

# NATURE

**PENNSYLVANIA**

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Cumberland Forest Stream © Byron Jorjorian

## Huge Conservation Win

This past spring, our colleagues in Kentucky and Tennessee finalized the acquisition of 100,000 acres located in the Central Appalachian Mountains—one of the most diverse deciduous forests on earth and a critical stronghold in the face of a changing climate. While working at this scale is not unprecedented for The Nature Conservancy, the transaction required an innovative approach to protecting critical habitat while inspiring nature-based economic opportunities that will benefit one of the most economically depressed regions in the nation. On the heels of this success, we are working harder than ever to pursue similar opportunities in Pennsylvania to safeguard more of this globally significant landscape and the local communities it supports.

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Cumberland Forest © Byron Jorjorian

## Appalachian Forests

Pennsylvania is a keystone for conserving a global treasure

The Appalachians, our nation's oldest mountain chain (at 480 million years), stretch from Newfoundland to Alabama. Its intact forested ridges spread across Pennsylvania and serve as a connector for wildlife migrating between the central and northern portions of these mountains. The Nature Conservancy focuses on three primary areas within the state.

- The rugged **Allegheny Front** extends from near Lock Haven through Maryland and into eastern West Virginia. This region's geology, topography and large, connected forestlands provide the ideal setting and space for nature to adapt to and survive expected impacts of a changing climate.
- In north-central Pennsylvania, the Allegheny Front meets with more than 2 million acres of protected forestland, including our state's only national forest, in a region known as **Pennsylvania Wilds**. This portion of the state boasts some of the darkest night skies in the nation and the largest elk herd in the Northeast. In the heart of this natural paradise, TNC works with partners, including at our 3,000-acre West Branch Forest preserve, to conserve and sustainably manage healthy and productive forests.
- Extending from Maryland to New York, the **Kittatinny Ridge** curves like a spine through Pennsylvania for 185 miles to create a refuge and corridor for migrating songbirds, hawks, eagles, bears and even plants. To safeguard this mostly intact wildlife superhighway, TNC is working with landowners and partners, over the next ten years, to protect 25,000 acres of the most critical, connected lands on and next to the ridge.



Allegheny Front Forest © Kent Mason

# Saving the Appalachians

## Healthy forests safeguard water, wildlife and ways of life

Whether along the Allegheny Front, the Pennsylvania Wilds or the Kittatinny Ridge, The Nature Conservancy works with a variety of partners to improve and maintain forests around the state. Current conservation tools include removing competing invasive vegetation, conducting controlled burns in targeted areas, and planting native trees and vegetation to restore habitat. The healthy forests that result from these practices provide abundant wildlife habitat, support local economies and communities, filter air and water, and store carbon.

### “Protecting Pennsylvania forests directly benefits the Appalachians.”

*Keith Fisher, TNC’s director of conservation programs in Pennsylvania*

In Pennsylvania, TNC recently participated in a conservation planning initiative aimed at coordinating efforts across multiple states to ensure the work being done in Pennsylvania supports and builds on efforts across the region.

“It is like building a bridge starting from both sides of the river,” says Keith Fisher, TNC’s director of conservation programs in Pennsylvania. “You have to make sure the two ends meet in the middle.”

Fisher says TNC and its partners intend to conserve 100,000 acres or more, over the next decade, along the Kittatinny Ridge, the Allegheny Front and in the Pennsylvania Wilds. This means incorporating innovative approaches to the current conservation toolbox and working with new partners and willing landowners to safeguard healthy, productive forests, located throughout the state, that benefit the local communities who depend on them.

## NATURE PENNSYLVANIA

### Marking a Milestone

Bud Cook, The Nature Conservancy’s Northeast Pennsylvania Program Director, celebrates 40 years of advancing TNC’s mission in the Keystone State. Since joining the organization as the Pennsylvania Executive Director in 1979, Bud has envisioned, pursued and executed conservation opportunities capable of enduring for generations. In 1998, he initiated the Monroe County Citizens for Open Space to spearhead a campaign



Bud Cook © TNC

that generated \$25 million, and then leveraged an additional \$50 million in matching funds for land protection. After that, Bud tapped into this experience to mentor partners and colleagues who went on to raise more than \$100 million for open space preservation in Pike, Northampton and Lehigh counties, and in Stroud Township. He also succeeded in transforming an old hay barn into the vibrant Hauser Nature Center in Long Pond, and a former golf course into the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge. He is loved and respected by conservation colleagues in Pennsylvania and beyond. Congratulations, Bud!

**CORRECTION:** The Spring issue incorrectly implied that Mari-Beth DeLucia represents the United States in her role as an American eel conservation expert on the IUCN Eel Specialist Group.