



Friends of PEC,

The past few weeks have been eventful for everyone, and we at PEC are no exception. Read on for a recap of information and content shared on our website in the month of July.

Policy Notes

Energy & Climate

July brought the long-awaited introduction of Senate Bill 15, known as the Energy Transition Act, by Senator Jay Costa (Allegheny County). [PEC enthusiastically supports the bipartisan measure](#), which would initiate Pennsylvania's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) with a broader goal of achieving net zero emissions in the electric power sector by 2050.



The introduction of SB 15 follows a July 8 House vote to approve House Bill 2025, which mandates that any proposed rulemaking by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to address carbon dioxide emissions be affirmatively approved by the General Assembly. [PEC opposes this legislation.](#)

Meanwhile, PEC submitted comments in partnership with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in support of proposed rulemaking to control emissions of VOCs and Methane from existing natural gas operations and equipment. Learn [more](#) and read the full report [here](#).

Finally, for Pennsylvania to continue its path toward a net zero future and economy, the growth of renewable generation will be essential. With this in mind, PEC worked with [Green Light Consulting](#) to prepare a report detailing how renewable generation has grown in western Pennsylvania, and compiling input from key stakeholders on barriers to that growth. Read the report [here](#).

Outdoor Recreation

Before adjourning for the summer, the legislature passed House Bill 1003 (Now [Act 39](#)), which increases public safety by strengthening the PA Fish and Boat Commission's ability to enforce the marking of low head or run-of-the-river dams, and House Bill 808 (now [Act 56](#)), which provides the Fish and Boat Commission greater autonomy in adjusting user fees charged by the Commission – a critical component of the resources used to support

habitat and recreational amenity work.

When the legislature returns in September, a number of other bills still await consideration, such as [H.R. 670](#) (encouraging wildlife corridors), [House Bill 792](#) and [Senate Bill 565](#) (bike lanes), [House Bill 1941](#) (liability protections for outdoor activities), and [House Bill 2131](#) (recreational access). Given that the state must also address state budget issues, we fully expect attempts to raid special funds like the Environmental Stewardship Fund (aka Growing Greener) and the Keystone Fund that are used to support conservation and recreational work throughout the Commonwealth.

Keep tabs on legislation and policy proposals PEC is following via the [Bill Tracker](#).

2020 Public Lands Ride: September 1-30

PEC's [Public Lands Ride](#) seeks to showcase state parks and forests across the greater central region of the state. Following a successful inaugural ride last year, the ride returns in "virtual" form for 2020.

Throughout the month of September, cyclists are encouraged to ride as many of the suggested routes as possible and share their experiences on social media. Find more details about this virtual event [here](#), and stay tuned for more route descriptions to be published throughout the summer.



Featured Route: [Reeds Gap State Park/Bald Eagle State Forest](#)

Nestled smack-dab in the middle of the Ridges and Valleys region of central Pennsylvania, Bald Eagle State Forest offers up no shortage of climbing over its many northeast-southwest-running mountains. This route boasts five major climbs, all rewarded with sweeping vistas showcasing the layers of

mountains characteristic of this area. The riding surface ranges from a couple longer stretches of pavement to chunky "driveable trail," and the scenery from lush, dense forests to farmland and mountain tops to creekside. Bald Eagle never disappoints us, and we're confident you'll feel the same!

MORE

PEC Blog

[Offsetting Our Carbon Footprint](#)

As official sustainability partner for the [GAP Relay](#) in 2019 and 2020, PEC purchased carbon offsets and water restoration credits equivalent to the total environmental impact of the event. That experience led us to examine PEC's own carbon footprint. We discovered that the

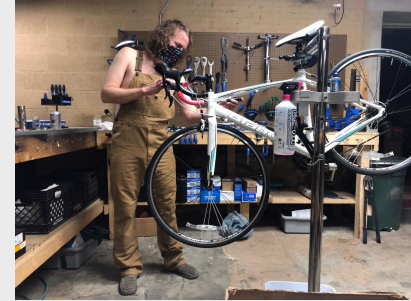


operations of even the most environmentally conscious organizations can have unintended environmental consequences. We also learned that virtually any business or organization, no matter how large or small, can counter those impacts relatively easily and affordably through carbon offsets, water restoration credits, and other tools.

READ

Outdoor Businesses Adapt to the COVID-19 Economy

Over the past three and a half months we've seen a record number of people turning to the outdoors as a reprieve from the stress, worry and boredom caused by the global pandemic. At the same time, companies large and small are being hit hard by COVID-19's economic impact. How are businesses in Pennsylvania's \$29 billion outdoor industry holding up amid the downturn? And how are they meeting demand for the goods and services that people need to get outdoors safely?



READ

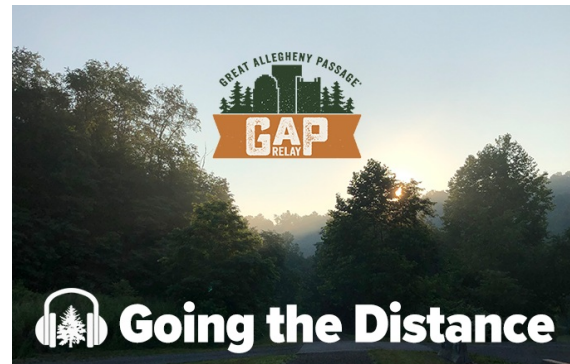
Pennsylvania Legacies



Mitigating Circumstances

Fixing leaks in the natural gas supply chain is critical to reducing Pennsylvania's greenhouse gas emissions, and proposed new requirements for gas facilities would hold operators accountable for detecting and repairing them. With estimated emissions from gas operations exceeding a million tons a year in Pennsylvania alone, that's a big job — even though the draft rule, as currently written, exempts broad swaths of facilities that other states treat as potential emitters.

Fortunately, there's a whole industry dedicated to efficiently detecting gas leaks using cutting-edge technology — and as these tools get more sophisticated, methane mitigation becomes more cost-effective by the day. But will the finished rule take full advantage of these resources and hold all producers to the same standard?



Going the Distance

The GAP Relay — a 150-mile race along the Great Allegheny Passage — is back for its third year, despite a global crisis that forced organizers to completely rethink the event. One thing hasn't changed: the sustainability partnership between PEC and event host P3R that made the GAP Relay the greenest relay race in America.

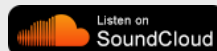
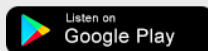
We welcome back P3R's Troy Schooley to discuss the new format and the growing movement for sustainability in distance running. Then the Bonneville Environmental Foundation's Heather Schrock explains how carbon offsets work — and how individuals and businesses of all sizes can use them to pursue their own sustainability goals.

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 and are available on most podcast platforms.



SUBSCRIBE

Press Releases

2020 GAP Relay Goes Greener

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) has partnered with race organizer P3R and the Allegheny Trail Alliance to make the GAP Relay presented by UPMC Health Plan one of the most sustainable distance-running events in the U.S.

MORE

Carbon Offsets & the GAP Relay

In 2019, P3R teamed up with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) and the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA) to create an event that would reflect our shared vision of sustainability in endurance sports. By offsetting carbon emissions and greeting runners at the finish line with tree seedlings to take home and plant, we worked to make the 2019 GAP Relay one of the greenest events of its kind in the U.S.

In 2020, we're taking it to the next level. Though teams will be tackling the 150-mile relay in "virtual" form this year, carbon offsets were purchased based on the estimated footprint of the in-person event. We also purchased Water Restoration Certificates (WRCs) equivalent to the race's estimated impact on local water resources.



What Are Carbon Offsets?

Many race day activities, such as electricity use, water use, and transportation along the course, release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. PEC calculated the emissions that would occur during the in-person race and purchased an equivalent quantity of carbon offsets, with the proceeds designated to fund clean-energy projects.

This year, we are offsetting 124 Metric Tons of CO₂, which is equivalent to:

The CO₂ emissions from 21 homes' electricity usage for one year



× 21

The CO₂ emissions from 13,953 gallons of gasoline consumed



× 13,953

The CO₂ emissions from 287 barrels of oil consumed



× 287

The greenhouse gas emissions 26.8 passenger vehicles driven for one year



× 26.8

*Estimates from the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator

For more information about the 2020 GAP Relay, visit p3r.org/races/gap-relay

To learn more about PEC's work on energy and climate, visit pecpa.org/energy.



PEC In the News

[Centre Daily Times](#)

**Looking for a bike or kayak?
They're in high demand as Pa.
residents turn to outdoor
recreation**



[Bay Journal](#)

**COVID lockdown unleashes
swarms of visitors at parks, trails**



Parks, trails and natural areas in

Athletes looking to stay in shape, those with trepidation of public spaces or transit, and Pennsylvanians who are simply tired of being cooped up during the coronavirus pandemic are turning to outdoor recreation in record numbers...

DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council gathered to tout the increases on July 8 at **Organic Climbing** — a Rush Township-based business that produces handmade bouldering crash pads, backpacks, clothes and tote bags for rock climbers.

Chesapeake Bay states have been slammed this spring and early summer as the masses head outdoors seeking relief from coronavirus stay-at-home orders. The effects have been widespread and varied across Bay states. Hiking, hunting, boating, paddling and fishing have all been affected...

According to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, use of 67 trails, parks and natural areas around the state spiked as much as 200% during March and April over the same period a year ago.

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