



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources**



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Labor & Industry**

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**At Kings Gap in Cumberland County, Shapiro Administration  
Highlights How Expanded Outdoor Corps Program Creates More  
Workforce Development, Job Training, and Conservation  
Opportunities in the Commonwealth**

*Over the last 10 years, more than 1,400 young people ages 15-25 have gained valuable training and experience in conservation jobs through the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps.*

*With a \$5 million investment in Governor Shapiro's [2024-25 bipartisan budget](#), the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is expanding to provide more young people with hands-on job training and conservation experience.*

**Carlisle, PA** – Today, **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn** and **Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Nancy A. Walker** visited the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps](#) crew at [Kings Gap Environmental Education Center](#) in Cumberland County to mark the program's **10th anniversary** and highlight its growing impact on workforce development and environmental stewardship.

Since its creation, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps has offered **hands-on conservation job training to more than 1,400 young people** ages 15 to 25 — building skills, supporting career readiness, and improving public lands across the Commonwealth.

Under **Governor Josh Shapiro's** leadership, DCNR has expanded conservation efforts in the Commonwealth by strengthening the Outdoor Corps workforce development initiative. The Governor's [2024-25 bipartisan budget](#) invests [\\$5 million](#) to enhance and grow the program, increasing job training and stewardship skills for more young people. The investment supports hiring additional staff and restructuring the program into a

regional model to improve efficiency, expand recruitment, and strengthen community partnerships.

Launched under Secretary Dunn's tenure, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps has provided paid conservation work experience, hands-on job training, and career readiness skills. The program is jointly run by DCNR and the Student Conservation Association (SCA), with critical support from L&I and private philanthropic partners.

"The young people we visited today and who participate in this program each year are our future leaders — in conservation and in public service," said **Secretary Dunn**. "I am grateful that Governor Shapiro and our partner agency, the Department of Labor and Industry, are willing to invest in this important conservation workforce development program. I'm proud to see many Outdoor Corps alumni continuing their work with DCNR, the U.S. Forest Service, and other respected agencies."

"Programs like the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps are exactly what workforce development should look like: hands-on, community-focused, and future-driven," said **Secretary Walker**. "By connecting young Pennsylvanians with real-world conservation work, we're helping them build job skills and empowering them to see themselves as leaders and changemakers. L&I is proud to support Secretary Dunn's vision for an Outdoor Corps of young people who are getting real-life experience in how to protect our Commonwealth's natural resources."

### **Expanding Workforce Opportunities All Across the Commonwealth**

Modeled after the Depression-era [Civilian Conservation Corps](#), the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is open to individuals ages 15-25 and provides hands-on experience in trail restoration, habitat enhancement, and tree planting. The Outdoor Corps offers opportunities for young people statewide through two program formats:

- **Six-week youth crews (ages 15-18):** Held during the summer in locations across Pennsylvania, including Altoona, Chambersburg, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Lockhaven, Meadville, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Ridgway, Scranton, Wellsboro, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport, and York. An American Sign Language Crew is also available.
- **Ten-month adult crews (ages 18-25):** Based in Altoona, Dubois, Harrisburg, Laurel Highlands region, Meadville, Philadelphia region, Pittsburgh, Somerset, Wilkes-Barre, and Williamsport, along with a statewide Cultural Resources and Residential Trail crew.

The program seeks participants from underserved communities to increase awareness about conservation in them, and to diversify young people who have an interest in natural resource protection jobs.

As of the beginning of the 2025 season, crew members had accomplished the following:

- 5,272 acres of land improved
- 1,065 miles of trails managed
- 50 miles of waterways improved
- 7,633 improvements to structures
- 18,970 native trees and shrubs planted
- 30,959 datapoints collected
- 1,105 certifications gained

Alumni of the program have gone on to work with leading conservation organizations, including DCNR, SCA, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service, benefitting from their hands-on experience and specialized training.

Learn more about how [DCNR is advancing sustainability in Pennsylvania](#) and how **Governor Shapiro** is [Safeguarding Our Land, Water, & Air](#) to protect the Commonwealth's environment.

Visit [DCNR's website](#) for more information on the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps and check out DCNR's [Calendar of Events](#) for more on happenings on public lands.

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