



25<sup>th</sup> Annual  
2019 **western  
pennsylvania**  
environmental awards

Wednesday, May 22, 2019  
The Westin Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



# 2019 western pennsylvania environmental awards



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# Welcome to the 2019 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards

Sponsored by  
**Dominion Energy**  
and  
**Pennsylvania Environmental Council** 

This awards program recognizes and honors the outstanding achievements of organizations, businesses, schools, and individuals in a wide range of environmental initiatives throughout the region. These awards pay tribute to those who have demonstrated a commitment to environmental excellence, leadership, and accomplishment in their respective fields. By sponsoring these awards, Dominion Energy and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council encourage the community to emulate the achievements of the successful nominees, thereby promoting innovative environmental efforts and enhancing the quality of life in Western Pennsylvania.

This year, we are proud to recognize four examples of the outstanding environmental work taking place in our region. In addition to their award, eligible winners will be honored with a donation of \$5,000 made on their behalf to the local nonprofit environmental organization of their choice.

We are also thrilled to be able to honor an influential voice in the Western Pennsylvania environmental community, Ron Steffey, the former executive director of the Allegheny Valley Land Trust.

**Please join us in congratulating this year's winners:**

**Aspinwall Riverfront Park**  
*Aspinwall*

**Lucas W. DeGroote**  
Powdermill Nature Reserve  
*Rector*

**Troy Firth**  
Foundation for Sustainable Forests  
*Spartanburg*

**Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps**  
*Harrisburg*

**Lifetime Achievement Award**  
**Ron Steffey**  
Former Executive Director, Allegheny Valley Land Trust  
*Kittanning*



# Clarion River

2019 Pennsylvania River of the Year

## A National Wild and Scenic River

A Wild and Scenic River that draws legions of anglers, paddlers, and other outdoors enthusiasts throughout the seasons, the Clarion River in northwestern Pennsylvania has been voted the state's 2019 River of the Year. The 110-mile Clarion River defines a wilderness of clean water and healthy forests that draws visitors back again and again. Once historically impacted and degraded from watershed stressors such as mining and logging, the Clarion is now thriving thanks to many restoration, enhancement, and protection efforts over the years.



*The Pennsylvania River of the Year program is a joint effort of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.*



To learn more about the River of the Year program, as well as a list of planned River of the Year activities and sojourns on the Clarion River, visit:

[pariveroftheyear.org](http://pariveroftheyear.org)



pennsylvania environmental council

## About the Pennsylvania Environmental Council

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council is a statewide organization that brings people, government, and business together to find real world solutions for environmental challenges. These solutions bring about sustainable communities, protect our water resources, and address energy and climate issues. PEC was founded in 1970 and serves the entire state through offices in Luzerne, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and State College.

For more information about the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, visit its website at [www.pecpa.org](http://www.pecpa.org).

## Thanks so much for joining us!



Every year, we at the Pennsylvania Environmental Council have the privilege of recognizing a few of the many contributions that Pennsylvanians make to enhancing and protecting our natural and built environments. Whether it is the Northeast Environmental Partner Awards in Wilkes-Barre, the Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence in Harrisburg, the Winsor Awards in Philadelphia, or these Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards, we are thrilled to be part of the process and to be able to bring some level of recognition to the highlighted efforts.

Special thanks to Dominion Energy for their continuing partnership in bringing you both this event and the Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence in Harrisburg. Without their support and the support of all of our benefactors, this evening would not be possible.

Each of these events is also an opportunity for all of us to connect and reconnect with others who are committed to stewarding Pennsylvania's environmental quality. We come together from a broad spectrum of society -- government, business and industry, outdoor recreation, watershed groups, scientists, and individuals. I am always encouraged at these gatherings by the level of discourse and shared purpose that permeates the conversations. Whether it is your first time at this program or your twenty-fifth reunion, please take advantage of the opportunity to make connections and take away something that you can use until next year's awards.

Tonight, we are pleased to honor three individuals and two organizations for their great work in Western Pennsylvania. They are each living examples of what can be accomplished by Pennsylvanians dedicated to making a difference in their community. We hold their achievements out to you tonight not only to highlight their specific work, but also to help shine a bit of a light on the types of projects being undertaken by tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians across the Commonwealth. Remember that these efforts come not only from volunteers and non-profits – there are thousands of professionals and companies focused every day on environmental improvement and protection in their businesses.

While I encourage you to read through this program and learn about PEC's work across the Commonwealth (also feel free to check-out our website and sign-up for our monthly *In Case You Missed It* newsletter), tonight is about the winners. Please enjoy their stories and be inspired by what they have accomplished and continue to work on.

It is our pleasure to be able to provide a forum to highlight their wonderful work.

I hope that you enjoy this evening's program.

**Davitt B. Woodwell**  
*President*

# We're leaving it better than we found it

Our commitment to the environment is helping  
create cleaner and greener communities.



At Dominion Energy, our dedication to a healthy ecosystem goes well beyond our financial investment in science and technology. It also takes on a personal touch. Like our employee volunteers who donate thousands of hours each year to conservation efforts. They pitch in to refurbish nature trails, build outdoor classrooms,

clean up streams and parks, and assist established conservation groups. Environmental stewardship is something that runs throughout our company. And you can see it at work every day. To find out more about how we're putting our energy to work for the environment, visit [DominionEnergy.com/Foundation](http://DominionEnergy.com/Foundation).



[DominionEnergy.com](http://DominionEnergy.com)



## About Dominion Energy

Dominion Energy, headquartered in Richmond, Va., is one of the nation's largest producers and transporters of energy. The Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation is dedicated to improving the physical, social and economic well-being of the communities served by Dominion Energy. The Foundation supports nonprofit causes that meet basic human needs, protect the environment, promote education and encourage community vitality. For more information, visit the company's website at [www.dominionenergy.com](http://www.dominionenergy.com).

## Welcome and Congratulations from Dominion Energy

On behalf of Dominion Energy, the corporate sponsor of the Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards, it is my pleasure to welcome you here tonight. Dominion Energy is proud to be associated with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and these awards. The awards go to organizations made up of individuals who care deeply about the environment and are taking meaningful action to improve it. It is our pleasure to honor those who show such commitment and passion for the environment we all share.

Providing the energy that powers the homes, businesses and daily lives of millions of Americans is what Dominion Energy does, but our responsibilities extend far beyond that. We also have an obligation to serve as careful stewards of the environment. For us, this is a deeply personal commitment. After all, we live and work in the communities where we do business. We breathe the same air and drink the same water. So do our children – and so will theirs. That is why we support organizations like the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. It's also why we are dramatically reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and taking other bold steps to build a more sustainable future for our planet.

We know the award winners here today share our vision for the future. It is demonstrated by the work they have done in this region. We congratulate them today.

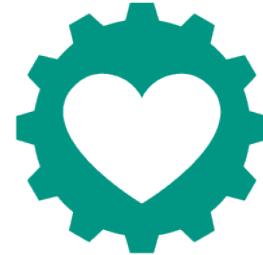
**Mandy Tornabene**  
*Vice President, Environmental Services*





 Bryan Heller Photography

# We Heart Trails



Coming soon, 1,500-miles of connected trail through America's industrial heartland will be waiting for you to explore.

The Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition consists of more than 20 organizations in four states working to complete and connect America's largest system of shared-use trails. When it's finished, local and visiting trail users will be able to walk and bike from trail to trail, town to town, and city to city.

**Join over 2 dozen regional groups in bringing this vision to fruition**  
at [www.ihearttrails.org](http://www.ihearttrails.org)

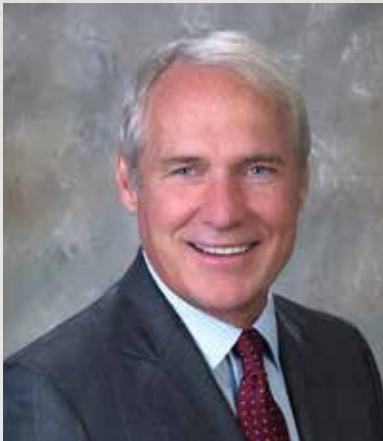
To learn more about the opportunities for trail experiences from around the **IHEARTTRAILS** footprint, check out the 'Story Map to Open Trails.' You'll find some new trails to put on your to-do list, as well as some more information about the groups turning conceptual trails into reality.

Scan the QR code to visit the 'Story Map to Open Trails.'



Industrial  
Heartland  
Trails  
COALITION

## Keynote Address



### Andrew G. Place

Commissioner  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

Andrew G. Place serves as a Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC).

With a background in business, academia, state government service, and agriculture, he brings a unique blend of insights to the Commission's efforts to balance the needs of consumers and utilities.

Prior to his appointment to the Commission, Place was the corporate director for energy and environmental policy at Pittsburgh-headquartered EQT Corporation, where he focused on the economic, social, and environmental balance inherent in energy policy choices. He also led the establishment of the Center for Sustainable Shale Development as Interim Executive Director.

Additionally, Place has served as Deputy Secretary in Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection for the Office of Energy and Technology Deployment. He was also a research fellow in Carnegie Mellon University's Department of Engineering and Public Policy and has taught at the university as an adjunct professor.

Place received his bachelor's degree in economics with a concentration in mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh, where he graduated cum laude, and a master's degree in public policy and management from the H. John Heinz III College at Carnegie Mellon, where he graduated with Highest Distinction. He resides with his family on a 210-acre cattle and sheep farm in the Appalachian foothills.

## Program

**Wednesday, May 22, 2019**  
**The Westin Pittsburgh**  
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

**5:00 p.m.**

Cocktail Reception  
and Silent Auction  
*Allegheny Foyer*

**6:30 p.m.**

Welcoming Remarks

Davitt B. Woodwell  
*President*

*Pennsylvania Environmental Council*

Amanda B. 'Mandy' Tornabene  
*Vice President-Environmental Services*  
*Dominion Energy*

Dinner

**7:30 p.m.**

Keynote Address

Andrew G. Place  
*Commissioner*  
*Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission*

Presentation of the  
**2019 Western Pennsylvania**  
Environmental Awards

Hon. Cindy Adams Dunn  
*Secretary*  
*Pennsylvania Department of*  
*Conservation and Natural Resources*

**Lifetime Achievement Award**  
Ron Steffey

**8:30 p.m.**

Dessert Reception  
*Allegheny Foyer*



# Innovation. Experience. Commitment.

EQT Corporation plays an important role in developing Pennsylvania's abundant source of natural gas. We take that role seriously, which is why EQT is committed to developing natural gas responsibly, while protecting the area's natural beauty and preserving the environment – land, water and air.

Safety matters to us. And we know it matters to the communities where we operate.

We all want Pennsylvania to thrive in its accomplishments – and together we're making it happen. EQT is proud to support the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

**EQT**  
Where **energy**  
meets **innovation.**



## 2019 Judges

Christine Dettore  
*Northeast Regional Advisor*  
*Pennsylvania Department of*  
*Conservation and Natural Resources*  
*Bureau of Recreation and Conservation*

Ellen Ferretti  
*Director Brandywine Conservancy*

Ed Grusheski  
*Fairmont Waterworks Interpretive*  
*Center Consultant*  
*Philadelphia Water Department*

Jonathan Johnson  
*Senior Policy Analyst*  
*Center for Rural Pennsylvania*

Claire Thorp  
*Conservation and*  
*Natural Resources Consultant*

Sue Wilson  
*Community Volunteer*

Marel A. King  
*Pennsylvania Director*  
*Chesapeake Bay Commission*

Beth Fisher  
*Business Director*  
*Little River Research & Design*

## Selection of This Year's Winners

The 2019 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards program was open to individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental excellence, leadership and accomplishment, and have made significant contributions toward improving Western Pennsylvania's environment. Applications were accepted in response to a Call for Nominations issued in January.

All entries were reviewed and evaluated by a distinguished panel of independent judges on the basis of their relevance, evidence of their impact on the environment, their approach to solving an environmental problem and the environmental benefit of their work. Judges were selected from outside Western Pennsylvania, so as not to exclude any potential nominees from within the region.

Winners were selected by these judges, who possess unique expertise in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The achievements of the five winners are summarized on the following pages and are presented in alphabetical order.

## Judges

Dominion Energy and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council extend our sincere thanks to the distinguished judges who volunteered to review this year's nominations, all of which represented deserving environmental achievements. The awards program would not be possible without our judges' commitment of their personal time and environmental expertise to select this year's winners from among the many outstanding nominations we received.

## Meet the Artist of the 2019 WPEA Award



**The Mighty Bluegill:**  
**Gyotaku by Matthew Monahan**

Chattanooga, Tennessee  
[themightybluegill.com](http://themightybluegill.com)

"In the midst of a lot of moving and familial flux, fishing united me to friends and family amidst a lot of disintegration. I'm sure that's part of why I'm so drawn to the beauty of fish. While some people see fish as slimy or...fishy, I see iridescent colors impossible to imitate and a magical creature that lives impossibly in a mysterious realm mostly invisible to us."

Traditionally, gyotaku is monochromatic – the beautiful simplicity of sumi ink on rice paper. One of my contributions to the art form has been the use of color, both for realistic as well as playful representations of the subject. In all forms of gyotaku, the fish itself is the plate and the artist provides color, value, and composition. In all of my art I hope to honor the fish as well as inspire the viewer to see the beauty of both creature and creator."

Aspinwall Riverfront Park provides public river access, and offers a place to fish and kayak for thousands of local residents.



# Aspinwall Riverfront Park

Aspinwall



Aspinwall Riverfront Park is an 11-acre urban park located along the Allegheny River just outside the City of Pittsburgh.

In 2011, when the eight-acre Aspinwall Marina was nearly sold to become a parking lot, the idea that the property could become a riverfront park captured the imagination of the community. At the time, Aspinwall Borough ~~was~~ not in the financial position to create or maintain a new park. So a small group of individuals, with Friends of the Riverfront serving as their agent, purchased the property to create a public park and create a link to the local trail system.

**D**eliberately a little more than six months, several foundations, corporations, and over 3,000 people raised the \$2.3 million needed to buy the property. Two-thirds of the funds were individual donations, and over \$14,000 was raised through children's efforts alone. In the years since, the park has raised over \$11 million. Only \$73,000 of the park construction budget and \$250,000 of the acquisition were taxpayer dollars.

Prior to the creation of the park, public access to the riverfront was extremely limited. Local green space was occupied by ballfields and traditional playgrounds, both of which served a relatively limited number of people and were not welcoming to native plants and animals.

What was once a full-service marina which included a retail store, repair shop, boat showroom and a gas station, has been repurposed as the park's Welcome Center. The space now hosts Venture Outdoors, weekly classes for people of all ages, and a theater group. It also serves as a wedding venue, providing critical funding for park operations.

The park provides public river access, and offers a place to fish and kayak for thousands of local residents. Aspinwall Riverfront Park partners with the Audubon Society to offer free public classes on native birds, and local gardeners have held several public tours of the property. The Pennsylvania Chapter of the Garden Club of America has recognized the park for its work in engaging children with the environment.

Since the project's inception, Aspinwall Riverfront Park has followed a three-pronged strategy to generate maintenance funds: on-going businesses on the site, an endowment, and an annual public appeal. In total, the Park is projected to generate \$125,000 in earned revenue this year.





**Lucas DeGroote has expanded regional bird conservation in Western Pennsylvania by forming major partnerships and initiating new programs that extend throughout North America and the world.**

# Lucas W. DeGroote

## Powdermill Nature Reserve Rector

Luke DeGroote is the coordinator for the long-term bird-banding program at Powdermill Nature Reserve, the research and teaching field station of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Since joining Powdermill in 2012, Mr. DeGroote has expanded regional bird conservation in Western Pennsylvania by forming major partnerships and initiating new programs that extend throughout North America and the world.

He was instrumental in founding the BirdSafe Pittsburgh program whose aim is to create a bird-friendly city. This program includes monitoring buildings for window strikes to help determine architectural risk factors for birds and retrofitting windows to make them bird-safe. He was the force behind the Allegheny Bird Conservation Alliance, a consortium of nonprofit organizations that promotes conservation programs throughout Western Pennsylvania. The Allegheny Bird Conservation Alliance has restored 2.4 acres at Deadman's Hollow near McKeesport to healthy bird habitat. Primarily through this effort, Pittsburgh was designated an Urban Bird Treaty City by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2018.

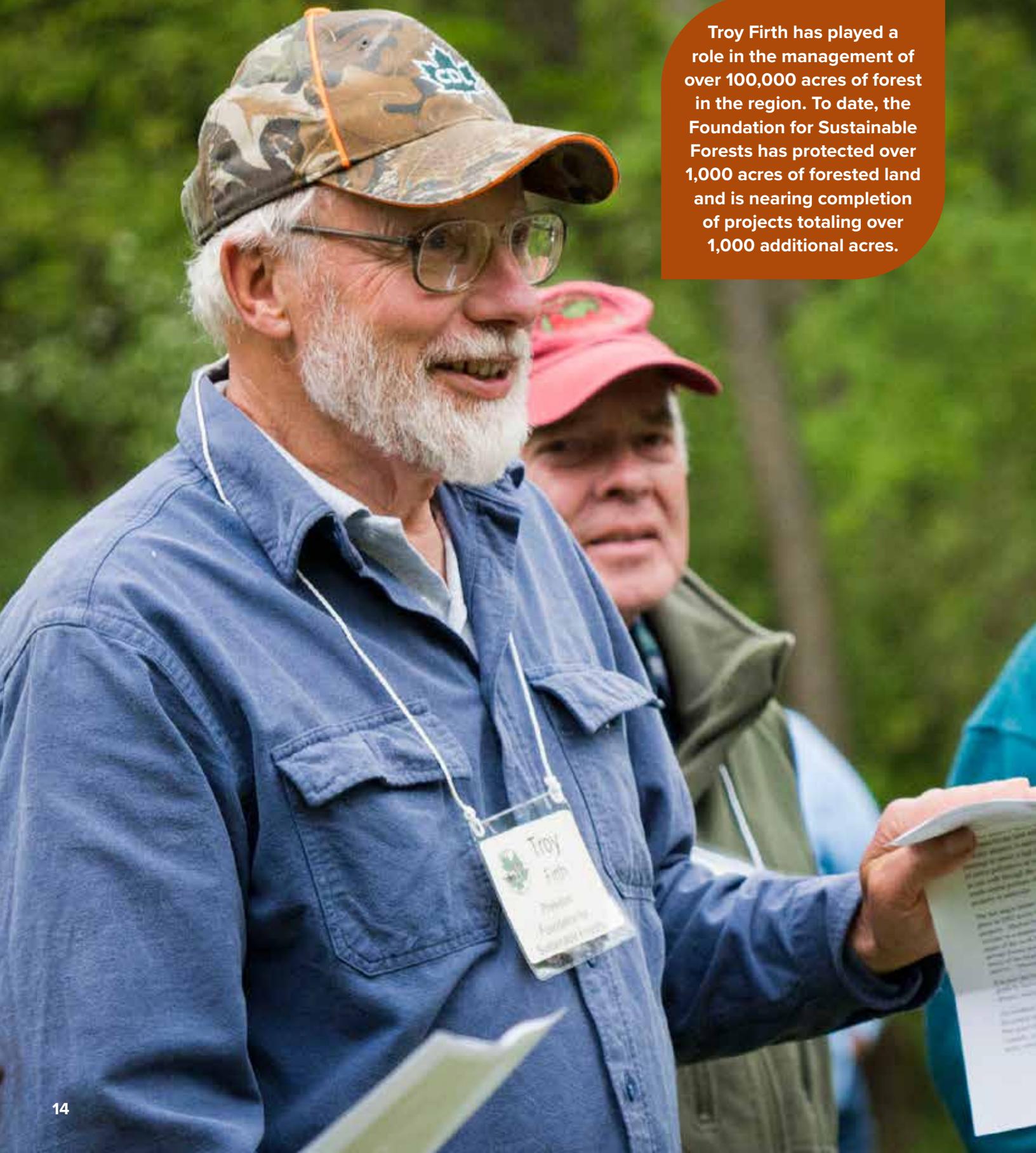
Under a project executed jointly with the American Bird Conservancy, Mr. DeGroote leads a team that assesses new formulations of glass or films to help industry develop "birdsmart" glass that is visible as a surface to birds, but still functions as a clear window. Because of his work in this area, seven companies in the U.S., Canada, and Europe now have bird-safe glass on the market today.

In the area of bird migration, Mr. DeGroote's team have become experts in the new Motus radio telemetry technology that allows even small birds to be tracked for months across continents. Mr. DeGroote and his staff are on schedule to install 70 permanent Motus tracking antennas by the end of 2019.

Mr. DeGroote has studied the effects of climate change on the breeding phenology and success of the 21 most common migratory birds at Powdermill Nature Reserve, dating back to 1961 and encompassing more than 10,000 records. His analysis indicates that generally birds are now breeding about two weeks earlier in Western Pennsylvania than they did in 1961. This is the largest study of its kind ever done and establishes for the scientific community the profile of adaptation and response to global climate change.

Luke DeGroote's research and programs have supported 54 apprentices and employees from as far as Alaska, Colombia, Peru, and the United Kingdom. He serves as an officer at the Pennsylvania Ornithological Technical Committee, North American Banding Council, Eastern Bird Banding Association, Allegheny Bird Conservation Alliance, and the Bird-Safe Building Foundation.





Troy Firth has played a role in the management of over 100,000 acres of forest in the region. To date, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests has protected over 1,000 acres of forested land and is nearing completion of projects totaling over 1,000 additional acres.

# Troy Firth Founder and President, Foundation for Sustainable Forests

## Spartansburg



As a practicing forester in Northwestern Pennsylvania, Troy Firth observed that traditional forest management and timber harvesting practices were resulting in reduced biodiversity, vigor, and resilience in Penn's Woods. He saw that the rising impact of invasive plant species, land use changes, and development was threatening the timber heritage and rural economy of the region.

Mr. Firth created the Foundation for Sustainable Forests (FSF) in 2004, a nonprofit land trust that protects sustainable working forests and highlights healthy forest practices for the benefit of the land. In the early years of the organization, Troy and Lynn Firth donated significant funds and forest properties. And although his charitable giving has continued, the organization has grown into the self-sustaining operation he envisioned.



Since its inception, the FSF has helped forest landowners and other conservation organizations overcome some of the challenges of forest management. Mr. Firth and the FSF are slowly helping the community to understand that a forest left "untouched" is still prone to invasive species and the impacts of climate change, and that thoughtful, proactive management can improve the overall health and vigor of a forest.

In his professional career, Troy Firth has played a role in the management of over 100,000 acres of forest in the region. To date, the FSF has protected over 1,000 acres of forested land and is nearing completion of projects totaling over 1,000 additional acres.

Mr. Firth's approach to forestry creates a diverse habitat for several priority bird species in Western Pennsylvania. The FSF and Troy Firth's forest management principles have been endorsed by Audubon Pennsylvania and are the reason why the Presque Isle Audubon Society has asked the FSF to steward its own lands.



The FSF has also participated in a number of studies with local colleges to quantify the impacts of Troy Firth's forestry approach. These studies have provided pilot data that shows less damage to the forest floor using horses compared to mechanical skidders and greater bird diversity using a "worst-first" approach to harvesting. Future studies hope to quantify how this approach enhances forest resilience to climate change and other chronic stressors.

Perhaps the best evidence of the environmental impact of Troy Firth's forestry is shown simply by walking through a forest that he has managed. His forests are diverse in age and structure, vibrant with wildlife, and rich in understory plant growth and diversity. They are living proof that a forest can be enhanced by human activities, a rare occurrence in many forest landscapes.



In 2018, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps completed projects in 28 state parks, 13 forest districts and seven municipalities throughout Western Pennsylvania.

# Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps

## Harrisburg

The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps grew out of Governor Tom Wolf's desire to engage young people and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) focus on sustainability and the need to cultivate a diverse, inclusive, strong and engaged community of stakeholders. Concerned with an imbalance in diversity within environmental disciplines, DCNR and its partners set out to build a program to engage a young and diverse workforce in service to the environment.



In surveying the needs of Pennsylvania's parks and forests and reflecting on the strong history of the Civilian and Pennsylvania Conservation Corps programs, DCNR partnered with the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to launch the Outdoor Corps in 2016. This program would have two main goals: develop the next generation of conservation leaders and; change the face of the conservation community in Pennsylvania by engaging underserved communities in environmental stewardship.

DCNR contracted with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to administer the program. After starting with five summer youth programs in its inaugural season, the Outdoor Corps has grown to nine young-adult crews (ages 18-25) and 17 youth crews (ages 15-18). The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is now the largest single SCA program in the nation, employing over 200 young people and crew leaders of all ages each year.

Just three years into the program, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps has already realized meaningful engagement with diverse communities across the state. In 2018, the Outdoor Corps completed projects in 28 state parks, 13 forest districts and seven municipalities throughout Western Pennsylvania. Youth and young-adults ages 15 to 25 mobilized in eight program cities to attack the \$1 billion backlog in park and forest needs. In Western Pennsylvania alone, the Outdoor Corps improved trails, rehabbed playgrounds, inventoried community forests, improved wildlife habitat, repaired boat launch ramps and maintained historic structures. Many of the projects undertaken by the Corps, including much needed boat dock repairs at Moraine State Park and re-constructing hiking trail bridges at Ohiopyle, worked to improve outdoor visitor experiences.

To date, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps has engaged over 475 young people across the state in conservation service work. Its membership is just under 40% non-white and 40% female, with the youth corps being the more ethnically diverse group in the program. Each year, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps positions over 200 young people to thrive while developing a lifelong affinity to the natural world.



# Conservation Through Cooperation

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) protects and restores the natural and built environments through innovation, collaboration, education, and advocacy.

PEC believes in the value of partnerships with the private sector, government, communities, and individuals to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.





Harrisburg   Luzerne   Philadelphia   Pittsburgh   State College

Coming together is a beginning;  
keeping together is progress;  
**working together is success.**

*Henry Ford*



[pecpa.org](http://pecpa.org)

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Under Mr. Steffey's leadership, 80 miles of the Armstrong and Redbank Valley Trails have been transformed from inactive railroad corridors to one of Pennsylvania's most spectacular trail systems.



# Ron Steffey

## Former Executive Director, Allegheny Valley Trail Association Kittanning

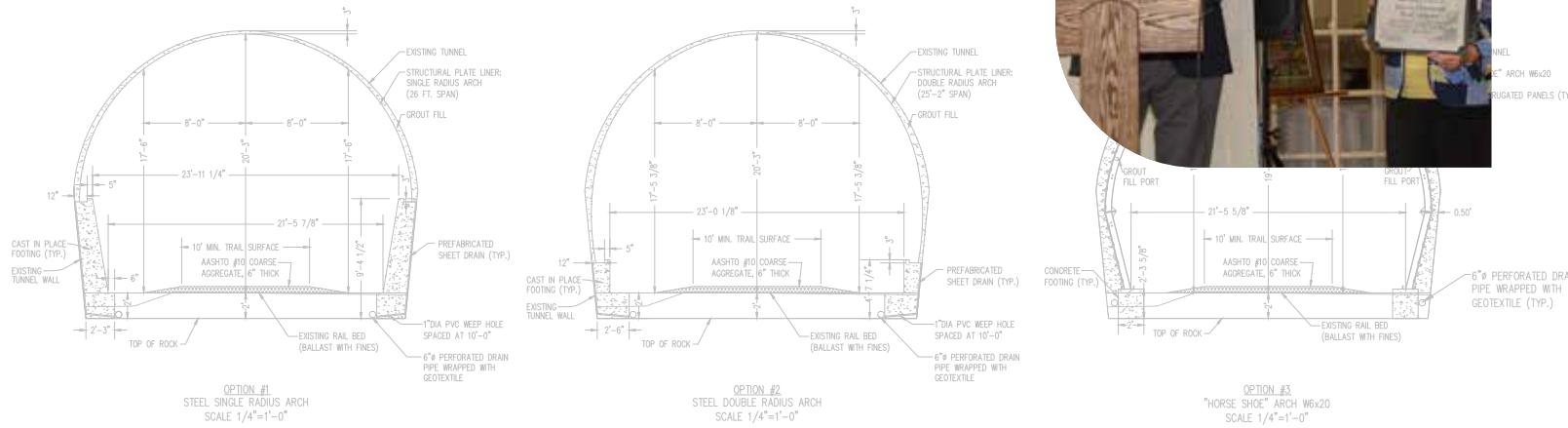
Known as “the face and heart of the Armstrong Trail,” Ron Steffey found his calling as an influential trailbuilder literally by accident.

A mining engineer by training, Mr. Steffey was working as a foreman when a mine accident ended his career. As part of his recovery plan, Steffey took to the Armstrong Trail for exercise. Once he became a regular trail user, he was motivated to help work on the trail through the AmeriCorps program. His dedication and passion for the trail led to his appointment as Executive Director of the Allegheny Valley Land Trust Association, which owns the Armstrong Trail.

Under Mr. Steffey’s leadership, 80 miles of the Armstrong and Redbank Valley Trails have been transformed from inactive railroad corridors to one of Pennsylvania’s most spectacular trail systems. The Armstrong Trail was named one of the top ten places to visit in Pittsburgh in 2018 and the Redbank Valley Trail was named Pennsylvania Trail of the Year in 2014.

In his selfless service to these trails, Mr. Steffey secured \$5 million in grant funding, and recruited and trained an army of volunteers, including young people, to help perform the necessary work in trail building.

He has also served as president of the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, whose purpose is to promote the development of a continuous trail between those two cities, and is now president of Steffey Trail Connections, which assists trail groups in the planning, construction, and maintenance of trails.





## The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy congratulates the 2019 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD WINNERS!

The Clarion River, pictured here, was once one of the state's most polluted rivers. Today, paddlers flock to the Clarion for popular floats and anglers to its banks for fishing. WPC is proud to be one of the many conservation organizations instrumental in its restoration and pleased to celebrate it as Pennsylvania's 2019 River of the Year.

Western Pennsylvania  
Conservancy



water, land, life.

Working with thousands of members and volunteers, the **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy** has conserved more than a quarter-million acres and helped establish 11 state parks. We plant trees and gardens in cities and towns, and preserve Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. It's all a part of our mission to provide our region with clean waters, healthy forests, abundant wildlife and exceptional places to explore. [Learn more at WaterLandLife.org](http://WaterLandLife.org).



# Funding projects that make a difference.

Project inventory available at [fpwgrants.org](http://fpwgrants.org)



[Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds](http://FoundationforPennsylvaniaWatersheds.org)

# Communities & Landscapes



For us, finding success on environmental and conservation issues means joining policy and program interests wherever we can. Whether it is in working with municipalities on local stormwater issues, replanting legacy mine lands for healthy forests, cleaning-up illegal dumpsites, developing cutting-edge standards with industry, or providing technical assistance to local trail groups, this means partnering with Pennsylvanians.

Some of the best examples of these partnerships can be found in the eight Conservation Landscapes that the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has developed across the Commonwealth. The program leverages DCNR resources (including its over two million acres of state forest lands, 120 plus state parks, and expansive community investment), bringing together government, community, and local businesses to address issues specific to each region.

PEC is proud to have been part of these efforts for well over a decade, especially in the Laurel Highlands and the Poconos. Through our partnership with DCNR we are able to promote regional trail projects, improved visitor experiences, increased communication with and between stakeholders, and greater understanding of the positive impacts that conservation, recreation, and environmental stewardship have on communities.



**Pennsylvania Legacies #84  
October 2018**

**Listen: [pecpa.org/audio](http://pecpa.org/audio)**



pennsylvania environmental council

**[pecpa.org](http://pecpa.org)**

For more information on PEC's Conservation Landscapes program, visit [pecpa.org/landscapes](http://pecpa.org/landscapes).



# Climate Issues



January 2019  
Watch: [pecpa.org/video](http://pecpa.org/video)



For more information on PEC's  
Climate Change Initiatives, visit  
[pecpa.org/climate](http://pecpa.org/climate).

Pennsylvania is a leading producer of energy. We believe that the state can and must be a leader in the effort to dramatically reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

These issues are currently front-of-mind for us as the Governor and General Assembly grapple with how to address a number of climate and energy issues. Carbon reductions, economic impact, consumer protection, energy efficiency, electrification, and zero-carbon energy are all in the mix – as is PEC.

For the last several years, PEC has been convening high-level discussions to develop viable pathways to a clean energy future in our Commonwealth. Our 2017 deep decarbonization conference brought together scientific and policy experts, government and business leaders, and technology innovators from across the nation. Since then, PEC has worked on strategies to realize emission reductions of 80 percent or more by 2050, including establishing carbon pricing; adopting a clean energy standard; and furthering technologies like carbon capture and community solar.

We look forward to those explorations turning into significant actions. For our most recent testimony to the state Senate as well as our *Energy and Climate: A Policy Path Forward for Pennsylvania* report from January, please visit our website.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

Congratulations to the leaders in our region who change the world through their commitment to conservation and our environment.



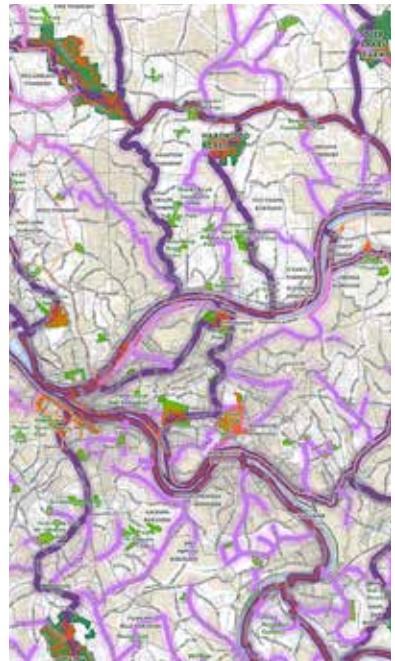
Pitt

A proud sponsor of the Western Pennsylvania Environment Awards



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ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

**84LUMBER.COM**



*Congratulations to the 2019 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award Winners!  
Your commitments and achievements will benefit our region.*

EPD is proud to work in Western Pennsylvania for over 80 years. Learn more about us: [www.epd-pgh.com](http://www.epd-pgh.com)



New Energy. New Promise.

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## Congratulations to the Winners

**Aspinwall Riverfront Park**

**Luke DeGroote - Powdermill Nature Reserve**

**Troy Firth - Foundation for Sustainable Forests**

**Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps**

**Ron Steffey - Lifetime Achievement Award**





# State of Play

As a statewide environmental organization that recognizes the inextricable links between the environment, the economy, and our quality of life, PEC sees the outdoor industry as a natural ally in the cause of conservation and environmental stewardship. We have recently launched the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Network](#) to help inform industry members about legislative and policy matters that may affect their businesses, connect them with key decision-makers and with one another, and empower them to advocate effectively for our shared values.

Depending on what numbers you use, outdoor recreation has an annual impact in Pennsylvania of between \$6 billion and \$29 billion. But the voices of that industry are often left out when issues affecting conservation and recreation arise in Harrisburg. Decisions made there can have real consequences – not just for the environment, but for the 251,000 Pennsylvanians directly employed in outdoor recreation, and the communities that depend on the economic activity it generates.

PEC launched the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Network](#) earlier this year to help businesses organize, mobilize, and stay informed about policy decisions that affect their bottom line and backyard. We're pleased to offer the State of Play newsletter (already on its second issue!) as a resource to keep those working in the recreation arena up to speed on industry news, allow them to connect with colleagues, and make their voices heard in the state capitol. Please help us grow this informal coalition by encouraging others in Pennsylvania's outdoor industry to subscribe.



 **Why Conservation Transcends Partisanship**

**Pennsylvania Legacies #89**  
**January 2019**  
**Watch: [pecpa.org/video](http://pecpa.org/video)**



pennsylvania environmental council

[pecpa.org](http://pecpa.org)

For more information on the Pennsylvania Outdoor Network, visit [pecpa.org/stateofplay](http://pecpa.org/stateofplay).

# Delaware River Watershed Initiative



November 2018  
Read: [pecpa.org/pec-blog](http://pecpa.org/pec-blog)



pennsylvania environmental council

[pecpa.org](http://pecpa.org)

For more on PEC's role in the  
Delaware River Watershed Initiative,  
visit [pecpa.org/DRWI](http://pecpa.org/DRWI).

As the federal government's role in environmental protection continues to evolve, regional partnerships and research-driven innovation are more important than ever, particularly in ecologically diverse watersheds that feed the Delaware River – a primary source of drinking water for 15 million people.

PEC participates in the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, a wide-ranging effort funded by the William Penn Foundation to protect and restore water quality in the Delaware and its tributaries. PEC leads a team of local watershed groups and academic partners in suburban Philadelphia, one of eight such collaborations involving 65 organizations in four states.

To date, the Upstream Suburban Philadelphia Collaboration has collectively built \$4.7 million in new stormwater control measures at dozens of sites across the region's watersheds. Additionally, partners have monitored water quality at 108 sites, trained more than 300 volunteers as stream monitors, and rallied thousands of citizens to donate nearly 9,000 volunteer hours supporting cleanups, tree plantings, and related clean water educational events.

The William Penn Foundation has committed \$42 million to support Phase 2 of the Initiative. As part of this, PEC continues to work closely with our watershed and academic partners in Greater Philadelphia and across the region to reduce pollution and promote water smart practices and policies.



Eckert Seamans very proudly supports the PENNSYLVANIA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL and salutes the 2019 award winners: Troy Firth, Foundation for Sustainable Forests; Lucas DeGroote, Powdermill Nature Reserve; Aspinwall Riverfront Park; Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps; and Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, Ron Steffey, the former Executive Director of Allegheny Valley Land Trust.



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# POWER TO THE POLLINATORS!

*Jessica Walliser*



POLLINATORS – TYPICALLY BEES AND OTHER INSECTS – MOVE POLLEN FROM THE MALE ANTER OF A FLOWER TO THE FEMALE STIGMA OF ANOTHER FLOWER, ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL AND ESSENTIAL NATURAL PROCESSES FOR SUSTAINING LIFE IN THE NATURAL WORLD.

The worth of pollinators is undeniable. Each year, more than \$20 billion dollars of food crops across North America are made possible because of creatures far smaller than the coin in your pocket.

North America is home to nearly 4,000 species of native bees. The majority of native bees are solitary, meaning they don't live in large colonies, and they are often more efficient pollinators. Only 250 native female orchard mason bees can pollinate an acre of apple trees, a task that requires 15,000 to 20,000 European honeybees.

And with rare exceptions, our native bees are very docile and don't sting. Many are very tiny and nondescript, while others shine like iridescent green jewels or have bright stripes.

Sadly, many of our native bees are showing signs of rapid population decline due to pesticide exposure, lack of forage, diseases, and habitat loss.

*Here are a few small steps you can take to support and encourage native pollinators:*

**1. Protect habitat you already have in place.** Preserve undisturbed, wild areas that can serve as sources of nectar and habitat. Rock piles, heaps of brush, snags, hollow-stemmed plants, and bare ground all serve as possible nesting sites. Some 70% of native bees build solitary nests in small tunnels in the ground, while the remaining species nest in above-ground tunnels such as in hollow plant stems and holes in dead trees.

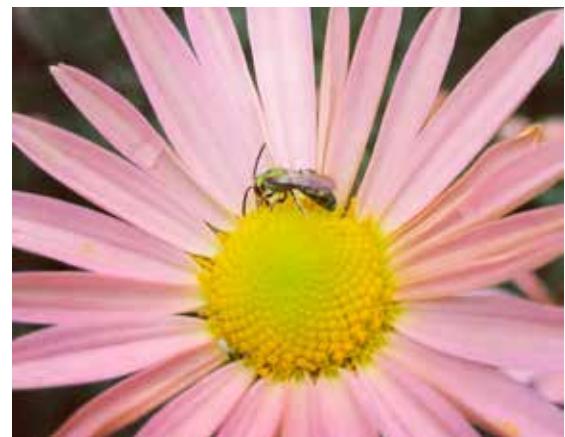
**2. Examine your lawn and garden management practices.**

Because native bees are sensitive to pesticides, convert to natural pest management practices. Avoid lawn and garden pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides made from synthetic chemicals.

Systemic pesticides, such as those used in lawn grub killers, tree injections, and rose granules, are carried throughout the plant's tissue and often end up in the pollen and nectar of nearby plants and trees where they're consumed by pollinators.

**3. Create new pollinator habitat for nectar foraging.** Plant native plants with successive bloom times, varied flower shapes, and diverse coloration. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation has been working with the native seed industry and seed suppliers to develop seed mixtures specifically tailored to pollinators. You can find regional, Xerces-approved seed blends listed on their website ([www.xerces.org/pollinator-seed](http://www.xerces.org/pollinator-seed)), including one specific to Pennsylvania.

**4. Add artificial and natural nesting sites for tunnel-nesting bees.** Purchase or build nesting tubes, tunnels, and blocks, or plant plenty of hollow-stemmed plants, like elderberries, Joe Pye weed, teasels, brambles, cup plant, and bee balm for native bees to nest in naturally. Place homemade or commercially purchased wooden nesting blocks or stem bundles in a sheltered site with morning sun. Leave them in place year-round, but replace them every few years.



Original article by  
horticulturist Jessica Walliser  
appears on [SavvyGardening.com](http://SavvyGardening.com).

# Cleaner Watersheds



**Pennsylvania Legacies #92**  
**February 2019**  
**Listen: [pecpa.org/audio](http://pecpa.org/audio)**



For more information on POWR, visit  
**[pawatersheds.org](http://pawatersheds.org)**

Eighty-six thousand miles of rivers and streams crisscross Pennsylvania, writing the histories and futures of communities both large and small that depend on them for drinking water, transportation, recreation, industrial processes, and more.

Local organizations are often on the front lines of the fight for healthier watersheds. We believe these local stakeholders are the most effective when they have access to the best technical and practical knowledge for achieving their goals – in particular, lessons learned from one another.

As a supporting organization of PEC, the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR) serves as a resource for community-level action to protect, restore, and promote enjoyment of our water resources. In addition to providing valuable information, POWR connects local watershed organizations with one another through educational activities, regional gatherings, and a statewide conference.

POWR also celebrates the natural beauty and recreational opportunities found on and along Pennsylvania's waterways through the popular River of the Year program, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Additionally, mini-grant funding supports a number of locally-organized river outings under DCNR's Pennsylvania Sojourn Program.

# Happy Trails



Among its other benefits, outdoor recreation contributes over \$6 billion to Pennsylvania's economy every year. While there are many components to that number, trails are a meaningful part of it. Whether for hiking, biking, birding, commuting, or even long-distance trail running, trails bring value to communities. Top companies want them to lure employees and cities want them to lure top companies. Small towns want trails because trails bring visitors...and visitors bring dollars.

But trails do much more than drive economic opportunity. They're vital transportation corridors within and near densely populated areas as well as in rural communities. Trails provide access to green spaces, fresh air, and outdoor experiences indispensable to physical and mental health.

PEC is active with local partners throughout the Commonwealth to create trail-based infrastructure and recreational opportunities. In Western Pennsylvania, we co-lead an ambitious, multi-state initiative – the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition – to support organizations with existing and planned trail segments that will ultimately cover more than 1,500 miles.

In Greater Philadelphia, we're part of the Circuit Trails Coalition, connecting the city and its suburbs with outlying areas, including New Jersey and Delaware. In the northeast, we facilitate collaboration and convene regular planning discussions among trail and conservation groups, government leaders, and other stakeholders through the Northeast Pennsylvania Trails Forum.

We urge you to get out and find a trail near you.



April 2019  
Watch: [pecpa.org/video](http://pecpa.org/video)



[pecpa.org](http://pecpa.org)

For more information on PEC's trails and recreation program, visit [pecpa.org/programs/trails-recreation](http://pecpa.org/programs/trails-recreation).



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## Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

*A system of non-motorized, multi-use trails, and local connectors linking Erie to Pittsburgh through the experience of small towns, rural landscapes, historic sites, and cultural areas, tied to regional trails and beyond*

EPT network of trails completed as of December 2018

66%



Congratulations to Ron Steffey, Vice President of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, on his Lifetime Achievement Award and dedication to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

# Healthier Forests



Pennsylvania has hundreds of thousands of acres of previously strip-mined land – most of which have not been restored to their original condition. While many former mining sites have been reclaimed, traditional erosion control and soil stabilization techniques have made it difficult for native tree species to establish themselves.

PEC's reforestation program works with local, state, and federal partners to help transition these scarred landscapes back to healthy woodlands by mechanically “ripping” the compacted soils to loosen them for roots and then planting native seedlings. We work on both public and private lands across the Commonwealth and are always looking for new opportunities.

Much of the planting is done by volunteers who turn out for our annual tree-planting events in April and May. Starting with just a few acres in Weiser State Forest four years ago, we have now planted tens of thousands of pines, oaks, American chestnuts, and other native species. PEC-sponsored projects in just the last month have planted over 66,000 seedlings on about 77 acres of public and private land – all formerly mined and needing lots of help to regenerate native forest cover.

The success of these efforts reflects the value Pennsylvanians place on the integrity and health of Penn's Woods. Thriving native woodlands support wildlife, promote air and water quality, and keep soil erosion in check.

We invite you to stay in touch and join us for next year's events!



**Pennsylvania Legacies #87  
November 2018**

**Listen: [pecpa.org/audio](http://pecpa.org/audio)**



pennsylvania environmental council

**[pecpa.org](http://pecpa.org)**

For more information on PEC's  
reforestation program, visit  
[pecpa.org/reforestation](http://pecpa.org/reforestation).

# Thank You!

Proceeds from tonight's dinner and auction will support the important work being done by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council locally and across the state. Whether it is working for renewable energy strategies, protecting Pennsylvania's watersheds or developing new recreational opportunities, PEC will continue to be at the forefront, providing leadership, understanding, and perseverance.

The generosity of many local individuals, businesses, and organizations make this event possible. We want to thank all of the benefactors and donors for their generous contributions.

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# 2019 western pennsylvania environmental awards

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**Thank You**

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