

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 27 Issue 4

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an

American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

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DEP Begins 2025 Black Fly Suppression Program

DEP uses non-toxic, naturally occurring bacterium to effectively suppress black flies, while not disturbing the aquatic ecosystem, humans, birds, or other insects

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has begun its annual Black Fly Suppression Program, monitoring and treating 48 rivers and streams spanning more than 1,800 miles.

"As the weather turns warmer, Pennsylvanians will be spending more time outdoors, and black flies (biting gnats) are a pest that can put a damper on an otherwise beautiful day," said DEP Acting

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EPA Meets with Water Systems During Water Week

Earlier this week, as part of annual Water Week, when water professionals gather to discuss priority issues impacting the industry, U.S. Environmental Pro-

tection Agency (EPA) Senior Advisor for Water Jessica Kramer joined a roundtable to discuss the Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (WIFIA). The WIFIA program provides borrowers with flexible, affordable financing options to

support water updates in communities. It funds planning, design, and construction of water infrastructure projects and can finance a combination of projects in a single loan.

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DEP Begins 2025 Black Fly Suppression Program

Secretary Jessica Shirley. “This annual treatment program reduces this nuisance so that Pennsylvanians and visitors can fully enjoy outdoor activities.”

The program involves aerial and backpack spraying to control nuisance black fly populations. Spraying activities will be performed on flowing sections of the river containing the pest species by both helicopter and DEP ground crews. Helicopters perform treatments by flying low over waterways and dispersing a brown liquid containing Bti.

Bti is a naturally occurring soil bacteria, used to treat the specific black fly species that is a pest to people. This bacterium quickly degrades in the environment, and does not harm fish, people, birds, or other insects. The frequency of the treatments will depend on weather and presence of the target species.

The PA Black Fly Suppression Program is entering its 40th year of spray operations on Pennsylvania waterways. The program focuses on the larval stage of a black fly’s life cycle in rivers and does not conduct spray operations on land to control black fly adult populations.

Prior to any spraying activity, DEP notifies county and local emergency management officials. Helicopters may be seen spraying material over waterways and ground crews may be seen applying material from bridges and wading in streams. Anyone concerned at the sight of a helicopter or ground personnel conducting sprays is encouraged to call their county emergency management office to verify that a black fly treatment is taking place in their area. Spray notifications can also be found on the DEP’s [Vector Management Program website](#) by clicking the link [2025 Spray Notifications](#). The published schedule is subject to change depending on weather and water conditions.

Visit the DEP website for more information about the [DEP Black Fly Suppression program](#).

Residents can report concerns about black fly populations directly to DEP through the DEP Black Fly Suppression Website at [Black Fly](#) | Department of Environmental Protection | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Meets with Water Systems During Water Week (continued)

Roundtable participants discuss WIFIA funding for critical water infrastructure in communities. From left to right: Tony Parrott, Louisville & Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District; Karen Jassoy, Padre Dam Municipal Water Department; Andrew Sawyers, EPA; Jessica Kramer, EPA; Todd Swingle, Toho Water Authority; Laurie Horridge, Narragansett Bay Commission; Joshua Schimmel, Springfield Water and Sewer Commission; Susan Pekarek, Johnson County Wastewater; and Paul Matthews, Tualatin Valley Water District.

“Water is essential to Powering the Great American Comeback. Through this low-cost loan program, EPA is accelerating investments in water infrastructure that support healthy Americans while creating jobs and reducing the cost of living,” said Kramer. “It is inspiring to hear from practitioners around the country about the incredible work they are doing to benefit the American public. I want to congratulate each of these water executives for delivering multiple benefits to their communities, and I look forward to more progress in the coming years.”

By streamlining the funding process, water systems can accelerate infrastructure projects to benefit communities. The WIFIA program offers interest rate resets, sculpted repayments, and fast disbursements, benefits not traditionally offered with other financing sources. For example, borrowers may defer repayment for up to five years after construction is complete and then customize their repayment schedule through the 35-year loan term. This flexibility provides borrowers with immediate funding to implement projects, while helping to keep rates more affordable.

At this week’s roundtable, EPA included seven existing WIFIA borrowers.

The [Narragansett Bay Commission](#) in Narragansett, Rhode Island, and the [Toho Water Authority](#) in Kissimmee, Florida, have used multiple WIFIA loans for relatively large-scale projects in their communities. With WIFIA loans, the Narragansett Bay Commission is upgrading its wastewater infrastructure to address combined sewer overflows, protect water quality, and increase system reliability. The Toho Water Authority received WIFIA loans to rehabilitate and replace sewer mains and manholes, as well as incorporate new potable and non-potable water supply sources to offset groundwater demand.

Other roundtable participants included [East County Advanced Water Purification](#) Joint Powers Authority in California, which is using a WIFIA loan to help fund a water reuse project that will meet up to 30% of East San Diego County’s drinking water demand. The [Tualatin Valley Water District](#) and the City of Hillsboro in Oregon are working together to increase drinking water capacity and enhance water system reliability in case of an earthquake. The Metropolitan Sewer District in Jefferson County, Kentucky, is upgrading its water quality treatment center to process wastewater and generate Class A biosolids for productive reuse. In Johnson County, Kansas, they are using a WIFIA loan to rebuild aging infrastructure to meet future water quality requirements. An

d in Springfield, Massachusetts, a WIFIA loan is helping to accelerate dozens of water infrastructure projects and ensure reliable drinking water and wastewater to customers.

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EPA Meets with Water Systems During Water Week (continued)

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the WIFIA program is a federal loan program administered by EPA. The WIFIA program aims to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. The WIFIA program has an active pipeline of pending applications for projects that will result in billions of dollars in water infrastructure investment and thousands of jobs. EPA accepts requests for WIFIA financing on an ongoing basis. Learn more about submitting a letter of interest for a WIFIA loan.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Anne Vogel appointed to EPA Region 5 Administrator

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin announced that President Donald J. Trump appointed Anne Vogel as EPA Region 5 Administrator. As regional administrator, Vogel will oversee EPA's work across the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin and 37 Tribal nations. She will also manage EPA's Great Lakes National Program.

"I am glad to welcome Anne to our EPA team," said Administrator Zeldin. "Through her leadership running Ohio EPA and following the East Palestine incident, Region 5 and the Great Lakes National Program have the right leader at the right time. I am confident that her deep knowledge and vast experience will be vital to implementing President Trump's agenda across Region 5."

"It's a tremendous honor to join Administrator Zeldin in Powering the Great American Comeback across the Midwest," said Regional Administrator Vogel. "I've been fortunate to have already worked with the Region 5 team in Ohio, and I look forward to working alongside them to implement the Administration's environmental priorities and ensure clean air, water and land for all, while fostering economic growth and environmental stewardship throughout the Great Lakes region."

Prior to joining EPA, Vogel served as director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency since December 2022. Previously, she served as policy director for Gov. Mike DeWine and worked for more than a decade at American Electric Power Co. Vogel holds a law degree from Capital University and an MBA from The Ohio State University.

EPA Region 5 Administrator Anne Vogel

Here's what people are saying about Anne's presidential appointment:

"Director Vogel has served Ohio with integrity, professionalism, and a commitment to public service," said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. "She has been integral in helping communities across Ohio clean up contaminated properties, and she has been a leader in Ohio's work to improve access to clean drinking water. With Anne's ability to find balance and bring people together, I know Region 5 is in capable hands."

"I have known Anne Vogel for many years and worked alongside her while I was Ohio's lieutenant governor, both when she served as Ohio EPA Director and as policy director in the governor's office," said Sen. Jon Husted. "Anne has the right experience and a passion for protecting our water, land and air and understands that we can successfully balance the needs of the environment and business so we can lead both healthy and prosperous lives. I believe she'll be an excellent regional administrator for the U.S. EPA."

"Anne is an outstanding public servant. I have long admired her work ethic and dedication to serving Ohio communities, most recently as Ohio EPA Director," said Rep. Troy Balderson. "I have no doubt that her professionalism and the experience she brings to the job will ensure success in her new role as EPA Regional Administrator."

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Anne Vogel appointed to EPA Region 5 Administrator (continued)

"Anne Vogel was key to the emergency response and subsequent cleanup of the environmental disaster that happened in our town in 2023," said East Palestine Mayor Trent Conway. "Anne was there from the beginning, and she will be there for us in the future in this new role as head of the U.S. EPA Region 5. Anne's unwavering support and dedication to our village is something we can never thank her enough for. The Trump administration could not have found a better fit to lead Region 5."

"As a neighboring state, IDEM has had the opportunity to work closely with Anne and the Ohio EPA to advance environmental progress in our region," said Clint Woods, commissioner of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. "Administrator Vogel brings a strong commitment to cooperative federalism, deep environmental policy expertise, and a passion for public service to this role. We look forward to working with her to advance initiatives and rebalance the state-federal relationship in a way that improves the lives of Hoosiers."

"The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has a good relationship with incoming Regional Administrator Vogel, and we look forward to working together to continue to protect air, land, water and climate," said Katrina Kessler, P.E., commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "Her knowledge of implementing EPA-delegated programs at the state level and her understanding of the challenges and opportunities of implementing those programs will benefit all states in Region 5."

"On behalf of myself and TRC, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Anne," said Christopher P. Vincze, chairman and CEO of TRC Companies, Inc. "As a leader in environmental stewardship for Ohio, Anne understands the critical importance of innovative solutions to today's challenges. Her leadership in Ohio, including her management of the East Palestine Crisis, illustrates her ability to deliver strong environmental protections to the people and planet while ensuring that economic growth policies are upheld. Her calm and collaborative style ensures that stakeholders are engaged, whether during a crisis or simply in the daily care of the environment she stewards. At TRC, we are also committed to advancing sustainable, innovative solutions that protect our environment while fostering resilience and growth. We look forward to continuing to work together with Anne and the EPA to create a more sustainable and prosperous future for all Americans."

"I'm pleased to congratulate Anne Vogel on her appointment and applaud President Trump for his confidence in her leadership," said Ray Walker, chief operating officer of Encino Energy. "As Director of the Ohio EPA, Anne brought a balanced, commonsense approach to protecting the environment while supporting responsible economic growth."

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Anne Vogel appointed to EPA Region 5 Administrator (continued)

The U.S. EPA's Region 5 office will benefit from that same thoughtful leadership, and it's great to see her continue that work at the federal level."

"Ohio Farm Bureau members appreciated how Ms. Vogel made it a point to work closely with the state's agriculture community to tackle tough issues as Ohio's EPA Director," said Ohio Farm Bureau Executive Vice President Adam Sharp. "Her leadership on taking a holistic approach to working on issues ranging from train derailments to water quality was instrumental in the progress we are seeing across the state and we look forward to continuing to work with her in her new role to protect all natural resources in Ohio and throughout the U.S. EPA's Region 5."

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

DEP Issues Temporary Extension to Keystone Landfill for Operating Permit

Department Will Allow Landfill to Continue Operations Consistent with Court Decision While Evaluating Landfill's Renewal Application, Odor Control, and Leachate Management

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued a temporary 6-month extension of Keystone Sanitary Landfill's (KSL) existing operating permit for its landfill facility in the boroughs of Dunmore and Throop in Lackawanna County.

This is not a renewal of the operating permit. This action will only extend KSL's existing operating permit until October 6, 2025. No other operation or construction change has been approved. KSL's current operating permit was set to expire on April 6, 2025.

The extension will allow sufficient time for DEP to evaluate the KSL renewal application considering a recent Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board (EHB) decision issued on April 1, 2025, regarding the appeal of KSL's Phase III Expansion. The department will also consider the effectiveness of KSL's odor control and leachate management measures that were required under a March 29, 2024, Consent Order and Agreement, among other things. KSL submitted a timely application for renewal for, which was accepted for review by the department in April of 2024.

Additionally, DEP recently received a ruling from the EHB regarding the appeal of KSL's 2021 permit to expand the landfill. That ruling identified operational issues that Keystone is required to mitigate, such as odor control and leachate storage, that were also specifically addressed in the March 29, 2024 Consent Order and Agreement.

In January 2024, DEP issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to KSL for failing to control odors from the leachate lagoons at its facility in Dunmore and Throop Boroughs. DEP's investigation into residents' complaints revealed that the odors rise to the level of a malodor after being detected by DEP staff at three residences in Throop Borough. A malodor is confirmed if a landfill-associated odor is detected on a complainant's property, with the complainant, by Department staff and is determined to be objectionable to the public.

DEP staff will continue to address any complaints about odors at the landfill as needed. Odor complaints may be reported to 570-826-2511, 24 hours per day. Pennsylvanians can also file an online complaint at: greenport.pa.gov/obPublic/EnvironmentalComplaintForm.

A copy of the permit extension to KSL is available on DEP's website: [Keystone Landfill | Department of Environmental Protection](#).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DCNR Names New Manager for Sinnemahoning State Park in Cameron and Potter Counties

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced the appointment of Tyler Ickes as the manager for Sinnemahoning State Park in Cameron and Potter counties.

“Tyler is a committed public servant with a strong sense of responsibility for public land stewardship,” Secretary Dunn said. “We are excited to see him in this role at Sinnemahoning and look forward to his growth as leader at the park and in the Pennsylvania Wilds.”

Ickes oversees the 1,910-acre park, which is nestled between the green-shouldered ridges of Pennsylvania’s Elk State Forest and Susquehannock State Forest. The park is a destination for camping, hiking, wildlife watching, boating, fishing, and more – all while being an excellent location for visitors to explore the other treasures of the Pennsylvania Wilds region.

“This is an amazing region with a wealth of public lands,” Ickes said. “I am excited for the opportunity to manage this amazing park and invite everyone to come see the PA Wilds and the many thousands of state forest acres up close.”

Ickes is an Imler, Bedford County, native who grew up visiting Blue Knob State Park with his family. He credits his family and friends for helping cultivate his early love for nature. Ickes enjoys fly fishing, bass fishing, hunting, and outdoor photography.

Ickes holds an undergraduate degree in biology and environmental science from Mount Aloysius College. He began his career with DCNR as a seasonal ranger at the Shawnee/Blue Knob complex before taking a position as a manager trainee in Pennsylvania’s southcentral region.

Last year, Governor Josh Shapiro launched Pennsylvania: The Great American Getaway, a new tourism brand highlighting the Commonwealth’s outdoor recreation opportunities. Pennsylvania’s state parks provide free access to nature, making them ideal destinations for relaxation and adventure.

Visit DCNR’s website) for more information about Pennsylvania state parks and check out DCNR’s Calendar of Events for happenings on public lands.

Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

DEP Updates Community on Upper Makefield Pipeline Leak

DEP has tested numerous surface and groundwater samples and is holding Sunoco responsible for cleanup activities

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) updated the Upper Makefield community on the ongoing cleanup of the Sunoco Pipeline L.P. (SPLP) petroleum pipeline leak that was discovered in late January 2025, in the Mt. Eyre neighborhood of Washington Crossing in Upper Makefield Township, Bucks County. On April 10, 2025, DEP provided an update to residents through a virtual public meeting, where staff walked through DEP's actions and efforts to protect residents' water and ensure that pollution from the leak is cleaned up.

"We are using every resource available to our agency to ensure people impacted by this leak have access to clean drinking water, and that Sunoco is held fully accountable for the cleanup," said Acting DEP Secretary Jessica Shirley. "DEP personnel are closely monitoring every phase of the cleanup process to ensure that SPLP has thoroughly identified and addressed areas affected by the leak."

On March 6, 2025, DEP issued an administrative order to SPLP requiring them to:

Provide clean water to affected residents.

Submit an implementation schedule for reporting.

Submit an interim remedial action plan.

Submit a Public Involvement Plan.

Submit a vapor intrusion (VI) investigation progress report.

Perform remediation in accordance with the Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act (Act 2 of 1995).

Since the discovery of the pipeline leak, DEP's Environment Cleanup and Brownfields (ECB) and Clean Water (CW) programs have been extensively involved through monitoring and assessing the affected area through inspections, field oversight, stream assessments and samplings, well water samplings, and attending public meetings.

DEP has actively engaged in a multi-agency coordinated response with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHSMA), Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH), and the Bucks County Department of Public Health.

Through its ongoing commitment to the community, DEP will continue to oversee all work that is being conducted to ensure it is done in accordance with all applicable laws and will continue to collect independent samples to verify results.

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DEP Updates Community on Upper Makefield Pipeline Leak (continued)

In addition, DEP will make sure the public's concerns are addressed by SPLP and is committed to holding meetings with stakeholders.

DEP will also continue to ensure point of entry treatment systems (POETs) are installed in homes where petroleum hydrocarbons are detected above the Statewide health standard to remove petroleum contamination from well water.

DEP is committed to proactive measures and issued SPLP three Chapter 105 water obstructions and encroachment general permits on March 24, 2025, to conduct exploratory investigations on the Twin Oaks Pipeline (the same pipeline in Upper Makefield Township) in Montgomery and Delaware counties.

Governor Josh Shapiro also sent a letter([opens in a new tab](#)) to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), calling on federal leaders to hold Energy Transfer accountable under their authority. The federal government has primary jurisdiction related to operation of the pipeline itself under the Pipeline Safety Act.

As Attorney General, Governor Shapiro negotiated a settlement with Energy Transfer to resolve violations associated with the construction of the ME2 pipeline. As part of the settlement agreement, Energy Transfer was required to pay \$10 million toward dedicated projects that improve the quality of watersheds and streams along pipeline routes, including projects in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

For more information on the pipeline leak and to view the April 10 community webinar please visit the [DEP Upper Makefield Pipeline webpage](#).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Celebrates Grand Opening of ADA-Accessible Pedestrian Bridge at Adams-Ricci Park, Improving Safety and Access for Enola Community

DCNR awarded \$248,000 through its Community Conservation Partnership Program to support this project, demonstrating the Commonwealth's commitment to enhancing public spaces and improving quality of life in communities across Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn joined local leaders, partners, and community members to celebrate the grand opening of a new ADA-accessible pedestrian bridge at Adams-Ricci Community Park in East Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County.

The new pedestrian bridge safely spans a busy state road, connecting the east and west sides of the park — and in doing so, significantly improves access to recreational fields, hiking trails, Conodoguinet Creek, and walking paths that lead to the Pine Hill Arboretum. The project prioritizes public safety and accessibility, while strengthening community connection to the outdoors.

The bridge was funded in part by a \$248,000 grant from DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2), part of the Shapiro Administration's broader commitment to enhancing Pennsylvania's public parks and natural spaces.

"This pedestrian bridge is a vital addition to East Pennsboro Township's Park system, providing a safe route for the community to access all the amenities that Adams-Ricci Community Park has to offer," said DCNR Secretary Dunn. "DCNR is proud to have supported this project, and we look forward to seeing how this bridge enhances outdoor recreation for years to come."

East Pennsboro Township collaborated with Cumberland County and neighboring municipalities to bring the bridge project to life — an example of strong local partnerships that reflect Pennsylvania's investment in quality-of-life infrastructure.

"We are excited to open this much-anticipated pedestrian bridge, which will greatly benefit parkgoers by providing safer and more convenient access throughout Adams-Ricci Community Park," said Commissioner George Tyson, President of the East Pennsboro Township Board of Commissioners. "This project is a testament to our ongoing efforts to improve infrastructure and enhance recreational opportunities for our residents."

This investment is one of hundreds made possible through the C2P2 grant, which supports projects to create new parks, rehabilitate existing green spaces, and protect natural resources across Pennsylvania. Last fall, the Shapiro Administration awarded more than \$79 million to 307 local projects through this program — reinforcing a statewide strategy to expand access to safe, high-quality outdoor recreation.

Pennsylvania is home to more than 6,100 local parks, 124 state parks, over 12,000 miles of trails, and more than 83,000 miles of rivers and streams — and with 2.2 million acres of state forest, the Commonwealth is one of the largest providers of public outdoor recreation space in the eastern U.S. offering outdoor recreation opportunities in all four seasons — making Pennsylvania The Great American Getaway.

For more information about DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program grants, visit DCNR's website. For more information about Adams-Ricci Community Park, visit eastpennsboro.net.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Getting Stuff Done: DEP Reduces Permit Backlog by 88% and Has Already Reviewed More Than 9,000 Permits This Year

DEP conducted more than 28,000 inspections in the first three months of 2025

DEP reviews more than 45,000 permits each year – for everything from clean drinking water to the energy projects that power our communities – and the Department is processing permits more quickly under the Shapiro Administration

During the first three months of 2025, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has reviewed and acted on more than 9,000 permit applications and ensured those permits were enforced properly by conducting more than 28,000 inspections of regulated facilities. Thanks to permitting modernization efforts under Governor Shapiro, DEP also continues to make progress on its permit backlog – announcing that it has reduced the backlog by 88%, from 2,400 permits to 300.

DEP reviews more than 45,000 permit applications every year. These include permits for land clearing activities for construction projects, air quality permits for factories and power plants, permits to upgrade drinking waters systems to remove chemicals like PFAS, and permits for oil and gas wells. With more efficient permit review from DEP, businesses in Pennsylvania can put shovels in the ground more quickly while still ensuring their projects meet standards to protect clean air and clean water.

DEP also conducted more than 28,000 inspections through March 31, 2025. DEP inspections include both scheduled and unscheduled on-site visits to permitted facilities, as well as document reviews to verify compliance with environmental laws and regulations. These inspections—whether on-site or operational—ensure that air emissions stay within air quality standards, drinking water remains safe, and rivers and streams are protected from pollution.

“Under the leadership of the Shapiro Administration, DEP is committed to moving at the speed of business while ensuring that Pennsylvanians are getting the environmental protections that they deserve,” said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. “We are working through the thousands of permit applications that we receive so that businesses in Pennsylvania know that they will get a decision on their application in a reasonable amount of time.

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Getting Stuff Done: DEP Reduces Permit Backlog by 88% and Has Already Reviewed More Than 9,000 Permits This Year (continued)

At the same time, we are ensuring that the environmental protections in those permits are followed through our inspections.”

DEP is modernizing its permitting process by investing in new technology and reviewing processes to identify and eliminate bottlenecks. In January, DEP launched([opens in a new tab](#)) a Permit Tracker to allow applicants and residents to monitor the progress of permits as they move through the review process. Since 2023, DEP has also added 225 employees to carry out critical functions like public health and safety inspections and permit application reviews.

DEP is working to implement the SPEED program, which was part of the bipartisan 2024-25 budget signed by Governor Josh Shapiro. The SPEED program offers increased flexibility, allowing permit applicants to have a DEP-verified and qualified professional conduct the initial review of the application. DEP staff will review the recommendations of the qualified professional and either make a final permit decision or identify technical deficiencies to the applicant. DEP will have final authority over all permit decisions. Applicants for eligible permits will agree to pay any review fees incurred by the qualified professional, in addition to permit application fees.

The SPEED program will be available for certain Air Quality Plan Approvals([opens in a new tab](#)), earth disturbance([opens in a new tab](#)), dam safety([opens in a new tab](#)), and individual water obstruction and encroachment permits([opens in a new tab](#)).

DEP has also implemented the PAYback program, which went into effect in November 2023 that assures a moneyback guarantee for permit applicants if their application is overdue. Since going into effect, DEP has evaluated and decided on more than 50,000 permits without having to refund a single application fee.

DEP is continuing to identify process improvements in its permitting programs. In May 2024, DEP launched a pilot program for Chapter 102 Individual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit applications([opens in a new tab](#)) in ten counties. The goal of the pilot program was to reduce overall time between application and decision. This pilot program is already showing results, with one permit application submitted through the program receiving approval 73 days quicker than the average review time.

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Getting Stuff Done: DEP Reduces Permit Backlog by 88% and Has Already Reviewed More Than 9,000 Permits This Year (continued)

DEP has also significantly improved the Chapter 105 Water Obstruction and Encroachment General Permit registration process by updating the registration form and instructions to make them easier to understand. DEP also launched a new Chapter 105 Pilot Program for individual Joint Permit Applications that should reduce errors in applications and cut the total time to process an application by 63 days. Similar to the Chapter 102 Pilot Program, applicants will need to meet with DEP prior to submitting a permit application. The Chapter 105 individual Permit Pilot Program will give review priority to publicly funded energy projects and environmental restoration projects.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Launches “Still Open. Still Awesome.” Campaign to Highlight Pennsylvania’s Open State Parks and Forests

With some federal campgrounds closing due to staffing shortages, DCNR encourages visitors to explore Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests for camping and outdoor recreation, which are open and ready for visitors.

DCNR is seeing a 30 percent increase in campsite reservations this month over the same time last year, highlighting the growing demand for outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania state parks.

As several federal campgrounds close due to staffing shortages, Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests remain open and ready for visitors – and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is launching a new tourism campaign to encourage Pennsylvania residents and visitors to choose state parks and forests for their next outdoor adventure. DCNR is seeing a nearly 30 percent increase in campsite reservations this March compared to the same time last year, signaling strong demand for outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania.

To encourage more residents and visitors to explore the state’s natural beauty, DCNR launched the “Still Open. Still Awesome.” campaign, reinforcing Pennsylvania’s commitment to accessible and affordable outdoor experiences.

“From breathtaking hiking trails to peaceful lakeside campsites, Pennsylvania’s parks are the perfect escape for those looking to unplug, unwind, and reconnect with nature,” said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. “With warmer temperatures on the way, now is the time to plan your next outdoor getaway.”

Pennsylvania’s 124 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forests offer free, year-round recreation with no entrance fees. With more than 7,100 campsites—including tent sites, modern cabins, and yurts—there’s an option for every level of camper. Many state parks also welcome pets, and locations like Promised Land State Park([opens in a new tab](#)) provide overnight accommodations for horseback riders.

Plan Your Great American Getaway

With the launch of Pennsylvania: The Great American Getaway([opens in a new tab](#)), the Commonwealth is highlighting its status as a premier outdoor recreation destination. Campsites and lodging at state parks can be reserved online at [visitPAparks.com](#)([opens in a new tab](#)) or by calling 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), Monday through Saturday, 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Many state parks have weekday availability and offer lower rates during non-peak times. For more information on Pennsylvania’s outdoor recreation opportunities, visit DCNR’s website([opens in a new tab](#)). Check out DCNR’s Calendar of Events([opens in a new tab](#)) for events on public lands.

Just in time for peak camping season, DCNR is relaunching its gift certificate program([opens in a new tab](#)), now available for purchase through the online State Parks Reservations System and in park offices. Gift certificates can be used for reservations on campsites, cabins, picnic pavilions, and state-operated retail purchases. Remaining balances on the new gift certificates will convert into donations after two years of inactivity, ensuring continued investment in Pennsylvania’s public lands.

Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

EPA announces new website for Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee flood response efforts

The new website contains information, resources and guidance for residents impacted by recent flooding

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the launch of a new website to provide current information on flood response efforts in Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. The site highlights the importance of ensuring the safety and integrity of essential water infrastructure that may have been impacted by flooding from this week's storms.

"Ensuring residents impacted by recent flooding have access to clean drinking water is our top priority," **said Regional Administrator Kevin McOmber**. "And in accordance with the first pillar of Administrator Zeldin's Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative promising rapid emergency response and clean air, land and water for every American, we will continue to support the impacted communities and our partner agencies as they move through the recovery process."

Recent severe storms resulting in significant flooding across Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee have prompted a swift response from EPA's Region 4 office. Recognizing the critical needs of affected communities, EPA Southeast has mobilized to support state and local efforts, with immediate focus on ensuring the safety and integrity of essential water infrastructure.

EPA is coordinating with Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KDEP), which has reported power outages impacting wastewater and drinking water treatment plants, and EPA has connected with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), which has indicated flood-related drinking water and wastewater system challenges.

Private well owners whose wells were flooded or otherwise damaged by the storm are urged to contact their local health department to request testing. Samples received through the local health department are tested for total coliform and E. coli, which may indicate fecal contamination and the potential presence of harmful microorganisms.

EPA is also actively monitoring the forecasted flooding along the Mississippi River over the next two weeks and stands ready to provide assistance to Mississippi as needed.

In addition to information on water quality and testing, the website contains information and guidance on flood cleanup, debris management, hazard information, mold abatement, renovation and rebuilding.

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EPA announces new website for Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee flood response efforts (continued)

For more information on private well water quality, visit EPA's well water page.

For more information on disinfecting well water after an emergency, visit the CDC's well water disinfection page.

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

ICYMI: Administrator Zeldin in NYPost: “So long to Biden’s ‘environmental justice’ scams — Team Trump is tackling REAL threats to water, air”

Since taking office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin has demonstrated his commitment to advancing President Trump’s agenda and Powering the Great American Comeback by cutting the wasteful and irresponsible spending from the previous administration.

Administrator Zeldin has canceled over \$22 billion in environmental-justice and DEI grants and contracts to reprioritize EPA’s commitment to protecting human health and the environment. The Biden Administration doled out billions of taxpayer dollars to activist groups that put ideological agendas ahead of directing action to actually remediate environmental issues impacting communities across the country.

Under Administrator Zeldin’s leadership, EPA will ensure that every penny of taxpayer money is used to protect human health and the environment for all Americans. EPA’s pledge to be exceptional stewards of taxpayer dollars will bolster President Trump’s promise of transparency and accountability as we unleash American energy, revitalize the American economy, and Power the Great American Comeback.

Read what Administrator Zeldin had to say in his exclusive [New York Post](#) op-ed:

“For too long, politicians and bureaucrats have been [fleecing the public purse](#) under the guise of ‘environmental justice’ — a favorite leftist buzzword.

“Instead of directly fixing actual environmental problems with our precious taxpayer dollars, the Biden Environmental Protection Agency lit them on fire to fund cronies and activist groups.

“Under the Trump administration, that’s coming to an end — and as EPA administrator, I’ve gone on the road to help put the president’s promises into practice.

“Many American communities are suffering with serious unresolved environmental issues, but under the ‘environmental justice’ banner, the previous administration’s EPA showered billions on ideological allies, instead of directing those resources into solving environmental problems and making meaningful change.

“Take, for example, a group called [Climate Justice Alliance](#), which argues that environmental justice ‘travels through a Free Palestine.’

“No surprise, the Biden administration tossed CJA an obscene award of \$50 million to ‘confront the legacy of environmental harms’ — not to take any action related to cleaning America’s air, land and water.

“In fact, that was 50 million fewer dollars dedicated to protecting our environment.

“I canceled this grant as soon as I was confirmed as the 17th administrator.

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ICYMI: Administrator Zeldin in NYPost: “So long to Biden’s ‘environmental justice’ scams — Team Trump is tackling REAL threats to water, air” (continued)

“Self-dealing and conflicts of interest tainted billions of dollars in grants dispersed in a swift effort by the Biden EPA that purposefully reduced government oversight.

“One Biden EPA staffer described the agency’s frantic multibillion-dollar spending spree at the end of the administration’s term as ‘tossing gold bars off the Titanic.’

“Those ‘gold bars’ were awarded to just eight pass-through nongovernmental organizations — including one tied to Georgia activist Stacey Abrams.

“That group [received \\$2 billion](#), more than 20 million times the organization’s 2023 reported income of \$100.

“Another beneficiary group had a man on the inside, former EPA employee Jahi Wise, who created and ran the ‘gold bar’ fund — and dished out \$5 billion to his former employer. This was just the tip of the iceberg.

“It is fundamentally disturbing how far-reaching and widely accepted this waste and abuse has been in our federal government.

“So-called leaders and public servants placed their own agendas ahead of the needs of Americans.

“Under President Trump, it’s a dereliction of duty we will not tolerate. That’s why I have canceled over \$22 billion in environmental-justice and DEI grants and contracts at EPA.

“This administration strongly believes in clean air, land and water for every American.

“‘Environmental justice’ is no substitute for actually resolving environmental challenges directly. We will no longer allow this abuse to continue.

“Instead of handing off the responsibility of environmental stewardship to unqualified NGOs, or prescribing every last solution from behind a desk in Washington, DC, I am visiting communities across our country, working with our state and local partners on the ground and meeting with Americans to understand the issues they face.

“Last month I traveled to St. Louis, Mo., where residents are still paying the price for decades of mismanaged radioactive waste left over from the Manhattan Project over 80 years ago.

“Community members living near the West Lake Landfill Superfund site told me and Sen. Josh Hawley about their struggles with an array of radiation-linked diseases.

“Hopeful newlyweds have been denied their dreams of having children, and many feel their only path to the American Dream and a healthy future is to leave the homes they love.

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**ICYMI: Administrator Zeldin in NYPost: “So long to Biden’s ‘environmental justice’ scams — Team Trump is tackling REAL threats to water, air”
(continued)**

“Neighborhoods like this have been ignored for far too long. The Biden EPA preferred to fill the pockets of leftist cronies rather than take care of long-overdue cleanups like this.

“EPA’s core mission is to protect human health and the environment.

“Nationwide, [we need federal funding](#) to advance that core mission: for new water infrastructure to ensure safe waterways and drinking water, air monitoring to ensure clean air, Superfund and brownfield remediation to protect community health and emergency responses to help rebuild in the face of unthinkable disaster.

“Tens of millions for ‘climate justice through a free Palestine’ doesn’t do a thing to help Americans overcome real-world environmental challenges.

“When President Trump speaks about a golden age for America, it is for everyone.

“Under this administration, EPA is serving all Americans with equal dignity and respect — and providing real environmental solutions, not false ‘justice.’”

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)