

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Conservation Program Overview

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Conservation Program is responsible for delivering projects and activities to achieve WPC's mission of protecting and restoring exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations.

Locations

WPC's Conservation Program has community-based staff throughout the region:

- Blair County – Juniata and Potomac Region Field Office
- Elk County – The Allegheny Project Office
- Westmoreland County – The Laurel Highlands/Ligonier Valley Project Office
- Indiana County – The Freshwater Conservation Center
- Dauphin County – PA Natural Heritage Program (eastern staff office)
- Allegheny County – Pittsburgh headquarters
- Fayette County – Fallingwater and administrative staff

Conservation Programs by Department

Conservation Science

This program applies scientific information to identify the most important places for WPC and its partners to make conservation investments, and guides the development of conservation projects through the lens of science. Recently, WPC developed a "Conservation Blueprint" to visually represent the most important forests and watersheds in need of conservation and restoration.

Forestland Conservation

This program protects the most ecologically significant lands in the state through a variety of methods. Emphasis is placed on working with private landowners who are voluntarily taking measures to permanently conserve priority lands by working with WPC.

Land Conservation and Stewardship

The Land Conservation and Stewardship team will focus on protecting lands that are identified as priorities for the Western Pennsylvania region. This work will be guided by research conducted by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy staff, and by partnerships and close collaboration with community members, volunteer groups, local governments, businesses and other organizations. The Conservancy believes that land conservation at an ambitious scale is important to preserving and enhancing the region, since this region is noteworthy for its dramatic open spaces, natural resources, habitat and scenic beauty.

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage

This program collects and manages ecological information about Pennsylvania. The information is generated mostly through fieldwork by a large staff of scientists (botanists, ecologists, zoologists). The data is managed in a statewide database – housed at the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – and is utilized for permitting decisions. Decision makers who desire to include conservation planning in the areas of economic development, land use and other planning also use the information.

Watershed Conservation

This program works to protect and restore Pennsylvania watersheds through a variety of on-the-ground projects in priority areas. The program is well known by local watershed groups that receive technical assistance from WPC water specialists and planners. Restoration projects often focus on working with farmers and agricultural producers to decrease water pollution from poor farming methods; working to remediate degraded water quality from past coal mining activity; and correcting erosion hotspots caused by poorly maintained dirt roads in rural areas.

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