

PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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Survey Shows 78 Percent Support More Funding For Conservation, Recreation

The [Growing Greener Coalition](#) Thursday pointed to a newly [released statewide survey](#) as clear evidence of strong public support for state funding to preserve farmland and open space, provide parks and trails and protect rivers and streams.

Overall, the survey found that more than 92 percent of the 608 Pennsylvanians surveyed think that state funds dedicated to preserving farmland and open space, providing parks and trails and protecting rivers and streams should continue to be used for these purposes.

In addition, the survey found that nearly 78 percent of respondents support increasing state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests and farms even if would cost the average household \$10 more annually. Further, these high levels of support are constant throughout every geographic region and every gender, ethnic, educational and economic demographic throughout the state.

“The results of this survey send a clear message that conservation funding is of utmost importance to the vast majority of Pennsylvanians,” said Andrew Heath, executive director of the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition. “The Coalition is pleased to find such strong public support for our mission to continue and increase dedicated funding for programs that protect our natural resources and historic treasures.”

“In a difficult economic climate, it is remarkable that support for conservation funding enjoys such strong public support at every level. This clearly demonstrates that continued and increased conservation and recreation funding is in line with what Pennsylvanians value,” said Heath.

The survey, conducted between October 1 and November 4 by the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg, showed overwhelming public support for both continuing existing dedicated state funding for conservation and recreation, as well as increasing state funding to protect land, water and wildlife.

The survey questions were commissioned by The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land.

A copy of the full survey [is available online](#).

The Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition comprises local, regional and statewide environmental, conservation and recreation groups that have come together to collectively build awareness and educate the public and elected leaders about the critical need for conservation and preservation funding.

For more information, visit the [Growing Greener Coalition](#) website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter [@pagrowgreener](#).

New State Website Confirms DEP Lost Over 22% Of Positions Over Last 10 Years

Gov. Corbett Thursday launched a new website-- [PennWATCH](#)-- designed to provide the public with more information on how taxpayer dollars are spent.

The website confirmed the Department of Environmental Protection has lost 615 permanent positions-- nearly 20 percent-- since the 2002-03 fiscal year. The agency's permanent complement fell from 3,211 to 2,596.

But these numbers include [over 105 positions](#) added by DEP to regulate Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling. When these are added in, DEP lost over 22 percent of its permanent positions over the last 10 years.

The numbers also do not include the 50 to 100 vacancies resulting from normal turnover of staff and the freeze on additional hiring Commonwealth wide.

"Pennsylvanians deserve to know how their tax dollars are being allocated and spent," Corbett said. "PennWATCH gives citizens unprecedented access to information on the state budget, revenues, spending and workforce."