This annual report covers 2012 accomplishments and marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Keystone Recreation, Parks and Conservation Fund. Through the strategic investments made possible with Keystone funding, local economies have grown, communities have been reborn and the recreational opportunities and the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians have been improved.
About Us

Our Bureau’s Mission
To be a leader in establishing community conservation partnerships for advancing the greening of Pennsylvania, for protecting the Commonwealth’s natural and heritage resources, and for providing recreational opportunities for all Pennsylvanians and visitors to enjoy.

What We Value

- Being a partner with local communities, counties, land trusts and non-profit organizations to protect and enhance Pennsylvania’s natural resources and help build attractive, sustainable communities.

- Connecting people to the places they love.

- Helping communities appreciate our natural resources by incorporating green principles and native landscaping, planting trees, using green design in buildings, protecting riparian areas and wetlands, and managing stormwater naturally.

- Supporting projects that provide: accessible, safe, close-to-home recreation facilities; trail systems that provide places to walk, bike and experience nature; critical habitat and cultural landscapes, and, public access to our rivers so they become “front doors” to vibrant, livable communities.

- Helping communities manage their growth, reduce the loss of open space and develop tools that will support responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

- Being responsive to community conservation needs and providing technical assistance, guidance and resource contacts that are timely and efficient in meeting those needs.

Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan:
The award winning Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan [http://www.paoutdoorrecplan.com/](http://www.paoutdoorrecplan.com/) (2009-2013) has guided Keystone and other grant investments. The state’s five-year Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan was honored as the best in the nation by the National Park Service and the National Association for Recreation Resource Planners in 2011. This plan identifies four important goals and provides significant recommendations for improving the health of Pennsylvanians. These four goals are:

- Strengthen connections between outdoor recreation, healthy lifestyles and economic benefits in communities.

- Reconnect people to the outdoors and develop a stewardship ethic through outdoor recreation.

- Develop a statewide land and water trail network to facilitate recreation, transportation and healthy lifestyles.

- Enhance outdoor recreation through better state agency cooperation.

The plan continues to guide community recreation & conservation work and Keystone and other grant investments.
Keystone grant funding announced and committed in FY 2012-2013

The grants announced by Governor Tom Corbett November 20, 2012 included 49 trail projects; 79 community park projects; 5 river conservation projects; and land conservation projects that will conserve 3,238 acres of open space. In addition, 37 statewide, park, heritage, greenway and trail initiative projects were announced. Typically, each dollar of the Keystone Fund grants leverage more than two dollars in direct private and local investments in parks, trails and community green spaces. These investments in turn generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity, ranging from recreational purchases and wages to increased property values.

Keystone Anniversary Event – State Capitol

An event celebrating the 20th anniversary of Keystone was held at the Capitol in March of 2013. The celebration included the presentation of the Keystone 20th Anniversary Awards, designed to recognize successful Keystone projects throughout Pennsylvania, and the release of a new report by The Trust for Public Land. This report documents that every $1 invested by the Keystone Fund in land and water conservation returns $7 in economic value of natural goods and services. http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/benefits-pa-keystone-roi-report.pdf

Keystone Accomplishments

Keystone accomplishments since inception include:

- 4,000 projects totaling $400 million and leveraging almost $870 million in local and private investment.
- 650 projects conserving approximately 130,000 acres at a cost of $156 million.
- 444 trail projects.
- 2,000 community park development projects, including ball fields, playgrounds, pools, picnic areas and recreation centers.

Keystone History:

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund (Key 93) was created in 1993 through the efforts of a strong, bi-partisan partnership of legislators, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and related businesses. The legislation, Act 50 of 1993, passed the PA Senate by a 48-0 vote and the PA House by a 196-3 vote. The $50 million bond referendum that provided initial funding was approved by 67% of voters. The Keystone Fund addressed the top priority of the PA Recreation Plan 1990-1995 for a stable, dedicated funding source.

Keystone – Act 50 of 1993

“An act providing for the establishment, operation and administration of the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund; designating a portion of the State Realty transfer tax revenues as a funding source for the fund; authorizing the incurring of indebtedness, with the approval of the electorate, to provide funding for the acquisition of, improvements to and the rehabilitation of parks, recreational facilities, educational facilities, historic sites, zoos and public libraries.”

Larry Williamson speaking at the 20th anniversary of Keystone
2012 Grant Investments

In 2012, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources awarded $26.5 million for 198 grants to revitalize communities, create new recreational opportunities, and conserve natural resources throughout Pennsylvania. The DCNR grant program combines several funding sources into one. Funding comes from:

- Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund
- Environmental Stewardship Fund
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (federal)
- Pennsylvania Recreational Trails (federal)
- Snowmobile/ATV Fund

For a complete list of our 2012 grant recipients visit: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_015945.pdf

For an interactive map showing the location and other grant investment information over the life of Keystone see: http://nrgisdevs01/BrcGrants_dev/index.html The remainder of this report includes case studies of DCNR grant projects that marked important milestones in 2012. Contributors that wrote or contributed to the articles or graciously provided photos are recognized and again thanked for their efforts.
Stony Creek – River of the Year 2012:

Project Location: Cambria and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Mike Piaskowski – River, heritage Areas and Partnerships Section Chief

Pennsylvania is fortunate to have over 85,000 miles of streams and rivers. Forty-six of those miles were spotlighted in 2012 when the Stonycreek River in Cambria and Somerset counties was named Pennsylvania’s River of the Year.

Pennsylvania has designated a River of the Year annually since 1983. In 2011, DCNR, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR), developed a process where the public votes to select the River of the Year. Through an array of special activities, a poster, and a multi-day sojourn, the designation helps raise public awareness about the stewardship needs of the river, helps celebrate conservation successes along its course, and highlights the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides.

The Stonycreek and its watershed hold a rich history that was instrumental in sustaining Native Americans and frontiersmen and later fueled the industrial revolution. Its legacy has presented obstacles and opportunities.

Helping the Stony reach its full potential continues to be no small feat. A dedicated group of local citizens and elected officials have poured decades of their lives into combatting acid mine drainage (AMD) and other issues. Because of their relentless determination, the AMD that once killed off all but a few aquatic species has largely been remediated, allowing anglers the opportunity to experience a near-wilderness fishing experience.

A crowd gathers on the banks of the Stonycreek River in Greenhouse Park, Conemaugh Township to watch the Whitewater Rodeo at the 2012 Stonycreek Rendezvous.
In addition to combating obstacles left by the industrial revolution, locals have also capitalized on opportunities. The Quemahoning Dam was built by the Cambria Steel Company in the early 1900s. Some 100 years later, DCNR would help the Cambria Somerset Authority (CSA) purchase the reservoir and subsequently install a custom-fabricated water release valve.

Even before CSA had control of the dam, locals could see the economic potential for regular whitewater releases. In 2012, their dreams became reality when the annual Stonycreek Rendezvous marked the first official whitewater release from Quemahoning Dam. Thanks to an incredible partnership, the Que now regularly releases up to 500 cubic feet of water per second to feed whitewater boating through Stonycreek Canyon. The Canyon presents one of the longest stretches of continuous rapids in the east, 15 rapids in four miles. The reclaimed fishery, along with the now regular whitewater releases has put the Stonycreek River on the map of the national and international watersports community.

Improving the health of our natural environment and the quality of life for our citizens are important aspects of the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation's work. A third benefit realized by investments in our natural resources is that of economic development. DCNR's investments are drawing dollars to the greater Johnstown Area, and savvy entrepreneurs are capitalizing. At the macro level the improvements to the Stonycreek River have significantly increased the critical mass of world class outdoor recreation opportunities in our region of the country, helping to draw more people from greater distances to take multi-day excursions. Just as the outdoor recreation industry is thriving in places like Ohiopyle, the greater Johnstown area is beginning to reap the economic benefit of tapping into the $646 billion dollar industry that is outdoor recreation.

For all that it has been and all it has become, the Stonycreek truly deserves the honor of being Pennsylvania's 2012 River of the Year!
Montgomery County Land Trust Hiester House Project & Partnership:

Project Location: Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Montgomery County Land Trust

Montgomery County Lands Trust (MCLT) announced on August 17, 2012, the permanent protection of the 78-acre Rogers-Hiester property, a long sought-after landscape in Upper Salford and Marlborough townships that is rich in both natural and historical resources. The property is the gateway to the Unami Forest, one of the largest remaining intact forests in southeastern Pennsylvania, and is home to the 1757 Georgian-style Daniel Hiester House. Plans for the property include restoration of the historically significant structure, the creation of a 75-acre park, and the future development of hiking trails that will connect the property to other regional trails and open space.

MCLT’s $1.6 million purchase of the property followed a 30 month campaign to raise the needed funds. A wide variety of public and private donors contributed to the effort, including Charles and Maureen Rogers, whose family had owned the property since 1929. Upon purchase, the land was transferred to Upper Salford Township, which will maintain it as a publicly accessible park. MCLT will hold a conservation easement on the property that ensures it will be forever protected from development.

The property is located off Route 63 just south of Sumneytown. Its visual prominence, natural resources, rich history, and potential access to public trails and parkland make Rogers-Hiester one of the most significant acquisition projects in Montgomery County.

The 78-acre property contains diabase geology, prime agricultural soils, and the confluence of Montgomery County’s only two high-quality streams: Unami Creek and Ridge Valley Creek. A large portion of the property consists of mature woodlands that are part of the Unami Forest, a notable section of the nationally recognized Pennsylvania Highlands. The land is ideally situated to serve as the linchpin for future connection to both Montgomery County’s 3,400-acre Green Lane Park and the 19-mile Perkiomen Trail just west of the property. With 50,000 users monthly, the Perkiomen Trail connects with the Schuylkill River Trail, linking Philadelphia to Pottsville.

“This is a capstone project for Montgomery County Lands Trust’s two decades of work in the region,” said Dulcie Flaharty, MCLT’s Executive Director. “During a time when funds for open space are scarce, we are grateful to have partners recognize the significance of this project, one that combines protection of both natural and cultural gems.”
The wooded property is a picturesque setting for a 255-year-old brick manse, originally the residence of Daniel Hiester, noted patriot and statesman. Because it was never remodeled, the house has retained exceptional, unaltered period features. The prominence of this estate was so significant that it was noted on the first official map of Pennsylvania in 1759. The rare combination of natural and historic resources elevates Rogers-Hiester landscape to a status of unprecedented importance, not only regionally but statewide.

Montgomery County Lands Trust was attracted to the project, recognizing that it had ranked for three decades as “highest priority” by the Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Services Department but had not yet been protected. Over the course of several years, Montgomery County Lands Trust worked with property owners Charles and Maureen Rogers to develop a preservation strategy, which was complicated by the necessity of finding funding to protect both the land and the structures.

Funding partners brought substantial resources to the project, including: $678,000 from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, $342,000 from Montgomery County’s Green Fields/Green Towns Open Space Program, $150,000 from the Open Space Institute, $20,000 from Upper Salford Township, and more than $60,000 in community support rallied by Montgomery County Lands Trust.

As a nonprofit conservancy, Montgomery County Lands Trust works to preserve and connect the natural areas, farmland, and neighborhood green spaces which contribute to the quality of life, to a clean and abundant water supply, and to the health of the region’s economy. To learn more about the organization, please visit the MCLT website at www.mclt.org.

“This property was a “Critical Habitat” acquisition,” said Carolyn Wallis, former natural resource program supervisor for DCNR. “The land has the highest conservation value in the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape. Two high-quality streams run through it, the diabase geology supports rare and unusual plants, and it is within the Unami Forest Important Bird Area as identified by the National Audubon Society. In other words, it is an exceptional place that needed desperately to be preserved.”
Antietam Lake

**Project Location:** Berks County, Pennsylvania

**Submitted by:**
Lorne Possinger – Recreation and Park Adviser

Antietam Lake Park is Berks County’s newest parkland. Spanning more than 640 acres, Antietam Lake Park is now the largest of the county’s parks. The vast majority of the park is in Lower Alsace Township, with a portion in Alsace Township. The park’s history dates to 1865, when the city of Reading bought the property as a water supply. The park’s main feature is Antietam Lake, a 13.5-acre impoundment of Antietam Creek. Park land surrounds the lake providing, a scenic setting for nature based recreation.

DCNR assisted with the initial purchase of the park and with the Master Site Development Plan. In 2010, the Antietam Lake Master Plan was finalized and promotes the conservation of the natural resources and historic elements at Antietam Lake while supporting sustainable public use and introducing public accommodations to enhance visitor experiences. In 2012, DCNR development grant was awarded, which was the culmination of an effort that began with acquisition and planning grants.

A DCNR grant funded the first phase of the development plan in 2011 and in 2012, DCNR funded the second phase. Clare Adams, the Berks County Parks Director said of the Phase 2 grant: “The County of Berks Parks and Recreation Department is very pleased to be the recipient of a 2012 DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund grant. Thanks to this award, the County will be able to restore the mid-19th century Bingaman Farmhouse at Antietam Lake Park as the hub of park activities. This $434,000 project is critical to serving the recreation and conservation needs of county residents, providing environmental and historic education and increasing access to outdoor recreation and natural areas.”
Blairsville Community Connections Project

Project Location: Indiana County, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Linda Gwinn - Secretary of the Blairsville Community Development Authority

In 2003, Blairsville residents were barely aware of the bike trails to the east and to the west of downtown Blairsville, or that they could one day be connected to them or that there were experts from the state to help. Then, as a result of a bike trail project, Blairsville was introduced to DCNR and Environmental Planner, Tracy Stack. We learned how she could help us. Blairsville neophytes gave
testimony at the “PPP” for the “SPC.”  New acronyms were being learned. Local citizens met government officials for the very first time. The process was entirely foreign.

Tracy Stack truly took our enthusiasm and passion and tied it to programs that would help us to revitalize our downtown and connect us to the regional trail system.

Volunteers and local leaders learned what “I Believe!” means! With Tracy’s leadership, guidance and technical assistance, we took those plans and were able to use them to make amazing things happen!

The timeline over this decade is star-studded with success markers!

- 2002 - Hoodlebug Trail Extension project
- 2004 - Blairsville Waterfront Greenway Master Plan
- 2006 - Market Street Streetscape design
- 2007 - Review of ACOE property for Blairsville Riverfront Trail
- 2009 - Trail Connectivity and Feasibility Study
- 2010 - Blairsville Riverfront Trail construction
- 2012 - Blairsville Riverfront Trail completion

“Tracy’s name comes up at every groundbreaking and every ribbon cutting. Without her help, we would still be wondering why the world was passing us by. Now we are so proud of our town… and we look forward to more successes!

Our next project is constructing a Pedestrian/Bike bridge over the four-lane State Route 22 to connect the Hoodlebug Trail into Blairsville!”

Linda Gwinn, Secretary of the Blairsville Community Development Authority

Left to right (back row): Rodney Ruddock, Indiana County Commissioner; Ron Evanko, Blairsville Borough Council; Joe Caugherty, Mayor/Blairsville Borough; Leann Chaney, Executive Director/BCDA; Tracy Stack, Environmental Planner/DCNR; Timothy Evans, Manager/Blairsville Borough (front row, cutting ribbon): Patricia Evanko, Indiana County Commissioner
Bethlehem Skate Park

**Project Location:** Northampton County, Pennsylvania

**Submitted by:** Lorne Possinger - Recreation and Park Adviser

One of my favorite lines from the TV show, *Parks and Recreation*, occurred in the first show. Asked to have a look at a possible park site, the Parks Director asks a nearby neighbor of the park site to “stand here and dream with me” about what the park could be. In many instances that’s exactly what municipal representatives do with BRC regional advisers. We are often asked to look at a potential project and dream with them for their future requests for state grant funds. I was asked to do this very same thing in the City of Bethlehem regarding its skate plaza.

I was taken to the outer end of an old railroad that is being converted into the South Bethlehem Greenway — a multi-use, 3-mile greenway that will link the urban core of the city with an outlying park. I am partial to the greenway project because it was one of the first large landscape, urban renewal projects I was involved in. It has an amazing design and city residents have been involved every step of the way. At the proposed skate plaza site, I could see the remains of the old Bethlehem Steel plant in the distance. The connection to nearby neighborhoods and the link with the greenway and outlying park made the location ideal.


The first phase of the $750,000 park opened in July 2010 in south Bethlehem after two years of fundraising and more than a decade of lobbying by teens and young adults looking for a place to skate and bike without being shooed by authorities for damaging public property. While the city features dozens of playgrounds and sports fields, there was no place to grind and do tricks on skateboards or a bike.

Andy Po, owner of the local skateboard business, Homebase Skateshop, characterized the design like this, “to the untrained eye, the Skate plaza will look like any other city park…to the avid skater, the Skate plaza will be like a trip around the world, going from one landmark to the next.”
What the skaters and cyclists got was the Lehigh Valley’s largest skate park, featuring 690 cubic feet of concrete obstacles: Ledges, pyramids and funnels. The park, between Steel and Daly avenues, is a stop along the city’s rails-to-trails park, which meanders through businesses and neighborhoods on the South Side.

To learn more about the Skate plaza visit: http://bethlehems skateplaza.com

Ralph Carp, the Bethlehem City Director of Parks and Public Property summed up the city’s outlook, “We are the only city that has stood its ground having the political will and public support to go forward with such an important and vital project.”

When asked about the support for the skate park, Mr. Carp remarked, “While this important community need is hard to sell in this economy, we have the grass roots support to make this project happen.”

Pictured: Opening day with Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan Ribbon cutting 2012
Clarion River Partnership

Project Location: Clarion County, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Eric Patton, Millstone Township (Elk) Supervisor

The Clarion River Dispersed Recreation Project encompasses many projects that focused on the same goal; protecting and enhancing the exceptional resource of the Clarion National Wild & Scenic River. The roots of the project grew from a need to address the increasing public use of the Clarion River for recreation. While the river was designated a National Wild & Scenic River in 1996, very little was done to change the management of the river, and adjacent public lands and public use increased over time. A National Wild & Scenic River is a river with outstanding or remarkable scenic, recreational, historic, cultural, or natural values maintaining a free-flowing condition. Of its 100 plus miles, the Clarion River has 17.1 miles that are designated as scenic, and 34.6 that are designated as recreational, for a total of 51.7 designated miles. The Clarion is one of only three National Wild & Scenic Rivers in Pennsylvania.

DCNR projects along the Clarion brought many partners to the table and brought all levels of government together and pooled our resources. Federal, state, county, and local agencies mutually contributed to the river work. DCNR education work also allowed private money to be invested as well.

Clarion River Partners

US Forest Service - Allegheny National Forest
US Army Corps of Engineers
DCNR State Parks - Cook Forest, Clear Creek, Bendigo, Elk
DCNR State Forest
DCED
Clarion University
The Stackpole - Hall Foundation
PA Game Commission
PA Fish & Boat Commission
Elk, Jefferson, Forest, and Clarion Counties
Clarion River Municipal Partnership Communities
The Student Conservation Association
Eastern National Forests Interpretive Association

Photo courtesy of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
These partners have directly invested over $2.5 million into public infrastructure along the Clarion National Wild & Scenic River. When considering the benefits over so much area and in so many communities, this investment into our rural communities and public land has been extremely efficient as well as effective. Only by partnering could we have accomplished so much with such a modest investment.

Specifically, there were three recent grants from BRC that tied this work together:

**Elk County - Clarion River Phase II - Dispersed Recreation**
$107,700

Development of dispersed recreation areas along the Clarion River. Work included construction of comfort facilities, parking areas, and canoe access ramps; stream bank stabilization; invasive species eradication.

**Millstone Township (Elk) - River Road Dispersed Recreation**
$20,000

Development of Clarion River recreation access and construction of parking areas.

**Spring Creek Township (Elk) - Clarion River - River Road Access Area - Phase II** $20,000

Development of Clarion River, River Road Access Area-Phase II construction of parking areas.

For the Clarion River Water Trail Map & Guide visit: [http://www.paconserve.org/assets/crwtm.pdf](http://www.paconserve.org/assets/crwtm.pdf)
Coleman Park – City of Lebanon

Project Location: Lebanon County, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Lori Yeich – Natural Resource Program Supervisor

Coleman Memorial Park is a 99-acre park with a balance of both active and passive recreation facilities located in the northwestern corner of the City of Lebanon, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. It is one of three Community Parks in the city, as classified by the Lebanon County Comprehensive Plan, and serves nearly 24,000 residents. The park was established in 1935 as a gift to the City of Lebanon from the Coleman and Brock families “…for public use as a public park that when improved will afford the citizens of the community a place of rest, recreation, entertainment and one of the finest natural parks in the country…”

BRC Assistance: This is a collaborative project supported by a funding partnership between the Keystone Fund and Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) Non-Point Source Program.

Development of new playground facilities:
- Development of new playground facilities for children of different age groups, 2-5 yrs. and another for ages 5-12
- ADA accessible safety surfacing
- Bench seating will be provided for supervising adults.
- A pervious parking lot of 33 spaces is designed to help support the existing trees and will maintain the existing character of this semi-wooded area.

Governor Tom Corbett announcing the latest round of grant funding at Coleman Memorial Park - November 20, 2012
Park Entrance Improvements: The existing park entrance sits back from PA Route 72 and is often missed by first time park visitors. The park’s current vehicular circulation also has separate and singular entry and exit points. Since off-site development has negatively impacted the park’s current exit route to PA Route 72, a redesign of the entrance addresses the need to provide for both entry and exit in the same location. This design solution benefits the community by increasing visibility of the park entrance and improving safety by creating better sight distances at the intersection with PA Route 72. In addition to the traffic reconfiguration, the proposed improvements include a stormwater infiltration basin according to best management practices and also landscape beautifications.

Amphitheater & Green Parking Improvements: Removal of the majority of the existing impervious asphalt paving within the Veterans Memorial Amphitheater seating area will not only create a cooler and more inviting seating area for concert goers but also an opportunity to collect and infiltrate stormwater, therefore reducing runoff. In addition to providing the additional green space, the slope of the seating area will be modified and include concentric retaining seat walls to provide for better views of the performance area stage. New lighting, ADA handrails and ornamental landscaping with native plants will be included at the open air amphitheater. Two existing parking lots adjacent to the amphitheater will be modified to provide for a more efficient parking layout and installation of the stormwater management upgrades.

Pedestrian Only Walkway: This proposed improvement will connect the Carriage House parking lot to the entrance of the amphitheater. This pervious paving walkway is proposed to generally follow the north side of Bashore Drive until it reaches the amphitheater entrance. The walkway itself will serve as a structure to collect and infiltrate stormwater runoff from the adjacent slopes to the north of the alignment. Solar powered bollards will be placed along the walkway to provide low level lighting nearest dawn and dusk and for evening concert goers.

This project is expected to be completed in 2015.
Hawthorne Park

Project Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Carolyn Wallis – Natural Resource Program Supervisor


Hawthorne Park features a green belt of native planting beds that curve through the middle of the park. Native trees provide shade and frame the surrounding urban context and visible city skyline. A high efficiency irrigation system helps to water an expansive 19,000 sq. ft. sitting lawn as well as the low maintenance native planting beds that minimize the use of city water: Permeable unit pavers that are used in walkways and for a performance/event area that disconnect the water infiltration from the city’s sewer system and use durable granite seatwalls and sustainable materials for benches and sitting areas. These “green” features enabled the site to be selected as one of 250 pilot projects nationwide for the American Society of Landscape Architects Sustainable SITES Initiative. This initiative is establishing the criteria for certification of landscaped sites as meeting the highest standards of sustainability throughout the country.

Project Partners:

City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Department; PA Horticultural Society; Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition; Philadelphia Water Department; City Councilman Frank DiCicco; State Rep. Babette Josephs; Pew Charitable Trust; William Penn Foundation; PA DEP; PA DCNR; Lager Raabe Skafte Landscape Architects.
Project Location:
Hawthorne Park is centrally located in the south Philadelphia neighborhood of Hawthorne. The park serves approximately 1,900 residents. The housing that surrounds the park was developed by the Philadelphia Housing Authority through the HUD HopeVI Program to replace the Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza Towers that were imploded after years of decline. The Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition strongly advocated for the creation of a community park on the site. The PA Horticultural Society received funding from the William Penn Foundation to design a park that would be a place for residents to relax and come together, with appealing natural landscaping and space for community events. The Philadelphia Water Department received funding from PA DEP to develop plans to direct the community’s stormwater runoff into the park vegetation as a way of mitigating water flow into the city’s combined sewer system. These features were recommendations of the city’s Green 2015 Plan that recommended that 500 acres of park projects be added to the city’s open space and designed with sustainable green best practices so as to mitigate stormwater runoff, minimize future maintenance, promote community connections and conserve energy.

Sustainable Practices

High Efficiency Irrigation: The park’s main feature is 60 percent green space and creates not only a park location for the community but a visual and psychological oasis from the harder surrounding city landscape. A high efficiency irrigation system nurtures the plants while minimizing water use. The system employs rain/freeze sensor and efficient Rain Bird spray heads in the plant beds.

Stormwater Management/Permeable Paving: The park includes nearly 6,000 square feet of permeable pavers which supplements the nearly 23,000 square feet of planting beds and lawn. This means stormwater is disconnected from the city’s stormwater infrastructure pipe system.

Leverage:

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<td>Private Foundations - (For purchase of land from Philadelphia Housing Authority)</td>
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Native Vegetation: Roughly 12 percent of the site is new plant beds, which are filled with tough, low maintenance plants. Most of the canopy and understory trees are native while the shrubs, perennials and bulbs are mostly non-native but non-invasive species. The canopy trees are Yellow Buckeye, Magyar Ginko, Thornless Honeylocust, Sweet Gum, Tuliptree, Kobus Magnolia, Swamp White Oak, and Basswood. The understory trees are White Fringetree, Stellar Pink Dogwood, Winter King Hawthorn and Chinese Witchhazel. All told, the park has 2,000 native plantings.

Materials Reuse: Many of the benches and other furnishings are built from recycled materials.

Maintenance: Durable, high quality materials and furnishings along with a manageable and maintainable planting will help foster a long-lived and long-loved community park. Maintenance of site provided by Ready, Willing and Able, Inc. a non-profit workforce organization that hires parolees and gives them work experience.
The Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program

Project Location: Multiple areas, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Mike Piaskowski – River, heritage Areas and Partnerships Section Chief

The Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program fulfills DCNR’s mission of regional heritage conservation, while boosting the second largest industry in the state — tourism. Pennsylvania’s network of 12 state-designated Heritage Areas had many accomplishments in 2012. Here is a small sampling of their impact:

Allegheny Ridge Corporation - www.allegenyridge.org
The Allegheny Ridge Corporation’s Mainline Canal Greenway Alliance secured funding for the design of boat launches in both Mapleton and Mount Union boroughs, Huntingdon County. These small rural communities are using ecotourism as one component of larger economic development strategies.

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor – www.delawareandlehigh.org
Completed the 2.5-mile East Penn section of the D&L Trail between Bowmanstown and Lehighton in Carbon County and broke ground on 9.7 miles of the Black Diamond section in Luzerne County set to open in 2013. Eight-four percent of the planned 165-mile D&L trail is now open to the public.

Endless Mountains Heritage Region - www.endlessmountainsheritage.org
Executed “Operation North Branch,” a major clean-up of the Susquehanna River in Monroe and Wyoming counties. More than 120 volunteers gathered over 2,300 lbs. of scrap metal and 150 tires!
Lackawanna Heritage Valley –
www.lhva.org
Organized and facilitated the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Roundtables, which gained regional recognition as a model of collaboration, bringing together more than two dozen local leaders to share ideas and collectively execute projects.

Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor -
www.lhhc.org
Celebrated the grand opening of the “Lincoln Highway Experience,” LHHC’s first permanent headquarters. As a result, gift shop revenue has increased by 228 percent and visitation is up by 353 percent. More than 300 individuals attended 17 programs offered throughout the year. The fully restored Serro’s Diner will be placed on site as a permanent exhibit.

Lumber Heritage Region -
www.lumberheritage.org
Developed a Five-Year Strategic Plan for PA Maple Producers, showcased a nationally recognized cultural exhibit entitled “Wood on Glass,” and created an interpretive site along the Driftwood Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek in Elk County.

National Road Heritage Corridor –
www.nationalroadpa.org
Secured the last needed property to develop the Sheepskin Trail from West Virginia through Point Marion Borough, Fayette County. Reached an agreement regarding a DEP consent order and secured funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation to begin trail planning and design.

Oil Region Alliance –
www.oilregion.org
Provided a permanent home for DCNR Circuit Rider Debra Frawley, greenways coordinator for Crawford and Venango counties. Ms. Frawley is the point person advancing greenway and trail development throughout the two county region. Her work includes the development of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.
Rivers of Steel Heritage Corporation –  
www.riversofsteel.com  
Increased tours of the Carrie Furnace National Historic Landmark and other heritage sites throughout the Pittsburgh region. Approximately $100,000 in gross revenue was generated from their receptive service program.

Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor –  
www.paroute6.com  
Designated the City of Warren in Warren County as Route 6’s 20th Heritage Community. The Heritage Community Program is a multi-disciplinary planning effort organized around sustainable heritage tourism and community sense of place.

Schuylkill River National Heritage Area - 
www.schuylkillriver.org  
Celebrated the grand opening of the “River of Revolutions” Interpretive Center located in Pottstown. The site will serve as the anchor for the planned Schuylkill River Academic and Heritage Center, a unique partnership between SRHA and Montgomery County Community College.

Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area -  
www.susquehannaheritage.org  
Helped to facilitate the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s approval to transfer approximately 1,200 acres of open space along the Lower Susquehanna River in Lancaster County to local and state conservation partners.

http://heritagepa.com
Belmont Complex

Project Location: Armstrong County, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Kathy Frankel – Natural Resource Program Supervisor and Gary Montebell – Belmont Complex Director

The Belmont Complex is a recreational facility owned by Armstrong County. The Complex is centrally located in the county and easily accessible. It offers an indoor seasonal ice skating rink/arena and an Olympic-size outdoor swimming pool, with a 150 foot water slide during the summer. Over the years, DCNR has made investments in the Complex with the first consisting of repaving of the access road and the parking area, and installation of floor matting at the ice skating rink. Next, DCNR assisted with rehabilitation of the swimming pool tank, installation of a new filtration system, concrete decking and painting. Most recently with the completion of the work done in 2012, DCNR assisted with funding of the upgrades to the refrigeration and dehumidification systems for the rink, installation of low E ceiling, dasher boards, utilities and ADA access.

With the upgrades of the refrigeration and dehumidification systems, and the installation of the LOW-E ceiling, the County anticipates a reduction in gas and electric bills for 2012; final readings for the utilities are forthcoming. Additionally, the facility management has received many compliments on the new dasherboard system, plus the new lighting of T-5 Fluorescent High Output lights are working well and the players, referees, and spectators all have been very happy with the brighter playing surface and spectator area.
Ed Sam, PA Interscholastic Hockey League Commissioner, “I was extremely impressed with updating of the Belmont Complex. The Belmont’s history and all of the student athletes that have passed through the Belmont should be so proud of the construction work that was recently completed! The improvements that have been made to your facility truly make the Belmont rank as a “first class” venue. The lighting, the dasher boards, the ceiling, and especially the atmosphere of the Belmont should make the people of your surrounding communities stand with pride of your wonderful building! The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Hockey League is proud to be a partner with the Belmont Complex!!"
Sister Cities Park

Project Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Carolyn Wallis – Natural Resource Program Supervisor

Dedicated in 2012 Sister, Cities Park has been transformed from an isolated space of lawns and shrubs and a few monuments into a vibrant place for play and celebration. Improvements include a new Children’s Discovery Garden, a café with outdoor seating, and a paved circular plaza with perimeter seating surrounding a spray fountain that features the many international sister cities of Philadelphia. The Children’s Garden, supported by DCNR, aims to engage children in a natural play environment that represents a fragment of the region’s native Wissahickon Valley ecosystem. A small boating pond adjacent to the outdoor café seating welcomes children to the garden. An accessible path winds its way from the boating pond up a hill on a natural surface, bordered by boulders, logs, native tree thickets, to the top of the “mountain” with a sitting area overlooking the boat pond and park below. A winding waterway flows from the top of the garden into the wading pool and children are able to play in the water, walk down it, or walk “through the woods” on a secret path back to boating pond.

Sister Cities Park is located on Logan Circle in Center City Philadelphia, in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul and across the street from the Four Seasons Hotel. In 2004, the Center City District released a study that addressed gaps and imbalances along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It concluded that while one of the most magnificent boulevards in America, the Parkway failed to maximize the potential synergies of all of its parts – the parks, museums and institutions. The result was to work on transforming the Parkway spaces into pedestrian-friendly, animated destinations.

For a story and photos of the park click here.
http://philadelphiaheights.wordpress.com/2012/10/03/exciting-new-park-opens-up-on-the-parkway/
Project Partners:

- Center City District
- PA DCNR
- PennDOT
- PA DCED
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- William Penn Foundation
- John S and James L Knight Foundation
- Sister Cities International

Impact: Because the park has been so popular, including the café, the Independence Visitors Center decided to operate an information desk in the café with tickets for cultural institutions and information for visitors.

The park is attractive to tourists who come to visit the many cultural institutions surrounding the Swann Fountain in the middle of Logan Circle and to nearby neighborhood residents and families who previously had no parks or open space nearby.

Funding: The William Penn Foundation and John S and James L Knight Foundation provided funding for preliminary studies of the park.

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Penn Park

**Project Location:** York County, Pennsylvania

**Submitted by:** Chris Novak – Press Secretary and Cori Strathmeyer – Penn Park Chairperson

On Sept. 14, volunteers from DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation participated in building a new playground at Penn Park in York.

Bring On Play (BOP) is a volunteer organization that supports York City’s Recreation and Park Department. The mission is to renovate one playground per year in the City of York with the community’s support to design, fundraise, and build. Through the programs, events and new play spaces, BOP promotes active lifestyles and encourages family interaction. BOP’s work is part of a larger initiative: To improve the health of those who live, work and play within York city. Organizations are working together to improve the environment and create sustainable change through system and policy changes. The parks are tobacco-free, protecting youth from second-hand smoke. The complete streets policy provides consideration for all modes of transportation, such as vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Environmental improvements, such as playground renovations, provide safe and fun areas for kids and family members to socialize and be active. BOP is improving city pathways, connecting schools to our parks, thereby increasing safety and physical activity opportunities. Through the work of BOP and many other organizations, York is becoming a healthier community.

Lauren Imgrund, Bureau Director of DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, “We are pleased to support the City of York’s playground building efforts at Penn Park with funding and technical assistance from our Community Conservation Partnership Program. The City of York and its partners “Bring on Play,” YMCA of York County and others should be commended for their efforts to revitalize their public spaces. In so doing, they are providing their citizens with safe and attractive places to live, work and play.”
The design of the equipment reflects Penn Park’s military history. The equipment colors (red, blue and grey) and the many “fort-like” structures mimic the Civil War era. Elementary school youth from McKinley and St Patrick’s schools drew pictures of their ideal playground. These ideas were translated into six playground options which the students later reviewed and chose by vote.

For more information about the plans to build a stronger community in York, please contact: [http://www.yorkcity.org/bop](http://www.yorkcity.org/bop) or Penn Park Chairperson Cori Strathmeyer
ExplorePATrails – Innovation for Outdoor Enthusiasts

Project Location: Multiple areas, Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Kent Taylor – Senior GIS Specialist

Since late in 2009, DCNR, in partnership with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Keystone Trails Association, and more than a thousand trail stewards and volunteers, have powered the one-stop website, www.ExplorePATrails.com. This website, designed for desktop internet users, provides resource for searching, viewing, mapping, and sharing information about Pennsylvania’s extensive network of trails.

ExplorePATrails.com

Launched in 2009, Explore PA Trails delineated 150 trails, about 5,000 miles. By 2012, 450 trails were mapped, 10,570 miles of trails ready for exploration and adventure by Pennsylvanians and visitors.

At its launch more than 15,000 mobile users and 50,000 unique users per year visit the site. This innovation did not happen by itself. The DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Staff recognized a trend and saw the potential to help Pennsylvanians access our trails GIS data and use it with their networked mobile devices. Enlisting the help of local colleges and the Bureau of Information Technology the web site team developed a prototype which helped define the ‘proof of concept’ requirements for the mobile web site.
In October 2012 DCNR launched the ExplorePAtrails.com mobile website. This gave users of smart phones and tablets a better way of accessing trails information. The new mobile-friendly web site allows users to search, map and share trails information while on the go. Trails enthusiasts can now find a trail or connect and share with Facebook friends while on the road or on the trail. All the data and information available on Explore PA trails.com for desktop is now available for mobile users.

Join other smart phone and tablet users by visiting ExplorePAtrails.com to view and share maps, photos, tweets, Facebook posts, calendar events, and YouTube videos. To find more, visit the site or contact NR-ExplorePAtrails@pa.gov.

For the 2012 trails report visit: [http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/trails advisory committee report](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/trails advisory committee report)