

Promote Health and Service During PA Healthy Lands Week

Pennsylvanian's have an opportunity to join a movement for sustainable cultural, natural, and recreational resources by participating in Healthy Lands Week

CAMP HILL, PA, USA, August 7, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Pennsylvanian's have an opportunity to join a movement for sustainable cultural, natural, and recreational resources by participating in the annual [Healthy Lands Week](#). Pennsylvania's parks, forests, and other greenspace not only improve people's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, they tell the stories of the places many call home.



PPFF volunteers help plants, shrubs, and flowers

What is PA Healthy Lands Week?

Born out of the [State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) (SCORP), Healthy Lands Week launched in 2022 with 24 events across Pennsylvania. SCORP – a plan for the people, by the

people – was developed by gathering input on Pennsylvanians' outdoor recreation needs and wants through surveys and conversations with recreation providers, outdoor enthusiasts, the state's general population, and underserved populations. Additionally, a 40-member task force guided the work based on the data received.

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Marci Mowery

One priority within SCORP was meeting the needs of Pennsylvania's diverse recreational users while ensuring

the protection of cultural and natural resources. For instance, 56 percent of survey respondents noted that public recreation areas where they live need upgrades and modernization. Building a sustainable system for outdoor recreation ensures maintenance resources, investments, and visitor use are well-balanced.

Healthy Lands Week was originally conceived as a time to focus on volunteerism, fostering the stewardship of sustainable outdoor recreational systems and protection of cultural assets. However, feedback from participants of the 2022 Healthy Lands Week encouraged the inclusion of educational and recreational programming, too.

Why Is Volunteerism Important?

Volunteerism provides many benefits to people, including skills development, networking opportunities, and stress reduction. Studies show that people who volunteer regularly have better health and live longer!

Other studies show that the benefits of social connectedness developed through volunteering cannot be overstated. Social connectedness is very closely linked to mental and emotional health. When people feel connected to the same cause or interest, they have lower levels of anxiety and depression. The [Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation](#) (PPFF) developed an infographic highlighting these and other benefits of volunteerism.

“The physical, mental, and emotional health benefits of being outdoors and donating your time in service cannot be understated,” said Marci Mowery, President of PPFF. Plenty of research shows that outdoor physical activity helps control your heart rate, decrease blood pressure, and lower stress. That is one reason why Healthy Lands Week was created.”

Organizations can help promote health, connectedness, and community service by participating in or sponsoring their own events during this year’s Healthy Lands Week, which kicks off on National Public Lands Day (September 23) and wraps up with A Walk in Penn’s Woods on October 1.



Laurel Ridge State Park volunteers help build a trail bridge



PPFF volunteers gather to clean graffiti of public land rocks

"These anchor days already exist and highlight the important role that outdoor spaces play in communities across Pennsylvania," Mowery continued. "Healthy Lands Week provides a platform through which organizations can organize events and volunteer opportunities to benefit the spaces that make these great places to live, work, and recreate."

Organizations across Pennsylvania are invited to plan for the weeklong celebration in one of many ways: organizing hikes, invasive species removal projects, virtual programs, tree plantings, trash pickups, educational and cultural events, recreation programs, and more.

How Can Organizations and People Get Involved?

As part of this weeklong celebration, its organizers – which include PPF, the PA Recreation and Parks Society (PRPS), WeConserve, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), among others – invite organizations to plan their own outdoor recreation adventures and volunteer stewardship opportunities in which the public can get involved. Registering an event at <https://healthylandswEEK.org> expands the audience of potential volunteers and increases an organization's reach. A comprehensive list of scheduled events will grow as activities are registered in the coming months and throughout Healthy Lands Week.

The Healthy Lands Week website has many resources to help plan a successful event, including logo files, sample social media posts, press release templates, and fast facts. The possibilities are limitless!

People interested in participating in events can search the listed events for something that fits their interests.

Learn more about PA Healthy Lands Week and how your municipality can get involved at <https://healthylandswEEK.org>.

Marci J. Mowery
Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation
+1 717-236-7644

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