



Lower Mount Bethel Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania © Nicholas Tonelli

A Historic Conservation Investment

2022 was a year of policy wins in Pennsylvania and Delaware

As we wrap up 2022, we're celebrating significant conservation wins for Pennsylvania and Delaware. Across both states, TNC joined with partners and volunteers in successfully mobilizing constituents to voice support for conservation investments to elected leaders.

In July, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved a historic investment—the largest in more than 15 years—in conservation and clean water as part of the state budget. It includes more than \$640 million for conservation, with \$100 million for the Outdoor Recreation fund (formerly Growing Greener). The budget also invests in water quality with \$220 million for a new Clean Streams Fund to support the efforts of PA farmers to reduce water pollution.

Following up on a historic \$50 million clean water investment in FY 2022, Delaware's General Assembly approved investments in open space funding (see reverse); \$20 million in agricultural lands preservation; \$66 million in state park infrastructure, shoreline, waterways, trails and pathways, plus investments in wetland management, and stormwater control.



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Climate and clean energy were also in our sights this year as we continued to push for more aggressive action to tackle climate change by supporting policies to accelerate the deployment of clean energy (including wind and solar power) and electric vehicles, as well as supporting limits on emissions from power plants. We also expanded our advocacy to connect with underserved communities and supported new policies to reduce air and water pollution in overburdened neighborhoods.

TNC's work to assist these milestone accomplishments would also not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, our members, our volunteers, our donors, and our Board of Trustees. We're grateful for your ongoing support.



Members of the Delaware Land Protection Coalition (DLPC) at Delaware Legislative Hall in Dover © Courtesy DLPC

First Conservation Day in the First State

Earlier this year, the Delaware Land Protection Coalition (DLPC)—of which TNC is a founding member—hosted the first ever Conservation Day at Legislative Hall in Dover. Coalition members met with Delaware Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long and General Assembly members to seek additional funding for open space for the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. The legislature later approved a \$10 million increase in allocations for 2023, doubling the previous total.

Climate-forward state policies like these will help reduce emissions and alleviate flooding caused by increased rainfall and storms. In the United States, forests capture and store almost 15 percent of the carbon dioxide emissions every year, equivalent to the annual emissions of 165 million cars.

“Investments in open spaces contribute to our sense of community and identity of place, and equitable access to and provision of open spaces are both critical to the health and well-being of our cities, our environment and our people,” says Lori Brennan, executive director of The Nature Conservancy in Delaware and Pennsylvania.

A rare orchid sighting in Delaware

Earlier this year, our staff spotted this yellow crested orchid (*Platanthera cristata*) for the first time at one of our preserves in Sussex County. This beautiful native specimen was found in an area that was recently thinned of overhead growth, allowing for increased sunlight. Be sure to follow our social media accounts for more exciting finds from the field.



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NATURE PENNSYLVANIA/DELAWARE



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Federal Wins in PA and DE

Early in the year, funding from the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) started to be released to communities. The bipartisan IIJA is helping to rebuild America’s roads, bridges and rails with an eye toward climate resiliency by creating new clean energy opportunities, expanding access to clean drinking water, addressing flooding and extreme weather events, and investing in communities that have too often been left behind. Funding will be spread over five years and vary by state based upon size and number of projects. To date, Pennsylvania has announced \$5.2 billion and Delaware has announced \$500 million in IIJA-funded projects.

And finally this summer, in news that made headlines worldwide, the U.S. Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in August. The bill puts the nation on track to reduce emissions by 40 percent by 2030. The IRA legislation invests about \$370 billion in clean energy over the next 10 years across all sectors of the economy, from transportation to power to industry. It also includes a \$25 billion investment in a range of agricultural and forest-focused natural climate solutions that harness nature’s ability to revitalize our air, land and water.