

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.