

MINUTES
**CONSERVATION AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ADVISORY
COUNCIL**
January 23, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gary Kribbs, Chairman
Rocco Ali, Member
Bill Forrey, Member
Clifford David, Member
Stock Illoway, Member
Joanne Kilgour, Member
Bob Kirchner, Member
Walt Peechatka, Member
Rick Sayles, Member
Janet Sweeney, Member
Geraldyn Singer, Member
David Trimpey, Member
Ephraim Zimmerman, Member

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

GUESTS PRESENT

Brian Palmer, ERG Inc.
John Kline, Kline Associates
Mike Nerozzi, PA Fish and Boat Commission
Robert Swift, Capitol Wire
Fred Brown, Citizen

WELCOME

Chairman Kribbs opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council unanimously approved the November 2018 minutes.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Dunn outlined DCNR's major initiatives: Forests, Climate, Water, Youth, Green, Recreation and Diversity. Senior staff worked hard to embed the initiatives into the everyday work of staff. There are many opportunities, such as abandoned mine drainage on state land, where DCNR can make a huge difference. Climate change presents several challenges that will need to be addressed in all the initiatives. The Water initiative has focused on riparian forest buffers and the Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) process; the final WIP will be due in April 2019.

The Governor issued an Executive Order on green government and climate, connecting nicely with both the Green and Climate initiatives. As indicated in the Order, DCNR will co-chair a "GreenGov Council" with the Departments of General Services and Environmental Protection.

The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is the largest success out of the Youth initiative, and the Department continues to examine how to improve the program to make it even better. The Governor is interested in workforce development, and this program exemplifies the types of skills building and workforce preparation that will launch the next generation of environmental stewards.

A focus for the Department over the next term will be flooding and infrastructure improvements.

Bob Kirchner asked about the Secretary's confirmation hearing.

Secretary Dunn replied that the hearing has not been scheduled.

Walt Peechatka asked if the Department has considered opportunities for the private sector to help with infrastructure issues.

Secretary Dunn said Marci Mowery from the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation would be a good person to speak with on this issue. The Department needs to be careful about the commercialization of public resources.

Stock Illoway suggested a company like REI could donate a portion of its sales to DCNR to provide more funding.

Cliff David asked how CNRAC can help DCNR.

Secretary Dunn said CNRAC could educate legislators on the infrastructure needs of the Department.

DCNR ADVISER REPORT

Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Adviser

Gretchen Leslie gave Council an update on recent happenings at the Department. New native wild plant regulations are now final after a long process of approvals. Over 3,000 hikers came out to 31 state parks for "First Day Hikes," exemplifying the growing popularity of the events. Finally, the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers named Clarion River as the 2019 River of the Year.

PRESENTATIONS

Tim Schaeffer, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Tim Schaeffer, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, spoke with Council about how the Fish & Boat Commission works with DCNR to advance shared goals. Examples of collaborations include the fishing tackle loaner programs, riparian forest buffer plantings, conservation explorer tool, streambank stabilization, trout stocking and lake habitat improvements.

Cliff David asked if the Commission is doing anything related to climate change.

Executive Director Schaeffer responded that the Commission is about to commence a strategic planning process, which will address impacts of climate change in Pennsylvania.

Walt Peechatka remarked how he is impressed with trout stocking efforts.

Secretary Dunn thanked the Commission for its work with and support of DCNR.

Marci Mowery, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation DCNR Infrastructure Report

Marci Mowery presented Council with an overview of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation infrastructure report, which discusses the \$1 billion of infrastructure needs. DCNR manages dams, wastewater treatment facilities, buildings and roads, all of which are aging and need attention.

Ms. Mowery highlighted some of the major infrastructure needs of the Department: DCNR manages 47 high-hazard dams, many of which are structurally deficient; parks and forests house over 3,000 miles of road that need to be rehabbed and brought up to an acceptable standard; bridges, sometimes serving as connectors between municipalities for emergency vehicles, need to be replaced; and natural hazards such as invasive species threaten the health of the resource if they are not addressed.

Ms. Mowery acknowledged it will take time to raise awareness about these deficiencies. She asked for CNRAC's support in educating the public and the legislature about the Department's need for more infrastructure funding.

Cliff David asked if there is anything Council can do to help with the effort.

Marci Mowery said each member could speak with respective stakeholders about the infrastructure backlog and help generate support for additional funding.

Rick Sayles asked about DCNR's current level of maintenance funding.

Rocco Ali asked if funds from Growing Greener III could help with some of the infrastructure backlog.

Secretary Dunn said Growing Greener III could help, but there is no guarantee.

WORKGROUP REPORTS

Bob Kirchner presented the final copy of the motorized recreation workgroup report for approval. He described the process the workgroup used to reach its recommendations: the group held conference calls throughout the year, spoke with a representative from Michigan, and provided draft recommendations to the DCNR Snowmobile/ATV Advisory Committee. Council approved the report, with Joanne Kilgour abstaining from the vote.

Rocco Ali suggested Council share the report with legislators.
Cliff David said he is not a fan of ATVs and asked if workgroup members considered the option of not having ATVs.

Mr. Kirchner clarified that ATV use in communities is a larger issue than the workgroup decided to tackle. The report gives recommendations for the overall administration of a motorized recreation program.

Ephraim Zimmerman said he wants to emphasize the importance of protecting ecologically significant areas.

MEETING ADJOURNED

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

Notice of the January 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.