

NATURE

PENNSYLVANIA

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Weighing in on Climate Change

The Nature Conservancy's mission is profoundly affected by climate change, the defining environmental challenge of our time. It threatens every strategy we pursue to "conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends." Its implications underscore the importance and the urgency of our work. Thanks to your support, we are using the best science to incorporate climate change into decisions about where and how we will work in Pennsylvania and around the world. Climate is a crucial lens through which we see all our work, now and in the future.

Bill Kunze

*Pennsylvania Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy*



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Disappearing Species

Safeguarding wildlife in a changing climate

For many people, the flute-like song of the wood thrush is the sound of the forest. However, our forests are threatened by development and a changing climate that is shrinking the habitat ranges of wood thrush and hundreds of other North American birds.

To help wood thrush and other birds survive and thrive, The Nature Conservancy is accelerating efforts to ensure forests are protected—and connected—to provide resilient habitat in a changing climate. This played out last spring with the announcement of a partnership with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary to safeguard forestlands at this iconic site on the Kittatinny Ridge, a globally significant bird migration superhighway.

Under the Conservancy's Working Woodlands program, a conservation easement has been secured to ensure that 2,400 acres of forest stay forever wild. The Conservancy is also crafting a management plan that brings the best in forest science to Hawk Mountain, including the potential to earn revenue for forest stewardship from the sale of carbon credits.

"This partnership helps the landscape at Hawk Mountain to be more resilient in a changing climate," says Bill Kunze, the Conservancy's executive director in Pennsylvania, "and also serves a model for how to protect forests at scale throughout eastern North America. The result will be more carbon sequestered, healthier forests and real hope that future generations will continue to hear the wood thrush's song ringing from the trees."

"The thrush alone declares the immortal wealth and vigor that is in the forest." *Henry David Thoreau*



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Energy Investment Partnerships

Reducing carbon can boost the economy

Nestled in Lancaster County, Flintrock Farms hums along thanks to long hours put in by the 3rd generation of farmers in this family-run operation. But as with many Pennsylvania farms, severe weather, a power outage or unexpectedly high utility bills can mean the difference between a good season and a bad one.

These are reasons why Flintrock Farms harnesses energy from renewable sources, specifically chicken manure and solar panels. Farther south, in York County, a local landscaping business called Lockwood Lawns thrives, in part, due to savings realized from powering equipment with solar energy instead of gasoline.

“You are seeing it around the state,” says Evan Endres, The Nature Conservancy’s climate and energy policy manager in Pennsylvania. “Businesses—from large family farms to local landscapers and even churches—are transitioning to clean energy because it is good for the economy and good for nature.”

According to Endres, the Conservancy wants to help grow the number of businesses pursuing clean energy alternatives across the Commonwealth, which ranks third in the nation for the emission of heat trapping greenhouse gases. One approach involves making home and business energy loans as common as car loans. The Conservancy is working with partners to achieve this in Pennsylvania through Energy Investment Partnerships, innovative financing mechanisms designed to stimulate and facilitate investment in clean energy through public-private partnerships.

“Most Pennsylvanians think clean energy and energy efficiency are good things,” adds Endres, “and they want more of it, for a variety of reasons aside from benefitting nature.”

Read more stories about the surprising places you find clean energy in Pennsylvania at www.advancingcleanenergypa.com.

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Central Appalachians

Securing a diverse and resilient landscape.

For almost a decade, six state chapters comprising The Nature Conservancy’s Central Appalachian program—Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee—have worked to conserve a network of connected forest and freshwater habitats that, together, are capable of adapting to a changing climate.

“Interestingly, recent updates to the science behind climate resilience and adaptation challenges us to think even more broadly,” says Keith Fisher, the Conservancy’s director of conservation programs in Pennsylvania. “Since species move and don’t recognize political boundaries, we need to conserve and connect habitats extending from the southern coastal plain through the entire Appalachian mountain chain to the Canadian Maritimes.”

Front and center in these efforts is Pennsylvania where, according to Fisher, success hinges on conserving forested ridges that extend from Maryland to New York.

“Pennsylvania’s location, nestled between the central and northern Appalachian mountains, sets the stage for success,” adds Fisher. “We truly do live in the Keystone State.”



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