

Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council



**to the Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources**



2013-2014 Annual Report

CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL

July 2014



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: Worlds End State Park, Tom Gettings



Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council

September 1, 2014

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

Dear Governor Corbett:

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) is pleased to present its 2013-2014 annual report of our activities in fulfillment of our obligations to provide advice and recommendations to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

As Governor, you know the importance of providing a balanced effort to achieve a strong economy while providing a strong and sustainable environmental effort for the Commonwealth and its citizens. Council fully understands the role that our natural resources play in building a strong economy and sustainable future for Pennsylvania and its citizens.

During the last year, CNRAC has continued its transformation as several long-time members of Council have departed, and we welcomed several new members. In addition, in the last year we have achieved stability in terms of DCNR staff that provides regular and sustained assistance to Council to carry out its duties. They are providing excellent and timely service to Council.

CNRAC is statutorily charged with (a) reviewing all conservation and natural resource laws of the Commonwealth and making appropriate suggestions for the revision, modification and codification thereof; (b) considering, studying and reviewing the work of DCNR; (c) advising the department, on request, and making recommendations upon its initiative, for the improvement of the work of the department; and (d) reporting annually to you and the General Assembly, and providing interim reports as deemed advisable. These responsibilities are carried out by a group of highly talented, energetic and dedicated citizen volunteers appointed, respectively, by the Governor and leadership of the Legislature.

During the course of the last fiscal year, the Council requested and received informative reports from major program areas in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. These reports served as an excellent tool for the Council to use in staying abreast of department activities.

As was the situation in the last several years, the Council continues to receive unsolicited public input related to the department's leasing and potential expansion of leasing on state forests and park lands in the Commonwealth. We are continuing to explore options that will strengthen this important program and help ensure that the commonwealth can continue to benefit economically while fulfilling its commitment to protect our natural resources.

We desire to expand our ability to obtain additional public input during the years to come to guarantee that the Council and DCNR are achieving our mandated missions.

Included in the attached report are a summary of some of the issues and subjects to which the Council devoted time and discussion at our meetings during the last year.

CNRAC believes that its work on behalf of the citizens of this Commonwealth helps strengthen DCNR's ability to provide quality natural resources, facilities, programs and other assistance to communities throughout Pennsylvania. We appreciate the opportunity to make this contribution and look forward to another year of listening to citizens and partnering with the department on conserving our state's natural assets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walt Peechatka', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Walt Peechatka
CNRAC Chairman

CNRAC Council Members 2013-2014

GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS

Erick J. Coolidge - Wellsboro, PA; Tioga County Commissioner and Owner/Operator of Le-Ma-Re Farm; term expires January 2016.

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

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.

Lori Mizgorski - Pittsburgh, PA; B.A. English, Hood College; Shaler Township Board of Commissioners; term expires January 2015.

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 expired January 2014. Awaiting reappointment.

Current Vacancy

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.

Thomas S. Buzby - Lebanon, PA; B.S. Public Administration, Virginia Commonwealth University; term expired January 2013. Resigned January 2014.

L. Stockton Illoway - Phoenixville, PA; B.A. Liberal Arts, Harvard University; M.S. Financial Science, American College; Senior Sales Associate, 1847 Financial; term expired January 2014. Awaiting reappointment.

Robert Kirchner- St. Marys, PA; B.S. Health & Physical Education, Slippery Rock University of PA; Senior Risk Control Consultant, PMA Companies; Vice President, American Council of Snowmobile Associations; term expires January 2017.

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

Blaine A. Puller - Smethport, PA; B.S. Forestry, Penn State University; retired Forest Manager; term expires January 2015.

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 2015.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE APPOINTMENTS

Clifford C. David, Jr. - Lower Gwynedd, Montgomery County, 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 2015.

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

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 expires January 2015.

Current Vacancy

CNRAC OFFICERS AND STAFF

DCNR Secretary - Ellen Ferretti

Chairman – Walt Peechatka, May 2013 to present

Vice Chairman – L. Richard Sayles, May 2013 to present

Secretary – Paul Lumia, Sept. 2013 to present

DCNR Council Adviser – Gretchen Leslie

Council Assistant – Lauren Adair

CNRAC Meetings

CNRAC held six regular business meetings in fiscal year 2013-2014:

July 24, 2013

Gretchen Leslie, director of DCNR's Office of Education, Communications and Partnerships, and Marge Hughes, director of DEP's Citizens Advisory Council, gave presentations on the subject of public participation in their respective agencies.

Council members Gary Kribbs and Ephraim Zimmerman reported on their attendance at a June 2013 public meeting held by DCNR in Williamsport to gather public feedback on proposed drilling in Loyalsock State Forest.

Public attendees at the meeting included: Curt Ashenfelter, executive director of the Keystone Trails Association. Mr. Ashenfelter urged the Council to take an active role in DCNR public meetings concerning gas drilling in the state forests; Robert Swift, Scranton Times Tribune; Colin Jerolmack, citizen; Ralph Kisberg, Responsible Drilling Alliance; and Harvey Katz, retired biologist, serving on the Lycoming County Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and the Endless Mountain RC&D Council.

September 25, 2013

Pam Pasi, director of DCNR's Administrative Services, gave a report on DCNR budget issues for the current fiscal year and what it expects to face in the next fiscal year.

Carol Collier, executive director of the Delaware River Basin Commission, gave an update on issues facing the Delaware River Basin Commission.

Seth Cassell, division chief, Resource Planning, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, gave a report on the upcoming Forest Resource Plan rollout and schedule for public input opportunities.



Council discussed and unanimously approved a procedure to encourage and receive public input at Council meetings. (*see page 10*)

Council member Paul Lumia was nominated and approved as Secretary of the Council.

November 13, 2013

Bill Kunze, Pennsylvania executive director of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), gave a presentation to the Council on the areas where TNC works collaboratively with DCNR. Mr. Kunze described the cooperative efforts with old growth forest management; prescribed fire memorandums of understanding for training, planning, and implementation of the program; hemlock conservation initiatives; integrated pest management efforts; the South Mountain initiative and the Michaux Forest trout habitat creek bed restoration program.

Tim Schaeffer, Pa. Fish and Boat Commission, gave an update on the status of HB 1576, the Endangered Species Act amendment legislation, and its effect on the Commission's species protection efforts.

Audience members included Jeff Schmidt, who announced his retirement from the Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club after 31 years. Joanne Kilgour, the new president of the chapter, was also in attendance and introduced herself to the Council.

January 22, 2014

Zack Roeder, DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, gave an update on the Natural Gas Advisory Committee to the Council, discussing the origins of the committee, its mission, vision, committee members and how the committee is advising DCNR on oil and gas issues.

Ellen Shultzabarger, DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, gave a presentation to the Council about PNDI, how the current tool works, the importance of PNDI and the partners that work with DCNR.

Ray Zomok, DCNR, Bureau of Facility Design and Construction, gave a presentation to the Council on current projects that the bureau is working on, including new visitor centers, dam replacements and road repair.

Lauren Imgrund, DCNR, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, reported on the DCNR's work on developing the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that is updated every five years. CNRAC was invited to provide input to the Technical Advisory Committee formed to help provide stakeholder input and direct DCNR on the upcoming plan.

Audience members included Joanne Kilgour and Evan Singer, Sierra Club; and Paul Lyskava, PA Forest Products Association.

March 26, 2014

Gretchen Leslie, director of DCNR's Office of Education, Communications and Partnerships, became the new DCNR adviser to the Council.

Council Chairman Walt Peechatka reported on his attendance at a meeting of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee on March 19, which discussed the report of the committee's study on the feasibility of merging the Fish and Boat Commission with the Game Commission and possible



combination of some of the DCNR functions with the new structure. He stated that the report indicates there are no advantages for including DCNR functions.

Pamela Pasi, DCNR's director of administrative services, presented the 2014/2015 Fiscal Year budget to the Council.

Rachel Reyna, DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, gave a presentation on the Urban and Community Forestry Council, including a background on the Council, how it was created, its purpose and what the Council is working on currently.

Gretchen Leslie gave an update on DCNR's work on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which included preliminary data survey results, workgroups that were created to help develop and enhance the plan, and ways the Council could become involved.

Audience members included Joanne Kilgour, president of the Pa. Chapter of the Sierra Club and Robert Swift, reporter for the Scranton Times-Tribune. Ms. Kilgour addressed the Council and submitted a written statement on the Sierra Club's concerns with drilling in state parks and forests.

Due to scheduling conflicts, the May annual field trip was postponed until September.

May 28, 2014

In recognition of the years of service of former CNRAC member Thomas Buzby, Chairman Walt Peechatka read a resolution honoring Buzby for his 14 years of service to the Council and the Commonwealth. The resolution was unanimously adopted by Council and presented to Buzby, who was in attendance.

Seth Cassell, DCNR, Bureau of Forestry gave a presentation on DCNR's newly released Shale Gas Monitoring Report. Mr. Cassell covered the 15 monitoring values, external partners and research.

Dr. Andy Mowen from Penn State gave a presentation on the preliminary data received from the statewide resident survey, which is part of the five-year Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan currently being developed. The data results gauged Pennsylvanian's opinions and thoughts on outdoor recreation across the Commonwealth.



Audience members included Joanne Kilgour from the Sierra Club who addressed the Council and submitted written comments on the Sierra Club's concerns about the impacts of drilling to state forests and the Shale Gas Monitoring Report.

Robert Gardner from the Sierra Club's Beyond Natural Gas Campaign addressed the Council and submitted concerns about the Shale Gas Monitoring Report.

Fred Brown from the PA Trails Foundation was also in attendance.

COUNCIL ACTIONS

Encouraging and Receiving Public Input

Council adopted a policy to appropriately accept and weigh feedback from members of the public. The policy was adopted at the Sept. 25, 2013 meeting.

Goal: to encourage and receive input from citizens and conservation organizations, of the Commonwealth, in an appropriate and defined manner that assures that those appearing before Council understand the process that will be followed and how those comments will be received and recorded.

Procedure:

- 1) Individuals and representatives of organizations in attendance at Council meetings will be provided an opportunity to offer comments to CNRAC on issues related to the DCNR mission and services provided by the agency.
- 2) Those offering comments to Council will be encouraged to present those comments in writing, in addition to orally, to assure accuracy in transcription. Council cannot otherwise guarantee the accuracy of the recorded minutes.
- 3) Oral comments will be limited to five minutes if time permits.
- 4) A sign-in sheet for meeting attendees will include a statement encouraging those making presentations to do so in writing as explained in Item #2 of this policy.

At the May meeting, Council also voted to respond to the Sierra Club regarding their requests for public meetings on natural gas and changes to the Gas Monitoring Report. Letters were drafted and finalized in July.

Council also drafted a letter to DCNR Secretary Ellen Ferretti in June indicating their support of the Gas Monitoring Report and recommending DCNR strengthen its ground water data collection and continue its efforts to secure public review and input.



Council also sent a letter to Governor Tom Corbett and legislative leaders in June regarding the protection of several recreation and conservation funding streams.



Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council

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June 25, 2014

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Corbett:

Pennsylvania has made tangible and lasting investments in conservation, thanks to the [Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund](#) and [farmland preservation](#) program, both established in 1993, as well as [Growing Greener](#), established in 1999. With these programs, Pennsylvania has been able to establish and improve parks and trails, protect wildlife habitats, preserve productive farms and save other important green spaces (such as historic battlefields and neighborhood gardens) that define PA communities and that will shape the lives of Pennsylvanians for decades and centuries to come.

According to a Penn State poll conducted in 2012, ninety-two percent of Pennsylvanians surveyed think that the state funds dedicated to preserving farmland and open space, providing parks and trails, and protecting rivers and streams should continue to be used for these purposes. Seventy-eight percent of Pennsylvania voters also want an increase in state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms, even if it would cost the average household an additional ten dollars annually.

The benefits of these funds to every Pennsylvanian are clear. The Keystone fund has funded over 1,900 public park projects and has helped conserve more than 154,000 acres of critical natural habitat. Growing Greener funds have protected 33,700 acres of family farmland and 42,300 acres of threatened open space. The fund has also enhanced access to outdoor recreation through the funding of over 360 municipal and state park projects and has helped reduce flooding and pollution by funding 400 watershed projects and restoring 1,600 acres of abandoned mine land. The farmland preservation program has protected more than 4,500 of Pennsylvania's family farms totaling over 500,000 acres.

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) strongly agrees with the overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians in regard to maintaining or increasing funds for parks

and trails, protecting wildlife habitats, preserving productive farms and saving other important green spaces.

CNRAC recommends that the funding sources for the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, farmland preservation program and the Growing Greener program be maintained for the purposes they were intended and not be diverted to the general fund to stem current or future budget deficits.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walt Peechatka', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Walt Peechatka
Chairman

The poll of Pennsylvanians was conducted by Penn State University on behalf of the Trust for Public Land with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds in partnership with R.K. Mellon Foundation, and the PA Growing Greener Coalition.

cc: Lieutenant Governor Jim Cawley
Representative Samuel Smith
Representative Mike Turzai
Representative Frank Dermody
Representative William Adolph
Representative Joseph Markosek
Representative Ron Miller
Representative Greg Vitali
Senator Joseph Scarnati
Senator Dominic Pileggi
Senator Jay Costa
Senator Jake Corman
Senator Vincent Hughes
Senator Gene Yaw
Senator John Yudichak



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:

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Harrisburg, PA 17105-8767
Telephone: 717-705-0031

E-Mail: gleslie@pa.gov or
laadair@pa.gov
Web site: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cnrac

