

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 24 Issue 5

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!

Inside this issue:

EPA and SEMARNAT Commit to Improving Environment and Public Health Along the U.S.-Mexico

6

EPA Announces Additional \$1.9 Billion in State Revolving Loan Funds for Water

7

Forestry Camp Program Prepares Reentrants For Tree Maintenance Careers

9

Harrisburg's Newest Peregrine Falcons Banded at Rachel Carson State Office

11

Wolf Administration Announces \$150K Grant For Pedestrian Bridge Repairs

13

Wolf Administration Announces Local Climate Action Training Provided to 121 More Municipalities

15

Wolf Administration, Sen. Bob Casey Highlight Importance of Infrastructure Act and Abandoned Mine Reclamation for Pennsylvania

18

Biden Administration Announces \$254 Million to Tackle Polluted Brownfield Sites

EPA announces 265 communities to receive Brownfields Cleanup, Assessment and Revolving Loan Fund Grants to help build a better America while advancing environmental justice

The Biden Administration through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded \$254.5 million in

Brownfields grants to 265 communities. Today's grants are supported by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides a total of \$1.5 billion to advance environmental justice, spur economic revitalization, and create jobs by cleaning up contaminated, polluted, or hazardous brownfield properties.

Brownfield projects can range from cleaning up buildings with asbestos or lead contamination, to assessing and cleaning up abandoned

(Continued on page 2)

properties that once managed dangerous chemicals. Once cleaned up, former brownfield properties can be redeveloped

DEP Coastal Zone Grant Aids Erie Bird Observatory

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Northwest Regional Director Erin Wells and colleagues today visited Fry's Landing on Presque Isle State Park to get a firsthand look at how the Erie Bird Obser-

vatory utilizes a 2022 [DEP Coastal Zone Grant](#), issued earlier this year

The Erie Bird Observatory (EBO), a nonprofit dedicated to avian research, education, and conservation in Northwest Pennsylvania, was

awarded \$45,886 from DEP's Coastal Zone Grant Program. A portion of these funds aids in its bird banding program. That program, which began in 1960, runs April through October,

(Continued on page 5)

Biden Administration Announces \$254 Million to Tackle Polluted Brownfield Sites (continued)

into productive uses such as grocery stores, affordable housing, health centers, museums, parks, and solar farms.

The Brownfields Program advances President Biden's [Justice40](#), which aims to deliver at least 40 percent of the benefits of certain government programs to disadvantaged communities. Approximately 86 percent of the communities selected to receive funding as part of today's announcement have proposed projects in historically underserved areas.

"With today's announcement, we're turning blight into might for communities across America," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. "EPA's Brownfields Program breathes new life into communities by helping to turn contaminated and potentially dangerous sites into productive economic contributors. Thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are significantly ramping up our investments in communities, with the bulk of our funding going to places that have been overburdened and underserved for far too long."

EPA's Brownfields grants and other technical assistance programs like the [RE-Powering America's Land Initiative](#) are also helping to build the clean energy economy. Today's announcement includes a former coal mine in Greene County, Pennsylvania, that will become a 10-megawatt solar farm, and a former dump site in the Fort Belknap Indian Community in Montana that will be converted to a solar farm, saving local residents an estimated \$2.8 million in energy costs over 25 years, among many others.

Today's announcement includes approximately \$180 million from the historic \$1.5 billion investment from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help turn brownfield sites across the nation into hubs of economic growth and job creation, along with more than \$75 million from Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations.

The funding includes:

- \$112.8 million for 183 selectees for Assessment Grants, which will provide funding for brownfield inventories, planning, environmental assessments, and community outreach.
- \$18.2 million for 36 selectees for Cleanup Grants, which will provide funding to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites owned by the recipient.
- \$16.3 million for 17 selectees for Revolving Loan Fund grants that will provide funding for recipients to offer loans and subgrants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites.
- \$107 million for 39 high-performing Revolving Loan Fund Grant recipients to help communities continue their work to carry out cleanup and redevelopment projects on contaminated brownfield properties.

(continued on page 3)

Biden Administration Announces \$254 Million to Tackle Polluted Brownfield Sites (continued)

Supplemental funding for Revolving Loan Fund Grants is available to recipients that have depleted their funds and have viable cleanup projects ready for work.

[View the list of selected applicants here.](#)

Since its inception in 1995, EPA's investments in brownfield sites have leveraged more than \$35 billion in cleanup and redevelopment. This has led to significant benefits for communities across the country. For example:

- To date, this funding has led to more than 183,000 jobs in cleanup, construction, and redevelopment and more than 9,500 properties have been made ready for reuse.
- Based on grant recipient reporting, recipients leveraged on average \$20.43 for each EPA Brownfields dollar and 10.3 jobs per \$100,000 of EPA Brownfields Grant funds expended on assessment, cleanup, and revolving loan fund cooperative agreements.
- In addition, an academic peer-reviewed study has found that residential properties near brownfield sites increased in value by 5% to 15% as a result of cleanup activities.
- Finally, analyzing data near 48 brownfields, EPA found an estimated \$29 million to \$97 million in additional tax revenue for local governments in a single year after cleanup—2 to 7 times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to the cleanup of those brownfields sites.

“EPA’s Brownfields Program is the true embodiment of turning adversity into opportunity—it takes contaminated and potentially hazardous places and turns them into thriving generators of economic prosperity,” said Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Chairman Tom Carper. “Today’s announcement is great news for the nation, as we unveil vital investments from our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help more communities benefit from this transformative program.”

“Today’s announcement is welcome news for the 149 million Americans who live within three miles of a brownfields site,” said House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone. “These funds, predominantly from our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will allow families across the country to rest a little easier knowing that some of the most contaminated sites in their area will soon be cleaned up, revitalized, and generating new jobs and economic opportunities. I’m grateful to Administrator Regan and the Biden Administration for working so closely with Congress to prioritize the Brownfields program and I’ll keep fighting to ensure every community – particularly those that have been historically overlooked and underserved – receives the resources they need.”

(continued on page 4)

Biden Administration Announces \$254 Million to Tackle Polluted Brownfield Sites (continued)

“Last year, President Biden signed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law, which provided once-in-a-lifetime investment that is fundamentally transforming our critical infrastructure,” said House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio. “This Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also included significant funding to EPA’s Brownfields program for the cleanup of legacy toxic contamination that scars our communities with hazardous, blighted, or underutilized properties and threatens the health of our families and our environment. The grants being announced today continue the successful tradition of the brownfields remediation program while targeting resources to those communities, both urban and rural, that haven’t been able to participate in the program due to lack of local-technical capacity or lack of local matching resources.”

Additional Background

A brownfield is a property for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Redevelopment made possible through the program includes everything from grocery stores and affordable housing to health centers, museums, greenways, and solar farms.

The next National Brownfields Training Conference will be held on August 16-19, 2022 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Offered every two years, this conference is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing former commercial and industrial properties. EPA co-sponsors this event with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Conference registration is open at www.brownfields2022.org.

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

DEP Coastal Zone Grant Aids Erie Bird Observatory (continued)

depending on the weather.

“This is the second straight year the Erie Bird Observatory has received a Coastal Zone Grant,” Wells said. “The research they are providing is vital in learning what types of birds are utilizing Presque Isles shoreline habitat and just how many birds are passing through.”

Bird banding is a technique for studying birds that involves attaching a very lightweight metal band with a unique number etched on it to a bird’s leg, allowing researchers to identify individual birds and study their habits and lifestyles, like their lifespan and migration patterns.

“Coastal areas such as the Lake Erie shoreline are heavily used by migrating birds during their seasonal migration between their wintering and nesting ranges,” said EBO Executive Director Sarah Sargent, Ph.D. “Receiving this grant from the DEP allows us to continue our research and helps us understand the stopover ecology of these birds and the importance of coastal habitats to them during migration.”

The bird banding project this year is utilizing additional technology, very small VHF radio transmitters that weigh a fraction of a gram, that are attached to the backs of five species of birds. These bands transmit every 10 seconds at 434MHz, and automated listening stations on and off the peninsula enable the EBO to determine how long the birds stay and use the local habitat. It also shows whether birds are using adjacent areas on the city side of the shipping canal and provides the flight directions of the birds once they leave the area to continue the next leg of their journey.

EBO’s grant was one of six projects receiving funding from this year’s Coastal Zone Grants which totaled more than \$250,000.

The grants aim to protect and restore the Lake Erie Coastal Zone, which is under increasing pressure from development, erosion, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Grants are awarded to projects related to fisheries, wetlands, recreation, public education, coastal hazards such as bluff recession, and other areas.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA and SEMARNAT Commit to Improving Environment and Public Health Along the U.S.-Mexico Border

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its counterpart in Mexico, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), virtually held their first public National Coordinators meeting under the Border 2025 U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program. The National Coordinators for the U.S. and Mexico shared their environmental priorities of tackling climate, addressing environmental justice and equity, and being more inclusive of Mexico's indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities in solving environmental challenges.

"Binational collaboration is key in tackling environmental and public health challenges along the U.S.-Mexico border," said **Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs Jane Nishida**. "EPA is committed to working with our counterparts in Mexico, as well as our state, local, and Tribal partners, and key stakeholders, to protect the health and safety of the vulnerable and underserved communities along the border."

The Regional Coordinators announced the Border 2025 projects selected and awarded for the border communities of [Arizona](#) and [California](#), and in Mexico for the states of [Sonora](#) and [Baja California](#) and shared information on pending projects to be awarded for the border region. New environmental efforts address air monitoring and health surveillance, wastewater reuse design, waste management relating to community workshops that train community residents to manage household waste and evaluating emergency sister-city contingency plans. The meeting also included a binational roundtable on environmental justice through community participation where the public had the opportunity to share priorities and concerns about the Border 2025 Program.

"For Mexico, it is very important to build binational solutions by engaging, listening and deciding jointly with indigenous and local communities on both sides of the border to recognize the knowledge they have of their territory, guarantee the right to a healthy environment and promote environmental justice for the most vulnerable communities in both countries," said **Miguel Ángel Zerón, Head of the International Affairs Coordination Unit of SEMARNAT and Mexico's National Coordinator**.

Border 2025 is the latest environmental program implemented under the 1983 La Paz Agreement. The Program emphasizes a regional and community-level bottom-up approach for decision making, priority setting, and project implementation to address the environmental and public health challenges in the border region. The Border 2025 Program also strengthens its focus and efforts in areas where environmental improvements are needed most such as clean and healthy air, clean and safe water, sustainable materials management, and emergency preparedness and response.

For more information on the U.S.-Mexico Border Program, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder>

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

EPA Announces Additional \$1.9 Billion in State Revolving Loan Funds for Water Infrastructure Upgrades

\$1.9 Billion in annual appropriations adds to \$7.7 billion in SRF funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2022

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced \$1.9 billion in grant funding to the State Revolving Funds (SRF) to accelerate progress on water infrastructure projects. Combined with historic investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this funding will help states, Tribes, and territories upgrade water infrastructure to provide safe drinking water, protect vital water resources, and create thousands of new jobs in communities across the country.

“Our nation’s water infrastructure is in significant need of upgrades to support communities that rely on it day-in and day-out. With this funding provided through annual appropriations, coupled with investments under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA is providing \$9.6 billion in the SRFs to deliver the benefits of water infrastructure investments to more communities—especially those that have long been overburdened by water challenges,” **said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox.**

In 2022, EPA is providing approximately \$3.2 billion to the Clean Water SRFs, including \$1.2 billion in new base federal grant funding being announced today and \$2 billion through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This total investment represents a near doubling of annual investment in the Clean Water SRF to support a wide range of water infrastructure projects, including modernizing aging wastewater infrastructure, implementing water reuse and recycling, and addressing stormwater. More than \$47 million in direct grant funding is available to Tribes, certain U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia for infrastructure projects.

EPA is also providing \$6.4 billion to the Drinking Water SRFs, including \$728 million in new base federal grant funding announced today and \$5.7 billion through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This total investment represents a six-fold increase in annual investment to help drinking water systems remove lead service lines, install treatment for contaminants, and improve system resiliency to natural disasters such as floods. More than \$32 million in direct grant funding is available to Tribes, certain U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia to use for drinking water system upgrades.

“States are eager to put these annual Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds to work in conjunction with the unprecedented funding provided for the SRFs under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and some states’ use of American Rescue Plan funding for water infrastructure. These combined funds will allow states to address critical infrastructure challenges and to support projects in communities across the country bringing significant public health and environmental benefits,” **said President of the Environmental Council of the States and Secretary of the Maryland Department of Environment Ben Grumbles.**

(continued on page 8)

EPA Announces Additional \$1.9 Billion in State Revolving Loan Funds for Water Infrastructure Upgrades (continued)

EPA encourages states, Tribes, and territories to strategically deploy SRF funding through the BIL alongside SRF base funding and other water infrastructure financing tools to make rapid progress on their most pressing needs. The agency is continuing to work with states, Tribes, and territories to ensure that disadvantaged communities fully benefit from historic investments in the water sector.

Learn more about EPA's [Drinking Water SRF](#) and [Clean Water SRF](#) programs.

Learn more about [water infrastructure investments through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#).

Background

Under the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs, EPA provides funding to all 50 states and Puerto Rico to capitalize SRF loan programs. For the base programs, the states and Puerto Rico contribute an additional 20 percent to match the federal grants. The 51 SRF programs function like infrastructure banks by providing low-interest loans to eligible recipients for drinking water and clean water infrastructure projects. As the loan principal and interest are repaid over time, it allows the state's Drinking Water SRF or Clean Water SRF to be recycled or "revolve." As money is returned to the state's revolving loan fund, the state makes new loans to other eligible recipients. These funds can also be combined with BIL funding and EPA's WIFIA loans to create a powerful, innovative financing solution for major infrastructure projects.

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

Forestry Camp Program Prepares Reentrants For Tree Maintenance Careers

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Deputy Secretaries John Norbeck and Michael Walsh visited the State Correctional Institution at Rockview in Centre County to tour the institution's woodshop and meet the group of 13 men who have been a part of a 5-week intensive arboriculture vocational training program at the facility's Forestry Camp.

The training program, created by DCNR and now in its fifth year, provides valuable skills to help program participants find employment upon their release in the high-demand field of tree maintenance and forestry.

The deputies had the opportunity to watch participants showcase tree climbing skills they gained during the program's duration.

"The Forestry Camp provides training in the areas of forestry, horticulture, and agriculture for those who meet strict eligibility criteria to live and work outside of the secure perimeter of SCI Rockview," said Corrections Forest and Nursery Manager Wade Renninger. "The partnership with DCNR, coupled with the unique layout of the institution, allows incarcerated workers to learn and apply new skills that will help them find gainful employment upon release."

The camp manages facility forestland for timber and firewood production, maintains boundaries and roads, and watershed quality through best management practices. Also contained within the 5,800-acre institution are a tree nursery, greenhouses, and a farm operation. A wildfire crew is available to assist the state Bureau of Forestry with manpower for fighting forest fires in portions of four forest districts surrounding SCI Rockview.

"This program has successfully helped connect reentrants for employment in the tree-care industry, and DCNR is committed to recruiting more people into outdoor professions," said Norbeck. "We are excited to expand this intra-agency Corrections and Conservation Collaborative into other realms of conservation, including plant propagation and integrated pest management, as well as to other DOC institutions.

"In fact, this past fall we incorporated lessons in meadows as part of the Forestry Camp training, and in summer of 2019 we piloted an 8-week streamside buffer training program at SCI Huntingdon where participants helped restore 2-acres along a stream," Norbeck said.

The multi-week arboriculture training program includes sessions on tree climbing and tree risk assessment, tree identification, tree pests and diseases, and pruning. The curriculum is based on industry recognized certifications and standards and has been endorsed by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA).

(continued on page 9)

Forestry Camp Program Prepares Reentrants For Tree Maintenance Careers (continued)

To date more than 140 incarcerated individuals have participated in the DCNR vocational training programs.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Pennsylvania companies employ among the largest number of people in the tree maintenance field in the nation.

For more information on the Bureau of Forestry visit the DCNR website. For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, visit cor.pa.gov.

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

Harrisburg's Newest Peregrine Falcons Banded at Rachel Carson State Office Building

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Pennsylvania Game Commission banded Harrisburg's newest peregrine falcons today. A recording of the banding is available on DEP's Facebook page www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDEP/.

"The falcons that have nested on the Rachel Carson State Office Building continue to be an environmental success story," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "Without the improvements to Pennsylvania's environment, these birds would not have the track record that they do here on the Rachel Carson Building."

Game Commission biologist Patti Barber led a team in bringing the nestlings in from the 15th floor ledge. Barber weighed the birds, inspected their health, and banded them.

Banding the falcons allows biologists and birdwatchers from all over the continent to track the birds and help us learn more about where they travel, how long they've lived, and whether they'll establish new nests in other places. Falcons born on the ledge at the Rachel Carson building have been tracked to locations from Florida all the way to Canada.

The peregrine falcon was removed from the federal Endangered Species List in 1999 and the Pennsylvania Threatened List in 2021 but remains federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the state Game and Wildlife Code.

Eighty-three falcons have now hatched since reproduction began in 2000. This makes the Rachel Carson State Office Building nest site the most prolific in the commonwealth.

The public watched a livestream of the event online; the video recording may be viewed on the DEP Facebook page www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDEP/.

(continued on page 12)

Harrisburg's Newest Peregrine Falcons Banded at Rachel Carson State Office Building (continued)

DEP also has a [live falcon cam](#) on the ledge to see the falcon nestlings and the adult birds.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Wolf Administration Announces \$150K Grant For Pedestrian Bridge Repairs

The Wolf Administration announced that \$150,000 in new grant funding was approved to assist Pottstown in repairing a pedestrian bridge at Memorial Park in the borough.

“We are pleased to be here today to announce funding for critical infrastructure at this important Pottstown park,” Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. “DCNR is proud to support local parks and their mission of providing recreation opportunities for millions of visitors each year. I look forward to seeing the impact this project will have in this community and the surrounding region.”

The 78-acre Memorial Park supports passive and active recreation and serves as the borough’s core park that includes several baseball fields, BMX bicycle racing and skateboarding areas, a dog park, picnic areas, and trails. The pedestrian bridge will reconnect two halves of the park that are split by the Manatawny Creek, which flooded in July 2019 during an unusually extreme summer storm, causing serious damage to the park’s infrastructure, including the old bridge.

“Assisting Pottstown with this bridge rehabilitation project will again connect park users to the wonderful array of amenities in the park,” DCNR Deputy Secretary Lauren Imgrund said. “We at DCNR are thankful the borough prioritized this bridge to ensure park visitors are able to safely enjoy everything the park has to offer, while addressing the environmental concerns that made the old bridge unusable.”

In addition to building a new bridge and restoring the connectivity and function of the park, Pottstown also plans to stabilize 200 feet of stream bank, implement a riparian forest buffer, improve ADA access and make other critical improvements.

“The Memorial Park Bridge Project represents the restoration of a key piece of park infrastructure serving the residents of Pottstown and regional visitors to the park alike,” Pottstown Parks and Recreation Director Michael A. Lenhart said. “Since the destruction of the old bridge in the 2019 flash flood, the function of the park has been severely impaired, effectively sundering the park into two parcels accessible only from opposite ends of the property. Restoration of the route allows both park users wider access to the varied recreation opportunities of Memorial Park and local residents a walkable route from the residential neighborhood north of the park to connections to the retail district of Shoemaker Road. In this way, the park serves many residents and visitors as a connection to the Manatawny Creek waterfront as well as a key walkable route to essential amenities.”

“The Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program is a critical part of the implementation of Montgomery County’s comprehensive plan, Montco 2040: A Shared Vision. The program provides grant funding for projects that are priorities for our municipalities and at the same time help achieve progress toward the goals of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan,” said Dr. Valerie A. Arkoosh, chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “A grant of \$200,000 was awarded to build a new pedestrian bridge and support stream bank restora-

Wolf Administration Announces \$150K Grant For Pedestrian Bridge Repairs (continued)

tion at Memorial Park in Pottstown. We are proud to join with DCNR and the Borough of Pottstown to help bring this park back to life.”

Pottstown is located in the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape. The Schuylkill Highlands Partnership integrates the inspiration and action of many partners throughout the six-county landscape. The Partnership devotes its attention and expertise to protecting and preserving this critical landscape in a manner that will ensure its vibrant sustainable economic future.

DCNR provides grants to myriad projects across the commonwealth annually, including a [\\$70 million investment during the 2021-22 fiscal year](#). Its Community Conservation Partnerships Program grants can fund:

- Planning, acquisition, and development of public parks and recreation areas
- Motorized and non-motorized trails
- River conservation and access
- Heritage areas and facilities
- Conservation of critical habitat, natural areas and open space

Eligible applicants for these grants include counties, municipalities, municipal agencies, non-profit organizations, state heritage areas, prequalified land trusts, and for-profit enterprises. Grant funding for the program comes from a variety of state funding sources including Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, Environmental Stewardship Fund, ATV and Snowmobile Management Restricted Accounts, Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program, and federal sources including the Recreational Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. DCNR selects the most appropriate funding source based on the applicant and proposed project.

Pennsylvania has more than 6,100 local parks. Under the administration of Governor Tom Wolf, DCNR has awarded more than \$342 million in grants to 1,965 projects across the commonwealth.

Learn more about DCNR’s Community Conservation Partnership Program grants on the DCNR website.

Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Wolf Administration Announces Local Climate Action Training Provided to 121 More Municipalities

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell announced today that 12 participants, representing 121 municipalities, have completed the 2021–2022 DEP Local Climate Action Program, conducting inventories of local greenhouse gas emissions and developing plans to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change risk in their communities. Video and photos of the event will be available later today at [PA cast](#).

“Climate change is often discussed in terms of global temperature increase, sea level rise, and hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere,” said Secretary McDonnell. “But the way people experience climate change is at the local level, and along with actions at the state, national, and international levels, actions in our communities are needed to reduce risk. DEP is committed to equipping municipalities in Pennsylvania to plan climate action and strengthen the sustainability of their communities.”

Since it began in 2019, the [DEP Local Climate Action Program](#) has provided training to 53 entities, representing approximately 380 municipalities across Pennsylvania.

The following entities, seven of which include [environmental justice](#) areas, participated in the 2021–2022 training:

Camp Hill Borough, Cumberland County;
Carnegie and Swissvale Boroughs, Allegheny County;
Delaware County (representing 49 municipalities);
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (representing 62 municipalities);
Lewisburg Borough, Union County;
Milford Borough, Pike County;
Millersville Borough, Lancaster County;
O’Hara Township, Allegheny County;
Rutledge Borough, Delaware County

(continued on page 16)

Wolf Administration Announces Local Climate Action Training Provided to 121 More Municipalities (continued)

Warrington Township, Bucks County; and
West Bradford Township, Chester County.

They were assisted by students from Bryn Mawr College; the University of Pittsburgh; Indiana University of Pennsylvania; and Bucknell, Drexel, Messiah, Moravian, Penn State, Temple, and Wilkes universities.

The DEP Local Climate Action Program pairs municipalities with ICLEI, a national nonprofit that fosters sustainable development, and with college students to perform inventories of greenhouse gas emissions from local buildings, transportation, waste management, and other sectors.

The teams also identify the particular climate-related vulnerabilities in their communities, such as flooding from extreme rainfall and public health impacts from extreme heat, and disproportionate impacts on residents who live in environmental justice areas.

After reviewing recommendations in the [Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan](#), teams use a template to draft local climate action plans to lower emissions and increase resilience to climate change impacts. Once they complete their plans, municipalities are eligible for free services from an energy management consultant, coordinated by DEP, to determine the most effective first steps to reduce emissions.

Officials from three participating municipalities joined Secretary McDonnell in the announcement.

(continued on page 17)

Wolf Administration Announces Local Climate Action Training Provided to 121 More Municipalities (continued)

"Swissvale knows that the future gets made now. Planning and preparing for the future with sustainability and environmental health in mind will make our borough and families stronger," said Swissvale Borough Council member Shawn Alfonso Wells. "With cleaner air and more sustainability, we not only improve our own environment, but also have an impact on areas around us, and pretty soon these small changes add up to make a big difference."

"The DEP Local Climate Action Program has greatly increased the capacity of our borough to make informed decisions about the adaptation and hazard mitigation we'll need to do to respond to the climate crisis. We are fortunate to have participated in the program, as it's provided a guiding framework we are certain our community will use for decades," said Taylor Lightman, director of Lewisburg Neighborhoods, a 501c(3) nonprofit dedicated to neighborhood revitalization in Lewisburg Borough.

"Our interest in developing a local climate action plan began with an idea to install rooftop solar panels on our town hall. As we explored the costs and impact of that initiative, we realized we wanted to develop a more comprehensive, holistic approach to working to reduce climate change and prepare for its impacts," said Rutledge Borough Planning Commission member Sid Misra.

DEP invites applications for year 4 of the Local Climate Action Program, which begins later this summer. Communities have until June 30 to express their interest. Please contact Christopher Nafe at chnafe@pa.gov or 717-783-9722 to sign up.

The Local Climate Action Program is run by the DEP Energy Programs Office and funded by the State Energy Program of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Learn more at dep.pa.gov/LocalClimateActionProgram.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Wolf Administration, Sen. Bob Casey Highlight Importance of Infrastructure Act and Abandoned Mine Reclamation for Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and U.S. Senator Bob Casey today toured the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area in Shamokin to highlight how abandoned mine reclamation projects can benefit local economies and communities. The Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act will provide an additional \$244 million for abandoned mine land (AML) reclamation in 2022 alone.

“Through the efforts of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and funding through the federal AML Reclamation Program, Pennsylvania has been able to reclaim over 91,000 acres of mine land, eliminate more than 1,800 open mine shafts and restore 300 miles of impaired streams. This has made the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area possible, providing new recreation opportunities for Coal Township residents and visitors. Thanks to the infrastructure law, Pennsylvania will also receive more than \$244 million to clean up dangerous sites, improve water quality damaged by acid mine drainage, create new jobs, and revitalize economies. I will continue fighting to bring infrastructure funding to Pennsylvania to ensure we can address the hazards and environmental pollution posed by legacy mining sites while creating good-paying jobs in rural and energy communities in Pennsylvania,” said U.S. Senator Bob Casey.

“Abandoned mine lands are a scar on Pennsylvania’s landscape, but by reclaiming them and restoring the land, there can be any number of important and productive uses,” said DEP Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mine Operations John Stefanko. “We’ve seen abandoned mine lands become new office parks, farmlands, solar fields, and, like the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area, new attractions to drive tourism.”

“Projects like this at the AOAA wouldn’t be possible without investments from the federal government, and I want to thank the Biden administration for their leadership in delivering additional resources to Pennsylvania so that we can keep restoring our landscapes and improving our communities,” said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell.

The Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area sits on more than 6,500 acres of former mineland, and a construction contract was funded from the 2018 federal Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization program for the 88-acre reclamation project to reclaim dangerous high-walls, a waterbody, and two vertical openings.

(continued on page 19)

Wolf Administration, Sen. Bob Casey Highlight Importance of Infrastructure Act and Abandoned Mine Reclamation for Pennsylvania (continued)

The project also included creation and expansion of nearly three miles of Jeep and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails and planting more than 13,000 trees on the property.

Abandoned mine land reclamation projects support vitally needed jobs for coal communities by investing in projects that close dangerous mine shafts, reclaim unstable slopes, improve water quality by treating acid mine drainage, and restore water supplies damaged by mining.

AML reclamation projects also enable economic revitalization by reclaiming hazardous land for recreational facilities and other economic redevelopment uses like advanced manufacturing and renewable energy deployment.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)