

MINUTES
**CONSERVATION AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ADVISORY
COUNCIL**
March 27, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gary Kribbs, Chairman
Clifford David, Member
Bill Forrey, Member
Greg Goldman, Member
Stock Illoway, Member
Bob Kirchner, Member
Walt Peechatka, Member
Rick Sayles, Member
Geraldyn Singer, Member
David Trimpey, Member

Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary
Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Adviser
Katie Woodbury, CNRAC Assistant

GUESTS PRESENT

Fred Brown, Constituent
Diane Kripas, PA DCNR
Don McClure, McClure Association Consultants
Brian Rider, Pennsylvania Forest Products Association
Sam Robinson, Governor's Office
Andrew Sharp, Governor's Office

WELCOME

Chairman Kribbs opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council unanimously approved the January 2019 minutes.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Dunn welcomed Council and thanked members for their support of DCNR. Ms. Dunn said she spent much of the past month visiting newly-elected senators to educate them about the importance of the Department's work.

Governor Wolf released his Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget, which includes no new taxes and a cost-to-carry appropriation for DCNR. Separate from the proposal, but equally as prominent, the Governor proposed a plan called "Restore Pennsylvania," a broad effort to fund infrastructure and flood resiliency projects throughout the state. DCNR's work would greatly benefit from the initiative, which would provide funds for dams, spillways, deteriorating buildings and land

conservation. Restore Pennsylvania funds would come from both bond sales and a severance tax.

Secretary Dunn said she appreciates the work of the Motorized Recreation Workgroup, especially the effort by Bob Kirchner to pull together a report. She said she looks forward to reading and discussing the recommendations with Council.

Another major initiative is Governor Wolf's newly-formed GreenGov Council. The Council, formed through an executive order in early January, will work with all state agencies to help achieve a 26 percent reduction of state agency greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050, from 2005 levels. DCNR is a member of GreenGov.

Walt Peechatka asked about funding to combat the Spotted Lanternfly.

Greg Goldman asked about a shift of special funds to the General Fund in the Governor's proposed budget.

Cliff David asked about the potential for a new Growing Greener initiative.

Secretary Dunn said she is not sure about the status of the effort.

Dave Trimpey asked about the status of the initiative to lower workers' compensation rates for loggers.

CNRAC Assistant Katie Woodbury said the Green Ribbon Task Force is still meeting to discuss next steps.

DCNR ADVISER REPORT

Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Adviser

Gretchen Leslie thanked members who attended DCNR's budget hearings in front of the Senate and House appropriations committees. Ms. Leslie said the reauthorization of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund is a huge win for conservation, and DCNR staff worked hard in lobbying Pennsylvania's congressional delegation to get this legislation passed. Council may be interested in looking into HB 3743 sponsored by Representative Everett; this bill would create a check-off program to fund several programs at DCNR.

Bob Kirchner asked if the Motorized Recreation Report would be published online.

Ms. Leslie said it will reside on the CNRAC webpage and the motorized recreation webpage.

PRESENTATIONS

Andrew Sharp, Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Governor's Office

Sam Robinson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Governor's Office

Restore Pennsylvania

Andrew Sharp gave Council an overview of Governor Wolf's Restore Pennsylvania initiative, an effort that would bring hundreds of millions of dollars into the Commonwealth for worthy

projects. The Governor identified five priority areas: high-speed internet access, storm preparedness and disaster recovery, downstream manufacturing, blight removal and revitalization, and transportation capital projects. The priority area of demolition, revitalization and renewal has a subcategory for green infrastructure, which is where many of the DCNR-related projects would fall.

Mr. Sharp said Restore will be transformative for conservation in Pennsylvania; the Governor's Office anticipates funding would be available for trail and park projects, state park infrastructure, green infrastructure, dams, acid mine drainage remediation and land conservation. Mr. Sharp said his office welcomes feedback on the proposal.

Cliff David asked if the Governor's Office has any specifics for allocations within the five priority areas.

Mr. Sharp said they are still gathering feedback on the level of need. The Governor's Office is gauging interest both locally and politically.

Bob Kirchner expressed concern with the idea of creating new "special funds" to be used for conservation, especially since every year the current special funds become targets in the budget process.

Sam Robinson gave Council an overview of the severance tax proposal and how it compares to similar taxes in other states.

Geralyn Singer asked where Council could have the greatest impact.

Mr. Robinson said a good start would be to talk to legislators about specific projects in their districts.

Diane Kripas, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, DCNR Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Diane Kripas gave Council an overview of the upcoming SCORP for 2020 – 2025. The Department will build upon the 2014-2019 SCORP; there is still a lot of ongoing work related to the implementation of this plan.

The 2020 SCORP will have five priorities: health and wellness, recreation for all, sustainable systems, funding and economic development, and technology. Each priority has a dedicated workgroup to develop recommendations.

DCNR conducted a survey through Penn State to understand recreational trends throughout the state. Interest in funding for parks and recreation remains steady, and Pennsylvanians continue to value access to open space. Once Penn State finalizes the results, the SCORP team will begin to discuss recommendations.

Cliff David asked when Council could give feedback on the plan.

Ms. Kripas said there would be opportunities to meet and discuss the recommendations. A workgroup dedicated to the plan may be useful.

Bob Kirchner said Council could hold public meetings once the draft plan is released.

Geralyn Singer suggested that Council look at the priority areas and provide feedback on something that would be worthwhile to DCNR. Ms. Singer asked how DCNR remains accountable to the report once it is released.

Ms. Kripas said there is a workgroup within DCNR that continues to meet and discuss progress on each recommendation of the report.

WORKGROUP REPORTS

Dave Trimpey said the Strategic Planning Workgroup held a conference call and went over the timeline for the State Parks Strategic Plan. The group also discussed the SCORP and thought some of the data from the Penn's Parks for All surveys would be useful for that process.

Cliff David said the Communications Committee released a draft communications plan.

Secretary Dunn said having members attend Restore Pennsylvania events would be helpful and would give the public a chance to engage with CNRAC.

Several members discussed the need to address infrastructure and thought it would be useful to designate a workgroup chair for an infrastructure workgroup.

Walt Peechatka said Council should adopt a resolution talking about the transfer of special funds. He also said Council should release a statement in support of Restore Pennsylvania.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Nominating Committee proposed the slate for leadership positions on Council for the next term: Ephraim Zimmerman, Chair; Janet Sweeney, Vice Chair; Geralyn Singer, Secretary.

Council unanimously approved the nominations.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The chairman and council adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Notice of the March meeting was published in a newspaper of general circulation in Dauphin County and mailed to individuals and offices in compliance with the Sunshine Act (1986-84). These minutes constitute the official record of the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council; no official transcript is provided.