideal, or to one another. Noise, though, short-circuits reverence, which is why churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples, throughout history, have sought to maintain quiet within.

The human trait of creativity is another manifestation of reverence. And as a writer, I know that creative thoughts and impulses spring from quiet. Most of my ideas for writing subjects arise during quiet hikes or within the serenity of streams. We'll need human creativity, perhaps more than ever, after our culture's uncomfortably glib

embrace of what we're calling "AI." In that future, quiet may enable us to preserve a sense of reverence for ourselves.

I also know that quiet helps me recall, and thank, those who took me outdoors as a child, who introduced me to trout under hemlock shade, to the rustle of a fox squirrel in a hickory tree. Those memories mandate my personal obligation to share quiet with others.

My granddaughter (9) loves to paddle a canoe. We've been canoeing together since she could sit upright in her own kids' life-jacket and flail at the water with a ping-pong blade. We paddle on lakes and ponds, all mostly quiet places. I never point out silence to her. I want it to sink into her awareness as we synchronize our strokes and glide. I hope she'll notice it sometime, in contrast to other places, so different from the screech of marketers, and note quiet's value. I want to make it possible for her to feel that distinction on her own, and I believe she will.

If we value quiet in this way, we must reserve quiet places for the lives of our children and grandchildren who otherwise might never know that quiet once existed.

We might also choose to work toward quiet—less noise—in our broader society where we live and work. If so, such an initiative will need a pragmatic approach. Noise is a difficult thing to—I'll use the word—regulate, politically and ethically. Those loud air-brakes I cited make travelling safer for all of us in mountainous terrain we love to visit. And there's no way to know how many lives backup horns,



Friends and family fun, Ohiopyle, Photo by Shawn Wolfe

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annoying as they are, have saved at worksites. We all make noise; we all sanction, even demand, it in our lives. I know that in my working life, paying my bills resulted in noise endured by others. And if you use electricity, if you travel by modern means, work in a quarry or a cubicle, your life begets noise.

Still, it is imperative for those of us who have known quiet to help others sense its ephemeral nature and the cost of its loss, to seize opportunities to reduce noise where we live, and preserve it where we do not live, but visit for quiet renewal. Our society makes its rare deliberate decisions by plurality. Only through consensus can we achieve some common honoring of quiet places and quiet times.

Ben Moyer's writing on nature, outdoors, and natural resource issues appears in numerous regional, state, and national publications. His recent book, "Smoke to See By" was honored as 2024 Book of the Year by the Writers Conference of Northern Appalachia. The book is available through PPFF, at many state park gift shops or at www.sunburypress.com. Ben lives and writes in Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

Gift Certificate Available



Available online or in the park office

- Share us with your family and friends
- Accepted at any park office, the 888-PA-PARKS call center, and for internet reservations for state park operated facilities
- Go green – gift certificates are now emailable and saved in your account for printing.
- All proceeds are used for the operation of Pennsylvania State Parks



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

ON SALE

THE 2026 STATE PARKS CALENDAR
AVAILABLE NOW IN THE PPFF
ONLINE STORE



Please note a correction in spelling on the February photo: The photographer is Sherry Acevedo. Our apologies to Sherry for the error.

Envisioning the Future of Pennsylvania's State Park and Forest Trails

By Marci Mowery

Pennsylvania's state park and forest trails inspire adventure, reflection, and connection to nature. When asked what they'd like to see in the future, trail users shared a vision rooted in respect, accessibility, and stewardship.

Maintenance and Preservation

The most common request was simple: keep the trails well maintained. Visitors want clear paths, repaired surfaces, updated blazes, and improved signage. Many emphasized the need for sustainable upkeep—addressing erosion, controlling invasive plants, and keeping facilities in good repair. There is strong support for increased funding to ensure trails remain safe and inviting for generations to come.

Mapping, Signage, and Information

Detailed maps—both printed and digital—are high on the wish list. Hikers want in-depth mapping for remote areas, full recreation guides for all parks, and better trailhead information boards. Up-to-date, phone-connected maps, interpretive signage, and even Wi-Fi for safety and navigation were suggested.

Access and Inclusivity

Trail enthusiasts envision a network that welcomes everyone: more accessible trails for people with mobility challenges, expanded equestrian access, and trails that connect communities. Several called for more shared-use trails, while others sought separation from noisy motorized routes. Additional parking, accessible entry points, and even safe spots to work remotely outdoors made the list.



Photo by Marci Mowery



Photo by Marci Mowery

Education and Engagement

There's a desire to connect more people—especially youth—to the outdoors. Suggestions included expanded programming for children and adults, citizen science projects, and events that reduce barriers to trail use. More organized volunteer opportunities, including local trail crews, could help bridge the gap between funding needs and maintenance goals.

Expansion and Protection

Many hope to see new trails, particularly in underserved regions like the northeast counties, as well as gaps filled in existing networks such as bike trails and the North Country Trail. At the same time, there's a strong call to protect the peaceful character of the trails—maintaining quiet, limiting ATV access, and preserving natural habitats.

Shared Vision

Above all, trail lovers want Pennsylvania's state park and forest trails to remain a source of joy, beauty, and connection. They envision trails that are accessible, well-marked, and well-cared for—places where future generations can walk, ride, learn, and find peace in Penn's Woods.

New Staff



New Hire: Nina

We're excited to welcome Nina Kralick as PPFF's new Office and Online Retail Facilitator. Nina brings extensive experience in office management, customer service, and organizational systems, along with a strong dedication to supporting staff, volunteers, and online retail operations.

A lifelong lover of Pennsylvania's outdoors, Nina draws inspiration from time spent running, cycling, and painting in our state parks and forests. She joins PPFF with a passion for helping preserve these special places: "We need to be faithful stewards and protectors of our precious natural resources, and I invite everyone to join in their own way."

Interns: Eleanor and Emily

This summer, PPFF hosted two interns, Eleanor Meckley and Emily Wegner. We kept them busy with advancing trail advocacy, helping them network with experts in conservation at events and workshops, and utilizing them to help share our mission for supporting state parks and forests and breaking down barriers to help ensure everyone can have a positive outdoor experience, volunteerism, and gathering data for blogs and infographics.

Eleanor, a Biology major at Shippensburg University, is part of the school's 4+1 program that will allow her to earn both a bachelor's and master's degree in just five years. Eleanor brings a love for field research, hiking, and especially Pennsylvania's waterways, where she enjoys sampling streams and exploring aquatic life.

Emily is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science at Bethany College, where she also serves as captain of the lacrosse team. A dedicated outdoor enthusiast who loves hiking, tubing, gardening, and sports, Emily is passionate about conservation and community. She plans to complete her degree and pursue a career in marine conservation or another field where she can make a positive environmental impact.



Interns Eleanor Meckley and Emily Wegner at Shikellamy State Park for the dedication of a new fish passage. Photo by Marci Mowery

State Parks*

will allow Sunday hunting

NOV
16

NOV
23

NOV
30

State Forests

will allow all Sunday hunting dates

*For the 2025-26 hunting season in state parks that allow hunting

19 NEW FACTSHEETS

your fave trails

ppff.online/fave-trails

SCENIC OVERLOOKS

In the spring "Your Favorite Trail to ...": Here are some resulting ideas for cross-country skiing.

All State Parks/Forests Mentioned

- Susquehanna State Forest
- Lehigh Gorge State Park
- Tidewater State Forest
- Black Mountain State Park
- Dorney Hill State Park
- Laurel Ridge State Park
- Pymatuning State Park
- Chapman State Park
- Clear Creek State Forest
- Monaca State Park
- Delaware Canal State Park
- Lickanawanna State Park
- One Bull State Park
- Toga State Forest
- Boyd Big Tree Conservation Area

What Should I Wear?

It's a winter sport, so of course you prepared to be out in the cold. He overheard! Cross-country skiing is in the field of exercise physiology a cardiovascular exercise known "Y" want! Some clothing essentials for

- Goggles
- A hat
- Nord
- Warm
- Coat
- Layer of c

Types + Counts

Both clas

RECOMMENDED FORESTS FOR A CHALLENGING CLIMB

In the spring "Your Favorite Trail to ...": Here are some resulting ideas for cross-country skiing.

Recommended Forests for

- Tidewater State Forest
- Susquehanna State Forest
- Lehigh Gorge State Park
- Pine Grove Furnace State Park
- Blue Knob State Park
- Buckhorn State Forest
- Clear Creek State Forest
- Colman State Park
- Denning State Park
- Cook Forest State Park
- Gallatin State Forest
- HC Connors Hill State

Small Actions Lead to Big Impacts for Conservation

As we go to press, we are still without a budget. We all have a role in advocating for state parks and forests, so we thought we would take a deeper dive into what advocacy is.

When you think of advocacy, what comes to mind? Lawyers and lobbyists pacing the halls of the Capitol? Signing a petition in favor of (or against) a policy? Calling your elected officials?

Merriam-Webster defines advocacy as “the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.” By this definition, we are all advocates in some way.

And when it comes to conservation, everyday advocacy is critical. You don’t need a podium or protest to make a difference. Simply spending time in nature—hiking, paddling, birdwatching—demonstrates that public lands matter. Your presence in these spaces reinforces their value. And when you volunteer your time or talent, you are advocating for the health and future of parks and forests (as well as clean air and water!)



Learning trail maintenance skills to improve public lands. Photo by Marci Mowery



Tabling at an event to promote the value of outdoor recreation. Photo by Marci Mowery

Advocacy can be as simple as introducing a friend to a favorite location, sharing a social media post about an upcoming conservation initiative, or encouraging your workplace to participate in a volunteer day. It can also be as bold as testifying at a public hearing in support of protected lands, joining a local friends’ group, or leading a community effort to improve a park.

Technology helps to play a role in advocacy, from building awareness through social media, completing an online call-to-action, or by building your knowledge base. Sign up to use your outside voice and receive our Action Alerts at ppff.online/subscribe.

Whether you decide to walk the halls of congress or merely walk a trail, the beauty of advocacy is that it meets you where you are. As the saying goes, ‘Even small ripples can turn into waves of change.’ Because advocacy isn’t just about grand gestures, it’s about showing up, speaking out, and making sure the places we love remain open to the public for generations to come.



Plan Ahead! Continue the legacy of conservation of our state parks and forests for future generations through a bequest or life income gift to PPFF.

Did You Know? PPFF is able to accept your TAX DEDUCTIBLE donations of stock to support our work and/or projects in state parks and forests.

For more information visit www.PAParksAndForests.org



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PA TRAILS YOU LOVE!

Discover more about trails near you at
PAParksAndForests.org/category/guest-blog/

What Can You Do to Improve Pennsylvania Trails During National Trails Month?

June 8, 2021



History of the West Rim Trail

September 17, 2025



of Beauty: State Forest Hiking Trails

September 5, 2025



Quehanna Trail History

September 18, 2025





Shared Spaces for All





PPFF ANNUAL AWARDS

Nominate a deserving volunteer at
<https://paparksandforests.org/our-work/volunteerism/annual-awards-nominating/>



2025 PPFF Virtual Book Club

Dec. 17, 2025

Join us at 12pm online to
discuss some of our favorite
books! Scan the QR code
or get details online at
<https://ppff.events/book-club-2025>



2025 Award Banquet

Photos by Tasha Ferris



Chair's Award sponsored by KCI - Keith Russell
Tina Molski (PPFF Board Chair) and Keith Russell



Forest of the Year Award sponsored by Purple Lizard Maps - Loyalsocks State Forest
Sponsors Justine Andronici and Michael Hermann, and Marci Mowery (PPFF President), Rich Glinski, Sean Freidhof, Seth Cassell, and Jason Albright



Cliff Jones Keystone Legacy Award sponsored by Domtar - Dwight Lewis Lumber Co., Inc./Lewis Lumber Products, Mel Lewis and Marc Lewis



Volunteer Award (Group) sponsored by Kate's Real Foods - Eastern PA Alliance of Climbers, Joe Forte, Dana Caracciolo, and Mary Soderberg (PPFF Board)



President's Award sponsored by Kate Harper Esquire - Steve Stroman



Park of the Year Award sponsored by Seneca Resources - Hills Creek State Park Complex
Tracy Lambert, Tim Morey, Scott Morgan, Ben Stone, and Mike Teeter (PPFF Board)



Joseph Ibberson Award sponsored by Stahl Sheaffer Engineering - Chris Kemmerer
Brad Mallory (PPFF Board), Chris Kemmerer, and sponsors Cristina Roth, Jeff Sheaffer, and Mike Marso.



Young Volunteer Award sponsored by Charles & Susan Davidson and George & Kristine Asimos - Mikayla Traini, Paul Fogal (PPFF Board), Mikayla Traini, and George Asimos (Sponsor)



Education Award sponsored by PA American Water - Dr. Allen Dieterich-Ward, Maria Montero (PPFF Board), Dr. Allen Dieterich-Ward, and Linda Ries (Pennsylvania Historical Association)



Improvement Award sponsored by Marotta/Main Architects - Paul Yost, Paul Roth (PPFF Board) and Paul Yost



Volunteer Award (Individual) sponsored by REI Co-Op - Charles Pinardi, Mary Hirst (PPFF Board), Charles Pinardi, and Tina Molski (PPFF Board Chair)

We Will Miss

Alec Campbell

May 23, 2025

Taken verbatim from DCNR's social media (because we certainly cannot improve it), this post and the picture that accompanied it, pays tribute to Tyler State Park Ranger Alec who lost his life in a kayaking accident in rain-swollen Neshaminy Creek at the park.



With an intense passion for life and an incredible ability to connect with people, Alec brought warmth, humor, and dedication to everything he did. He was an avid disc golfer, hiker, and paddler who loved planting native species and spent countless hours restoring natural areas by removing invasives.

Alec was a thoughtful educator, drawing on his background in psychology and his experience as a devoted father to make meaningful connections with park visitors, volunteers, and students. He guided many Eagle Scout and youth projects at Tyler and always found a way to engage his audience. He once was even described by a middle school group as “super chill and funny,” which might just be the highest praise anyone could hope for.

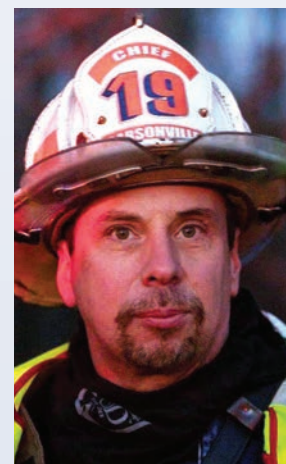
A GoFundMe page has been established to support his children:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/in-memory-of-alec-college-fund-for-alecs-boys>

David Warfel

January 21, 1968 –
May 29, 2025

Wildfire fighter/instructor (and maintenance supervisor for the Weiser State Forest) Dave Warfel died in May after leading a training course at the Wildland Fire Academy at Shippensburg University.



Dave served as Chief of his local fire company, Carsonville Volunteer Fire Department, which shared this tribute to social media: "It is with great sadness that we must announce the passing of our beloved fire chief, David Warfel. David started his volunteering in his teens as a member of Powells Valley Fire Co then Carsonville Fire Co, and Halifax Fire Dept. He was always a cheerful, musical, funny guy; you couldn't make it through an event without him singing a little at some point. A great man and staple of the community has been lost but will always be remembered."

John "Jack" Winieski

September 5, 1930 - July 9, 2025

Many knew him for his work with trees, but forestry wasn't just Jack's job—it was who he was. Over his 30-year career with the PA Bureau of Forestry, Jack shaped forest management and timber stand improvement practices in the Commonwealth. After retiring, Jack served as Executive Director of the Allegheny Chapter of the Society of American Foresters for 20 years. Outside of work, he inspired younger generations with his hands-on expertise and plainspoken wisdom—whether as a visiting instructor at Penn State's Mont Alto campus or through his leadership on the Project Learning Tree curriculum for elementary students.

Jack's passion extended to his backyard, where he propagated fruit and nut trees, notably his hickories. His efforts earned him awards at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, including “Best in Show” as recently of January 2025. Even his side hustles centered on trees—splitting and delivering firewood, tending and harvesting for local apple orchards, and cutting and selling Christmas trees for private growers and with the Dillsburg Jaycees.

Whether he was cracking jokes or hickory nuts, Jack exuded a contagious enthusiasm that inspired anyone who was lucky enough to work alongside him.



BY THE NUMBERS

The theme for 2024 was 'leap in', which celebrated the Leap Year and provided an opportunity to educate, inform, and conserve through various modes. And 'leap in' we did! Your support fuels it all. Across Pennsylvania, PPFF and our Friends chapters help to bring parks and forests to life through volunteer power, hands-on projects, and community outreach. In 2024, together we:



165
SPECIAL EVENTS

attracting **70,104**
people concerts,
yoga, paddles,
heritage days, fishing
derbies, movie
nights, and more!

190
OTHER EVENTS
attracted **12,991**
participants



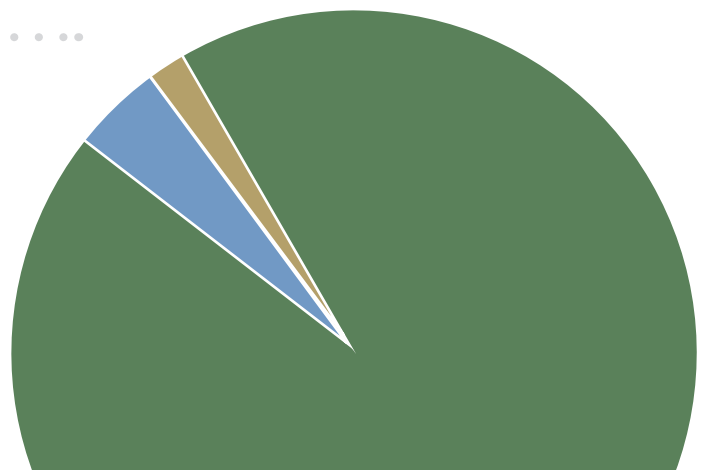
The value of this volunteerism is worth more than

\$1,345,259.81

EXPENSES

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation focuses on program, which is reflected in the annual allocation of expenditures.

■ PROGRAM ■ MANAGEMENT ■ FUNDRAISING



LEAP IN: 2024 IN REVIEW

The theme for 2024 was “Leap In”—a nod to the Leap Year and a call to action to celebrate, educate, and conserve Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests. Throughout the year, PPFF and our Friends chapters embraced this spirit by creating new opportunities for learning, engagement, and stewardship. We also celebrated our 25th anniversary.

We reached people across the state through newsletters, blogs, and social media, sharing fresh ideas for outdoor recreation and spotlighting ways to get involved.

Volunteers were at the heart of this effort. Corporate teams rolled up their sleeves for workdays, and two new Friends chapters leapt into action—making an immediate impact in their communities.

Education and safety remained central. Working with DCNR, we provided resources for safely viewing the solar eclipse, and our infographics highlighted practical tips for skill-building and safe recreation. At the same time, we invested in the future by commissioning studies to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps.

Our programs continued to grow in exciting ways. The PPFF Book Club expanded to twelve virtual gatherings, several featuring the authors themselves, while the Conservation Heritage Project uncovered new Untold Stories designed to inspire the next generation of conservationists. We also supported the completion of the state park history book, capturing the story from 2016–2023.

On the ground, our commitment to stewardship was evident in every corner of the state. Trail funds supported critical improvements to park and forest paths, and historic Civilian Conservation Corps structures were restored to preserve a legacy of conservation and service.

2024 was truly a year of “leaping in”—to new projects, deeper connections, and stronger partnerships that ensure Pennsylvania’s parks and forests remain vibrant for generations to come.



Things that YOU made possible through PPFF and friends groups:

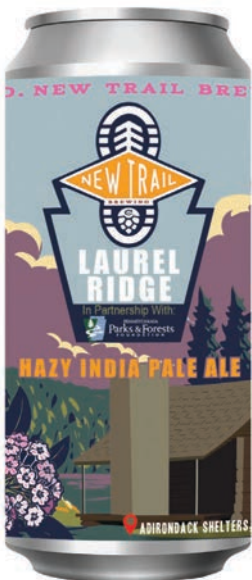
- 6200** Students reached through 210 programs supported through EITC donations
- 5506** Trees planted
- 4295** Students and others reached through 14 outreach events
- 465** People reached via 10 educational programs
- 420** Miles of trails built or maintained
- 211** Bluebird boxes/bird projects
- 201** Trails maintained
- 35** Amphitheaters or other educational facilities built or maintained
- 30** Gardens planted or maintained
- 24** Trail bridges or culverts built or maintained
- 18** Amphitheaters/educational areas
- 17** Roadside cleanups
- 14** Spanish language radio shows held
- 12** Benches
- 12** Buildings, equipment or similar items maintained
- 12** Conservation books discussed
- 9** Color correcting viewfinders placed
- 8** Training programs held for volunteers
- 8** Picnic tables
- 8** Playgrounds built or updated
- 7** Corporate volunteer days
- 5** Banquet tables
- 4** Playgrounds maintained
- 4** Historic structures maintained
- 3** Interns
- 3** Leave No Trace programs
- 2** Videos released
- 2** ADA canoe and kayak launches installed
- 2** Interpretive panels placed
- 1** Fishing pier
- 1** Ranger e-bike purchased
- 1** Campground host golf cart
- 1** Public webinar held
- 1** Picnic pavilion
- 1** Large fire ring
- Educational supplies purchased- water quality test kits, program supplies, etc
- Pa Outdoor Corps crews supported
- Taxidermy projects
- Bus transportation fees paid to reduce transportation barriers

Partnerships

Airstream Owners Give Back

Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation was honored to receive a grant from the WBCCI Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Airstream Club International (also known as the Wally Byam Caravan Club International). Over 1000 Airstream owners spent nearly a week in York and exploring the great state of Pennsylvania. While there, not only did they enjoy what makes Pennsylvania great, they gave back through local charitable support, a blood drive, and grants to several conservation organizations. What an amazing group.

Dendy Jarrett, President of the WBCCI Foundation, presented the check during the closing ceremonies on Thursday. Thank you, WBCCI Foundation, for your generous support and commitment to conservation.



Laurel Ridge State Park Beer

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, New Trail Brewing stepped in to assist in raising funds to restore the fireboxes of the unique Adirondack style shelters located on the trail. You, too, can assist by making a donation to this project at: <https://paparksandforests.org/support/special-funding-initiatives/laurel-highlands-hiking-trail-shelters-fund/> Thank you, New Trail!



New Patches and other merch!

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STATE EMPLOYEE?**

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PA Parks and Forests Foundation
for your annual SECA Donation!

Please use

#9200-0046

Powered by Purpose: The Perks of Pitching In

Make new connections, build your community—pitch in and feel the impact.

Top Nine Ways Volunteering Helps Overall Health

- Reduces Stress
- Boosts Self Esteem and Confidence
- Increases Physical Activity
- Improves Cognitive Function
- Promotes Longevity
- Creates a Sense of Purpose
- Improves Mood and Decreases Depression
- Enhances Social Connection
- Strengthens the Immune System

77% of volunteers say that volunteering improves their mental health, 53% say it helps their physical health.



Older adults who volunteer at least 200 hours annually decreased their risk of blood pressure by 40%, thus lowering their risk of heart disease and stroke.
(Carnegie Mellon study)

Volunteering for as little as one hour a week (is) associated with slower biological aging, with the greatest health benefits observed in those volunteering more than four hours a week.
(Social Science and Medicine Study, 2023)



Mental Health:

- Reduces stress
- Decreases depression and anxiety



Emotional Health:

- Fosters empathy and compassion
- Builds emotional resilience



Physical Health:

- Encourages physical activity
- Lowers blood pressure and improves heart health



Spiritual Health:

- Fosters a sense of connection
- Promotes reflection and inner growth



Visit the PPFF calendar to learn of volunteer events near you.

Combat Loneliness:

Loneliness is the "new smoking." Studies show it can impact mortality as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Volunteering not only helps to reduce loneliness, it helps to decrease depression and anxiety and can foster a sense of connection.

Graphic funded, in part, by a grant from



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You Made it Happen

Assessment of Workforce Trends for the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps

Understanding how the next generation thinks is critical to not only attracting participants to the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, but for building the next generation of conservation leaders. To better understand Gen Z and Gen Alpha, PPFF retained the services of Strategic Consulting Partners and the Deeter Gallaher Group.

Here is a quick little quiz on current lingo—see how you do! Check out our blog page to see how well you did!

Lingo	Guess	Real Answer
Bet		
No Cap		
Cheugy		
Drip		
Delulu		
Gucci		
IYKYK		
Tea		

Spiral Climber and Benches at Mont Alto

The playground at Mont Alto continues to expand, with the addition of benches and a spiral climber. As this project ends, we are proud of the work that was completed in this oldest park in our state system. From the restoration of the Civilian Conservation Corps era pavilion to the playground, both visitors and residents will benefit from the work.



Board Retreat

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation board had a chance to learn more about some big projects under way in your state parks and forests. First, we toured the Glen Onoko Falls project. We are hopeful that funding will be included in the 2025-26 budget to make improvements to the trail, which is currently closed due to dangers. We also toured the Leadership Training Academy at Hickory Run State Park and held a meeting in the recently opened visitor center there. These in-person retreats allow us to better understand the projects and pressures that are occurring in state parks and forests.



Women in the Big Woods

This summer, forty women came together at French Creek State Park’s Group Camp 2 for the second annual Women in the Big Woods!

In partnership with the staff of French Creek and Marsh Creek State Parks, participants enjoyed three days and two nights of hands-on learning and community. Thanks to your support, women explored new outdoor skills through workshops led by park staff, PPFF team members, and dedicated volunteers. From archery (with equipment you helped purchase!) and mountain biking, to outdoor cooking and even forest bathing, the weekend was filled with discovery, confidence-building, and connection.



We’re already looking forward to 2026!

Start of Work at Carroll Cabin

Your support is transforming a circa-1767 log cabin into an historical opportunity to ‘stay the night.’ Recently, a mason was brought under contract to begin the deconstruction of the stone chimney as part of the process of righting the list of the building. Looking forward to watching this project as it moves through each stage!

If you would like to contribute to the project, scan the QR code.



Chair Donation

As we continue to work to make parks and forests more accessible, we are excited to announce that we will be launching a free, motorized chair loan program for those with mobility challenges. Recently, Quantum Rehab donated a chair to kick-start the program. Look for it to roll out in 2026!



Getting Out Under the Stars...

An array of tents for programming at Ohiopyle State Park, made possible by your purchases at our retail outlet in the park visitor's center, were not only purchased, they were immediately put to use in park educational programming! Keep your eye on the park's educational programs to learn



how you might get a chance to participate. And while you are at Ohiopyle, don't forget to stop in the visitor center - our space is right as you come in the door to say hi to the friendly faces at the front desk.

...and Getting Onto the Water

Although they work incredibly hard, it's not ALL work for the PA Outdoor Corps. Pictured here, Ohiopyle State Park environmental education staff and interns recently took the American Sign Language Outdoor Corps crew out to Yough Lake to use the stand up paddleboards. It was the first time using a SUP for many of them and everyone had a great time.

The paddleboards were funded through a partnership between PPFF, the park, and Ford Bronco.



We are happy to act as fiscal agent for parks and forests so they can receive funds such as the Bronco Wild Fund grant program, funding such things as the purchase of the SUPs above and expansion of access to the Calderwood tract of property, donated to Cook Forest State Park by the Calderwood family in memory of brothers Jim and Jeff "Cuffy" Calderwood.

Jim worked for Clear Creek State Park and upon Cuffy's passing a few years after his brother's a gift of 110 acres was made to the park for creation of an accessible hunting area.



Removing Barriers

Visitors to Fowlers Hollow State Park are now able to borrow thematic adventure bags to help them on their explorations in the park. There's a bag with information on insects, rocks and minerals, birds, and fungus. Purchase of the bags and



materials was made possible through donations and firewood sales managed by a PPFF volunteer a/k/a the Friend of Fowlers Hollow. Visit the campground host to check out a bag!

Outreach

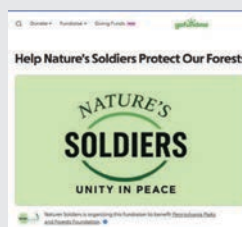
Catching someone in the office is sometimes challenging, as we spread out across the state meeting with friends groups, tabling at events, and rolling up our sleeves to work on projects. This summer, Interns Emily and Eleanor also had a chance to not only take part in projects, they mastered their public engagement skills at a variety of tabling events.



A Special Shout Out

This space is reserved for the younger set. This summer came the mysterious deposits into our bank account from Go Fund Me. "Do we know Gavyn Corchado?" went the call from Marci to Pam.

She did not, but a click or two uncovered that Gavyn is a student at MMI Preparatory School in Mountain Top and is the founder of Nature's Soldiers, as Gavyn writes, "a student led nonprofit dedicated to protecting the environment, one action at a time."



He chose PPFF as beneficiary of his \$1,000 summer fundraising goal - and he surpassed his goal, with \$1,200 raised! We hope we can go up there and plant a few trees with Gavyn and his fellow students.

Friends in Action

Friends of Chapman

The Friends are among the newest of our PPFF chapters and they certainly hit the ground running - or the water paddling - with the installation of the latest ADA kayak launch in the system. Made possible by a donation from a generous mother and son duo, Barbara Swift Suckow and Kyle R. Suckow, the launch is the latest but NOT last of the accessible launches fulfilling our mission to bring the outdoors to everyone and everyone to the outdoors.



Friends of Colonel Denning

In what's become a lovely tradition at the park, once again this September the Friends hosted the Shippensburg Swing Band for an evening of music and dancing. Does that sign say free ice cream? Better mark your calendar for next year!



Friends of Ole Bull

A kids' fishing derby always produces adorable photographs. Wet kids, helpful parents, lots of action. This past June the Friends' annual derby did just that. Stocking day on Friday was very rainy but Saturday Derby Day itself was bright and carefree with many a fish tale put in the memory banks.

Friends of Greenwood Furnace

The final Music on the Beach concert at Whipple Dam not only featured the music of a great band and utterly perfect Labor Day weather, but it gave the Friends the opportunity to recognize Board member Denson Groenendaal with a lifetime achievement award. Denson is a founding member from way back when the Friends formed in 2001. He serves as the group's treasurer and has spearheaded several park improvement projects over the years, including the Friends pavilion at Greenwood Furnace, the restoration of the charcoal wagon, and the soon to be installed playground at Greenwood Furnace. He has also led improvements at Whipple Dam. Congratulations to Denson from the Friends and all of us at PPFF. Pictured with Denson are park manager Mike Dinsmore and Friends group president Mike Rubano.



Friends of Pinchot

Some of the lakeside trails at Pinchot State Park are notoriously wet so it was with gratitude that the Friends welcomed volunteers from Laborie Medical Technology to join them in a volunteer day. The crew completed 110 feet of trail repairs, which included the installation of 30 feet of underdrain mattress across five critical locations. These underdrains, made of nonwoven geotextile fabric wrapped around clear gravel and topped with trail surfacing material, help redirect water beneath the trail to prevent erosion and maintain durability. What a great before and after!



Friends of Trough Creek

The half-mile out and back Cemetery Trail at Trough Creek State Park leads to the cemetery where many of the workers at the Paradise Iron Furnace were buried in graves marked with simple unengraved fieldstones. This summer, the Friends took some time to clear the trail and the cemetery itself. It's a bit of a climb up there but a good fall hike is in store if you're in the neighborhood.



Friends of Tyler

A tour of the historic properties that are a part of the park featured in a day of history and hiking sponsored by the Friends. The Tyler Mansion (now a part of Bucks County Community College) was the destination for these hearty hikers. Beautiful day!



Friends of Varden Conservation Area

Shown in the picture? Reflections on another lovely Varden Conservation Day in Wayne County. Steam tractors, live animals, the requisite food and fun. Can it really be 15 years the Friends have been hosting? Mark your calendar for Sweet 16 in 2026.

List of Friends

Cherry Springs Dark Sky Association
 Friends of Beltzville
 Friends of Big Pocono
 Friends of Black Moshannon
 Friends of Caledonia
 Friends of Canoe Creek
 Friends of Chapman
 Friends of Colonel Denning
 Friends of Cook Forest
 Friends of Cowans Gap
 Friends of Davis Hollow Cabin
 Friends of Goddard
 Friends of Greenwood Furnace
 Friends of Kings Gap
 Friends of Laurel Hill
 Friends of Little Buffalo
 Friends of Lyman Run
 Friends of Michaux
 Friends of Milton
 Friends of Mont Alto
 Friends of Mount Pisgah
 Friends of Nockamixon
 Friends of Nolde Forest
 Friends of Oil Creek
 Friends of Ole Bull
 Friends of Parker Dam
 Friends of Pinchot
 Friends of Pine Grove Furnace
 Friends of Prince Gallitzin
 Friends of Promised Land
 Friends of RB Winter
 Friends of Ridley Creek
 Friends of Ryerson Station
 Friends of Shawnee & Blue Knob
 Friends of State Line Serpentine Barrens
 Friends of Trough Creek & Warriors Path
 Friends of Tuscarora & Locust Lake
 Friends of Tyler
 Friends of Varden Conservation Area
 Friends of Weiser - Haldeman/Greenland
 Friends of Weiser - Roaring Creek
 Friends of White Clay Creek
 Friends of Worlds End
 Friends of Yellow Creek
 Lackawanna State Park Trail Care Crew



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