

Activity 1: DCNR Mission Statement

The legislation that created DCNR in 1995, outlined the following mission:

“The primary mission of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is to maintain, improve and preserve state parks; to manage state forest lands to assure their long-term health, sustainability and economic use; to provide information on Pennsylvania’s ecological and geologic resources; and to administer grant and technical assistance programs that will benefit rivers conservation, trails and greenways, local recreation, regional heritage conservation and environmental education programs across Pennsylvania.”

DCNR’s current mission states: “We conserve and sustain Pennsylvania’s natural resources for present and future generations’ use and enjoyment.”

The core mission remains a cornerstone of DCNR’s services. The DCNR Action Plan lays out the future of the agency, one in which DCNR is viewed as a leading steward and advocate for the natural resources of the state, an expansion of the mandated mission.

Improve Stewardship of State Parks and Forests: In order to sustain the many uses of lands for generations, DCNR encourages the best science, research and technology to guide management of the lands. DCNR supports economic development through wise use of natural resources and increased tourism. DCNR is dedicated to the acquisition of lands and conservation easements to protect ecologically valuable areas.

Promote Statewide Land Conservation: DCNR owns only a small percentage of land and water. DCNR helps communities manage growth, protect special lands and reduce the loss of open space through education, grants and land easements. DCNR will help landowners understand the conservation values of their properties and protect forests on private lands.

Build and Maintain Sustainable and Attractive Communities: Using financial and technical assistance, DCNR helps foster regional and county-level planning that conserves natural and heritage resources and promotes recreation. DCNR targets assistance to projects that invest in older communities, build green infrastructure and greenway connections.

Create Outdoor Experiences for Citizens and Visitors: DCNR creates recreational connections with the outdoors by improving visitor experiences and increasing awareness of what is available. DCNR expands and targets educational messages to help people make lifestyle decisions to protect natural resources.

Activity 1: Government Agency Worksheet

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is charged with managing 2.4 million acres which includes 117 state parks and 2.1 million acres of state forest land. DCNR provides information on the state's ecological and geologic resources and establishes community conservation partnerships. The department provides technical assistance and funding for private forest management, urban forestry initiatives, river conservation and building sustainable communities by supporting trails, greenways, local parks, outdoor recreation, and natural areas. DCNR is responsible for managing the state forests, the largest publicly owned habitat for plants and animals and supporting private forest ownership. DCNR is the coordinating agency for protecting biodiversity. DCNR provides healthy outdoor recreational experiences and interpretive programming.

Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and the **Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)** are independent state agencies funded largely by sports license sales and federal excise taxes. The PGC is responsible for Pennsylvania's wild birds and mammals, managing 1.4 million acres and coordinating public access programs which avail 4.5 million acres of private property to public hunting and trapping. The PFBC protects and conserves the aquatic resources and provides fishing and boating opportunities. PFBC manages fish, reptiles, amphibians and aquatic insects. Both agencies establish laws and regulations, improve habitats and educate the public. The **Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission** manages state historic sites and associated land resources. They promote protection and preservation of architectural and archaeological resources of the state and its communities

The **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** is the state agency largely responsible for administering environmental laws and regulations which impact local and state decisions. DEP issues permits which impact community growth and development including permits for sewage treatment and water supply facilities. DEP responsibilities include reducing air pollution, protecting drinking water, protecting water quality, regulating wetlands, waste management, recycling, coordinating the state energy initiatives, providing mining regulations and coordinating related funding and grants.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is responsible for highway plans and mass transit. The Pennsylvania highway system includes 120,298 miles of public roads, of which 43,634 miles are state-owned and 76,664 miles are owned by other public entities such as counties and municipalities. PennDOT is directly responsible for the development and maintenance of 39,906 miles of state public roads. Other agencies, such as DCNR, are responsible for 3,199 miles of state roads. PennDOT channels funds for county and municipal roads and establishes standards for public roads. Public involvement is important.

Federal Lands in Pennsylvania: The U.S. Department of Agriculture— **U.S. Forest Service** manages 200 million acres of national forests and grasslands throughout the U.S., of which the Allegheny National Forest consists of 23,100 acres in northwestern Pennsylvania. The **U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)** manages 500 million acres of America's public lands (1/5th of the U.S.) under a variety of agencies including the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** which in Pennsylvania is responsible for the Erie NWR (8,777 acres), John Heinz NWR at Tinicum (932 acres) and the Cherry Valley NWR. The DOI **National Park Service** manages 29 sites in Pennsylvania including the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Valley Forge and Johnstown Flood National Memorial.

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Governor's Center for Local Government Services serves as a resource for local government officials, developers and citizens interested in community planning - providing valuable tools for economic development and building strong communities. They provide funding for planning and technical assistance and access to numerous planning publications. **PA Department of Agriculture** administers several programs for agricultural preservation and best management practices. **County Conservation Districts**, each led by a volunteer board of directors, studies county natural resource issues and makes decisions which enhance and protect their communities. They address issues dealing with erosion, sediment control and floodplain monitoring.