



## Welcome, Educators!

We start off 2022 with a lot of news and opportunities to benefit formal and nonformal environmental educators statewide, including updates from the DEP Environmental Education Grant Program, a grant announcement from NOAA, the latest on the Pennsylvania State Education Standards revision, the winning students in the 2022 School Radon Poster Contest, the 2022 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Report, and the more.

— Bert Myers, Director, Environmental Education and Information Center, DEP

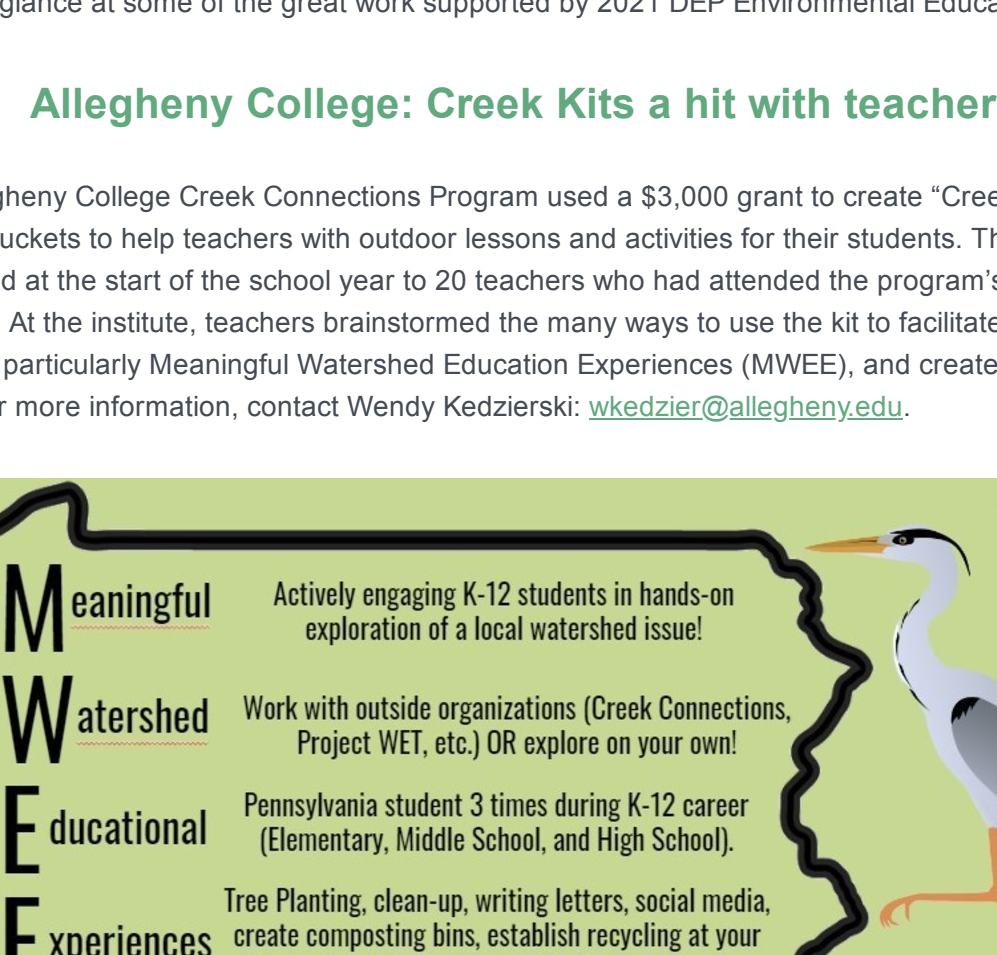
## Grants

### 2022 DEP Environmental Education Grants update

The 2022 DEP Environmental Education Grants round closed on December 10, and we're excited to review 87 project proposals, with many focused on Environmental Justice. We anticipate announcing grant awards in the spring.

### "DEP Grants 101" webinar: A wealth of information on funding sources

Learn more about the basics of applying for DEP grant funding and programs that may support projects by your school, nonprofit organization, or municipality: Watch [DEP Grants 101](#). Over 650 people attended this live webinar hosted by the DEP Communications, Grants, and Environmental Justice offices in November. Many good questions were asked and answered—maybe yours!



### Chesapeake Bay Watershed education grants available now

Approximately \$1.35 million in grant funding is available to schools through Pennsylvania's Department of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program. Grants are available for:

- **School District MWEE Programming**—Projects to help school districts deliver Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences to students or increase school districts' capacity to deliver environmental education.
- **Statewide Capacity Building**—Initiatives to build statewide or multi-state environmental literacy capacity.

Applications are due March 3, 2022.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the NOAA B-WET program, which has directly reached more than 700,000 students and 25,000 teachers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. NOAA believes that students who take part in inquiry-based, hands-on learning about their environment are better equipped to care for our ecosystem now and in the future. Find more information at [Chesapeake Bay WET Program](#).

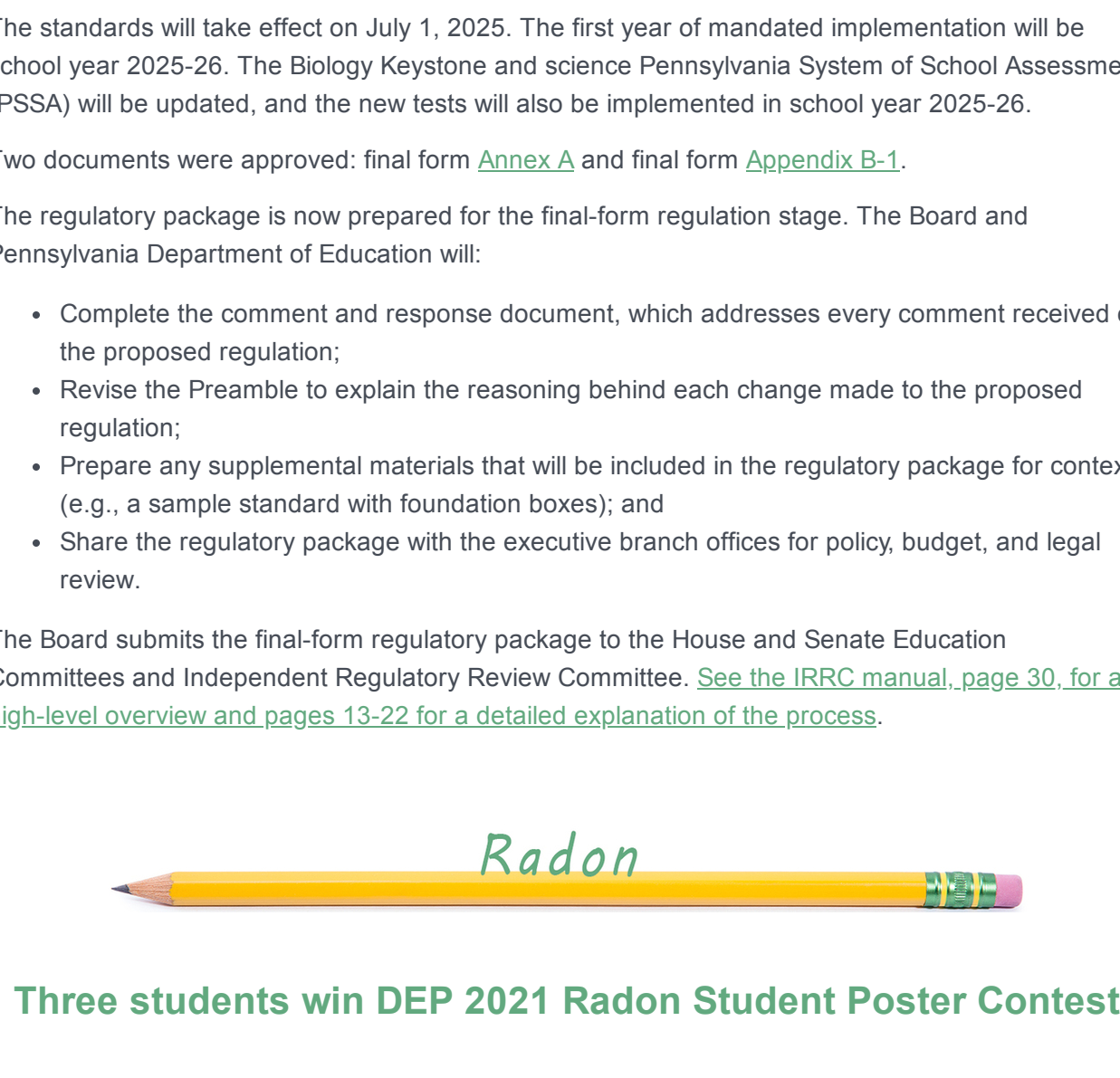
If you have any questions about the grants or want to discuss project ideas, contact Elise Trelogan: [elise.trelogan@noaa.gov](mailto:elise.trelogan@noaa.gov).

## Shout Outs

Here's a glance at some of the great work supported by 2021 DEP Environmental Education Grants.

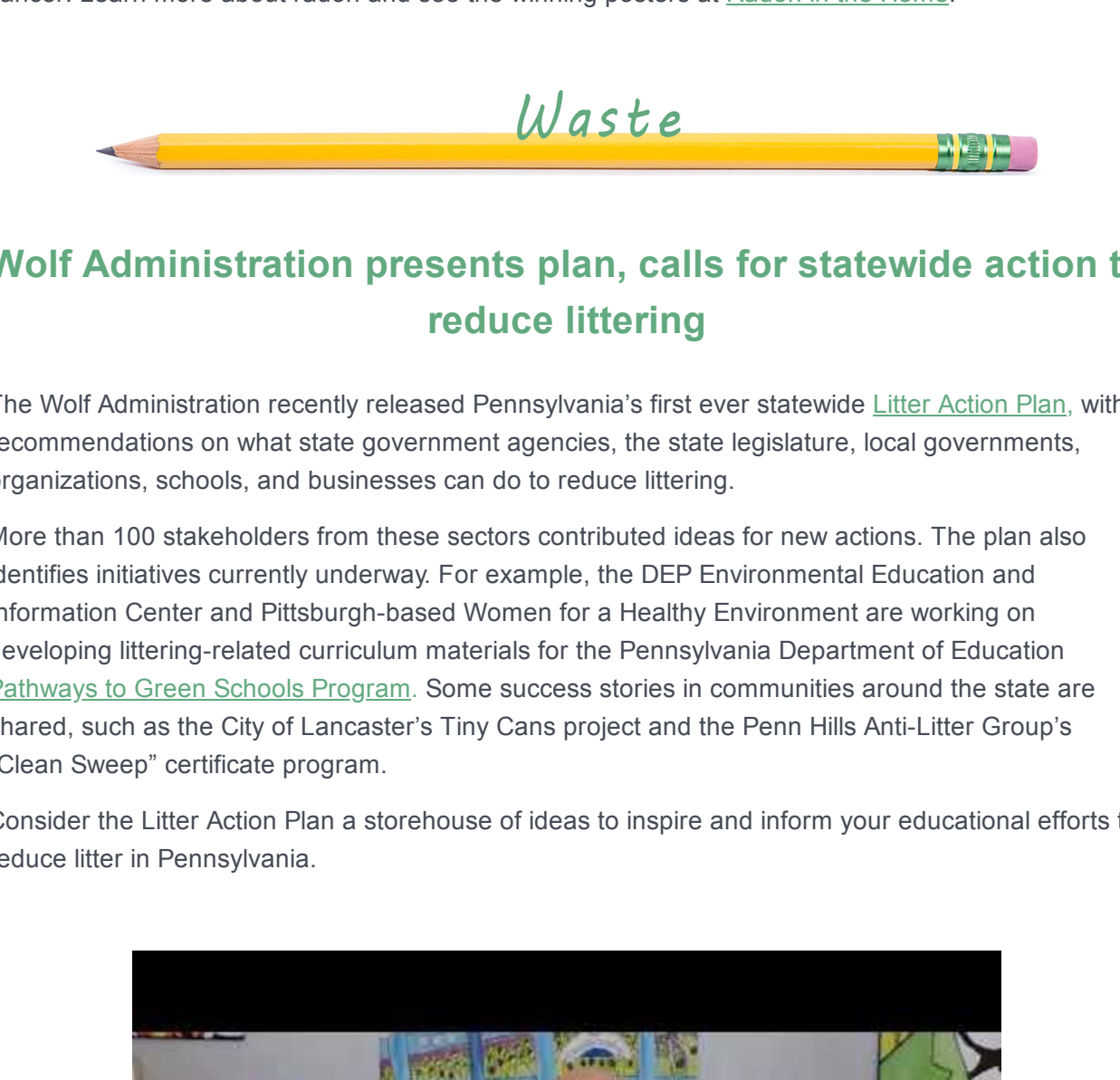
### Allegheny College: Creek Kits a hit with teachers

The Allegheny College Creek Connections Program used a \$3,000 grant to create "Creek Kits," grab-and-go buckets to help teachers with outdoor lessons and activities for their students. The kits were distributed at the start of the school year to 20 teachers who had attended the program's Summer Institute. At the institute, teachers brainstormed the many ways to use the kit to facilitate outdoor learning, particularly Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences (MWEE), and created a MWEE flyer. For more information, contact Wendy Kedzierski: [wkedzier@allegheny.edu](mailto:wkedzier@allegheny.edu).



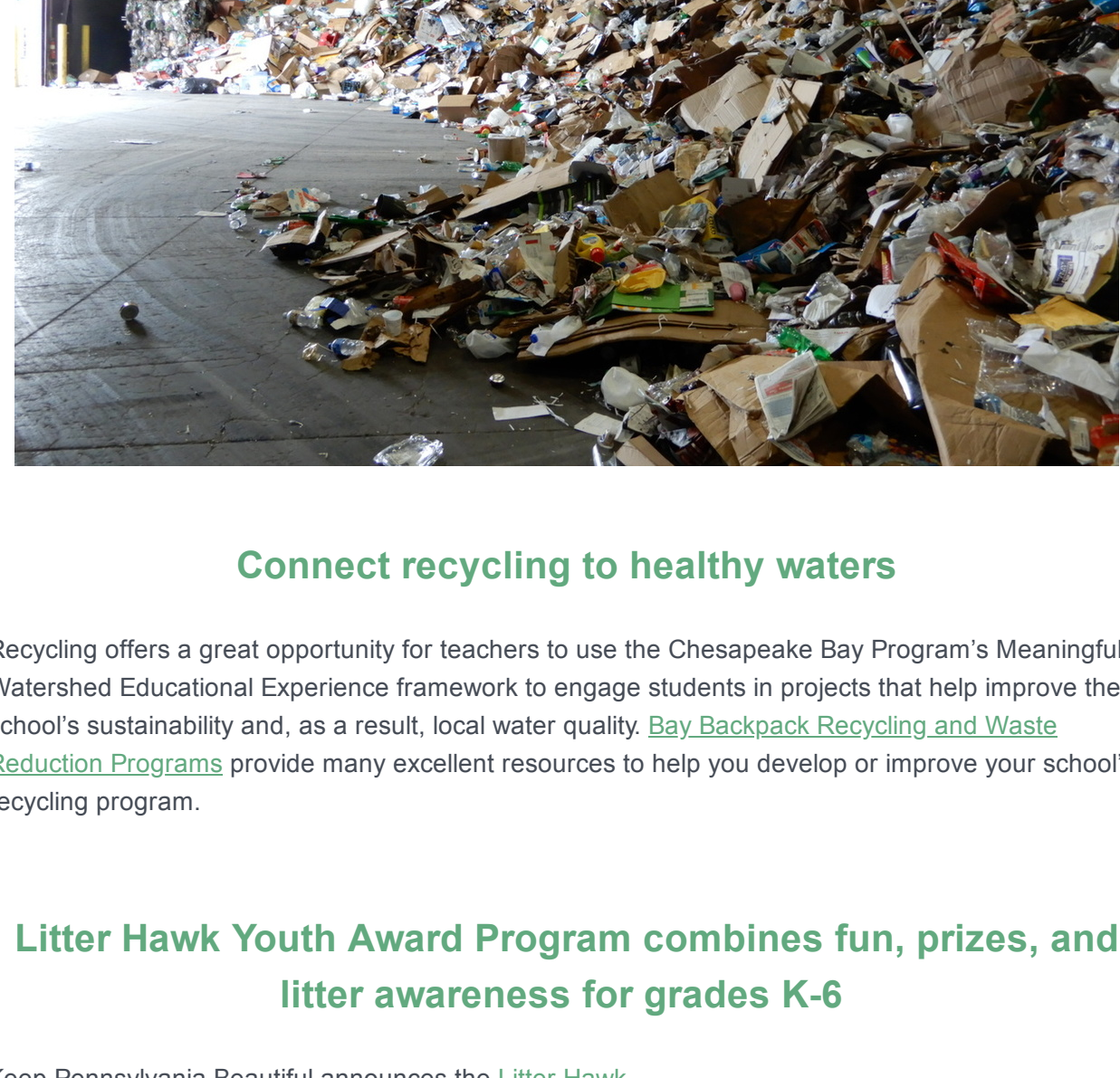
### Montgomery County Conservation District: Yes to no-till community education

The Montgomery County Conservation District is using a \$2,945 grant for its no-till community education and engagement. In November they hosted a "Lawn to Meadow" demonstration, showing how colorful meadows can benefit pollinators while increasing stormwater infiltration into the ground, reducing runoff and flooding, and reducing the need to mow, saving time and money. [Read more about the event in this DEP blog post](#). The district plans to hold more events for local farmers and home gardeners interested in learning about cover crops and native meadow plantings. For more information, contact Abigail Reiter: [areiter@montgomeryconservation.org](mailto:areiter@montgomeryconservation.org).



### Stroud Water Research Center: Taking a stream testing lab to learners in Environmental Justice areas

Stroud Water Research Center used a \$20,000 grant to create a stream studies mobile lab to engage low-income and/or minority students in Environmental Justice areas who have limited access to transportation and/or technology. The "Delivering Meaningful, Safe and Accessible Watershed Education" project will engage students in after-school programs and families at community events in southern Chester County. The mobile lab, which is solar powered, includes table space for instructor preparation, microscopes, and water quality testing equipment. The outside of the lab is designed for instruction. It even includes a data collection form that can be written on with dry erase markers!



## Education Standards

The State Board of Education voted unanimously on January 13 to approve the final-form amendments to Chapter 4: Academic Standards and Assessments. The Board approved all the recommended changes that were presented to the Chapter 4 Committee on December 1, including the Environmental Literacy and Sustainability domain standards.

The standards will take effect on July 1, 2025. The first year of mandated implementation will be school year 2025-26. The Biology Keystone and science Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) will be updated, and the new tests will also be implemented in school year 2025-26.

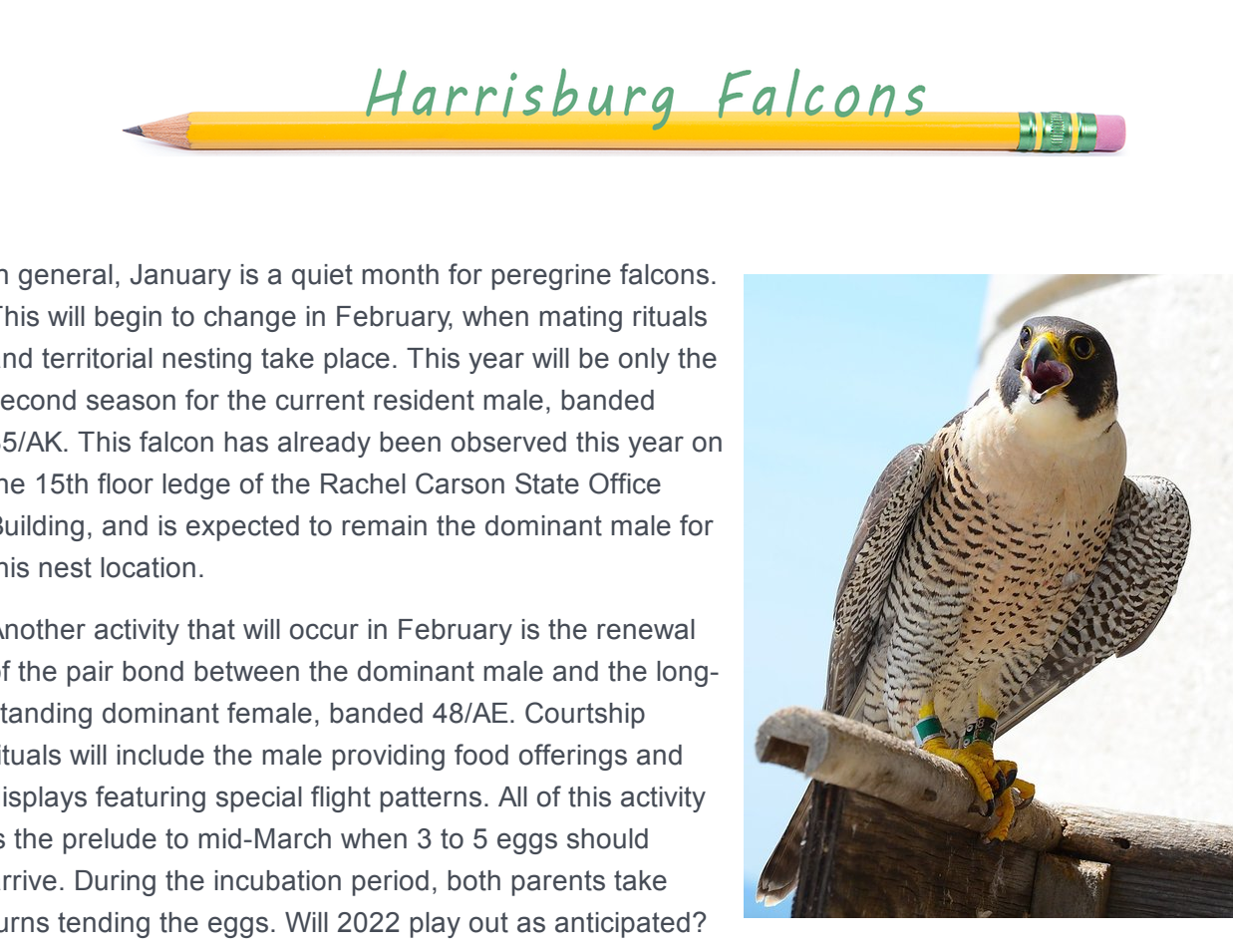
Two documents were approved: final form [Annex A](#) and final form [Appendix B-1](#).

The regulatory package is now prepared for the final-form regulation stage. The Board and Pennsylvania Department of Education will:

- Complete the comment and response document, which addresses every comment received on the proposed regulation;
- Revise the Preamble to explain the reasoning behind each change made to the proposed regulation;
- Prepare any supplemental materials that will be included in the regulatory package for context (e.g., a sample standard with foundation boxes); and
- Share the regulatory package with the executive branch offices for policy, budget, and legal review.

The Board submits the final-form regulatory package to the House and Senate Education Committees and Independent Regulatory Review Committee. [See the IRRC manual, page 30, for a high-level overview and pages 13-22 for a detailed explanation of the process.](#)

## Radon



Over 100 posters were submitted in the 2021 DEP Student Radon Poster Contest. Students were encouraged to combine science and art in an educational poster that shows the physical aspects of radon, the harmful effects of indoor radon gas, and/or the importance of testing for radon in the home.

Congratulations to three students on their prize-winning artwork:

- **First Place: Samantha Strop**, Pleasant Hills Elementary School, Allegheny County (teacher: Jennifer Kassimer)
- **Second Place: Elizabeth Baily**, Dingman Delaware Middle School, Pike County (teacher: Jessica Gregorski)
- **Third Place: Keyley Lubinsky**, Saint Clair Area School District, Schuylkill County (teacher: Alyssa Palina)

The DEP Radon Program will use their posters in public education outreach.

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in the ground from the breakdown of uranium, and can seep into buildings through cracks in the foundation. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Learn more about radon and see the winning posters at [Radon in the Home](#).

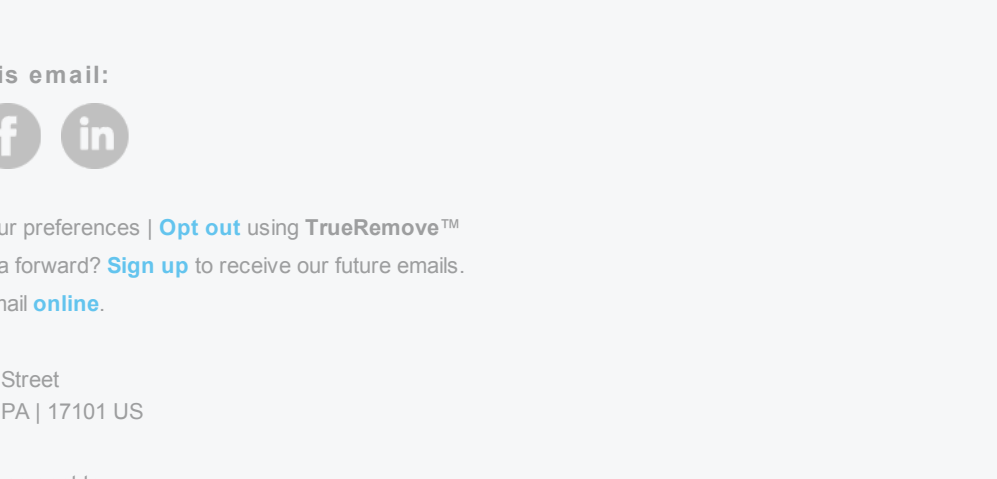
## Waste

### Wolf Administration presents plan, calls for statewide action to reduce littering

The Wolf Administration recently released Pennsylvania's first ever statewide [Litter Action Plan](#), with recommendations on what state government agencies, the state legislature, local governments, organizations, schools, and businesses can do to reduce littering.

More than 100 stakeholders from these sectors contributed ideas for new actions. The plan also identifies initiatives currently underway. For example, the DEP Environmental Education and Information Center and Pittsburgh-based Women for a Healthy Environment are working on developing littering-related curriculum materials for the Pennsylvania Department of Education [Pathways to Green Schools Program](#). Some success stories in communities around the state are shared, such as the City of Lancaster's Tiny Cans project and the Penn Hills Anti-Litter Group's "Clean Sweep" certificate program.

Consider the Litter Action Plan a storehouse of ideas to inspire and inform your educational efforts to reduce litter in Pennsylvania.



### DEP recycling booklet available

DEP's new [Guidelines for Recycling in Your Community](#) is a useful resource to help students, residents, and businesses understand how to recycle correctly. The booklet provides information to help maximize the social, environmental, and economic benefits of recycling, including locating local recycling programs and rules.



### Connect recycling to healthy waters

Recycling offers a great opportunity for teachers to use the Chesapeake Bay Program's Meaningful Watershed Education Experience framework to engage students in projects that help improve their school's sustainability and, as a result, local water quality. [Bay Backpack Recycling and Waste Reduction Programs](#) provide many excellent resources to help you develop or improve your school's recycling program.

