

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 26 Issue 7

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

July 2024



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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DCNR Celebrates The Allegheny River As The 2024 River Of The Year

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources **Deputy Secretary Claire Jantz** honored the Allegheny River as Pennsylvania's 2024 River of the Year during the celebration for the river at

Allegheny River Trail Park Saturday.

Governor Josh Shapiro signed a resolution acknowledging June as Rivers Month as a part of the River of the Year celebration, and has committed his administration to protecting clean water in Pennsylvania through mul-

tiples budget initiatives.

"The Allegheny River is an important part of Pennsylvania's natural history and beauty, so it is great to celebrate all that the river offers and its impact on the Commonwealth at

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Shapiro Administration Celebrates Historic Improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Susquehanna River as Commonwealth Leads Effort to Improve Water Quality

Under the Shapiro Administration, Pennsylvania will continue to improve local waterways and water quality

Governor Josh

Shapiro joined Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley, Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn to celebrate

significant improvements to the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's (UMCES)

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DCNR Celebrates The Allegheny River As The 2024 River Of The Year (continued)

the River of the Year Sojourn,” **Jantz said.** “Congratulations to Three Rivers Waterkeeper and the community of supporters who uplifted this special river.”

The historic Allegheny River starts as a stream in Potter County, meandering through a field of wildflowers before crossing briefly through New York and then through six counties in Western Pennsylvania.

The 325-mile river ends in Pittsburgh where it meets the Monongahela River and flows into the Ohio River, providing drinking water to more than one million people and acting as an ecologically and economically precious water trail.

The fertile valleys and abundant biodiversity have led many communities to call this place home, including the O-non-dowa-gah (Seneca Nation) who call the Allegheny Ohi:yo’ (beautiful river), the Lenni Lenape (Delaware Nation) who named it welhik-heny (most beautiful stream), and French settlers who referred to it as La Belle Riviere.

A series of locks and dams were constructed in the early 20th century to make the Allegheny River navigable for barges to transport goods; and now swimming, boating, and fishing are profoundly enjoyed by residents and visitors.

The river includes the Allegheny Islands Wilderness, a seven-island, 372-acre preserve that boasts old-growth hardwoods and prolific bird populations.

The U.S. Forest Service has documented over 50 mammals, 200 birds, 25 amphibians, 20 reptiles, 80 fishes, and 25 freshwater mussels in and around the Allegheny, including the threatened Salamander Mussel (*Simpsonaias ambigua*), who help improve the water quality by filtering out sediment and pollutants.

Whether you are bird watching, island camping, or traveling through the locks, you are sure to find that the Allegheny River is rich with life, history, and beauty.

“The Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers commends everyone who was a part of the strong showing of support for the Allegheny River in voting and at the River of the Year sojourn,” **said Janet Sweeney, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers.** “The River of the Year program continues to engage our communities by providing a wonderful opportunity to showcase all the nominated rivers and the great work being done in Pennsylvania on these resources.”

[Three Rivers Waterkeeper](#) nominated the Allegheny River, and received a \$10,000 Leadership Grant to help fund a slate of year-long 2024 River of the Year activities.

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DCNR Celebrates The Allegheny River As The 2024 River Of The Year (continued)

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers worked with Three Rivers Waterkeeper to create a free, commemorative poster celebrating the Allegheny River as the 2024 Pennsylvania River of the Year.

The poster was distributed during Saturday's sojourn.

"We were so excited to see everyone who came out Saturday to show their support for the Allegheny River," **said Jess Friss, Director of Community Programs at Three Rivers Waterkeeper.** "We remain dedicated to protecting the water quality of the Allegheny River and all its uses, are excited to have the support of the community and the collective commitment to environmental stewardship, recreation, and love for our waterways."

An independent program, the [Pennsylvania Sojourn Program](#), is a unique series of a dozen such trips on the state's rivers.

These water-based journeys for canoeists, kayakers, and others raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism, and heritage values of rivers.

Visit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' website for more information on the [River of the Year competition](#) and check out the department's [Calendar of Events](#) for events on public lands.

Source: PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Shapiro Administration Celebrates Historic Improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Susquehanna River as Commonwealth Leads Effort to Improve Water Quality (continued)

17th annual [Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card](#) was issued today at the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) office in Harrisburg for the 2023/2024 period. The report measures the health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, considering ecological, societal, and economic indicators. For the first time in the report's history, the Chesapeake Bay showed steady overall improvement, earning a C+ grade – the highest grade ever awarded to the overall health of the Bay since the report was created. The Upper Bay, which is fed by the Susquehanna River from Pennsylvania scored one of the highest grades among any area of the Bay – and posted a significant improvement from last year – showing how efforts in agency collaborations, strong partnerships, and sustained investments led to progress throughout the Susquehanna River watershed and beyond.

“Our Commonwealth’s Constitution states that every Pennsylvanian has a right to clean air and pure water. My Administration takes seriously our responsibility to protect that right, defend the freedom to breathe clean air and drink pure water, and create a better Commonwealth for our children and grandchildren,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**, “This year, the Chesapeake Bay got its highest grade in 22 years, and the portion of the bay that the Susquehanna River flows into got the second-best grade of the entire watershed. Pennsylvania’s portion of the watershed is significantly improving because we’ve brought people together and invested in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. My Administration is proud of this progress – and we’re going to continue to work to restore the Chesapeake Bay for years to come.”

“The improvements we are celebrating today – cleaner water, better habitat, and healthier watersheds – are the returns on the investments made by Pennsylvania over the last several years. That’s why it’s important to continue to invest, so we can continue to make progress,” said **Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “Pennsylvania will build on the momentum from the last five years, and we are committed to continuing this work for years to come, as we work collaboratively to clean up Pennsylvania’s local waterways, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.”

“Pennsylvania is making unprecedented investments to support farmers who are changing the way they operate to create healthier soil and cleaner water,” said **Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding**. “Since 2019, those investments have accelerated our progress toward reducing pollution in the Bay nearly two and half times that of the previous 10 years. Since the Shapiro Administration began, \$154 million to 700-plus projects through the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program is multiplying the millions invested through PA Farm Bill Conservation Excellence Grants, and Resource Enhancement and Protection tax incentives even further. The data in the Bay Report Card just serve to show that supporting farmers is an effective way to get stuff done for all of us.”

“Pennsylvania has been hard at work increasing funding and technical assistance with new staff, investments, and partnerships in planting streamside forest buffers, leading all Bay

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Shapiro Administration Celebrates Historic Improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Susquehanna River as Commonwealth Leads Effort to Improve Water Quality (continued)

states in buffers planted and accounting for 60 percent of the total amount of buffers planted in the watershed since tracking began in 1996,” said **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. “This work helps Pennsylvanians who live and recreate in the watershed with cooler waters, less risk of flooding, and better habitat, as well as helping those downstream.”

Since 2021 Pennsylvania has invested more than \$580 million into supporting farm conservation, restoring watersheds, and other on-the-ground projects to improve local water quality. This includes more than \$61 million in Growing Greener grants, more than \$92 million in farmland preservation and conservation projects, and nearly \$9 million to plant forest buffers and restore urban tree canopy.

The Susquehanna River is the largest tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, playing a critical role in the overall health and ecology of the Bay. This significant milestone for the Susquehanna River represents the ongoing work to restore Pennsylvania’s watershed through strategic partnerships and funding. Since 2004, DEP has restored approximately 967 miles of streams and more than 28,000 acres of public lakes. The Shapiro Administration will continue to work towards a vibrant and resilient watershed.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, please visit the [website](#), .

Source: **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**

Biden Harris Administration Announces \$4.3 Billion in Grants for Community-Driven Solutions to Cut Climate Pollution Across America

Funded by President Biden's Investing in America Agenda, EPA announces 25 selected applications through competitive Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program to tackle climate change, improve air quality, and advance environmental justice

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced selected recipients of over \$4.3 billion in Climate Pollution Reduction Grants to implement community-driven solutions that tackle the climate crisis, reduce air pollution, advance environmental justice, and accelerate America's clean energy transition. The [25 selected applications](#) will fund projects in 30 states, including one Tribe, that target reducing greenhouse gas pollution from six sectors: transportation, electric power, commercial and residential buildings, industry, agriculture/ natural and working lands, and waste and materials management. In addition to today's selected applications for specific projects, this first-of-its kind program secured by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act is also helping 45 states and dozens of [metro areas](#), [Tribes and territories](#) develop Climate Action Plans and is the single largest effort to spur the development of concrete local climate action goals across the nation.

The grants will fund projects supporting the deployment of technologies and programs to reduce greenhouse gases and other harmful pollution across the country and build the infrastructure, housing, industry, and competitive economy needed for a clean energy future. These grants will also help businesses capitalize on new opportunities, spur economic growth and job creation in new and growing industries, and support development of training programs to prepare workers.

Together, these selected projects will implement ambitious climate pollution reduction measures designed by states, Tribes and local governments that will achieve significant cumulative GHG reductions by 2030 and beyond. **When estimates provided by all selected applicants are combined, the proposed projects would reduce greenhouse gas pollution by as much as 971 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2050, roughly the emissions from 5 million average homes' energy use each year for over 25 years.**

EPA expects to announce up to an additional \$300 million in selections under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program for Tribes, Tribal consortia, and territories later this summer.

EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan will announce selections today in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with Governor Josh Shapiro as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's fifth Investing in America tour. Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection has been selected to receive a more than \$396 million grant for their proposed RISE PA project

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Biden Harris Administration Announces \$4.3 Billion in Grants for Community-Driven Solutions to Cut Climate Pollution Across America (continued)

which will reduce industrial GHG emissions in the industrial sector through a competitive grants program and incentives for small-, medium- and large-scale decarbonization projects across the state. EPA senior leadership will also join Senator Alex Padilla (CA) and officials to announce that the South Coast Air Quality Management District has been selected to receive nearly \$500 million for transportation and freight decarbonization through incentives for electric charging equipment and zero-emission freight vehicles.

“President Biden believes in the power of community-driven solutions to fight climate change, protect public health, and grow our economy. Thanks to his leadership, the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program will deliver unprecedented resources to states, local governments, and Tribes to fund the solutions that work best in their communities,” **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan**. “Selected recipients have put forward ambitious plans to advance sustainable agriculture, deploy clean industrial technologies, cut emissions and energy costs in homes and commercial buildings, and provide cost- and energy-efficient heating and cooling to communities, creating economic and workforce development opportunities along the way.”

“My Administration is taking real action to address climate change while continuing to create energy jobs and grow the economy – and today, I’m proud to announce that thanks to our partnership with the Biden Administration, Pennsylvania has been awarded \$396 million in federal funding to start a new initiative called RISE PA,” **said Governor Josh Shapiro**. “This is one of the largest federal grants Pennsylvania has ever received, and through RISE PA, we will offer grants for companies working to make their operations more efficient. This investment will help us reduce toxic air pollution, create thousands of jobs, invest in our energy sector, and continue Pennsylvania’s legacy of energy leadership.”

“President Biden’s Climate Pollution Reduction Grants put local governments in the driver’s seat to develop climate solutions that work for their communities,” **said John Podesta, Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy**. “These grants will help state and local governments improve the air quality and health of their communities, while accelerating America’s progress toward our climate goals.”

“Under President Biden’s leadership, this Administration has mobilized every tool and resource to reduce climate pollution, advance environmental justice, and spark economic growth in communities across America, and today’s transformational investments will further empower Governors and Mayors to seize these opportunities,” **said White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi**. “As part of President Biden’s historic climate laws, today’s funding announcement for locally led projects will support community priorities while animating a race to the top on climate jobs. These awards will supercharge American climate progress across sectors – from reaching 100% clean electricity to slashing super-pollutants like methane to

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Biden Harris Administration Announces \$4.3 Billion in Grants for Community-Driven Solutions to Cut Climate Pollution Across America (continued)

harnessing the power of nature across our farms and forests in the fight against climate change. This is a big deal.”

EPA made its selections through a rigorous grants competition that was designed to be fair and impartial. The Agency reviewed nearly 300 applications that were submitted by entities from across the country and requested a total of nearly \$33 billion in funding.

The 25 selected applications – from states, a Tribe, local governments, and coalitions of these entities – will receive federal funding to implement local and regional solutions. Many of these projects can be expanded and provide examples that other states, local governments, Tribes, and even businesses can replicate in their work to tackle the climate crisis. For example:

- **The Montana Forest, Community and Working Landscapes Climate Resiliency Project** will fund measures that improve forest management and expand urban and community forests. The selected application will also assist efforts to mitigate wildfires and coal seam fires and support local initiatives to improve soil health and reduce pollution from agriculture.
- **The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy** will fund measures to increase the adoption of climate-smart and precision agriculture and reduce agricultural waste from livestock. The selected application will also fund projects to improve energy efficiency in commercial and industrial facilities and low-income households as well as deploy solar and electrify irrigation wells.
- **The Clean Corridor Coalition’s** proposal for ZE-MHDV Infrastructure along the I-95 Corridor project will deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure for commercial zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles on the Interstate-95 freight corridor. This is a joint venture amongst the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Delaware Department of Transportation, and Maryland Departments of the Environment and Transportation. The selected application will provide technical assistance for workforce development and corridor planning across **New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, and Maryland**.
- **The Accelerating Siting, Zoning, and Permitting of 60% Renewable Energy in Michigan** grant will provide incentives and technical assistance to local and Tribal governments to accelerate the siting, zoning, and permitting of renewable energy. The selected application will help spur the adoption of renewable energy at the scale and pace needed to reach **Michigan’s** goal of 60 percent renewable energy by 2030.
- **The Atlantic Conservation Coalition** is a regional approach focused on natural climate solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The selected application will fund efforts across **North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia** to leverage the carbon sequestration power of natural and working lands, including coastal wetlands,

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Biden Harris Administration Announces \$4.3 Billion in Grants for Community-Driven Solutions to Cut Climate Pollution Across America (continued)

peatlands, forests, and urban forestry. The Atlantic Conservation Coalition is a partnership amongst the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, South Carolina Office of Resilience, Maryland Department of the Environment, and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

- **The Accelerating Clean Energy Savings in Alaska's Coastal Communities** grant will provide advisory services and incentives to replace residential oil burning systems with energy-efficient heat pumps in 50 **Alaskan** communities.

State, Tribal and local action is vital to deliver on the President's commitment to reduce climate pollution by over 50% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050. The innovative measures contained in the selected applications, developed with input from local communities, are expected to achieve substantial public health benefits such as reducing exposure to extreme heat, improving air quality, reducing energy burden for lower income Americans, improving climate resilience, and providing workforce and economic development opportunities, particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants advance President Biden's historic [Justice40 Initiative](#), which aims to ensure 40% of the overall benefits of certain climate, clean energy, and other federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. EPA expects to award the funds later this year, once all legal and administrative requirements are satisfied.

Many of the proposed projects contained in the selected applications announced today, as well as the \$250 million in planning grant funding that EPA is providing under the CPRG program for development of Climate Action Plans by state, local, and Tribal governments across the country, will complement the Biden-Harris Administration's historic federal actions and national climate strategies across sectors. Those include: the U.S. [National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#), the Administration's efforts to achieve [100% clean electricity by 2035](#) and make zero emissions construction common practice by 2030, the [Industrial Decarbonization Roadmap](#), the U.S. [Buildings Decarbonization Blueprint](#), the Administration's [climate-smart agriculture efforts](#) and [Nature Based Solutions Roadmap](#), the U.S. [Methane Emissions Reduction Action Plan](#), the [National Climate Resilience Framework](#), and more.

[Learn more about the selected applications](#)

[Learn more about the CPRG program](#)

For further information: Contact: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Budget Supports Department Operations, Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps

Governor Shapiro has signed the fiscal year [2024-2025 budget](#), which passed with bipartisan legislative support.

“Since my first day in office, I’ve been focused on getting stuff done for the good people of Pennsylvania, solving the most pressing problems we face, and bringing people together in a bipartisan manner to deliver results -- and I’m proud to sign this budget into law that makes historic investments in education and economic development, while continuing investments in public safety and violence prevention, all while cutting costs and reducing taxes,” said Governor Josh Shapiro.

The budget provides the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources with the funds needed to meet operational needs.

The Department will receive \$5 million and five new positions to expand the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps](#).

This program has helped more than 1,100 young Pennsylvanians -- our future conservation leaders -- develop skills by completing critical projects in state parks and forests.

This boost in funding signals Governor Shapiro's understanding of the importance of public lands and will allow the Outdoor Corps to have an even bigger impact.

The budget also allocates an additional \$500,000 per year to the Keystone Tree Fund to plant trees along streams and in communities, and it increases the spongy-moth spraying program by \$1.5 million to help us protect our forests from this damaging invasive pest.

Source: PA DCNR

DCNR Celebrates Forest Stewardship Council Leadership Award For Achieving 25 Years Of Forest Management Certification

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources received the Leadership Award [Opens In A New Window](#) from the Forest Stewardship Council [Opens In A New Window](#) for 25 years of positive forest management.

The award comes as **Governor Josh Shapiro** has consistently worked to protect the Commonwealth's rich environment and ensure Pennsylvanians' Constitutional right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the environment.

"The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is excited to celebrate this incredible honor, which highlights 25 years of management certification and the tremendous work of our Bureau of Forestry to be a national leader in forest conservation," **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said**. "These efforts ensure we have healthy, vibrant forests for wildlife habitat, sustainable forest products, and more. Congratulations to our Forestry staff for this well-deserved honor."

In addition to receiving the award for 25 years of Forest Stewardship Council forest management certification, the Bureau of Forestry was credited with proving success across a wide range of forest conditions, multiple agencies, and evolving public expectations.

The Forest Stewardship Council is a trusted national and international forest certification organization and its leadership awards recognize uncommon excellence that advances responsible forest management and forest conservation.

"We are truly humbled and honored to receive this award and we intend to continue to be leaders in sustainably managing forestland and working to preserve natural spaces for future generations," **State Forester Seth Cassell said**. "I believe our team in the Bureau of Forestry is second to none. This award proves that our work and commitment to excellence is truly making a difference. Thank you to the Forest Stewardship Council for recognizing our work."

The Bureau of Forestry was among the 20 recipients of recognition in 2023, which follows a **successful audit** announced last year.

Forests cover nearly 60 percent of the Commonwealth and **Pennsylvania's Forest Action Plan** focuses on an array of values including:

- Clean air and water
- Recreation opportunities
- Wood products

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DCNR Celebrates Forest Stewardship Council Leadership Award For Achieving 25 Years Of Forest Management Certification (continued)

- Habitat for thousands of plants and animals
- Carbon storage

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is currently developing a strategic plan, **Forests for All: A Plan for Pennsylvania's Forests and People (PDF)**, which outlines the vision and mission for the future of the Commonwealth's forests and its people rooted in strengthening the ecosystem management foundations laid by the agency and growing in its connections with people and communities.

The plan is currently undergoing review and finalization, and is subject to change.

The current plan outlines five goals in support of that vision and mission.

Pennsylvania's state forest system extends into 50 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

It offers water and air purification, recreation, aesthetic beauty, plant and animal habitat, economic and societal benefits through provision of wood products, and environmentally sound utilization of mineral resources.

Pennsylvania is divided into 20 forest districts, responsible for protecting all forestland within their boundaries from fire, destructive insects and disease.

Visit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' website for more information about **Pennsylvania's state forests** and check out the department's **Calendar of Events** for events on public lands.

Source: PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

EPA Announces New, Earlier Protections for People from Pesticide Spray Drift

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is putting protections in place sooner for farm-workers, their families, and the general public near where pesticides are applied. EPA will now assess the potential for people to be exposed to a pesticide when it drifts away from where it is applied earlier in the agency's review process. This applies to new active ingredient pesticide registrations and new use decisions. This updated process will protect people from pesticide spray drift 15 years sooner in the review process for new pesticides than has historically occurred.

During and after application, pesticides can drift to unintended areas like residential or recreational areas where people can get it on their skin or eyes, causing different symptoms depending on the pesticide. By assessing the amount of a pesticide that drifts beyond its intended target, EPA can identify measures that will protect people from unintended pesticide exposure. This change is also consistent with the agency's commitment to address environmental justice concerns from pesticide use in and around farm communities and to comply with the Endangered Species Act, where EPA is working to improve how it evaluates risk to and protects endangered species.

"People who live or work near farms can be unintentionally exposed to pesticides, and it's our job to do as much as possible to prevent that from happening and to protect their health," **said Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff.** "Our new policy will ensure that vital public health protections are in place when a pesticide is initially approved – so people don't have to wait years for the protections they deserve and need."

Historically, EPA has only conducted a chemical specific assessment of the potential for people to be exposed to pesticide 'spray drift' during registration review, which happen every 15 years after a pesticide is approved to ensure that it can carry out its intended functions without creating unreasonable adverse effects to human health and the environment. Starting now, the agency will also complete a chemical specific spray drift analysis during the initial registration process or the review process for new and amended uses of existing products, to ensure that any needed protections are put in place from the beginning of the pesticide's use, rather than delaying them for 15 years. This will also ensure both new and old pesticide registrations are held to the same standard.

EPA will use chemical specific human health spray drift analyses to determine specific label instructions to protect against and reduce the occurrence of spray drift, such as droplet sizes and buffer distances, for each pesticide and use. Additionally, if EPA identifies spray drift risks for people living or working nearby or non-target species, the agency will protect against those risks.

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EPA Announces New, Earlier Protections for People from Pesticide Spray Drift (continued)

As part of this action, going forward EPA will now include a chemical specific human health spray drift analysis for:

- New active ingredients: any new submissions for domestic uses of new active ingredients.
- New uses and amended uses: any new use and amended use registration submissions where that active ingredient has previously received a chemical specific spray drift analysis.
- Currently pending registrations: registration actions that are currently under review with the agency, when possible.

To read more about how the agency will implement this change, see the document entitled *Implementing Chemical Specific Human Health Spray Drift Analysis into Pesticide Registration Actions, July 2024*. Information on the methodology for conducting human health quantitative spray drift analysis can be found in the document entitled *Residential Exposure Assessment Standard Operating Procedures Addenda 1: Consideration of Spray Drift*. These documents can be found at docket ID EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0676 at the Regulations.gov page.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Pennsylvania Receives an Additional \$28.6 Million to Restore Abandoned Mine Land for Economic Development Projects

The Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program will fund sustainable economic and community development projects – protecting homes and businesses, while improving the health and safety of Pennsylvania communities. With the largest inventory of abandoned coal mines in the nation, Pennsylvania has already received \$244 million this year from the federal government to clean up abandoned coal mines.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has received \$28.6 million in federal funding for the 2024 Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program, which will put abandoned mine lands across the Commonwealth to good use by funding economic and community development projects on reclaimed sites. Previous AMLER projects include public parks, public waterlines to ensure clean and safe water, recreational trails for fishing and biking, and more. Pennsylvania has more abandoned coal mines than any other state in the country. With the support of federal and state funding, Pennsylvania has already rehabilitated 150,000 acres of abandoned mine lands.

“Remediation of abandoned mine lands is critical for the health, safety, and well-being of communities across Pennsylvania,” said **DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “With this federal funding, we will be able to continue this vital work that protects public health and safety, and put reclaimed land to good use with eligible economic development initiatives.”

Pennsylvania has a roughly \$5 billion need for reclamation and stream restoration. More than 5,000 miles of streams in Pennsylvania are impacted by acid mine drainage from abandoned mining sites – these toxic chemicals can harm our water sources and result in issues like erosion. In April, Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis and U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced a \$244 million investment into restoring and reclaiming abandoned mine lands in Pennsylvania. The funding is part of the \$725 million for abandoned mine cleanup nationwide this year under the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA). The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation will receive \$244 million for projects to clean up abandoned mine lands and protect Pennsylvania communities – removing waste piles, re-grading dangerous highwalls that can result in loose dirt, trees, and other hazards, treating abandoned mine drainage that affect streams and rivers, and preventing and treating mine subsidence underneath homes and businesses across the Commonwealth.

Millions of structures in Pennsylvania are located over old, abandoned underground coal and clay mines. That’s why DEP offers mine subsidence insurance for Pennsylvania homeowners that may have abandoned mines beneath their homes. Damage due to mine subsidence or mine water breakouts is usually not covered by your homeowner’s insurance policy.

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Pennsylvania Receives an Additional \$28.6 Million to Restore Abandoned Mine Land for Economic Development Projects (continued)

Residential Coverage of \$150,000 through DEP costs just \$41.25 a year. Since 1961, the Mine Subsidence Insurance program has paid out over \$36 million in homeowner claims.

On June 3, 2024, DEP received the FY 2024 AMLER Program funding administered by The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). OSMRE used the Department of the Interior's Financial & Business Management System (FBMS) Standard Treasury for payment allocation. This is the ninth year Pennsylvania has received funding from the AMLER Program. AMLER was established in 2016 to accelerate abandoned mine land remediation for long-term sustainable use through economic and community development.

Eligible projects will need to comply with the OSMRE FY 2024 AMLER guidance document. Example projects can include outdoor recreation/conservation plans and industrial improvements. Interested applicants can apply on DEP's Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) and Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Grant Program page.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, please visit the website, or follow DEP on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Releases New Science-Based Recommendations to Help More States, Tribes, and Territories Reduce Exposure to PFAS in Fish

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued updated recommendations under the Clean Water Act for contaminants that states, Tribes, and territories should consider monitoring in locally caught, freshwater fish. For the first time, EPA has added several per- and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS) to the contaminant list alongside lead, three cyanotoxins, a flame retardant, and amphetamine. The recommendation to monitor for twelve PFAS fulfills a key commitment in Administrator Regan's PFAS Strategic Roadmap and helps protect communities from exposure to these "forever chemicals."

"It's important for EPA to continue advancing the science on PFAS as part of our comprehensive effort to protect the public from these harmful substances," **said EPA Acting Assistant Administrator for Water Bruno Pigott.** "By considering the latest science in their local advisories and testing for PFAS in fish at a local level, states and Tribes can protect subsistence, recreational, and sport fishers."

States, Tribes, and territories monitor and analyze contaminants in fish and shellfish caught in local, fresh waterbodies. When they find contaminants at concentrations that can negatively impact people's health, they issue consumption advisories. Some state and territorial programs that issue fish and shellfish advisories rely on EPA's recommendations to determine which contaminants to monitor.

Many states are already monitoring for certain PFAS in fish and using local data to issue fish consumption advisories where appropriate. Examples of states that have advisories in place include Alabama, Connecticut, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin.

With this announcement, EPA is suggesting that states, Tribes, and territories monitor for twelve PFAS and other contaminants including lead, cyanotoxins, a flame retardant, and amphetamine. This update comes after reviewing scientific literature, analyzing data, and seeking external peer review of the agency's analysis, and it will help ensure that state and Tribal fish advisories consider the latest science.

EPA's most recent National Aquatic Resource Survey, which monitors fish tissue from lakes and streams across the country, and numerous other studies have found PFAS in freshwater fish and shellfish at levels that may impact human health. These studies indicate the presence of PFAS in fish, but they do not give enough information at a local level to inform public health decisions, which is why the role of states, Tribes, and territories in gathering local data is essential.

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EPA Releases New Science-Based Recommendations to Help More States, Tribes, and Territories Reduce Exposure to PFAS in Fish (continued)

EPA recommends that people who eat locally-caught, freshwater fish and shellfish caught in local rivers and lakes consult their state, Tribe, or territory to determine the safe amount of those fish and shellfish to eat.

View EPA's lists of contaminants to monitor and learn more about EPA Guidance for Developing Fish Advisories.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Selects Educational Organizations to Receive Over \$3.6 million to Support Environmental Projects Nationwide

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the selection of 38 organizations to receive over \$3.6 million in funding for projects under the Environmental Education Grants Program.

“Advancing environmental education advances EPA’s mission because it better equips our communities with the information they need to protect public health today and in the future,” **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** “This year’s environmental education grant recipients will work in underserved communities across the country to foster a deeper understanding of environmental challenges and inspire action towards sustainable solutions.”

The funding will range from \$50,000 to \$100,000, to organizations that provide environmental education activities and programs. This year’s grantees will conduct project activities in 28 states and the Republic of Palau, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.

This year’s environmental education projects include:

- Helping young people in New England grow into a new, inclusive generation of environmental justice problem-solvers through a series of linked experiences.
- Using urban greening initiatives (e.g., tree planting, nature-based solutions, and urban gardening) to help address the impacts of climate change and air pollution in Camden, New Jersey, an environmental justice and overburdened community.
- Transforming a state-of-the-art electric bus into a roving electric classroom that will bring immersive environmental education experiences to 21 Title I elementary schools in Henrico County, Virginia.
- Recruiting educators in Tennessee, particularly from underserved communities, to participate in a year-long cohort focused on environmental education through the lens of addressing climate change resulting in cohort members including climate change education across the curriculum.
- Educating 400 underserved youth in Milwaukee and Southeast Wisconsin on the impacts of climate change in environmental justice communities, empowering them with indigenous knowledge to combat climate change, take action, and create local solutions.
- Employing “meaningful watershed experiences” to empower students, teachers, and community members in Houston, Texas, fostering watershed stewardship to design and implement nature-based solutions to flooding that aim to reduce storm water run-off and the associated pollutants from entering the water supply.

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EPA Selects Educational Organizations to Receive Over \$3.6 million to Support Environmental Projects Nationwide (continued)

- Engaging students from diverse backgrounds in Kansas and Missouri to come together, dialogue, and take action to address existing barriers to their involvement and interest in green careers.
- Enhancing interest, opportunities, and involvement in green careers for 100 students in rural Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah through the creation of online career resources, statewide virtual youth green careers summits, school-based action projects, mentorship programs and more.
- Braiding indigenous and western science through youth-led community action in the Republic of Palau to address contamination left behind from World War II.
- Establishing a K-12 classroom and outdoor learning space on a peatland conservation parcel in Homer, Alaska, where school visits and field trips will enable students to directly engage with local peatlands, construct native plant gardens, and more.

The following organizations have been selected to receive this year's Environmental Education Grants:

- CASA, Inc. (CASA de Maryland)
- Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
- Desert Research Institute
- Ecology Project International
- Explora Science Center & Childrens Museum of Albuquerque
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- Henrico County Public Schools
- Hitchcock Center for the Environment
- Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group
- Hubbard County Solid Waste Conservation District
- Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education (Ignited)
- Ipswich River Watershed Association
- Ivy Academy

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EPA Selects Educational Organizations to Receive Over \$3.6 million to Support Environmental Projects Nationwide (continued)

- Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education

•Learning Endeavors

- Louisiana Environmental Action Network
- Massachusetts Audubon Society
- Minnesota State University - Mankato
- Mississippi State University
- Missouri River Bird Observatory
- National Wildlife Federation (Atlanta)
- National Wildlife Federation (Houston)
- Neighborhood House of Milwaukee
- New Haven Ecological Project
- New York Sun Works
- Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
- Openlands
- Protect Our Water Jackson Hole
- Rowan University
- Sierra Streams Institute
- Takshanuk Watershed Council
- The Living Classrooms Foundation
- Trail Blazers
- University of Alaska - Anchorage
- University of Maine
- Upper Iowa University

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EPA Selects Educational Organizations to Receive Over \$3.6 million to Support Environmental Projects Nationwide (continued)

- Women for a Healthy Environment
- Youth Environmental Alliance

EPA anticipates providing funding for these projects once all legal and administrative requirements are satisfied.

Since 1992, EPA has distributed between \$2 million and \$3.7 million in EE grant funding each year, for a total of over \$95.1 million supporting more than 3,960 projects. The program traditionally provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. For more information, visit EPA's Environmental Education webpage.

To learn more about current and past award winners, or to apply for future EE grant competitions, visit the Environmental Education Grants webpage. This website will be updated as future competitions are announced and additional grants are awarded.

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Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency