WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy



The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. To date, the Conservancy has permanently protected more than 262,000 acres of natural lands. The Conservancy also creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.

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Cover: Fallingwater, now on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Cover photo by Christopher Little



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the board and staff of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, we are pleased to be able to provide this report on our programs and projects during 2019. We could never have achieved these outcomes without your support.

Even though this annual report highlights efforts and outcomes of the last calendar year, I would be remiss in not sharing some of the valuable insights we have gained over the past few months of 2020. When Pennsylvania was in the "red" and "yellow" phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, our work continued even while we worked remotely. We appreciated the support of our members, donors and volunteers who stayed in touch through that time. Thankfully our

nimble and adaptable board and staff sorted out ways to keep our work going. Our greatest challenge was at Fallingwater because there the site had to be closed to the public. We recently reopened it for outdoor-only self-guided and guided tours.

Now that we're in the "green" phase in Pennsylvania, we have been able to work together more, socially distanced, and it's good to see our colleagues, partners and volunteers more, while much work still remains remote. I have appreciated that work has continued to be done in recent months at those different phases. and conservation outcomes have been accomplished even in these challenging times. And our conversations have deepened as we reflect on how, for our conservation movement to be successful, it needs more than ever to be inclusive and within a framework of racial justice and equity for all.

With all the complexities of these times, I'm pleased we can still report on exciting results across our programs. In our land conservation program, we acquired a farm in Mercer County for our farmland access initiative, both to preserve the farmland and to make it accessible at reasonable costs to farmers wanting to lease it and grow local, organic foods for our regional food supply. We have acquired several donated conservation easements, added land to our nature reserves and protected properties from the French Creek watershed to the Laurel Highlands to Centre County near State College.

Our natural heritage program has done research and field surveys to protect rare birds, plants and other species, and monitored habitats for rare species. Our watershed conservation team has restored miles of rivers and streams, completing projects ranging from abandoned mine drainage remediation to stream bank stabilization to riparian tree plantings. Our gardens and greenspace program has planted trees and community gardens in our cities and towns and installed green spaces on school grounds where children can learn outside and enjoy nature.

A high mark for the year was the inscription of Fallingwater on the UNESCO World Heritage List — an exciting outcome for the Conservancy, and only 20 short years in the making.

One additional note as we look back over the year and then where we are now: During this worldwide pandemic and all the accompanying impacts on the economy and businesses, we appreciate all of your help with the financial challenges of these unusual times. Fallingwater's revenue is a fraction of its normal levels, and all our programs are looking for support to keep revenues close to their usual levels. It is interesting to recall the resolve of WPC's founders to create this organization 88 years ago during the Great Depression, one of the most challenging times in our nation's history. That same resolve will help ensure the Conservancy's legacy, as we navigate the current challenges. We are grateful for your commitment and support.

On behalf of the board and staff, I hope you enjoy this annual report. Most of all, I hope that you, your friends and your families will all be well in the months ahead. Thank you for all that you are doing, in so many ways. to support the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Thomas D. Saunders PRESIDENT AND CEO



landowners and the Conservancy to protect conservation values of Together with our members, funders and landowners, the Conservancy protects land that safeguards wildlife habitats, forests, rivers and land by limiting future development. streams and farmland. These lands also provide access to the public for recreation and relaxation. One admirable quality conservation-minded people have in common,

Donated Conservation Easements: Gifts of Land Benefit All

Conservation-minded landowners are the backbone of local and national conservation efforts, and the pillars of many conservation movements past and present, addressing issues such as climate change and endangered species. Last year, landowners of five properties in Blair, Sullivan, Venango and Westmoreland counties protected their land by donating conservation easements to the Conservancy, Conservation easements are legal agreements between

In 2019, that work continued, with 2,473 additional acres protected. bringing the total WPC-conserved land in the region to more than 260,000 acres. The following summary highlights a few of the 13 land conservation project outcomes in 2019.

says WPC Vice President of Land Conservation Shaun Fenlon, is their unwavering commitment to preserving land for the benefit of future generations.

"When landowners are moved to donate an easement they invariably have deep connections to their land and recognize how it can continue benefitting the greater good," says Shaun. "Everyone benefits from their singular act of generosity."

Marcia Bonta and her husband, Bruce, are among those landowners. Marcia authored nine books, including a series about observations of seasonal plants and animals on their forested property in Blair County. On Earth Day, they donated an easement on their 648-acre land fondly denoted as Plummer's Hollow. The property includes stands of trees that have not been timbered since 1815. Now maturing to oldgrowth forest, these trees provide essential habitat for native species that rely on mature forests for their lifecycles.

"We want to make sure the property can remain as an example of a relatively unspoiled natural environment and help alleviate the effects of climate change," she says.

Land along the Alleghenv River in President Township, Venango County, has been in Court Gould's family for seven generations. His donated easement on their 309 acres helps protect Johnston Run, which flows through the property. Because the waters are cold and pristine, the stream is designated Exceptional Value by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Court says the easement also honors his father and the indigenous people of Western Pennsylvania.



WPC's West Branch French Creek Conservation Area in Erie County now protects six miles of forested land along the West Branch French Creek, a major tributary to French Creek.

"Long before my ancestors settled on this land, it belonged to the Paleo-Indians who inhabited our land and river valleys for centuries. We possess the land, but ultimately it belongs to nature to benefit us all. It's up to us to be good stewards while this land is in our care. Through this donation, we're doing iust that." Court adds.

Michael Blehar and Beth Evans donated an easement on their 22-acre property in Cook Township, Westmoreland County, which is mainly forested and buffering Fourmile Run, a tributary to Loyalhanna Creek. "Nature soothes what ails you, making you slow down and breathe," Michael says. "Doing what you can to preserve nature and its many benefits is important to us."

Opportunities for Farmers Progress

Leasing land to more small-scale farmers became a reality in 2019 through the Conservancy's farmland access initiative, a program to help support the local food economy by making land more accessible to local farmers.

On WPC's farmland near Grove City in Mercer County, the Westsylvania Cider Co., owned by Chris and Sarah Kubiak, will farm about 10 acres to plant trees for an apple orchard for organic hard cider production. Rare heirloom varieties including Newtown Pippin, Harrison, Hewes Virginia Crab and Grimes Golden, which were grown in Western Pennsylvania more than 100 years ago, will be planted.

Ciders will be derived from real fruit, says Chris, and unfiltered, unsulfated and with no added flavorings or sugars. "Like wine, these ciders will have a uniqueness and complexity found nowhere else in the world, and we want to use it as a means to educate people on the history of cider, organic and sustainable apple growing, and interconnections with ecosystems," he adds.

The first seedlings will be planted to start the orchard in fall 2020, which is anticipated to yield apples in about six to 10 years. Efforts are currently underway to finalize a lease on the property's second farm to another operator.

This farm, along with a Westmoreland County farm that WPC purchased on Earth Day in 2020, expand on the Conservancy's longstanding practice of leasing a portion of its 400-acre Plain Grove Fens Natural Area in Lawrence County for farming. Currently Fallen Aspen Farm leases 57 acres there to raise produce and livestock for Pittsburgharea restaurants.

More Public Land for Anglers, Hikers, Hunters and Nature Lovers

WPC-owned reserves in Erie, Bedford and Fayette counties expanded in 2019. In Erie County, 390 acres expanded the West Branch French Creek Conservation Area to nearly 1,000 acres. The property is open to the public and protects six miles of forested land along the West Branch French Creek, a major tributary to French Creek, the most biologically diverse stream of its size in the northeastern United States.

At 370 acres, WPC's Sideling Hill Creek Conservation Area in Bedford and Fulton counties is an important area of biodiversity because it protects the unique shale barrens plant community, forests and several globally rare plants. This natural area was expanded by 100 acres last year, adding more forest buffer along sections of Sideling Hill Creek, a tributary to the Potomac River. The creek is home to populations of rare freshwater mussels. Although not for the novice outdoorsperson due to its rugged and steep terrain, this conservation area is open to the public for fishing and hunting. The Conservancy also added important acreage to Bear Run Nature Reserve along the approach to Fallingwater (read more on page 9).



LAND STEWARDSHIP

WPC owns 46 properties totaling more than 14,400 acres that are open free to nature lovers of all ages for a variety of recreation options including, hiking, fishing, hunting and wildlife watching.

Sustaining the ecological values of and improving the properties we own is an important and ongoing priority of our land protection work in order to help make these natural areas enjoyable, accessible for nature experiences for you and your family.

New Trails Open, Improved for the Public to Explore

At a ceremony in May in Somerset County, a new hiking trail and observation deck was officially opened and dedicated to honor the conservation legacy of the late Joshua C. Whetzel, Jr., who served as president and chief executive officer of WPC from 1969 to 1978.

Many successful conservation projects were achieved in the 1970s under Josh's leadership, including protecting the first segment of the Great Allegheny Passage Trail. "My dad was ahead of his time in his thinking and acting on conservation. He could really see things that needed to be done or acquired." says current WPC board member Joshua Whetzel, III, regarding his father's visionary leadership.

At the 1.500-acre Bennett Branch Forest in Elk and Clearfield counties, the 3.6-mile trail was improved in 2019. It takes hikers through forests of mixed oak, sugar maple, black birch and beautiful hemlock groves. Backcountry camping is permitted, as is mountain biking on designated trails. This forest adjoins Moshannon State Forest, making a contiguous expanse of public land in this scenic, natural region.

Work at Toms Run Advanced. Trail Completed in 2020

Thanks to assistance from several volunteers, the 3-mile trail at Toms Run Nature Reserve in Allegheny County took major steps towards completion in 2019. Located 10 miles from downtown Pittsburgh in western Allegheny County near I-79 and Route 65. Toms Run Nature Reserve has been protected by WPC since 1977; it is open to the public for hiking, nature watching, hunting and birding.

In 2019, volunteers attended several workdays to help clear debris, including old tires, appliances and waste, pull invasive plants and mark the trail's path. The trail,

About 30 people attended a special ceremony in May 2019 to dedicate the new Joshua C. Whetzel. Ir. Trail in Westmoreland County, which has an observation area overlooking the southern edge of Confluence, portions of the Great Allegheny Passage Trail and the Casselman and Youghioghenv rivers.



A 3-mile trail at Toms Run Nature Reserve in Allegheny County is now complete and welcomes you to hike and explore!

an ADA-accessible pathway and a parking area to accommodate school buses are all completed. The installation of trail and educational signs is expected to conclude in late summer 2020.

The reserve has been used as an outdoor classroom by the Pittsburgh Environmental Charter School and other schools over the past several years.

Reestablishing a Native Forest at Bear Run

At 5,100-acre Bear Run Nature Reserve in Fayette County, WPC's stewardship staff is gradually converting conifer stands planted in the late 1950s to a native mixed deciduous forest.

This is being accomplished by cutting or girdling (removing the bark in horizonal bands around trunks of trees) small group selections of conifer trees, and allowing those trees to die naturally and. when fallen, decay on the reserve over many years. As a result of this girdling, sunlight through small canopy openings will reach the forest floor and encourage the growth of native deciduous trees such as red maple, tulip tree, American beech and various oaks. Inventory work on this project will continue through 2020.

CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Lake Pleasant in Erie County is a part of a protected and important conservation area owned and managed by WPC. Staff work to keep the area ecologically healthy by trying to control invasive species in the lake and surrounding wetlands.

The Conservancy's team of more than 20 scientists continued their work in field and stream, documenting and assessing the locations of native, rare and endangered plants and animals, while working on various projects to improve and protect wildlife habitats.

WPC Senior Director of Conservation Science Charles Bier spent most of the spring and summer months visiting WPC-owned nature reserves and natural areas to conduct and document ecological observations and assessments. WPC-owned properties protect species and habitats, and provide recreation and watershed protection among other benefits. His work will result in vital information to guide and prioritize management decisions for each property.

"It was good to spend time assessing rare species plant communities and habitat conditions at many of our properties. Similar to the challenges many landowners in our region face, we too are finding an increase of invasive species growing on our properties. That's concerning and something I certainly documented in my assessments," Charles comments.

Management plans are established for all WPC properties, providing roadmaps for WPC's stewardship staff on how to care for the land. For example, some of the non-native invasive plants Charles documented could be pulled rather treated with herbicide. And his assessments identified plants, such as native ainsena, that were not known to arow on WPC properties.

"So, it's not all bad news," Charles assures, "WPC properties host some of the most unique and beautiful natural characteristics found in the region. From the wetlands on preserves in the northwest to the dry, shale barrens in Bedford County, they are all worth

Assessing Properties to Improve Stewarding

a visit." Tryon-Weber Woods in Crawford County and Lake Pleasant Conservation Area and Wattsburg Fen Natural Area in Erie County are among Charles' favorite places in the region to explore nature.

Map of Biodiversity Importance Advances

Christopher Tracey, natural heritage program conservation planning manager for WPC. and Molly Moore, a WPC GIS specialist, spent much of 2019 working on a national project to combine 40 years of natural heritage information.

As part of the team of scientists and specialists from across the NatureServe Network, they provided their expertise to help create the Map of Biodiversity Importance (MoBI). This work, done in partnership with Esri, Microsoft and The Nature Conservancy, used GIS data to model the habitats for more than 2,200 of the country's most imperiled plant and animal species. MoBI will help conservation organizations, land managers and land trusts utilize biodiversity data to help make effective conservation decisions.

MoBI uses the Esri GIS platform to provide a national view of an area's biodiversity and potential conservation targets. "There's a lot of information now right at our fingertips that we did not have access to before. It's a game changer for conservation decision-making and prioritizing at the local and state levels," says Christopher. MoBI made its national debut in February 2020 and can be found at natureserve.org.

Prioritizing Grassland Conservation for Birds

Heading north to their Pennsylvania nesting grounds, migratory birds face threats — in particular, habitat loss. Some migratory birds depend on open grasslands such as hayfields. herbaceous meadows and farmland, but these places are shrinking across the U.S. WPC Ornithologist David Yeany is working to help save habitat for bird species such as the upland sandpiper and Henslow's sparrow.

Along with our Pennsylvania Game Commission partners, during a one-year study. David examined where suitable grassland habitat is currently located across the state and identified more than 5,000 potential sites for grassland bird conservation. Bird counts were conducted at 38 of these sites to help prioritize conservation actions. While work activities concluded in early 2020. the project will continue to provide guidance to conservation organizations statewide over the next several years.



Searching for Mussels in the Ohio

In a multi-year study that concluded in 2019, WPC scientists from the PA Natural Heritage Program and watershed conservation program conducted research in the Ohio River to see if the endangered salamander mussel and other mussel species were present in the river's slow waters and silty substrates. Our scientists found 13 freshwater mussel species in the Ohio River, which is considered promising given the industrialized pollution a century ago harmed aguatic life in the river. Funding from a PA Wildlife Grant and Wild Resource Conservation Program supported this research.



World Heritage Achieved Heritage List.

It took more than 20 years of planning and preparation for this international honor that substantiates Frank Lloyd Wright as the most significant American architect of the 20th century. Fallingwater was inscribed to the list on July 10, 2019, along with seven other Wrightdesigned buildings from across the country as part of a serial nomination.

"This irrefutable World Heritage designation forever acknowledges Wright's profound influence and decades-long contribution to modern architecture," says Fallingwater Director and WPC Vice President Justin Gunther.

Wright designed Fallingwater for the Kaufmanns, a family that longed for and loved nature, who wanted their weekend home intertwined with the surrounding landscape of trees and stream.

Director Emerita of Fallingwater Lynda Waggoner, who spent decades spearheading a team of Wright experts for the World Heritage effort on behalf of the Frank Llovd Wright Building Conservancy, says without Wright our architecture today would be very different.

"These eight buildings sum up modern architecture in their open plans, abstraction of form, use of new technology, connection to nature and ability to adapt to modern living," she adds.

Now that World Heritage is achieved. preserving Fallingwater is more critical than ever. "Fallingwater is an irreplaceable landmark for all of humanity to learn from and experience, and our commitment to safeguard it for future generations is stronger now than ever," Justin adds.

Opportunity, Creativity

Fallingwater is now on the UNESCO World

New Residency Programs Offer More

When Monmade, a project of Pittsburgh's Craft

Business Accelerator at Bridgeway Capital, needed a partner to sell artisans' products, the journey led them to Fallingwater.

"Designing products for Fallingwater offered an excellent opportunity for artists to have fun with design, create innovative designs and sell their products, with the added benefit

of the artists experiencing and learning from the expert staff at Fallingwater," says Katie Johnson, CBA's business support and impact specialist.

Fallingwater partnered with Monmade to create the Fallingwater + Monmade Design Residency (FMDR). In April. participants had full access to Fallingwater's

grounds and collections. Through their immersion, they gained inspiration to create jewelry, porcelain and stone bowls, fine art prints, fashion accessories and more.

"Fostering business development and creativity in our region's Mon Valley communities was an added benefit of this unique residency," says Fallingwater Curator of Education Ashlev Andrvkovitch. "It's our hope that inspiration, creativity and discovery become lifelong pursuits for these and all of our residency participants."

The products created by participants are still available for sale through the Fallingwater Museum Store, at FallingwaterMuseumStore.org. Search for the Monmade items within the FMDR Collection.

Led by teaching artist Ivan Chow, another new residency program in 2019 provided an opportunity for students entering grades 10 through 12 to examine and explore Wright's ideas and philosophy. This drawing intensive residency launched with strong interest, as a total of more than 50 students participated in the sessions offered in the spring and fall.

> "Mr. Chow has been an artist and architect for more than 30 years; he practiced the art of travel sketching throughout the world and we're honored to have him impart his knowledge to us and our participants," Ashley says. This new residency is also being offered in 2020 through a hands-on, virtual experience.

Both residencies are part of the Fallingwater Institute, which provides various immersive programs throughout the year that are available to students, designers, artists and educators to foster collaborative thinking and challenge current thoughts, ideals and ideas related to design and architecture.

In 2019, more than 300 people experienced Fallingwater through our residency opportunities.

Protecting the Gateway to Fallingwater

The forested approach to Fallingwater will remain intact now that four acres, which include more than 600 feet of frontage along Route 381 in Stewart Township, were protected last April. The property is entirely forested and has been added to the 5,119-acre Bear Run Nature Reserve.

Although it's small in acreage, the property will have a big impact on safeguarding the scenic views and forested areas along this stretch of the Laurel Highlands Scenic Byway, which is characterized by rolling hillsides, forests, picturesque farmlands and, of course, Fallingwater.



Fallingwater + Monmade Design Residency participants representing Jowdy Studio, Collarbone Jewelry and Otto Fin, along with Katie Johnson from Bridgeway Capital, are photographed at the Fallingwater Museum Store standing in front of their creations inspired by their immersive experience at Fallingwater.

COMMUNITY **GARDENS & GREENSPACE**



More than 11,000 garden volunteers, 19 new garden stewards and nearly 850 community forestry volunteers helped continue to beautify communities by planting and caring for flower gardens and trees throughout the region in 2019. With the support of local foundations and private donors, it is now easier for people with disabilities and physical limitations to participate in activities including school grounds greening projects, installing a new community garden and planting thousands of trees.

Enhancing the Gardening Experience for Everyone

The Conservancy expanded opportunities in 2019 to make it easier for people with disabilities or other physical limitations to participate in gardening. In September, students from The Day School at The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh helped open Pittsburgh's second

ADA-accessible community flower garden at an existing WPC community flower garden site in the city's Homewood neighborhood at Frankstown Road and Bennett Street.

Students placed mums within five wheelchair-accessible raised flower beds connected by crushed limestone rock pathways. As part of their outdoor classroom and nature curriculum, students visit regularly to help volunteers from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority plant and care for native perennials and annual flowers.

Funded by the Allegheny Regional Asset District, the ADAaccessible garden offers people of all ages with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy gardening, according to Wendy Pardee, CEO of The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh. "We strongly believe in

an accessible community. We applaud the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy for being intentional in creating a world that is just a little bit bigger for everyone."

At Pittsburgh Pioneer Education Center in the city's Brookline neighborhood, the Conservancy made enhancements to a sensory garden by planting a variety of native perennials and purchasing an indoor growing station, an adaptive watering hose and a cedar storage shed, all thanks to a grant from Pennsylvania American Water. The garden, built with the help of the Conservancy in 2010, utilizes plants and various structures and features that stimulate children with physical, mental and multiple disabilities through touch, scent, sound, color and texture.

The RAD and PA American Water grants also enabled WPC to purchase specialty gardening tools to help make gardening easier for volunteers with disabilities and physical limitations at our 132 community gardens in 20 counties across the region.

People in Wilkinsburg, Allegheny County, are enjoying a beautiful flower garden on Ardmore Boulevard where there was once just a concrete traffic median. During the spring of 2019, 40 volunteers, including community volunteers from Princeton Park Block Club and from financial sponsors Guardian Storage, WTAE-TV and Security Systems of America, helped us plant the colorful and welcoming garden, which features native, pollinator-friendly perennials and annuals.

Restoring the Region's Tree Canopy

Trees provide numerous benefits including cleaner air, higher property values and water conservation, to name just a few. Through several tree-planting efforts including TreeVitalize Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh

Growing a New Community Garden

Redbud Project, Conservancy staff and volunteers planted 1,557 trees and 310 shrubs in 2019.

In Erie, 50 volunteers from Gannon University and the Rotary Club of Erie helped to plant 45 trees along downtown streets. This was the Gannon students' fifth year of volunteering during their spring Day of Giving. Since 2013, the Conservancy has been working with the Erie Community Foundation. Erie Downtown Partnership, the City of Erie and other community groups and volunteers to restore the urban tree canopy. The 2019 planting brought the total number of Conservancy-planted trees in Erie to 280.

To help improve the quality of life and the environment in the Pittsburgh region, TreeVitalize Pittsburgh planted 667 trees in 31 low-tree canopy Pittsburgh neighborhoods including Homewood, South Side Flats and downtown Pittsburgh and multiple Allegheny County communities, including the City of Clairton, Harrison Township and Verona Borough. We accomplished this with the help of our TreeVitalize Pittsburgh partners Allegheny County Parks, the City of Pittsburgh, Tree Pittsburgh and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. As of 2019, staff and volunteers have planted more than 33,000 trees through TreeVitalize Pittsburgh!

Pittsburgh's riverfronts got an extra splash of color in 2019 with the addition of 890 trees and 310 shrubs as part of the Pittsburgh Redbud Project, bringing the number of trees planted through the project to more than 3,400. Residents and visitors to the city will enjoy seeing and smelling the vibrant spring blooms from trees planted last spring and fall along River Avenue, on Allegheny Landing and at PNC Park, near Station Square and The Glasshouse apartments on the Monongahela River, and along North Shore Riverfront Park and near Carnegie Science Center.

Establishing a Vital Community Forestry Model

The Conservancy conducts street- and park-tree inventories in partnership with communities, assessing tree location, species, size, condition and safety status. Using the information collected, we provide recommendations for implementing tree plantings or green infrastructure projects. In Clairton and Harrison, stakeholders and residents wanted to improve their urban forests. We completed an inventory, assessed vacant sites that could be planted with new trees and provided ideas for planting sites. Our tree suggestions resulted in 25 trees being planted in Clairton and 64 in Harrison in 2019.

"I wholeheartedly believe trees have the power to transform communities and lives," says Charles Dizard, councilman for Harrison. As of 2019, volunteers had planted nearly 200 trees there through TreeVitalize Pittsburgh, beautifying parks, streets and school grounds.



A new community garden, planted and maintained with the help of community volunteers, beautified Ardmore Boulevard in Wilkinsburg, Allegheny County.

WATERSHED CONSERVATION

The Conservancy's watershed conservation team actively worked to restore the region's watersheds, improve aquatic habitats and provide paddlers with access to local streams and rivers. They searched for Eastern hellbender salamanders at 26 new sites and planted thousands of riparian trees – improving a total of 10.66 stream miles in 2019.

Improving Stream Health with Thousands of **Riparian Trees**

The Conservancy's watershed conservation staff and volunteers plant trees and shrubs, such as silver maples and elderberry bushes, to restore waterways and improve water quality. The areas where land meets waterways, called riparian zones, buffer pollutants from streams and provide wildlife habitat. Conservancy staff works with landowners who want to improve their riparian areas and stream health by planting trees and shrubs.

In 2019. Conservancy staff. conservation partners, landowners and volunteers planted 10.833 riparian trees and shrubs on 49 acres. bringing our riparian plantings to more than 55,000 trees since 2001.

We planted riparian trees in 10 counties in Western and Central Pennsylvania -Armstrong, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Greene, Indiana, Potter and Warren with the most in Potter County: 3,167 trees on 14.7 acres.

Funding from foundations, individuals and government grants make this work possible.

Protecting the Pennsylvania River of the Year

The Conservancy has done extensive land protection and watershed restoration work to benefit the Clarion River since the 1970s. In 2019, this picturesque river was named Pennsylvania River of the Year by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Organization



for Waterways and Rivers. The Conservancy partnered in a slate of yearlong River of the Year outreach and education events that reached thousands of participants.

As part of our events to help celebrate the Clarion River in 2019, we helped to improve a riparian buffer on a private property on the Clarion River near Belltown. The Conservancy planted 30 riparian trees and 70 live-stem stakes. Live-stem staking is a method of soil bioengineering where cut stems of trees are transplanted into stream banks where they take root and grow to offer stability, control erosion and enhance riparian habitat. An additional 100 live stakes were planted at another private property near Hallton.

Amphibian

We co-hosted a 24-mile paddling sojourn on the Clarion River for 34 participants and held two Clarion River cleanups in cooperation with county conservation districts, Trout Unlimited and local schools throughout the watershed. During just two days of cleanup events, 112 volunteers cleaned up 37 miles of the river.

Using eDNA to Search for Our State

To generate greater awareness of the importance of clean waterways in the commonwealth, Pennsylvania named the Eastern hellbender as the state amphibian in 2019, recognizing its importance as an indicator species for clean water. The Conservancy has monitored hellbender populations since 2007. Although not listed as an endangered species, this salamander, which can grow to be two feet long and live for 50 years, is a species of concern due to declining populations. Its presence is a great indicator of a stream's long-term health — it prefers flowing, well-oxygenated streams but it faces many threats, including habitat loss and degradation from dams and industrial pollution.

The Conservancy has traditionally used SCUBA surveys and a method of lifting and turning over rocks and logs to find this elusive critter. We continued to use a technique called eDNA (environmental deoxyribonucleic acid) as a first step to determine if hellbenders might be present in a stream. It involves collecting a water sample, filtering it and sending it to a conservation partner geneticist to test for hellbender DNA. If we get a positive result from the geneticist, we return to complete a lift and turn survey.

In 2019, we completed eDNA work on 26 new locations in the Driftwood Branch of the Sinnemahoning Creek watershed. We found two locations with low concentrations of DNA present, and we'll survey those in 2020.

Celebrating 10 Years of Improving Stream Access

Thanks to the generosity of two longtime WPC members, more people are getting on the water!

Founded in 2008 and funded by the generosity of Conservancy donors and outdoor enthusiasts Roy Weil and Mary Shaw, our Canoe Access Development Fund provides grants to watershed organizations and other community groups to develop and improve access sites for canoeists, kayakers and anglers. Conservancy staff also helps grant recipients with planning and site preparation. The first projects supported by the fund were implemented in 2009.

In 2019 we provided grants for partners to create or improve nine canoe access sites on local streams and rivers, including the Conemaugh River in Westmoreland County and the Connoquenessing Creek in Butler County, bringing the total number of access sites funded since 2009 to 76.

Barry Tuscano, longtime Conservancy member and paddling enthusiast, says, "By making river access easy, more people will be introduced to our rivers. Rivers are where people fall in love with the natural world. If you want to protect nature, get more people on the water."

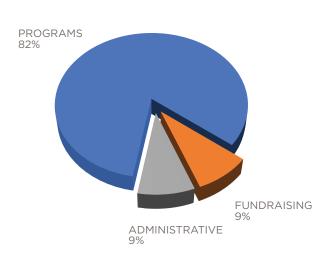


The Riverside Canoe Access site in Johnstown Cambria County, was one of nine such sites created or improved in 2019 with funding by WPC's Canoe Access **Development Fund.**

2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

OPERATING REVENUES GOVERNMENT BUSINESS 25% FOUNDATIONS FALLINGWATER ADMISSIONS 20% INDIVIDUAL 15% SALES 10% OTHER RETURN

OPERATING EXPENSES



Memberships	MILLIONS
Individual	\$3.8
Foundation	3.7
Business	0.6
Government	6.3
Earned Income	MILLIONS
Fallingwater Admissions	5.2
Sales (Gift Shop/Café)	2.6
Other	0.7
Internal Income	MILLIONS
Investment Return for Current Operations	2.8
TOTAL	\$25.7
TOTAL Programs	\$25.7 MILLIONS
	·
Programs	MILLIONS
Programs Conservation	MILLIONS \$8.3
Programs Conservation Fallingwater Community Gardens &	MILLIONS \$8.3 7.6
Programs Conservation Fallingwater Community Gardens & Greenspace Constituent Programs &	MILLIONS \$8.3 7.6 3.2

Administrative/General

Expenses

TOTAL

2.1

\$23.8

Contributions. Grants &

Momborshins

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	Redbud tree in bloom near downtown Pittsburgh	
		and the second

Annual Fund Gifts to the annual fund are essential in sustaining our daily operations. These vital contributions enable the Conservancy to carry out its mission throughout the year. You can also provide dependable income for the Conservancy and Fallingwater by making your annual gift through convenient monthly deductions via credit card or debit card from a designated financial account.

Leadership Circle and Kaufmann Society The Conservancy's Leadership Circle members, including Kaufmann Society donors whose gifts are directed for Fallingwater, have made the Conservancy's work a philanthropic priority. Members who make annual gifts of \$1,000 or more are recognized through the Leadership Circle program. The Conservancy recognizes this significant commitment by providing enhanced access to our programs, special outings and additional insights into our plans throughout the year. Become a monthly donor and make your \$1,000+ annual gift in convenient monthly deductions – a simple way to make a big difference!

Members of the Evergreen Circle have loyally supported the Conservancy for at least 15 out of the last 20 years. Some have been members for much longer — with memberships dating back to the 1950s! Their loyal and continuous support has been a crucial part of our successful work. We are deeply grateful for those who constantly support our efforts each and every year.

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy was supported by 9,435 private donors, individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations that together made cash, stock and in-kind gifts totaling \$8,211,853 in 2019. Their support is playing a significant role in advancing WPC's mission of protecting water, land and life in Western Pennsylvania.

We are extremely grateful for your support. The accomplishments included in this Annual Report are the direct result of your ongoing dedication and investment in the Conservancy. Each year we look forward to recognizing you in this publication. This year we've decreased the size of the report as part of the cost-cutting measures necessitated by the impacts of COVID-19. As a result, we deeply regret that we are not able to list individual donors this year.

The support of our annual donors, along with the generous future commitments of our Heritage Circle members, provides transformational support for the Conservancy to conserve our beautiful region now and in the future. We could not do this work without you!

How You Can Continue to Help

The Conservancy relies on the support of more than 9,000 member households and more than 11,000 volunteers to fulfill its mission to conserve water. land and life. Your continued involvement will ensure that this work continues.

Evergreen Circle

Special Gifts

The Conservancy deeply appreciates gifts of appreciated stock, real estate property, in-kind gifts and multi-year commitments in support of our programs. Please contact the Conservancy's development office at 412-586-2336 or development@paconserve.org for more information.

Take Advantage of CARES Act's Tax Benefits

In March, Congress signed into law the CARES Act, a \$2 trillion stimulus package that provided immediate relief to all economic sectors. Included in the legislation were two new benefits for individuals who want to provide much-needed support to charitable organizations: universal (above-the-line) deduction for donations up to \$300 and an increase in the charitable giving deduction cap for individuals from 60% of adjusted gross income to 100%. Visit our website for more information.

Employee Matching Gift Program

Many companies and organizations will match employee contributions, greatly increasing the impact of your gift to the Conservancy. Please contact your human resources office for further information.

To learn more about how you can help, contact Lauren Marshall, the Conservancy's donor relations coordinator, toll-free at 1-866-564-6972 (ext. 2336) or Imarshall@paconserve.org. Additional information can be found at WaterLandLife.org.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy



800 Waterfront Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15222

412-288-2777 info@paconserve.org

WaterLandLife.org

CREATE A LASTING LEGACY AT WPC

You can create a long-lasting impact in Western Pennsylvania by including the Conservancy in your estate plans. Your legacy will contribute to our financial strength and ability to conserve Western Pennsylvania's most spectacular land, water and wildlife and to preserve Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, Fallingwater. Bequests in a will or trust are one of the most common ways of making a legacy gift, and they are simple to establish.

If you would like more information or if you have already included the Conservancy or Fallingwater in your estate plans, please contact Julie Holmes, the Conservancy's director of development, at **412-586-2312** or **jholmes@paconserve.org**.