

## **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) conducts several conservation and partnership programs including River Conservation Grants, managing aquatic invasive species, and providing education programs.

DCNR oversees various community conservation partnership program grants. One category is [River Conservation Grants](#). These grants focus on enhancement and protection of Pennsylvania's waterways. Applications for these grants are submitted under several categories: Land Acquisition and Conservation Funding, which includes lands for the purpose of waterway conservation; Community Recreation and Conservation Planning Funding, which address water-related recreation or conservation needs; Park Rehabilitation and Development Funding, which include physical improvements that enhance water resources; State and Regional Partnerships Funding, which fund a variety of water-related projects; and Riparian Forest Buffer Funding, which supports the planting of trees and shrubs along streams statewide.

In 2022, DCNR released a grant investment of just over \$1.2 million to seven recipients throughout Pennsylvania for planting trees and income-producing species along streams to help keep nutrients and soil on the land and prevent impacts to water quality. The grants are administered through DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Program.

DCNR is also working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) on monitoring bacteria. All permitted inland beaches are regulated by DOH under [28 Pa. Code § 18.28](#) (relating to bathing beach contamination). Weekly testing for Escherichia coli (E. coli) density is required based on [USEPA 2012 Recreational Water Quality Criteria](#). The Federal Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act ([BEACH Act](#)) was signed into law on October 10, 2000 and required the EPA to develop water quality criteria for testing and monitoring recreational water issues. Pennsylvania adopted EPA's recommended criteria for E. coli which is protective of the statewide Water Contact Sports Use.

DCNR's Bureau of State Parks is also working in a task force of various state agencies to address harmful algae blooms. State parks post advisories and provide information to visitors about active HAB conditions when needed.

DCNR also has an aquatic invasive species program. This program is actively suppressing nuisance and invasive aquatic vegetation on waterbodies in several state park and state forests for recreational access and ecological purposes with expenses that totaled approximately \$100,000.

Bureau of State Parks provides [aquatic education programs](#). These programs include Watershed Education (WE) programs for schools, Watershed Education Teacher Workshops (including advanced WE topic-specific trainings), an annual WE Community Connections Forum for High School students; Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) Ambassador trainings for non-formal educators, school administrators, and classroom teachers; WE and MWEE training facilitation for Penn State Master Watershed Stewards; Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) Educator Workshops; programming on invasive plants (including service learning with aquatic invasive plant

removal); programs using water as a lens to investigate land use practices; and school programs that included water quality monitoring.

From September 2021 – May 31, 2023, the Bureau has offered six Project WET Workshops (specifically “Getting Little Feet WET for Early Learners”) for 280 educators. For the Bureau’s Watershed Education (WE) program, 209 WE programs were presented to 7,395 participants for a total of 679.73 hours. Five Watershed Education Teacher (WE) Workshops were offered (including one five-day long WE Institute, one hybrid workshop, and one advanced WE Workshop on Chemistry) offered for 653 total educators. In addition, eight MWEE + WE workshops were offered in partnership with newly trained IU MWEE Facilitators at various park sites for 142 educators.