



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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## **Shapiro Administration Invests \$52.5 Million in Recreation and Conservation Projects Across the Commonwealth**

*As part of the investment, the City of Bethlehem will receive \$500,000 to connect the South Bethlehem Greenway to the Saucon Rail Trail and create 14 miles of contiguous trail in the Lehigh Valley region*

*In the 2023-24 bipartisan budget, Governor Shapiro advocated for \$112 million to improve state parks and forests, spur economic growth in the outdoor recreation industry, and make Pennsylvania the largest state to open an Office of Outdoor Recreation*



**Bethlehem, PA** – Today in Bethlehem, Governor Josh Shapiro and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DNCR) **Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn** announced a \$52.5 million investment for more than 225 recreation and conservation projects across Pennsylvania that will create new recreational opportunities, conserve natural resources, and help revitalize local communities.

“Our Commonwealth has incredible outdoor spaces – and for me, there’s no better place to be than on a Pennsylvania trail. So today, I’m proud to announce that the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, led by Secretary Cindy Dunn, has awarded more than \$52 million to over 225 local projects across the Commonwealth that will help communities like Bethlehem connect more trails, improve more parks, and help more Pennsylvanians just enjoy their time outside,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “Our local parks and natural spaces are hometown treasures in our neighborhoods – in urban cities and rural towns alike. Communities across Pennsylvania should know that my Administration is ready to work with you to protect and invest in your local treasures.”

Investments are being made in a variety of proposals, including: 23 trail projects; protecting nearly 6,835 acres of open space; 13 projects for river conservation; 13 community and watershed forestry projects; and 99 projects to develop or rehabilitate recreation, park and conservation areas and facilities. DNCR [recently announced](#) nearly \$1.4 million in funding for 10 ATV and snowmobile facilities and trails projects. Visit the DNCR website for a [complete list](#) of grants awarded by county.

“These projects will fund critical improvements to local parks, river access and trails across the Commonwealth, which will bring outdoor recreation amenities closer to home and improve access in our communities,” **DNCR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said**. “We are here today in Bethlehem to highlight the importance of trails in DNCR’s strategic goals. Trails boost quality of life, and the role trails play as connectors is key in increasing Pennsylvania’s economic competitiveness. I thank the City of Bethlehem for prioritizing access to trails and being an example that investing in trails is key in spurring revitalization efforts and economic growth in our communities.”

As part of this investment, Bethlehem is receiving a \$500,000 grant to help with land acquisition that will connect the South Bethlehem Greenway to the Saucon Rail Trail. This connection would create 14 miles of contiguous trail in the region and close one of the state’s [Top 10 Trail Gaps](#), while also improving a [robust trail network in the Lehigh Valley](#).

“The South Bethlehem Greenway is a meeting place on the southside where people frequently walk, run, bike, and come together as a community,” said **Bethlehem Mayor J. William Reynolds**. “Investments in recreation and conservation projects of these types are key in improving the city for residents and as a destination for visitors. We thank DNCR for continued support of this project and our park revitalization efforts in the city.”

DCNR has closed five major trail gaps since identifying its Top 10 Trail Gaps in 2014. Two have been added by the [Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee](#), which assess trail needs based on the agency's list of [priority trail gaps](#). DCNR's Top 10 Trail Gaps and priority trail gaps list were developed to prioritize strategic investments.

"It's thanks to strong local, state, and federal collaboration that we'll close the trail's gap and get this important project done—and with it, grow our economy and foster community right here in our backyards," said **Congresswoman Susan Wild (PA-07)**. "I'm very proud to have secured a \$2.7 million federal investment in the Bethlehem Greenway Trail, and I'll continue to work alongside the Commonwealth and the City of Bethlehem to make this resource a reality for our community."

"The South Bethlehem Greenway has been a ribbon of connectivity in our community for 20 years," said **Rep. Steve Samuelson**. "Thank you, Governor Shapiro, for this critical funding to enable the Greenway and the Saucon Rail Trail to connect for 20 miles."

The grants are administered by the DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#) (C2P2). Funding comes from the Keystone Fund, which is generated from a portion of the realty transfer tax; the Environmental Stewardship Fund; the ATV/Snowmobile Fund generated through fees for licenses; and federal monies.

Pennsylvania's 124 state parks attract 40 million visitors annually, and outdoor recreation adds \$14 billion annually to Pennsylvania's economy and supports 150,000 jobs. Governor Shapiro advocated for \$112 million in the 2023-24 budget to improve our parks and forests and create a new Office of Outdoor Recreation to connect Pennsylvania's natural resources and parks with local businesses and put Pennsylvania on the map as a leader in outdoor recreation.

For more information on the fall grant round or to apply, visit the [DCNR Grants Customer Service Portal](#). Visit [DCNR's website](#) for more information about the agency and check out DCNR's [Calendar of Events](#) for events on public lands.

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