



Pennsylvania's leader and chief advocate for conservation and outdoor recreation by conserving and maintaining Pennsylvania's public natural resources for the benefit of all people, including generations yet to come.



Manage 2.2 million acres of state forest land







JAMES C NELSON
WILD AREA

TUSCARORA STATE FOREST

DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES







Maintain and protect 124 state parks



Hyner View State Park
North

Parks for *Every Pursuit*

All seasons. All year. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources' Bureau of State Parks manages **124 state parks** with more than **300,000 acres** for every kind of adventure imaginable. From cross-country skiing to stargazing, find a Pennsylvania state park for your next pursuit of happiness. The Great American Getaway starts here.

DCNR.PA.gov

888-PA-PARKS





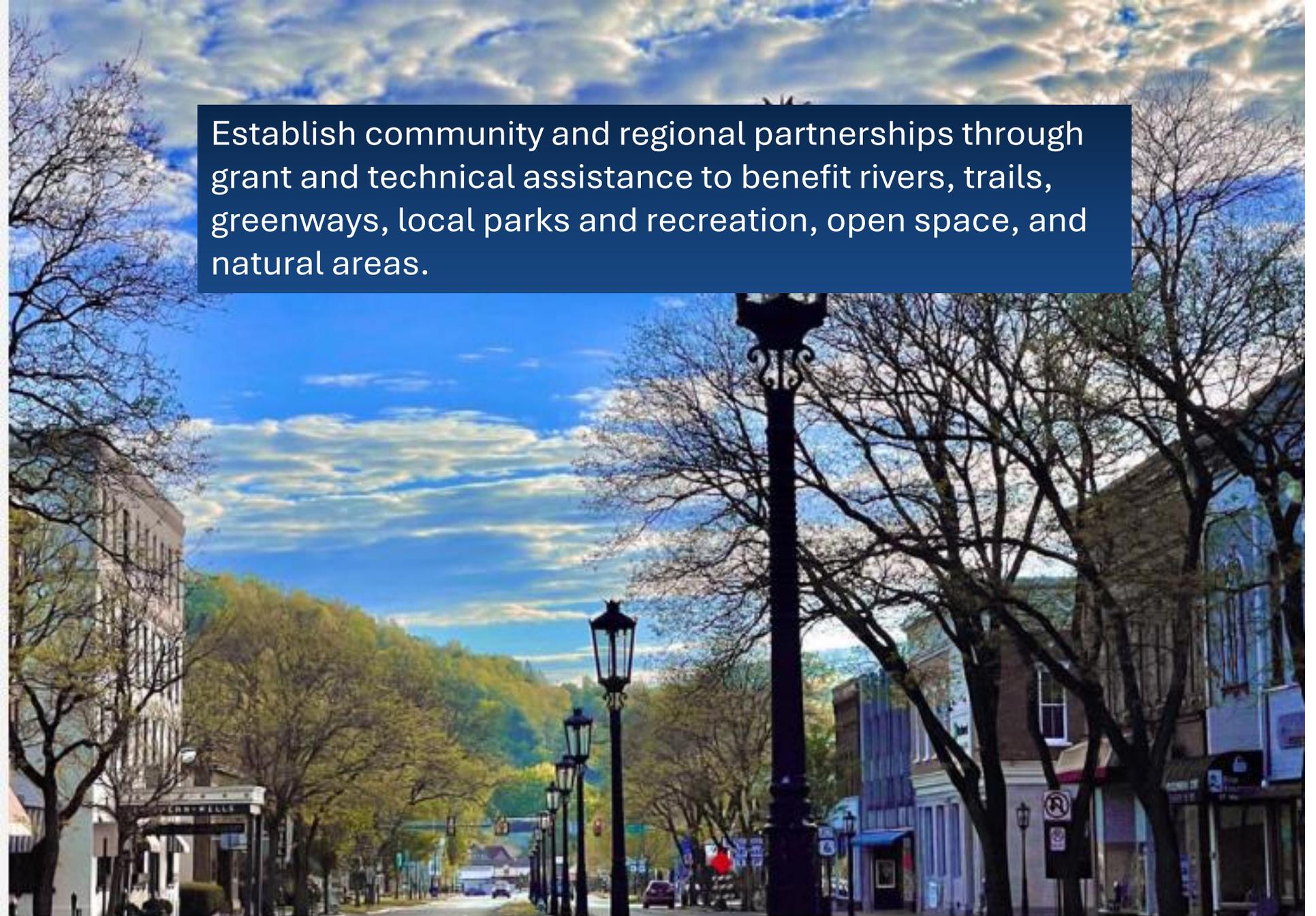




Provide information on the state's ecological and geologic resources



Establish community and regional partnerships through grant and technical assistance to benefit rivers, trails, greenways, local parks and recreation, open space, and natural areas.



DCNR Grants: 2024 Accomplishments

In 2024, DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation funded more than 300 local projects in Pennsylvania, including:

\$81.5 million
funding awarded



85
local parks
renovated



6,800



acres of land
protected for
habitat and
recreation



25
new parks
built

19
waterways
restored or
access enhanced



50

partnerships
supported

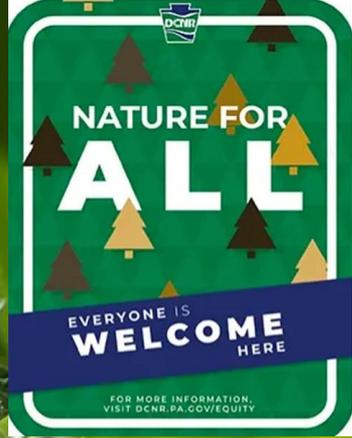


17
parks
planned



284
acres of trees,
buffers, and
meadows planted



A photograph of a woman with brown hair, smiling, walking through a dense forest. She is wearing a dark t-shirt and a blue baby carrier. A baby wearing a light blue hat and a pink shirt is visible in the carrier. The forest is lush with green foliage and tall trees in the background.

Taking intentional action to ensure DCNR lands are accessible to all, provide inclusive and equitable programs and services, and recruit and retain a diverse workforce.







Imagine a place where vibrant communities draw strength from their natural assets to sustain their quality of life. A place where citizens care about protecting the special qualities of a region – their region. A place where people and partners band together to envision a better economic future, tackle shared challenges and care for the natural, scenic, cultural and recreational resources that define the place they call home.

This is a Conservation Landscape

Conservation Landscapes



- Accomplish DCNR's mission through partnerships that promote efficient, effective programs that respond to community needs and shared goals and help break down agency silos.
- Place-based approach to coordinate strategic investment and action in large landscapes, around the values of sustainability, conservation, outdoor recreation, and community revitalization.

Key Program Elements

- Presence of DCNR lands
- Sense of urgency & readiness
- Civic engagement
- Partnership & collaboration focused:
 - Share Vision/Values/Priorities
 - Align goals
 - Interagency involvement
 - Leverage other \$
- Strategic investments
- Dedicated DCNR staff to lead



Landscape Teams

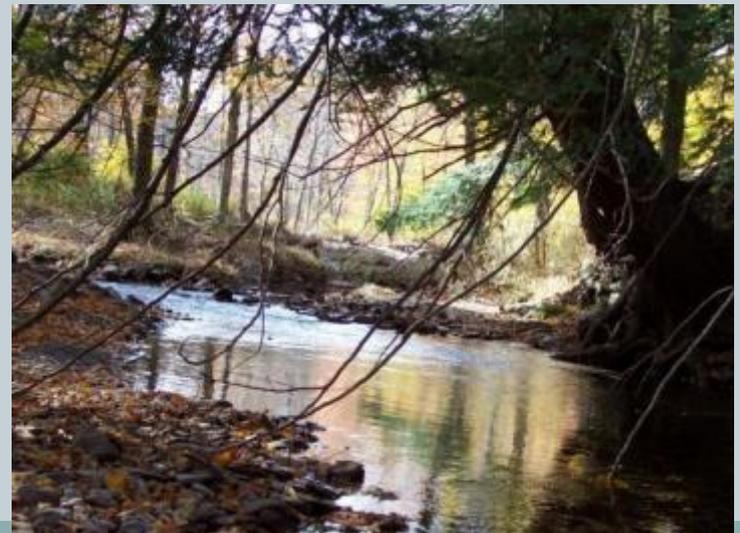


- Overall shared vision and goals
- Annual work plans
- DCNR staff coordinator – “Internal Lead”
- Grant funding supports non-profit partners to co-lead - “External Lead”
- Cross-bureau staff involvement
- Evaluation and modifications to address new opportunities
- Relationship building
- Critical networks created

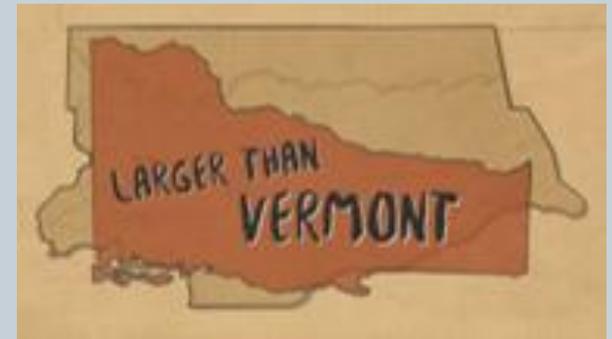
Priority Projects



- Landscape Teams work on priorities that...
 - Conserve land for parks, trails, and critical habitat
 - Protect watersheds and greenways
 - Create walking and biking trails
 - Protect habitats
 - Reduce forest fragmentation
 - Revitalize communities
 - Contribute to sustainable economic development

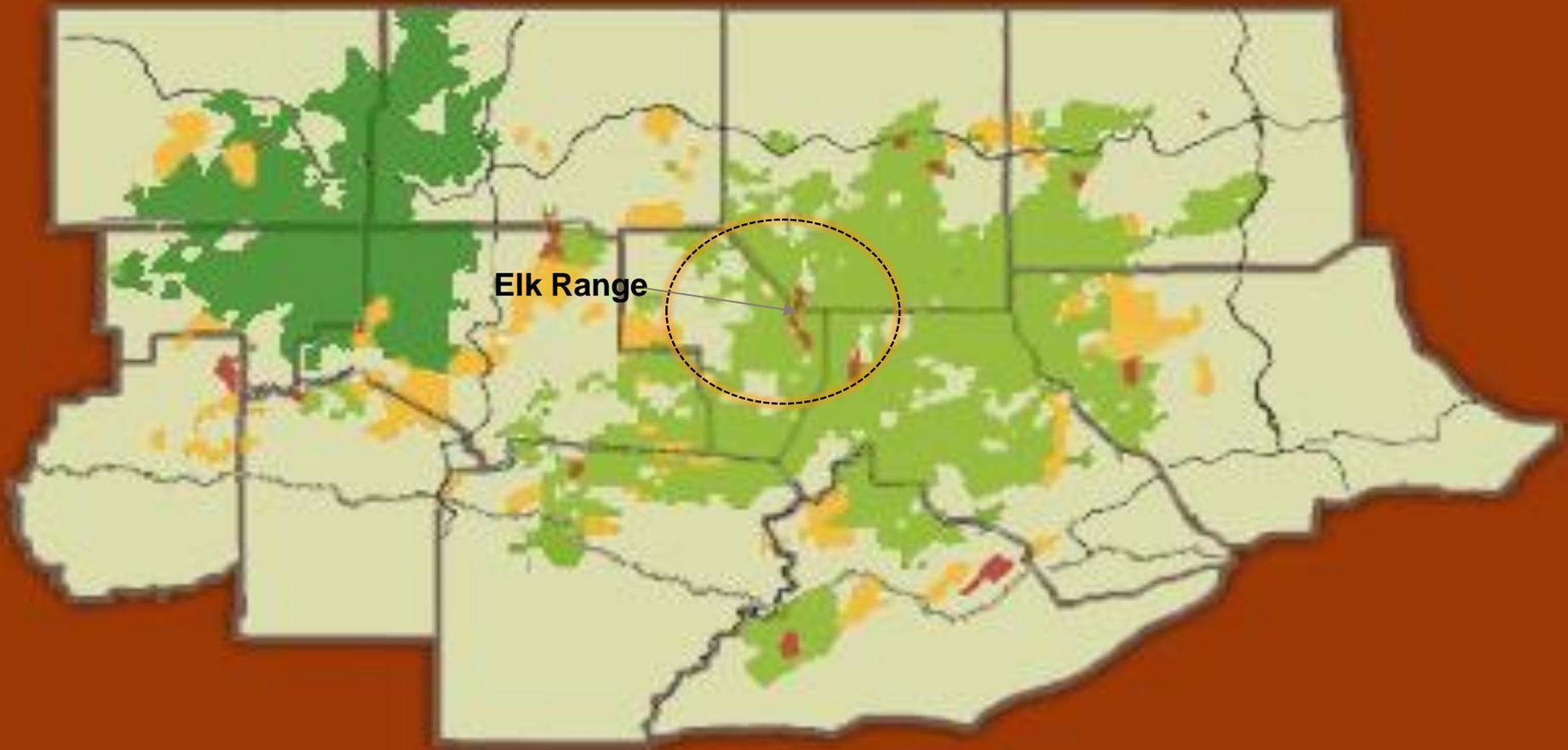


Pennsylvania Wilds

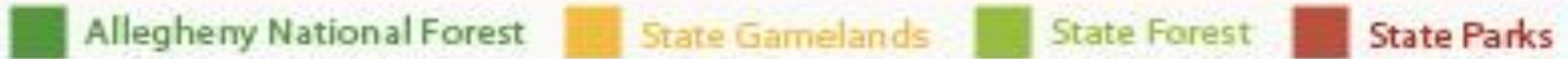


GOAL: Grow the regional outdoor recreation economy through strategic investment in public lands and integrate conservation and economic development in a way that strengthens and inspires its communities.

Public Lands in the PA Wilds



Elk Range





A Recreation Plan for the State Parks and State Forests in the Pennsylvania Wilds



Prepared for the Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

Executive Summary
May 2006



FERMATA
Prepared by Fermata, Inc.
of Austin, Texas

DCNR Investments: Park & Forestry Infrastructure



2002-2019:

- **\$179 million invested in new and upgraded facilities in state parks & forests to support region:**
 - visitor /resource mgt. centers (strategic anchors)
 - modern restrooms
 - trails & trailheads
 - interpretive displays & signage
 - basic critical infrastructure – water & sewer, dam safety, roads





ELK
COUNTRY
PA
VISITOR CENTER

Bald Eagle State Park Nature Inn



THE NATURE INN
AT BALD EAGLE

Tiadaghton Forest District Resource Management Center



Wildlife Center at Sinnemahoning State Park



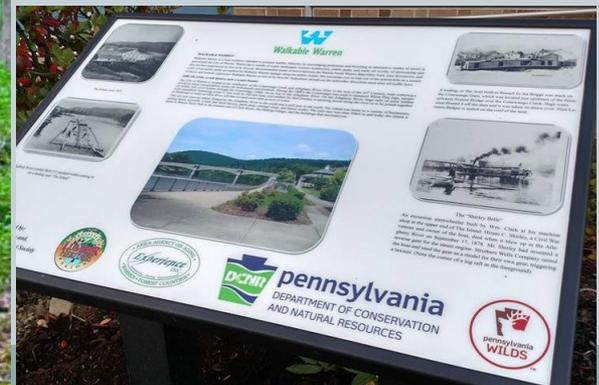
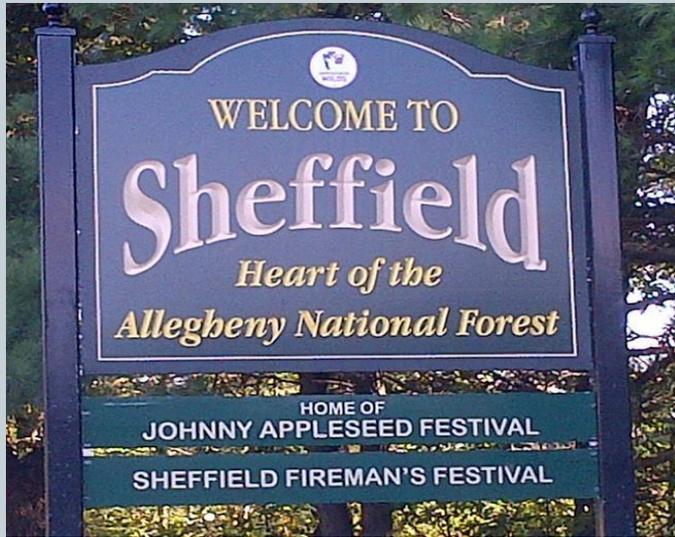
Kinzua Bridge State Park Skywalk & Visitor Center

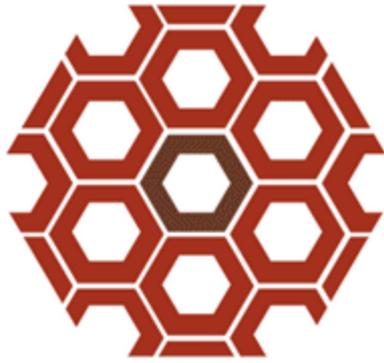


Source: ANFVB



DCNR Investments: Grants





PA WILDS CENTER

FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

the
WILDS
coop
erative
of
PENNSYLVANIA

IS HERE

pennsylvania WILDS™ 



PA Wilds Conservation Shops





- 100% of profits re-invested.
- 35 Year Agreement with DCNR
- Also ShopthePaWilds.com



Sustainable Partnerships

A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS TEAM

Pennsylvania Wilds
Center for Entrepreneurship

Pennsylvania Wilds
Planning Team

Pennsylvania Wilds
Tourism Marketing Corporation

WE the residents, business community, marketers, planners, representatives and stewards of the rivers, streams and lakes, towns and villages, parks and forests, wildlife and dark skies that comprise the region known collectively as **THE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS**, hereby commit ourselves to fulfilling the following mission and upholding and living by the unique core values that define **THE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS** and the authentic experiences it represents.

OUR MISSION

Celebrate and nurture our natural wonders
by connecting people with nature.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The way of nature is our way of life.

OUR METHOD

Welcome those who share our passions.

OUR PROMISE

The road less traveled makes all the difference.

Our core values spring from the soul of our organization. We will adhere and live by these beliefs even if doing so becomes unpopular or costs us commercial opportunity.

OUR VALUES INCLUDE: Charm not chain; Stewardship of the land; The joy of exploration and discovery; Cultivating the relationship between people and the environment; Preserving, sharing and creating new stories; Aspiring to excellence in all we do.

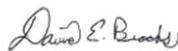
Our personality traits describe the unique characteristics that separate us from other places in the world. We celebrate these traits and bring them into every facet of **THE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS**.

WE ARE: Down to earth; Quirky and authentic, not slick; Wild yet welcoming, Enthusiastic and optimistic; Rugged and resourceful.

We commit ourselves to working **TOGETHER** to fulfill our mission every day, while living by our core values in **THE PENNSYLVANIA WILDS**.



Pennsylvania Wilds
Center for Entrepreneurship



Pennsylvania Wilds
Tourism Marketing Corporation



Pennsylvania Wilds
Planning Team



- **THIS INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH THE PA WILDS PLANNING TEAM** by and among the Counties of Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga, and Warren, Pennsylvania, hereinafter referred to as the Participants.
- **SECTION 1: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**
- The Participants desire to cooperate to address mutual planning issues and concerns related to implementation of the PA Wilds Initiative, and more specifically to:
 - Provide leadership to support appropriate planning in the PA Wilds region that helps communities take the best economic advantage of the initiative while retaining the character of the area.
 - Be a conduit for interaction and communication with municipal officials.
 - Identify impacted communities, their needs and implementation strategies necessary to assist them in responding to the potential increased visitation and development that may result around DCNR investment areas.
 - Review current county planning documents and if necessary provide advice and information for update of documents to address the potential opportunities and challenges for counties in the PA Wilds region

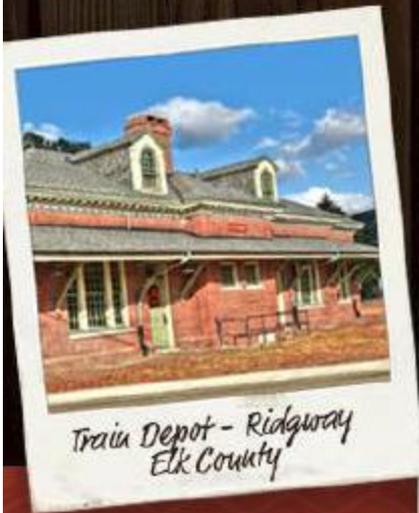
<http://www.pawildscenter.org/community-character-stewardship/>



DESIGN GUIDE

for Community Character Stewardship

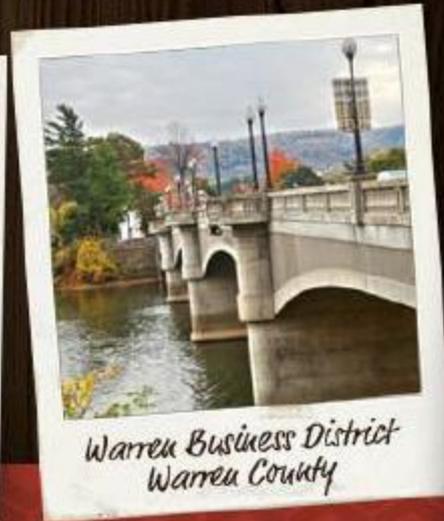
Second Edition



*Train Depot - Ridgway
Elk County*



*Alabaster Coffee - Williamsport
Lycoming County*



*Warren Business District
Warren County*



*Veterans Mural
Clatsop County*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lYNLVsU2PA>

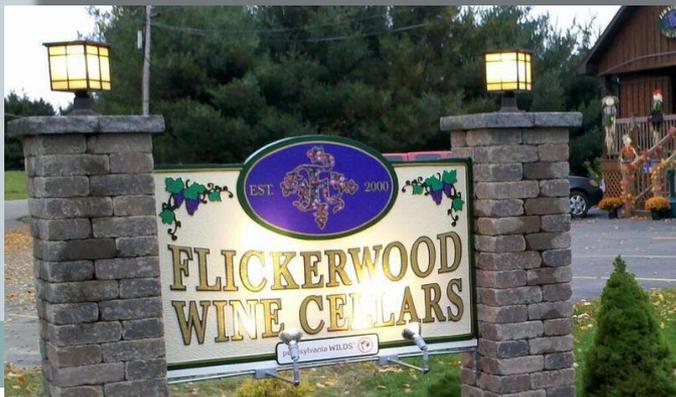


“A community’s image is fundamentally important to its economic well-being. The Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide will go a long way toward helping the region preserve its identity, while also prospering economically.

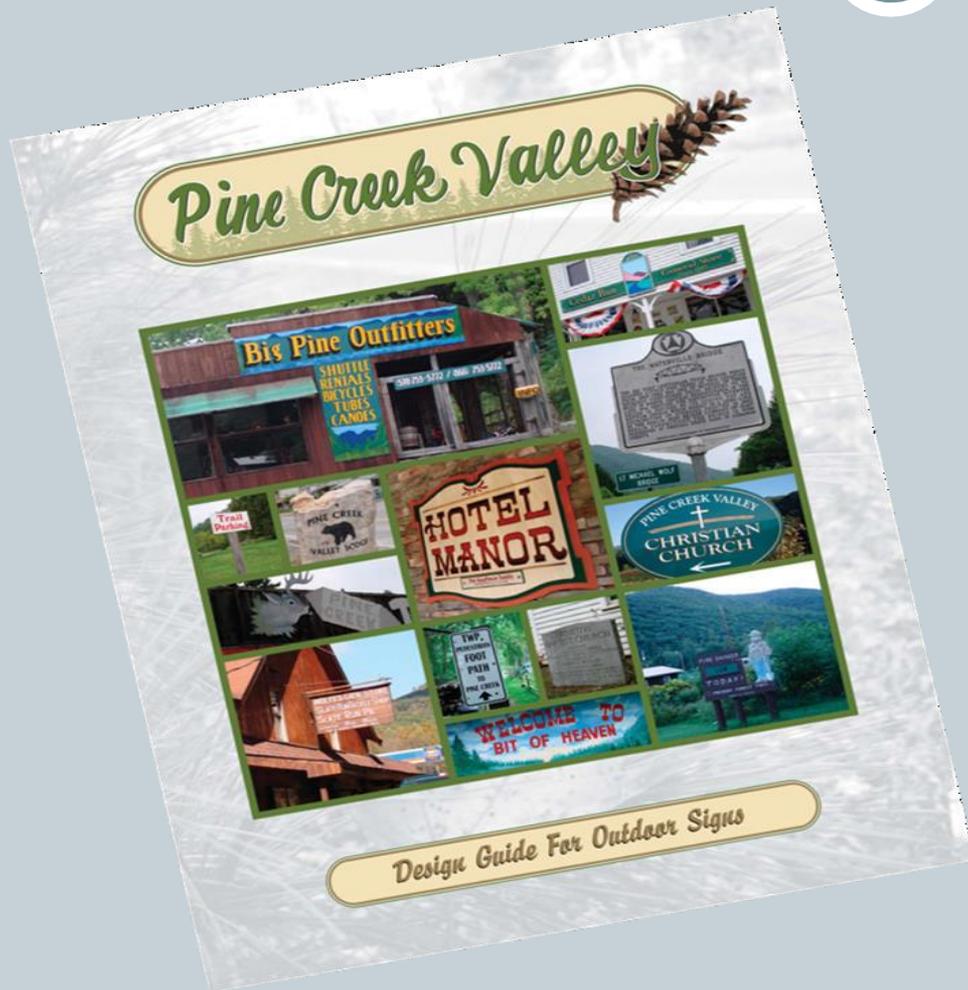
This Design Guide is one of the best and most comprehensive I have seen.”

Ed McMahon, Urban Land Institute and
Author of “Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania”

Context Sensitive Design & Signage



Pine Creek Valley



- Pine Creek Council of Governments
- Corridor Planning Process & Technical Assistance
- DCNR – DCED Grant Cost Sharing

Gateway to Cherry Springs State Park



Clarion River Municipal Partnership



Knox and Kane Rail Trail

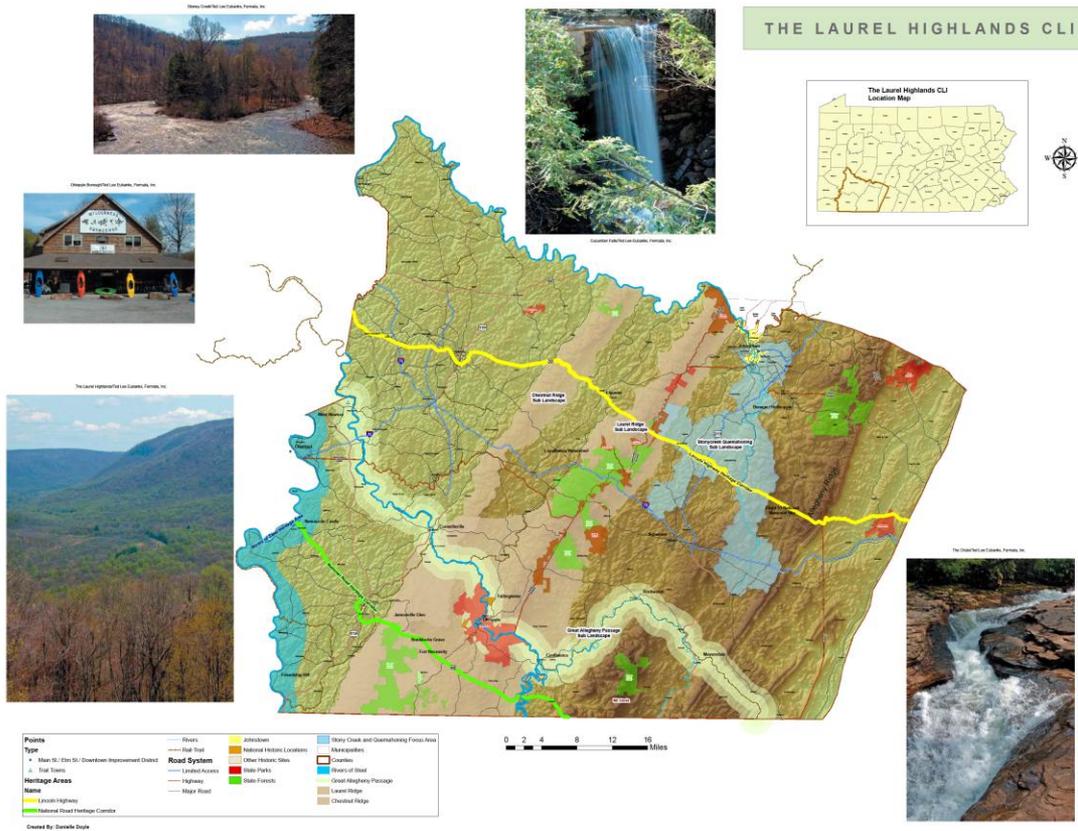


- 73-mile rail trail -- ultimately linking Kinzua Bridge and Cook Forest State Parks.
- DCNR grant funding to support acquisition & development.
- 2023 Trail of the Year.



Laurel Highlands

The overall goal of the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape is to transform the region into a premier outdoor recreation and heritage tourism destination through strategic planning and project implementation that fosters stewardship and protects the region's unique natural and man-built environments as the means to a sustainable regional economy.



Sub-landscapes & features: Laurel Ridge, Chestnut Ridge, Great Allegheny Passage, Ohiopyle, Flight 93 & Stonycreek-Quemahoning.











LAUREL HIGHLANDS

A large map of the Laurel Highlands region, showing Westmoreland, Fayette, and Somerset counties in Pennsylvania, and parts of Maryland and West Virginia. The map is surrounded by numerous photographs of outdoor activities such as skiing, hiking, cycling, and horseback riding. A legend in the bottom right corner of the map area lists symbols for scenic byways, points of interest, state parks, state forests, state game lands, and state lands. A small inset map of Pennsylvania is also visible, highlighting the Laurel Highlands area.



LAUREL HIGHLANDS
SCENIC BYWAY





OHIOPYLE MULTIMODAL GATEWAY PROJECT BREAKS GROUND





GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE





Program Best Practices

“Models of Successful Collaboration -- 2019

Demonstrating the value of taking a landscape-scale approach.



2019

PENNSYLVANIA
CONSERVATION
LANDSCAPES

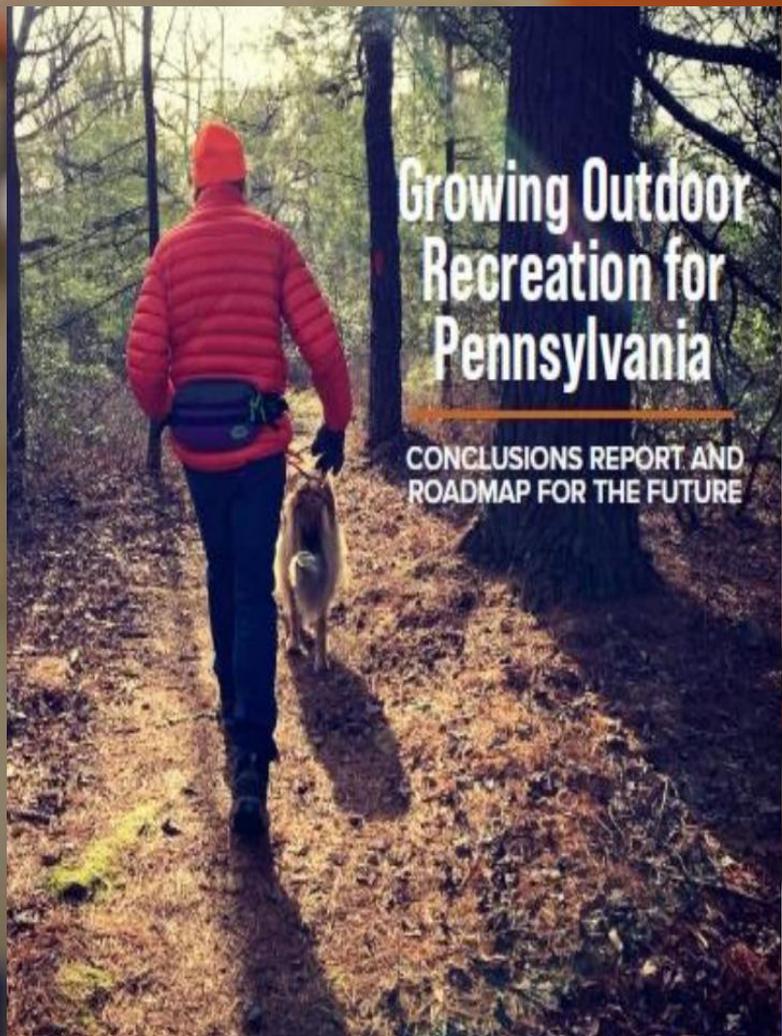
*Models of Successful
Collaboration*



ELEVATE

Elevating Pennsylvania's Outdoor Recreation Industry

Elevate is an effort to create a statewide organization that will represent the needs of the growing outdoor recreation industry in Pennsylvania.



Growing Outdoor Recreation for Pennsylvania

CONCLUSIONS REPORT AND ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

PENNSYLVANIA

THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY







A family of six posing on a wooden deck overlooking a vast, forested mountain range at sunset. The group includes a man, a woman, and four children. The man is on the far left in a dark polo shirt and jeans. Next to him is a young boy in a red t-shirt and a baseball cap. In the center is a woman in a dark green t-shirt and olive pants. To her right is a young man in a white t-shirt with a "VENICE BEACH" logo and dark shorts. Next is a woman in a white t-shirt with "HOME OF THE GROUNDHOG" text and dark leggings. On the far right is a young man in a grey t-shirt with "COUGARS" and "BASKETBALL" text and dark shorts. The background shows rolling green hills under a bright, hazy sky with the sun low on the horizon. The deck has a wooden railing with vertical balusters.



Thank you!

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/ConservationLandscapes>
mehill@pa.gov