



Summer Report

Plan to support healthy farms released

Healthy farms are good for our environment

On the heels of the growing “Farm to Table” movement, PennEnvironment released its newest study outlining the benefits of sustainable agriculture—for the environment, our economy and public health—as well as a blueprint for state policies that will improve our food system and environment.

Pennsylvanians want more healthy, locally grown food that is produced in ways that reflect our values, including protecting the environment.

“Promoting sustainable agriculture is a triple win. It benefits Pennsylvania’s economy and family farmers; it helps protect our environment; and it’s better for our health,” said Mary Kate Ranii, Western Pennsylvania field organizer for PennEnvironment.

PennEnvironment’s report, “Healthy Farms, Healthy Environment,” outlines these benefits. Studies found that organic farmland absorbs as much as 20 percent more water than conventional farmland, while reducing farm runoff and nutrient pollution. These studies also show that some organic crops can be grown using 30 percent less energy than if grown conventionally.

A call to action

PennEnvironment is calling on state officials to renew funding for and expand successful sustainable agriculture programs that have expired, including the Farmers’ Market Development Act,



USDA/Creative Commons

Photo:

▲ Local farmer harvesting greens in Lancaster County

the Farm to School Act, and the Paths to Organic program. These programs promote farmers’ markets, connect local, healthy farms with Pennsylvania schools, and help conventional farmers convert to organic farming.

The report also identifies successful programs in other states, including Vermont’s Farm to Plate Initiative, which is

helping to advance sustainable agriculture, and Illinois’s policies to purchase local food for state agencies.

“Pennsylvania can easily produce more sustainable food,” said Ranii. “But only if our elected officials in Harrisburg bring back critical programs and take cues from successful strategies being implemented in other states.”



Staff

more online

Visit our website to help win back programs that support healthy farms in Pennsylvania at: www.PennEnvironment.org.

◀ PennEnvironment’s Mary Kate Ranii (left) and volunteer Liz Rosenbaum (right) talk with residents about the benefits of sustainable farming



To our members

Summertime is when we get outdoors and enjoy all of Pennsylvania's great natural places. From Pittsburgh's Three Rivers to Gettysburg in central Pennsylvania to Valley Forge in the Delaware Valley—the commonwealth is blessed with many of America's incredible outdoor treasures.

That's why this summer, PennEnvironment's hard-working door-to-door canvassers will be out there working to protect the places that make Pennsylvania great.

We know that Pennsylvanians from every walk of life love our awe-inspiring outdoors, so I hope that if one of our staff members comes to your home during our summer membership drive, you'll support their efforts and renew your membership with PennEnvironment. With your help, we can keep protecting the state's great natural heritage—now, for our children, and for future generations of Pennsylvanians to enjoy.

Thanks for all your support.

David Masur
Director

Toward a greener future

PennEnvironment and PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to:
PlannedGiving@PennEnvironment.org.

Photo: USGS

Recent action

Green building proposal passes state House

PennEnvironment-backed legislation to promote cleaner, greener buildings passed the Pennsylvania state House earlier this year, with broad bipartisan support.

Buildings represent one of our largest energy users, leading to more air and global warming pollution than any other source nationwide. All told, 40 percent of our nation's energy goes to heating, lighting, cooling and powering our buildings. This energy accounts for about 10 percent of our planet's global warming pollution, loading the dice for more extreme weather events like Superstorm Sandy last fall.

That's why PennEnvironment applauded the passage of House Bill 34 (sponsored by Rep. Kate Harper of Montgomery County). If signed into law, this bill would require state-funded buildings to meet greater energy conservation standards. This would cut energy costs while promoting green building technologies throughout Pennsylvania, benefiting our economy and environment along the way.

Working to restore Pittsburgh's Three Rivers

From Pittsburgh's Three Rivers to the smaller streams in our backyards, Pennsylvania's waterways are part of what make living in the commonwealth so great.

Unfortunately, nearly half the streams that crisscross our state—nearly 45,000 miles in total—don't have the protections they need and deserve, due to loopholes in the federal Clean Water Act. Polluters are taking advantage of these loopholes, compounding the problem. Already 15,000 miles of Pennsylvania's streams are too polluted for fishing and swimming.

PennEnvironment is building support from residents in Pittsburgh and across the state. Together, we can demonstrate the public support President Obama needs to close these loopholes, and protect all of our rivers and streams from harmful pollution.



▲ Pittsburgh's Three Rivers

100,000 people. One voice. Our environment first.

In the last few years, gas drilling has spread at an alarming rate across Pennsylvania, leaving a path of poisoned drinking water, spills, accidents, blowouts and destroyed forests in its wake.

With growing public concern, PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center launched a campaign to collect 100,000 signatures for a moratorium on fracking until it is guaranteed safe for our health and environment.

A moratorium is needed now more than ever. The gas drilling industry and their political allies in Harrisburg are working day in and day out to weaken safeguards for our health and environment. They want to sell off some of our most beautiful state forests to the highest bidder; and billions of dollars in corporate welfare is being given to an industry that is posting record profits.

While we can't match these industries dollar-for-dollar, with growing public support and scrutiny, PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center knew it could match them vote-for-vote.

Gaining momentum against drilling

Not surprisingly, the response to the campaign was overwhelming. Petition-signers crossed party, age, and community lines: Democrats, Republicans, Independents; urban, suburban and rural; young and old from each county in the state signed.

Pennsylvanians from all walks of life clamored to sign the petition. Volunteers went door-to-door in their neighborhoods. They brought copies of the moratorium petition with them to their local farmers' markets, offices, coffee shops, and places of worship.

Partners in the health and environmental community, including 350.org, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and others helped make the effort possible. Local organizations like Berks Gas Truth, Marcel-

lus Outreach Butler, and others gathered signatures in their communities. And it paid off in dividends. We hit the 100,000 mark right before Earth Day 2013.

One simple message

On April 30, more than 100 supporters gathered at our news conference to announce the 100,000 strong against fracking. Then we delivered the simple request, "We must put Pennsylvanians' health and our environment first. Stop fracking now."

Farmers, religious leaders, community members, and others spoke passionately about the threat posed by gas drilling and the need for a moratorium. And then, boxes in hand, the group marched to the governor's office in the Capitol to deliver these 100,000 comments.

The fight doesn't stop here. In the coming months, PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center will release a new report highlighting the continued environmental violations by the gas drilling industry. We'll organize volunteers on the ground to pressure local legislators to publicly support a moratorium. And we'll continue to make sure that there is an informed citizenry for this crucial public debate about fracking.



staff in action

PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center supporters and staff brought the facts to Gov. Tom Corbett and asked them to keep Pennsylvania safe from gas drilling.

(Above) PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center's Erika Staaf delivered more than 100,000 petitions to the governor.

Craig Christopher O'Connor, Jr.



Dozens hike for Loyalsock State Forest

Pennsylvanians who enjoy our state forest system bristled when they learned that Gov. Tom Corbett had been quietly negotiating with a Texas-based gas company, Anadarko, to access pristine tracts of Loyalsock State Forest for gas drilling.

Anadarko's environmental track record is already dismal. The company has drilled close to 300 wells in Pennsylvania, and a 2012 study by PennEnvironment showed that Anadarko has been cited for more than 150 environmental violations since 2008.

That's why PennEnvironment invited concerned citizens from all corners of the state to partake in a symbolic 13-mile trek from Loyalsock State Forest to downtown Williamsport to the local state senator's district office.

Dozens of Pennsylvanians joined the effort and hiked 13 miles to defend Loyalsock State Forest from pending gas drilling proposals.

The journey ended at Sen. Gene Yaw's office, who chairs the Senate's environmental committee. Citizens delivered more than 10,000 signatures calling for a legislative hearing and for the senator to help defend Loyalsock from further gas drilling.

Most who joined us had never met before, but were called to action to defend this beloved state forest, known for its beautiful waterfalls and breathtaking vistas.

(Top) PennEnvironment's David Masur (left) and activists hiked from Loyalsock State Forest to Sen. Yaw's office.

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PennEnvironment

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind PennEnvironment. We focus exclusively on protecting Pennsylvania's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Protecting Pennsylvania's parks

This summer, PennEnvironment launched a massive campaign to protect Pennsylvania's greatest places—from Valley Forge, Gettysburg and our portion of the Appalachian Trail, to Pennsylvania's awe-inspiring state parks like Ohiopyle and Ricketts Glen. These are the places where families hike, camp, fish, and teach their kids about our state's history.

Unfortunately, the most beautiful parts of Pennsylvania face a barrage of threats from encroaching overdevelopment, ongoing pollution, and Marcellus Shale drilling.

And now Congress is on the verge of decimating the nation's most successful program that protects our parks and other open spaces—the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

So PennEnvironment is taking to the streets this summer to educate more than 100,000 Pennsylvanians about the threats to this critical program. For 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund saved the places that make Pennsylvania—and the nation—great. Now we must save the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

our parks need our help

◀ For more than 50 years, our greatest outdoor places like Valley Forge have been protected by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We must do all we can to save this program's resources.

Chris Potako/Creative Commons

