

Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape

Fast Facts

Counties

Pike, Monroe, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Wayne and Carbon

Sub-Landscapes

Within this landscape are at least two somewhat distinct areas. Luzerne, Lackawanna and western portions of Carbon counties have distinct ecological and cultural characteristics associated with the Northern Anthracite field, including the Susquehanna and Lackawanna “Valley” communities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, and Lehigh communities of Hazleton, White Haven and Jim Thorpe. The culture and ecology of Pike, Monroe, and portions of Wayne and eastern Carbon counties have been influenced by the Delaware River, its river communities and its long-standing tourism industry. This CLI contains the following sub-landscapes: Delaware Highlands, Susquehanna River, Upper Delaware and Lehigh River.

What is a Conservation Landscape?

The Conservation Landscape Initiative is a place-based strategy for natural resource stewardship and advocacy in key landscapes across our state where there are strong natural assets and local readiness and support for land conservation, locally-driven planning, and community economic revitalization efforts.

Vision

The vision of the Pocono Forests and Waters Conservation Landscape is to conserve the natural environment and enhance the quality of life by sustaining vital natural resources.

Region

The Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape has a rich and diverse past, ranging from early Colonial settlements along the rivers and valleys, industrial development and extractive uses, to outdoor leisure, sporting and vacation activities.

This landscape houses abundant natural resources, including the greatest concentration of wetlands in the state and large tracts of public and private forested lands, such as state and national forests, parks, camps and private hunting clubs that were established in the past and still exist today.

The public benefits from these natural lands encompass a whole host of rewards, such as a sense of community, clean water, storm water retention, clean air, an array of outdoor recreation and sporting activities and opportunities to learn about and experience the natural world.

This region is also home to Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the US Forest Service and one of the fathers of the



conservation movement in the United States.

At the heart of the Pocono Forest and Waters region is:

- **Conserved land!** The region has a core of protected DCNR-owned public lands: 54,536 acres of State Parks and 85,239 acres of State Forests (with 2,754 acres designated as “Wild Area” and 7,947 acres designated as “Natural Areas”);
- **Trails!** Miles of recreational trails weave their way through the landscape, providing hours or days of outdoor fun in forested, urban and rural settings; and
- **Water!** The region represents about 8% of the Commonwealth’s land area, but is home to approximately 20% of the inventoried wetland area. There are 4,700 miles of streams and about 74 square miles of lakes and ponds in this region!



Plan

Resource Protection

The natural beauty of the region, coupled with its proximity to large urban centers, have made it a destination for millions of people to call home, visit and recreate over many generations. The lakes, ski areas, and resorts draw many visitors seeking less-rustic vacations. At the same time, wilderness-oriented pursuits such as hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, birding, canoeing, rafting, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and numerous other low-impact recreational activities are available. Pocono Forests and Waters seeks to protect and enhance the resources that are the foundation for the nature-based recreation and sporting experiences and opportunities of all visitors and residents of the region.

Community development

Pocono Forests and Waters will use the core of state forests and parks to add value to the surrounding communities in the landscape with expanded and creative opportunities that focus on:

- Conserving the character of this diverse and beautiful region;
- Increasing outdoor recreation and sporting opportunities;
- Tapping into the abundant nature-based tourism market;
- Education and outreach to local communities, municipal governments and organizations; and
- Community economic and workforce development

Building a Constituency for Sustainability

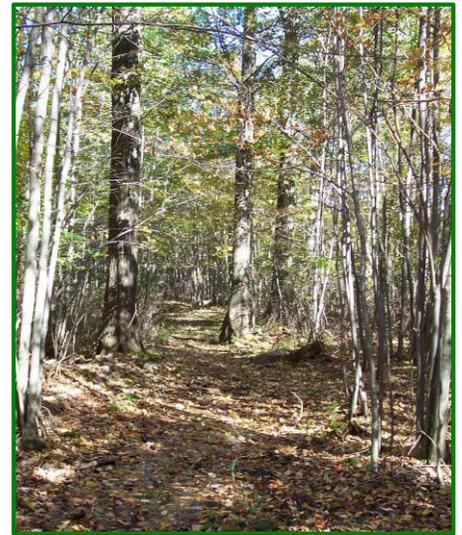
Northeastern Pennsylvania is under intense pressure from urban/suburban sprawl and development. Many lands that had been under a state of de facto protection, such as local hunting clubs, camps and water company lands, are in jeopardy of development. In addition, connecting trails and greenways is becoming increasingly more difficult as right-of-ways and linear segments of undeveloped lands become divided and developed.

Most of the region's local governments, community organizations, and citizens agree that land use is a critical issue affecting this region. Development often occurs haphazardly, diminishing the ecological integrity of protected lands and eroding communities. Planning for development in this area is integral to sustaining the character of this region. Pocono Forests and Waters seeks to partner with local governments, economic development agencies, community and civic groups, conservancies, and others to help plan for responsible development within the region.

Partnership

Pocono Forests and Waters is a partnership to protect the environmental integrity of the land and corresponding public benefits. Working together to forge a greener future, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is facilitating the efforts of many partners including:

- Federal, state, and local governments
- Land trusts, trail groups, and other non-profit organizations
- Regional tourism boards
- Local businesses



More Information

For more information on the Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape, contact:

Tim Dugan
PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry
V. (570) 895-4000
tdugan@pa.gov

Janet L. Sweeney
Pennsylvania Environmental Council
V. 570-718-6507
jsweeney@pecpa.org
www.pecpa.org



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