

CNRAC



Conservation &
Natural Resources
Advisory Council



Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

2015-2016 Annual Report

July 2016

CNRAC



Conservation &
Natural Resources
Advisory Council

Pennsylvania Constitution Article I, Section 27

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

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council

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

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

On the cover: Mansion Overlook at Kings Gap Environmental Education & Training Center near Carlisle, Pa.

July 1, 2016

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

Dear Governor Wolf:

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) is pleased to present its 2015-2016 annual report of our activities in fulfillment of our obligations to provide advice and recommendations to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

We are pleased to see the passage of the 2015-2016 budget includes a reduction of DCNR's reliance on the Oil and Gas Lease Fund to fund agency operations. We support a shift in General Funds that leads to a more stable and reliable funding source for the department.

We believe there are pressing issues facing Pennsylvania's natural resources that warrant the attention of the council. Several topics covered this year include protection of waterways and habitats, Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan, reinvigoration of Pennsylvania's timber industry, and unconventional gas drilling. We hope this report and our future actions will give you an indication of our commitment to these and other important issues.

Sincerely,



L. Richard Sayles
CNRAC Chairman

CNRAC Council Members 2015-2016

GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS

Erick J. Coolidge - Wellsboro, PA; Tioga County Commissioner and Owner/Operator of Le-Ma-Re Farm; term expires January 2019.

Susan Landes - Denver, PA; B.S, Recreation and Parks, Penn State University; M.P.A, Penn State University; Executive Director, Lancaster Recreation Commission; term expires January 2018.

Paul Lumia - Dallas, PA; B.A. Economics, Lehigh University; M.S. Environmental Resource Management, University of Pennsylvania; Executive Director, North Branch Land Trust; term expired January 2015. Resigned June 2016.

Paul A. Lyskava- Camp Hill, PA; B.A. Notre Dame University; M.P.A. Public Administration, Penn State University; Executive Director, Pennsylvania Forest Products Association; term expires January 2018.

L. Richard Sayles - Harrisburg, PA; B.S. Developmental Psychology, Penn State University; Dauphin County Area Coordinator for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of the Capitol Region; term expires January 2017.

Ephraim Zimmerman - Pittsburgh, PA; B.S. Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University; M.S. Forest Ecology, University of Michigan; Ecological Assessment Manager, PA Natural Heritage Coordinator, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; term expires January 2017.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE APPOINTMENTS

Rocco S. Ali - North Apollo, PA; B.S. Biology and Chemistry, Geneva College; M.S. Orthopedics and Neurology, University of Pittsburgh; Physical Therapist and Clinical Supervisor, Nova Care Outpatient Rehabilitation; term expires January 2017.

L. Stockton Illoway - Phoenixville, PA; B.A. Liberal Arts, Harvard University; M.S. Financial Science, American College; Senior Sales Associate, 1847 Financial; term expires January 2017.

Robert E. Kirchner - St. Marys, PA; B.S. Health & Physical Education, Slippery Rock University of PA; Owner, WhyNotSafety, LLC; President, American Council of Snowmobile Associations & Allegheny Forest Alliance; term expires January 2017.

Walter N. Peechatka - New Cumberland, PA; B.S. Forestry, Penn State University; Senior Consultant, Versant Strategies; term expired January 2016, awaiting reappointment.

Janet L. Sweeney - Luzerne, PA; B.A in Sociology, State University of New York; M.S. Science in Planning and Regional Development, University of Arizona; Director, Pennsylvania Environmental Council; term expires January 2018.

David Trimpey - Pittsfield, PA; B.S. in Forest Science, Penn State University; Resource Manager, Kane Hardwood Division of Collins Pine Company; term expires January 2018.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE APPOINTMENTS

Clifford C. David, Jr. - Lower Gwynedd, PA; B.A. Psychology, Bucknell University; B.S. Botany, University of Vermont; M.S. Organization and Management, Antioch College; President, Conservation Economics; term expires January 2017.

William Engle- Harrisburg, PA; B.S. Geoenvironmental Studies/History, Shippensburg University; M.S. Education, Temple University; term expires January 2017.

William C. Forrey - Camp Hill, PA; B.S. Landscape Architecture; M.S. Regional Planning, Penn State University; Retired Pennsylvania State Park Director; term expires January 2019.

Gary M. B. Kribbs - Havertown, PA; B.A. Geology, University of Toledo; M.S. Geology, University of Toledo; President, AEON Geoscience, Inc.; term expired January 2016; awaiting reappointment.

William E. Mifflin - Philadelphia, PA; B.S. Ornamental Horticulture, B.S. Recreational Management, M.Ed. Recreation Administration, Temple University; Executive Director, Philadelphia Hospitality, Inc.; term expired January 2015; Resigned May 2016.

David Rohm - Pittsburgh, PA; Visual Communications, Art Institute of Pittsburgh; Design Team Leader, Infinity Concepts; term expires January 2017.

CNRAC OFFICERS AND STAFF

DCNR Secretary – Cindy Adams Dunn

Chairman – L. Richard Sayles, May 2015 to May 2017

Vice Chairman – Paul Lumia, May 2015 to June 2016

Secretary – Gary Kribbs, May 2015 to May 2017

DCNR Council Adviser – Gretchen Leslie

Council Assistant – Katie Woodbury

CNRAC Meetings

Due to a travel ban issued in 2015, CNRAC only held three regular business meetings in fiscal year 2015-2016:

July 22, 2015

Mike Eschenmann, chief of the Division of Community Parks and Conservation in the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, presented information on DCNR's grant program, including an overview of DCNR's online grant application system, which streamlines the application process for the many user groups eligible for grant funding. DCNR offers grants in several categories: Land Acquisition & Conservation, Park Rehabilitation & Development, Community Recreation & Conservation Planning, State & Regional Partnerships, Trails, and Peer & Circuit Rider. In 2015, DCNR received 428 applications, requesting \$92 million. DCNR can typically fund only half of the grant requests it receives.

Tim Schaeffer, director of Policy, Planning, and Communications for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC), gave an overview of how DCNR and PFBC work together to protect waterways and habitats. PFBC regularly advises DCNR on the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) environmental review tool, which allows potential developers and grant recipients to screen their land for potential hazards to protected species or the environment.

Tomas Aguilar, director of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction at the PA Department of Health, presented information on Lyme disease and the department's efforts to educate citizens about the disease. Mr. Aguilar described Lyme as a multi-stage disease that can be debilitating if not detected and treated in time. Every county in Pennsylvania is affected by Lyme disease. Mr. Aguilar covered the best ways to prevent Lyme, symptoms, and the Department of Health's new awareness campaign, "Don't Let a Tick Make You Sick," which is focused on prevention techniques.

During the public comment period, Jeff Schmidt of the Sierra Club introduced Tom Torres, the new head of a forest watch program that will identify potential threats to forests. Mr. Torres will be leading a volunteer force. Mr. Schmidt also shared a letter from multiple conservation groups outlining concerns about natural gas drilling in the Clarence Moore lands of the Loyalsock State Forest. The groups sent the letter to the Governor's Office.

Others in attendance were:

- Colleen Engvall, Pennsylvania General Assembly's Joint Legislative Conservation Committee
- Adam Banks, Pennsylvania General Assembly's Joint Legislative Conservation Committee



Directly after the July 22 meeting, DCNR employees and council members held a small ceremony celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the agency and CNRAC. Secretary Cindy Dunn was joined by the first DCNR Secretary John C. Oliver (right), and council member Bill Forrey.

September 23, 2015

Ryan Szuch, section chief in the Forest Resource Planning Section of DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, provided an overview of the draft State Forest Resource Management Plan. The last management plan was written in 2007. Mr. Szuch walked council through chapters of the plan, which provides a broad framework from which the bureau can develop future district-level plans focusing on local resources and values, and incorporating increased public input. The plan also provides points of emphasis for future management, such as climate change, conservation of wild character, prescribed fire, lakes, river islands, cultural resources, and communication via social media and interpretative opportunities.

Sara Nicholas, DCNR policy director, provided an overview of the newly formed Green Ribbon Commission on Forest Products, Conservation, and Jobs. Co-led by DCNR, Agriculture, and the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Commission kicked off in January 2016 for a limited timeframe to develop recommendations on how to reinvigorate the forest products industry and provide for healthy, productive forests to support the industry.

Michele Tate, executive director of the Department of Environmental Protection's Citizen's Advisory Council (CAC), gave an update on the Act 54 Report, detailing statistics, reports on mining impacts, and recommendations from the University of Pittsburgh (the contractor on the report). CAC issued recommendations on the report. Ms. Tate also noted the CAC leadership was working on strengthening ties with the General Assembly by meeting with leadership and environmental committee chairs. Other actions of CAC include: input on the Act 537 modernization; advocating for statewide water well construction standards; program performance and efficiency review; and input on the Climate Action Plan and the EPA Clean Power Rule.

Hayley Jeffords, DEP Policy Office, gave an update on the Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force, including reviewing the charge of the task force and subcommittee structure.

Others in attendance were:

- Richard Martin, PA Forest Coalition
- Jeff Schmidt, PA Sierra Club
- Fred Brown, PA Trails Foundation
- Joanne Kilgour, PA Sierra Club

November 18, 2015

While not a regular business meeting, CNRAC hosted a public input session for the Bureau of Forestry's Resource Management Plan. This was a final meeting in a series of 12 public meetings held across the state by the bureau to present a draft of the plan and receive public input. After a presentation on the main plan components by Ryan Szuch, section chief in the Forest Resource Planning Section of DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, 17 citizens presented their opinions to several CNRAC members in attendance during 5 minutes each of individual testimony. Representatives from recreation groups, conservation and environmental organizations and private citizens spoke about their ideas and concerns about natural gas drilling, recreational opportunities, and natural resource protection.

March 23, 2016

DEP Secretary John Quigley presented information to council on the DEP's current role in protecting the Chesapeake Bay and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Secretary Quigley noted that Pennsylvania has not been close to meeting its federally mandated responsibilities in protecting the watershed. As a result, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) withheld around \$3 million from the agency. Secretary Quigley outlined DEP's new plan to address the inadequacies of the current program, starting with updating software, data and record keeping systems.

Matthew Keefer, DCNR assistant state forester, gave a presentation on DCNR's role in Chesapeake Bay efforts. The agency advances the protection of the watershed through recreation and public access, education and outreach, land conservation, urban tree planting, and riparian forest buffers. Mr. Keefer stressed the importance of buffers in improving water quality and highlighted buffer success stories in Pennsylvania. Mr. Keefer explained the department's Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative and mentioned the newly formed Riparian Forest Buffer Advisory Committee and its role in providing recommendations for the initiative.

Ellen Shultzabarger, division chief for the Bureau of Forestry, presented information on the newly launched PA Explorer Conservation Tool. The tool combines data from both the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index Environmental Review Tool to improve mapping, species habitat information, and the ability to filter data on a screenshot.

Others in attendance were:

- Sara Nicholas, DCNR policy director
- Annie Macky, DCNR policy specialist

Strategic Planning Session

In lieu of a public meeting in May, the council convened at the Kings Gap Environmental Education and Training Center for a strategic planning retreat to discuss current council structure, purpose, and future relevance. Jeff Kreider, OA-Human Resource Development Division, facilitated the conversation. Secretary Dunn also gave remarks on CNRAC's involvement with stakeholder engagement, and Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC council adviser, led discussions on council members' connections within the community and respective areas of expertise. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the form and function of the council. Council agreed productivity will increase by focusing dedicated effort in establishing goals, council structure, and individual/collective roles. Mr. Kreider provided the following recommendations for consideration of council:

- I. Revisit structure set by bylaws to determine if changes are needed to better organize and run the council without an executive director.
- II. Reevaluate the need for work group structure based upon council member interest, background/expertise, demographics and community stakeholder connections.
- III. Determine appropriate number of meetings and work sessions to allow for information gathering, issue development, and public input.
- IV. Determine a consistent method of communications among council members to reflect work group accomplishments and collective council progress.
- V. Leverage identified opportunities to mitigate identified council weaknesses.

Council will be evaluating these recommendations and taking action in future meetings.

Council Actions

After hearing public comment and receiving written correspondence from citizens about natural gas drilling on the Clarence Moore lands in Loyalsock State Forest, council penned a letter to DCNR Secretary Dunn and Governor Wolf outlining its suggested approach to natural gas drilling on that particular tract of state forest land.



October 6, 2015

The Honorable Cindy Adams Dunn
Secretary
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
400 Market Street, 7th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Secretary Dunn:

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) has received numerous letters and in-person inquiries from individuals and organizations regarding the disposition of surface drilling on lands within the boundaries of the Loyalsock State Forest and specifically those known as the "Clarence Moore" lands. The majority of the individuals and organizations that have contacted CNRAC have stated that they would like to see no surface disturbance on these lands due to the sensitive nature of the fauna and flora and the existing high quality outdoor recreation opportunities found there.

Members of CNRAC understand that subsurface fossil fuel resources under Loyalsock are not owned by the state, and that the owners of these resources may have rights to utilize some surface areas within the boundaries of the Loyalsock State Forest to access these resources. CNRAC also understands that there are differing legal opinions as to what surface areas within the Loyalsock might be available to the subsurface resource owners.

Based on available information, including the stated mission of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry and the advancement of subsurface horizontal drilling technologies, members of CNRAC recommend that DCNR work to the best of its ability to protect the surface area of the Loyalsock State Forest. CNRAC feels that the preferred course of action would be for DCNR to negotiate a "No Surface Disturbance Use Agreement" with the owners of the subsurface resources, so that the majority if not all of the resource extraction takes place from a remote location outside the boundaries of the Loyalsock State Forest. If surface disturbance is unavoidable, CNRAC recommends that DCNR continue to negotiate a Surface Development Management Agreement (SDMA) that protects the most sensitive natural areas of the Loyalsock and that has the least amount of impact on all Loyalsock State Forest user groups.

Finally, CNRAC encourages DCNR to continue to disseminate pertinent information about the Loyalsock to the public in a timely manner. CNRAC also suggests that DCNR continue to hold Loyalsock stakeholder meetings in order to keep all stakeholders informed and allow for public comment.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Richard Sayles".

L. Richard Sayles
CNRAC Chair
cc: Governor Tom Wolf

Council sent a letter to Governor Wolf, Pennsylvania State Representatives, and Pennsylvania Senators regarding concerns about House Bill 2013, proposed legislation calling for public-private partnerships and development in Pennsylvania state parks.



June 28, 2016

Dear Governor Wolf, PA State Representatives and Senators:

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council has reviewed House Bill 2013, P.N. 3219, and would like to express its opposition to this bill, as it is currently written.

HB 2013 would authorize DCNR to be involved in private-public partnerships within the Pennsylvania State Park system, which is unnecessary since that authority was given to DCNR in the act that created the department in 1995. DCNR has taken advantage of this authority to expand its recreation and park opportunities since its inception. The department presently has 140 concession agreements with private firms that include ski areas, food concessions, boat rental concessions, lodge concessions, and others.

It is the opinion of this Council that DCNR is managing an excellent state park system, which was confirmed in 2009 when the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration presented its National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management to Pennsylvania's State Parks. The state park system has been operating for more than 120 years and is managed with integrity and professionalism.

Continued increases in attendance and revenues each year indicate a consumer base that is very satisfied with the operation and management of the state park system. Numerous surveys with visitors show this to be the case.

This Council takes its responsibility seriously to review policies and programs of the state park system, which includes reviews of the public-private relationships within the bureau. Council believes that DCNR's Bureau of State Parks has done an excellent job of using its authority for private development and integrating public-private relationships into the operating structure of the state park system.

Based on the foregoing, the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council believes that HB 2013 would not be an advantage to Pennsylvania's excellent state park system and, therefore, recommends against its passage in its current form. We would welcome an opportunity to work with the sponsors in addressing ways to accelerate the growth of private/public agreements to address the need for additional appropriate recreational activities while enabling the Commonwealth to maintain its outstanding reputation for providing recreational opportunities for its citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Richard Sayles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

L. Richard Sayles
CNRAC Chair

cc: The Honorable Cindy Adams Dunn



Council members from left to right: Rick Sayles, Cliff David, Dave Trimpey, Janet Sweeney, Stock Illoway, Rocco Ali, Bill Forrey, Erick Coolidge, and Gary Kribbs. Not pictured: Ephraim Zimmerman, Dave Rohm, Sue Landes, Bill Engle, Paul Lyskava, Walt Peechatka, and Bob Kirchner

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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

Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC)
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8767
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8767
Telephone: 717-705-0031

E-Mail: gleslie@pa.gov or
kawoodbury@pa.gov

Website: <http://www.apps.dcnr.state.pa.us/cnrac/>

