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Governor Wolf Announces \$28 Million DCNR Investment to Improve Recreation, Community Revitalization Efforts Across Pennsylvania

Homestead, Allegheny County, PA – Standing near the site of a future trail linking the nationally acclaimed Great Allegheny Passage with the Borough of Homestead, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced an investment of \$28 million for 176 projects across Pennsylvania that will create new recreational opportunities, conserve natural resources and help revitalize local communities.

“Our communities thrive economically when people want to stay and businesses want to grow and these beautiful public spaces and new recreational areas help improve the quality of life across our commonwealth,” Governor Tom Wolf said.

“Just as Governor Wolf supports sound investments that translate into revitalized communities and job growth, Homestead has rallied around three projects that will benefit from DCNR grants being announced today,” Dunn said. “Its efforts exemplify the driving force behind DCNR’s grants program -- that the health and vitality of a community is reflected in the quality of its parks and trails, access to rivers, open spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities.”

Noting these grants throughout the state “help communities protect and enhance their natural amenities,” the DCNR secretary told a gathering of borough residents and federal, state and borough lawmakers that Homestead is receiving two \$100,000 grants: one providing a direct connection from the Great Allegheny Passage Trail to The Avenues Business District; and the other providing funding for renovation of McLean Playground and Frick Park.

“Whether in Allegheny or Montgomery County, local parks are as diverse as the populations they serve,” Dunn said, “but they face similar challenges -- limited funding, aging infrastructure, maintenance needs and reduced capacity to carry out programs and services. These funds offer a helping hand to achieve projects countless studies show community residents want.”

Homestead is overseeing three of 176 projects in the state that are being aided by 2015 grants awarded and administered by DCNR’s Community Conservation Partnerships Program.

“We are extremely pleased by DCNR’s investment in our community, enabling us to serve our residents better by rehabbing the parks and playgrounds, and offering green spaces that will collect and retain stormwater,” Homestead Borough Council President Lloyd Cunningham told listeners gathered along Waterfont Drive. “The Avenues Trail Connector will be an excellent supplement to the Great Allegheny Passage trail, providing a direct connection from the trail to The Avenues Business District and offering cyclists easier access to local businesses in our Historic Business District.”

The council president hailed the borough projects as “an excellent example of regional collaboration” involving the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN), Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Steel Valley School District and William V. Campbell Educational and Community Foundation.

“These grants are vital to the future growth and development of our communities and breathe life into projects that will reinvest in families and their children,” said Senator Jay Costa (D-Allegheny). “For the Allegheny Passage, this is an incredible project that ties communities together through recreation. This project alone will be an attraction that will drive people into our communities to take advantage of recreation facilities, spurring the local economy in the process.”

Stretching 150 miles from Pittsburgh to its junction with the C&O Canal Towpath at Cumberland, Md., the Great Allegheny Passage offers afford hikers and bicycling enthusiasts the opportunity to travel a more than 330-mile route between Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C., that is free from traffic and motorized vehicles.

Funding for grants overseen by DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation includes the Keystone Fund, which is generated from a portion of the realty transfer tax; the Environmental Stewardship Fund; the ATV/Snowmobile Fund generated through fees for licenses; and federal monies.

In its Grant Round 21, DCNR received 430 grant applications in 2015 that accounted for funding requests totaling more than \$92 million. Grants were awarded in categories that included municipal and regional community recreation and park projects; land acquisition; rivers conservation efforts; and planning.

For a complete list of grants by county, visit:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/brcinteractivemapping1/grantannouncements/index.htm>.

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