

# In Case You Missed It

## April 2021



## Policy Updates

It didn't take long for the new state and federal legislative sessions to become active, so let's get right to it.

First and foremost is the Governor's proposal to link with the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative** (aka "RGGI") – a market-based, multistate platform to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the electricity generation sector. PEC, through our **decarbonization work**, has been supportive of this approach for a long time.

While it is only one piece of a much bigger puzzle, RGGI is the most readily available and sensible first step for our state. However, **legislation has been introduced** in the General Assembly to impede not only the initiative to link with RGGI, but *any* proposed rulemaking to address CO2 emissions.



Another series of bills we're tracking closely in the state legislature would **hamper rulemakings on environmental and health protections**, and to allow for unwarranted permitting approvals without appropriate safeguards. Other proposals worth noting, which PEC supports, include legislation that would help **protect bicyclists**, and legislation that would provide **water quality protections** from fertilizer application.

At the federal level, we are strongly supporting three bipartisan efforts in Congress:

First, companion legislation that would utilize Congressional Review Act authority to **reverse proposed weakening of methane emission standards** for the oil and gas industry. This legislation is supported by the environmental community and representatives of the industry alike.

Second, House and Senate legislation that would make an unprecedented investment in **plugging orphaned wells**. The REGROW (Senate) and Orphaned Well Cleanup and Jobs (House) bills would not only provide significant resources to our state to address this challenge, it will also



support employment opportunities for skilled workers.

And last but certainly not least, PEC remains focused on securing **re-authorization of the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund**, which over the past several decades has provided tremendous investment in remediating abandoned mine lands and acid mine drainage treatment. We are also supporting the **RECLAIM Act**, which would accelerate the release of more than \$1 billion from the AML Fund to target remediation opportunities near communities that have traditionally relied on the coal industry for employment or have recently experienced significant coal job losses.

[Learn More](#)

## Upcoming Outdoor Events

### 2021 Public Lands Ride: Two Ways to Participate!

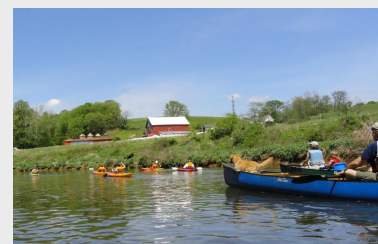


The Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Public Lands Ride seeks to celebrate and showcase the wealth of public parks and forests across the Commonwealth, bringing awareness to public lands as an invaluable resource for us to protect and enjoy.

This year, we are excited to promote both an in-person event returning to Black Moshannon State Park on October 2, 2021, and the release of six new routes in different state forests to be ridden anytime. Learn more [here](#).

### Join a River Sojourn This Summer!

Each Year, the **Pennsylvania Sojourn Program**, administered by PEC's affiliate **POWR** in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, awards more than \$30,000 in grants to support local watershed organizations and their sojourn events. This year, 13 mini-grantees will offer sojourn events from now through early fall.



View a story map of upcoming sojourn events by this year's grantees [here](#).

## PEC Blog

### Reassessing Our Climate Footprint



In 2019, PEC worked with Bonneville Environmental Foundation to help us measure our carbon and water footprints. With the framework for this process already in place, we decided to calculate our footprint once again for 2020. However, this past year looked a little different.

Learn more about how we offset our carbon footprint for 2020 [here](#).



---

## Improving Water Trail Access

PEC's mission is exemplified through our work with the statewide **Water Trails Program**. As water recreation increases in popularity, the PA Water Trails Program is committed to building a network that all Pennsylvanians can enjoy.

---

## Completed! Tookany Creek Trail Feasibility Study

Finally! After a year and a half, a robust public outreach campaign, multiple revisions and updates, and hundreds of hours spent analyzing and designing preferred alignments, the Tookany Creek Trail Feasibility Study has been completed and **published**.

---

## U.S. Representatives Seek Official Designation for 9/11 Trail

In early April, U.S. Representatives introduced a bill which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to formally designate the 9/11 Memorial Trail.

# Pennsylvania Legacies

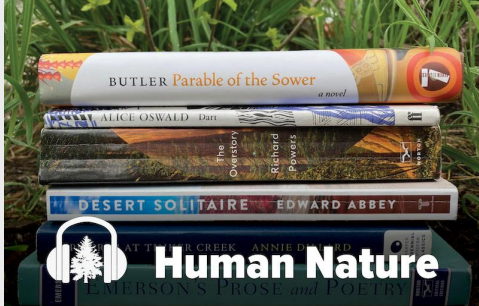
In 1971, Pennsylvania became the first state to guarantee citizens' rights to clean air, pure water, and a healthy environment. Fifty years later, the state legislator who led the campaign for Pennsylvania's Environmental Rights Amendment is taking it to the next level.

In his new book, Franklin Kury makes the case for a federal constitutional amendment to meet the unprecedented threat of climate change.



**Nothing More Fundamental**

**LISTEN**



## Human Nature

An emerging interdisciplinary movement is opening the environmental field to new scholarly approaches and bringing new voices into the discussion.

PEC's Lily Jones speaks with John MacNeill Miller, a professor of English literature at Allegheny College, about his work exploring the link between humans and non-human systems through a cultural lens.

LISTEN



## Small Wells, Big Leaks

As Pennsylvania weighs a new DEP rule that would expand leak detection and repair requirements for oil and gas producers, there's new research on the integrity of relatively low-producing "stripper" wells.

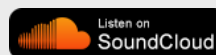
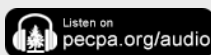
Such facilities would remain exempt under PA's current rulemaking, but a University of Cincinnati **study** suggests they're among the leakiest well sites in Appalachia. We speak with the author, **Dr. Amy Townsend-Small**.

LISTEN



*The Pennsylvania Legacies podcast features conversations with community leaders, experts, thinkers, and citizens on the most important environmental and conservation issues facing Pennsylvania.*

*New episodes are posted every other Friday at [pecpa.org/audio](https://pecpa.org/audio) and are available on most podcast platforms.*



**SUBSCRIBE**

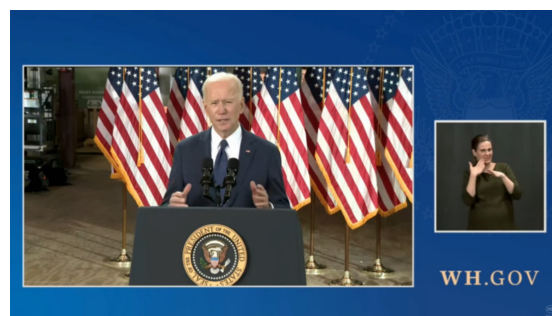
## PEC in the News

### How Western Pa.'s Energy Industry Could be Impacted by Biden's Climate Goals

April 22, 2021 / Pittsburgh Business Times

President Biden's commitment to slice carbon emissions by more than 50% by the end of the decade will likely have a substantial impact on Pennsylvania and its reliance on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas, but analysts and others say it's too early to tell how that will shake out...

"We think it's a great step and probably wise because the administration signaled its intent to look at this holistically and make it as much about growth as it about reduction goals," said John Walliser, SVP of legal government affairs at the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and chair of the DEP Citizens Advisory Council.



- **Spring Garden Street Greenway Could See Safety Updates Within Biden's Infrastructure Plan** April 6, 2021 / Philly Voice
  - **Greenway Connecting Delaware, Schuylkill Rivers Slowly Inches Forward** April 5, 2021 / KYW Newsradio
- 



## Stay connected

SUBSCRIBE

JOIN PEC



Copyright © 2020. All Rights Reserved.