

Pennsylvania Wilds Conservation Landscape 2013 Accomplishments

Fast Facts



Has 2 million acres of public land – as much as Yellowstone.

Offers some of the best outdoor recreation opportunities in the country.

Is known for its robust wildlife, rich oil and lumber heritage and charming small towns and rural character.

Public Lands in the PA Wilds



Has led to increases in overnight leisure travel, trip lengths, state park attendance, small business start-ups, job creation, and tax revenues in the region.

Has achieved unprecedented regional cooperation with formal 12-county Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement.

What is a Conservation Landscape?

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

2013 Top Accomplishments

DCNR Facility and Grant Investments:

- Contracted with Buehler & Associates Architects for design and construction of new park complex office and visitor center at Kinzua Bridge State Park.
- Installed exhibits at Wildlife Watching Center at Sinnemahoning State Park and held public open house in October.
- Made improvements to Inn at Cook Forest at Cook Forest State Park.
- Hosted Gov. Tom Corbett at the Elk Country Visitor Center, a DCNR and Keystone Elk Country Alliance public-private partnership, to highlight the PA Wilds as a tourist destination and to mark the 100-year anniversary of elk reintroduction to region. This year, 350,000 people visited the Center with more than 4,000 school students benefitting from on-site or distance learning educational programs.
- Replaced directional signage across the 127-mile Elk Scenic Drive and added way-finding signage for the Elk Country Visitor Center.
- Provided a second year of grant funding to support implementation of regional and county greenway plans through mini-grant programs.
- Awarded \$2.7 million in Community Conservation & Partnerships Grant program funding across the PA Wilds region for recreation, park and conservation projects in communities.



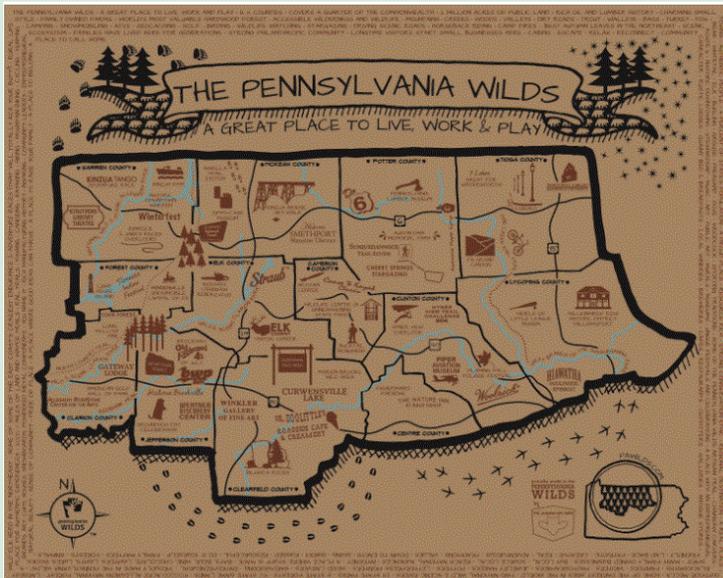
PA Wilds Planning Team:

- In May, with more than 160 in attendance and with support from the Potter County Education Council, the Team held a very successful annual dinner to update local officials and regional stakeholders. Thirteen PA Wilds Champions were recognized and an accomplishments video unveiled (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCcmd_3yxZSk)
- Gathered regional trail interests together at the PA Greenways and Trail Summit to discuss regional trail strategies, capacity building and vision for PA Wilds to Pittsburgh trail initiative. Headwaters Charitable Trust stepped up to support the Team in this work.

- Continued work on community character protection with development of the PA Wilds Design Guide Supplement for Oil and Gas Best Practices. The supplement, which includes several industry case studies, was presented at the October 2013 PA Planning Association Conference.
- Established relationship with Center for Rural PA to create an annual report to measure impact of PA Wilds program goals.

PA Wilds Small Business Ombudsman:

- Ombudsman’s work has resulted in 56 small business start-ups and 57 expansions that have created 264 jobs. In addition to service sector-businesses and producers, the ombudsman is now also working with manufacturers of outdoor recreation products in the region.
- Revamped the PA Wilds Artisan Trail website, created a formal advisory committee to guide the program’s expansion to include public art venues, craft wineries, breweries and distilleries and agricultural/food products to trail offerings.
- Formed relationship with *Keystone Edge*, an online business journal with a statewide footprint, to report regularly on business activities in the PA Wilds region.
- Launched major youth outreach undertaking with the development of the PA Wilds Inspiring Entrepreneurs Program, which uses real-life stories of entrepreneurs in the PA Wilds to educate and inspire students in grades 9-12 about entrepreneurial and stewardship opportunities in their back yards, and to build pride of place (the map below, created by a local artisan, is distributed to students as part of the program).



Pa Wilds Tourism Marketing Corporation:

- Received more than 6,000 hits a month to the PA Wilds Tourism Marketing Corporation’s www.pawilds.com regional visitor website.
- Conducted second annual public photo contest and established traveling exhibit being shown in galleries across the region.
- Started development of a PA Wild Geo Trail to create a region-wide geocaching trail. Geocaching is a growing outdoor recreational activity.



For More Information

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