

STRONGER TOGETHER 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Cover photos provided by several of our local park and recreation departments.

OVERVIEW

In the year of the pandemic shutdown, PRPS embraced transformational change. Our challenge was not that society suddenly and fundamentally changed, but how the Society could be proactive in leading organizational change to remain relevant to its members, the profession and the public our industry serves.

PRPS enjoyed a more favorable position during the pandemic than most other associations and nonprofits, according to state and national surveys. The Society was among just 23 percent of organizations nationwide that remained operational during shutdown and also reported an increased demand for services. Indeed, the staff was busier than normal, scrambling to provide guidance and answers for our members and the stewards of 6,129 local parks (319 with swimming pools; 2,087 with athletic fields) and 2,370 playgrounds.

This report highlights the accomplishments of the Society in a year packed with individual and corporate challenges, yet one in which innovation, adaptation and collaboration resulted in PRPS growing stronger together.

GOVERNANCE

MISSION

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society empowers recreation and park professionals and citizen advocates to enhance life-enriching services for all Pennsylvanians.

VISION

The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society will improve environmental, economic and social health and wellness for current and future generations.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The organizational culture of PRPS is expressed in the collective behavior of our leaders and members, and how our actions are perceived and received by others. To facilitate the highest levels of relevance, capacity and influence, we integrate these six core values into all operations with consistency and unity:

- Integrity
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Education
- Equity
- Empowerment



The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society empowers recreation and park professionals and citizen advocates to enhance life-enriching services for all Pennsylvanians.

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Margie Lewis, M.S., CPRP – President
Tonya Brown, CPRP, AFO, CPSI – President-Elect
Jason Lang, M.S., CPRE – Secretary
Todd Roth, CPRP, AFO – Treasurer
Kim Batty, Ph.D. – Educators Director
Kristin Zeigler, AFO – Aquatics Branch President
Ken Lehr, CPRP – Community Branch President
Derek Dureka, CPRP – Park Resources Branch President
Marisa Sprowles – Pennsylvania State Parks Branch President
Becky Kandrac, CTRS – Therapeutic Recreation Branch President
Rochelle Barry – District 1 President
Doug Knauss, CPRP – District 2 President
Mike Richino, CPRP – District 3 President

ADMINISTRATION

STAFF

Tim Herd, CPRE – Chief Executive Officer
Niki Tourscher, CPRP, CPSI – Director of Training and Get Outdoors PA
Emily Gates – Director of Strategic Partnerships
Tracy Robert – Membership Services Manager
Emily Schnellbaugh – Communications Manager
Joleen Kough – Financial Manager
Dan Hendeby, CPRP, CPSI – Education Manager
Jane LaMar – Administrative Assistant
Brian “BK” Koehler, CPSI – Director, Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute

Interns

Lauren Ansell – Marketing Engagement, Penn State University

Chalsey Dorce – Institute Content Curator, Penn State University
Muhsin Wahid-Anwar – Institute Intern, Penn State University
Kyle Randy Chin – Inclusion Intern, Temple University

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

The annual Administrative Plan is developed by the staff to implement the policies and priorities of the Board of Directors. It also advances the actions of the Society’s allied work plans: the PRPS Strategic Plan, Leadership 2025, the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute Business Plan, and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Despite the unexpected and wide-ranging effects of the pandemic that prevented progress on certain priorities for 2020, many key tasks were accomplished, while several other, more opportunistic, initiatives moved forward to help meet the members’ immediate professional needs, and they are noted in this report.

FINANCIAL STANDING

Annual Audit. PRPS financial statements and accounting practices are annually reviewed by the independent firm of MaherDuessel, which identified no material deficiencies for the calendar year 2019.

Investments. Certain PRPS funds are invested with the objective of preserving the long-term real purchasing power of assets while providing a relatively predictable and growing stream of annual reinvestments in the Society. As of December 31, 2020, these funds included 113.153 shares of Microsoft Corp. and 20,357.947 shares of the

Vanguard Balanced Index Fund Admiral, with a combined current value of \$928,017. From its inception in September 2015 through February 2021, the fund has yielded 11.8 percent and has produced investment returns of \$310,124.

Operating Reserve. The operating reserve includes not only what is invested in the Vanguard Investment Fund, but also all other unrestricted net assets (such as cash, retained earnings and other current assets). Of the portion that is Board-designated in the Vanguard Fund, 8 percent is set aside for advocacy, 6 percent for capital needs, and 86 percent as operating reserve.

2020 Budget. In May, PRPS qualified for a federal Paycheck Protection Program loan of nearly \$93,000, and in October, for its subsequent forgiveness. The Society neither cut back on staff, nor had to tap its operating reserve. Despite a loss of revenues, and the inability to offer trainings and programs as planned, its cash position and working capital remained strong. At the end of the year, total revenues amounted to \$1,191,195, with expenses of \$1,044,035, resulting in a net income of \$147,160.

Assets & Liabilities. As of December 31, 2020, total liabilities and net assets amounted to \$1,619,056.

MEMBER-DRIVEN COMMITTEE WORK

BRANCHES AND DISTRICTS

The three geographical districts and five professional-track branches each have an elected Executive Committee with officers who conduct related business meetings and organize socials and fundraisers for the good of their members.

CONFERENCE

Two PRPS firsts were associated with the 2020 Annual Conference: It was the first to be a joint conference with the Pennsylvania Alliance of Environmental Educators, which was also to be the largest-ever in terms of attendance; and it was the first to be unavoidably canceled due to pandemic restrictions — and just four days before it was to begin. It became *The Greatest Conference That Ever Wasn't*, as the Society's professional development program pivoted to virtual programming for the rest of the year. The 2021 Conference Committee repurposed many speaker presentations and

socials for the following year's event. However, as pandemic restrictions extended into the end of the year, and it became impractical to hold the conference in person — and with just weeks left in the yearlong planning process — the committee started all over, reworking it into a first-ever virtual format.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Governmental Affairs Committee develops and updates PRPS legislative priorities and position statements; issues Action Alerts, opinion-editorials and media releases; and drafts various correspondence and support and sign-on letters. It also prepared an issue of Guidance & Resources on "New Laws Affecting Recreation Operations, Workforce & Compliance."

In 2020, despite the lack of PRPS-supported legislation passed into law by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the major working issues included municipal preschool recreation, recreational therapy licensure, provisional hiring parity, liability for volunteer park organizations, and insurance coverage for tick-related diseases. On the federal level, the committee monitored legislation and promoted support for the full, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, resulting in a much higher appropriation to Pennsylvania.

The committee also strengthened organizational partnerships with the NRPA and its Park Champions program, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF), the Philadelphia Parks Alliance, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Stakeholders network. It solicited proclamations and

resolutions for Pennsylvania Park and Recreation Professionals Day. In October, along with PPFF, it hosted a virtual meeting of the bipartisan Park and Recreation Caucus. Late in the year, advocacy software was purchased, which will enable a much more efficient and engaging tracking system for PRPS stakeholders in 2021.

FINANCE

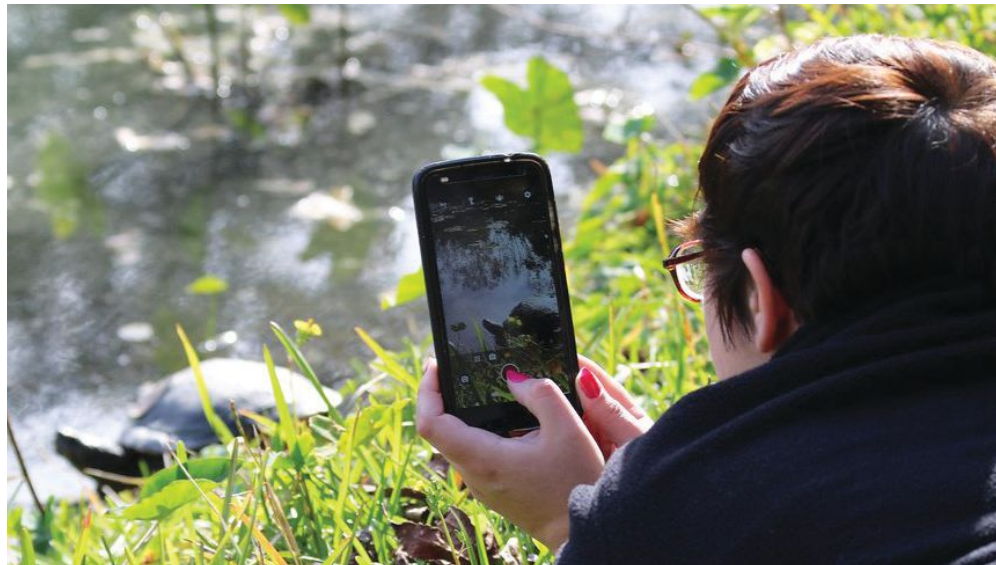
The Finance Committee reviews the annual budget and investments, and monitors their management. It also reviews the annual audit and its recommendations, if any, and updates the Financial Management Policy as needed.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Health and Wellness Committee develops and disseminates information on health-related priorities, trends, technical assistance and partnerships. In 2020, the committee completed the Culture of Health Handbook, which provides a practical approach for parks and recreation departments to promote healthier lifestyles through four core program areas: physical, mental, social and intellectual health. The handbook's debut, first planned for the 2020 Conference, was postponed by the pandemic to spring 2021, allowing its programmatic recommendations to be applied to 2021 summer camp programs.

INCLUSION

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts extended in new directions during 2020. In June, the committee developed an Inclusion Call to Action Statement, which reiterated a number of strategies first outlined during the 2018 Leadership



Summit, and which have become the committee's working priorities. Despite the cancellation of the in-person Urban Park and Recreation Exchanges, PRPS continued to offer DEI training through webinars and conference sessions, and began surveying members about their DEI practices and needs. In 2021, the committee plans to schedule a series of listening tours for underserved communities throughout the state. From this input, the PRPS will develop a toolkit and specific recommendations for our member agencies to increase their DEI efforts.

MEMBERSHIP

In 2020, the very active Membership Committee provided testimonials toward the development of a new membership brochure and launched two email recruitment campaigns to nonmembers with important COVID-19-related information, along with a personal invitation to join PRPS at a discounted rate. To demonstrate membership value, *The SCOOP* was temporarily distributed to nonmembers to share important resources and best practices. To aid existing members who had lapsed in their renewals during furloughs and shutdowns, PRPS extended the expiration dates an extra four months to ensure continued access to important pandemic resources. The committee also created two new pages for the website: a New Member Welcome Center page, which serves as a quick reference to the most frequently used resources, and a new Calendar page for all upcoming events.

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

Due to the cancellation of the Conference & Expo, the committee considered alternate ways to present to our award winners, and settled on hosting a separate presentation during the 2021 Virtual Conference. Winners were announced in *The SCOOP*, highlighted on social media, posted on the website and published in the *Pennsylvania Recreation & Parks 2020* spring magazine.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

MEMBER BENEFITS & ENROLLMENT

Even during the pandemic, PRPS provided numerous networking opportunities for park and recreation professionals to share ideas, struggles and successes, and it remained the go-to source for quality continuing education programs on a wide range of topics such as COVID-19 response and

recovery, swimming pool management, park operations, activities and leadership.

PRPS actively promotes the economic, environmental, social and personal benefits of parks and recreation; advocates in support of recreation and park funding; monitors key legislative actions that impact the profession; and provides up-to-date information on safety standards and best practices. Member benefits include access to members-only publications, free posts on the PRPS Job Center, and eligibility for scholarships, mini-grants, and the Recognition & Awards program.

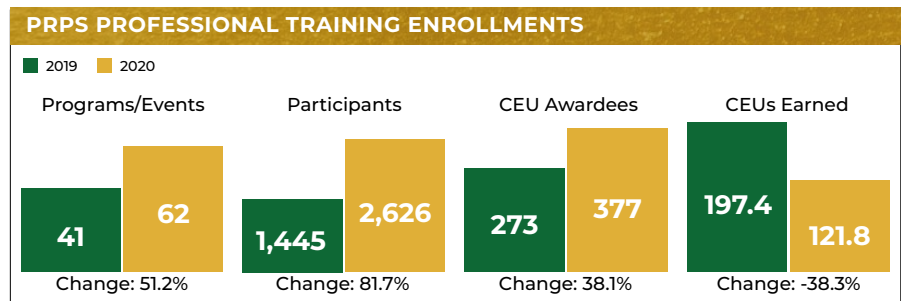
In this pandemic year, the membership rolls shrank slightly; however, more than half of the loss came from our student members, who pay no dues. (Declines in member enrollments in other membership associations have ranged up to 20 percent.) In fact, 2020 membership revenues exceeded budgetary expectations.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

The swiftness of the emergence of the pandemic, changing conditions, governmental directives

and its universal impact upended nearly everything PRPS had planned for the year. In response, the Society released and updated issues and position statements, vacated the office building (staff worked remotely for 10 weeks), recorded informational videos, issued Action Alerts, developed graphics and procedures, authored op-eds and implemented a popular series of free Virtual Roundtables on various topics. It collected, curated and published hundreds of COVID-19-related resources in a new *Recreation and Park Industry Pandemic Resource Center*. It also worked with the National Recreation and Park Association to publish and disseminate the *Path to Recovery Framework*, and with the Pennsylvania DCNR and Department of Health to develop *Considerations for Reopening Pools, Beaches and Waterfronts*.

The most impactful statewide resource became the much-updated 28-page *PRPS Recreation and Park Facilities Reopening Guidelines* that offered specific recommendations based on broad governmental guidance. Gov. Tom Wolf's office requested a copy of the document



	MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENTS	DEC. 2019	DEC. 2020	CHANGE
Professional		752	725	-4%
Associate		104	110	6%
Student		755	656	-13%
Retiree		34	37	9%
Life		19	20	5%
Complimentary		37	38	3%
Honorary		43	44	2%
Board		377	322	-15%
Corporate		89	98	10%
Total		2,210	2,050	-7%
Friends		18,507	17,981	-3%

Another Good Year

2020 was a year like no other. Through all of the ups and downs, parks were able to bring us together. Here is a look at just a few of the GOOD things that happened in 2020. Keep in touch with us on social media @goodforpa, or online at goodforpa.com

Reached
975k+
park lovers in PA



2020 was the first year that Park and Rec Professionals Day was recognized nationally.

Garnered
24k+
unique engagements



In 2020 we looped in park professionals from around PA to give us an educational weekend in their local parks.

Directed
5k+
visitors to the Good for PA website

Welcomed
2000+
new users to the Good for PA community



In 2020 Good for PA released 11 blogs for the community to read and share

Our local park finder features over
6,100
local parks for you to explore!



Development and Training Team was able to transition nearly all offerings — except the annual conference — to a virtual platform. Working closely with experienced presenters and dedicated committees, PRPS continued offering Swimming Pool Workshops, Playground Maintenance Workshops, the Fall Membership Meeting & Mini-Conference, and the Therapeutic Recreation Institute. This, along with a new series of free Professional Roundtables, amplified the virtual offerings, reaching not only PRPS members, but professionals from across the nation.

PRPS PROFESSIONAL ROUNDTABLES

To assist PRPS members with questions and concerns surrounding the field during the pandemic, free Professional Roundtables launched in late March. With topics including Aquatics, Maintenance, Programs & Events, and Summer Camp, as well as Urban, Therapeutic and Outdoor Recreation, 30 roundtables were held in 2020. Some topics were so popular, consistently reaching over 100 attendees, that the PRPS Zoom account capacity had to be increased to accommodate the larger audiences.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION INSTITUTE LUNCHTIME SERIES

When the in-person Therapeutic Recreation Institute (TRI) became impossible due to COVID-19, PRPS pivoted to providing a virtual alternative: the Lunchtime Sessions. Its eight virtual sessions over three weeks during the lunch hour became the best way to meet the needs of our therapeutic recreation practitioners, many of whom were struggling to address COVID-19 concerns at their workplaces. The new formula attracted more than 110 participants who earned 698 hours of continuing education credit. While a live event will return, the popular Lunchtime Sessions will continue.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY & MENTORING PROGRAM

While many other programs were successfully conducted online, the Leadership Academy was postponed until it becomes possible to once again meet in person, where its engagement can be most impactful. Similarly, due to the timing of COVID-19, the Mentor Program did not operate as planned. Both are planned to resume in 2021.

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

The PRPS Communications Team expanded its reach, with the addition of a marketing intern; the temporary services of an outside social media company, Hello Social; and additional administrative support. Throughout the pandemic, social media stats showed strong increases across all channels, due to additional posts of COVID-19-related infographics,

before releasing a set of official guidelines for outdoor recreation. The resource was accessed and requested by Pennsylvania legislators, municipal officials, private parks and golf courses, and many others outside the membership.

PRPS RESEARCH: COVID-19 AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STUDY

To provide member professionals with relevant and timely data to help them better manage the changes in a pandemic year, PRPS contracted with Penn State to assess Pennsylvanians' perceptions and expectations of local park and recreation services related to both COVID-19 and diversity, equity and inclusion. Key findings were presented to the members in November by Professor Andrew J. Mowen and Samantha Powers, and subsequently digitally published and disseminated.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Although pandemic restrictions prohibited in-person attendance, enrollments in PRPS trainings grew significantly over the previous year, because the PRPS Professional

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS: 878

LINKEDIN
PRPS FOLLOWERS: 870
TR FOLLOWERS: 758

FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS: 3,258

TWITTER
FOLLOWERS: 1,021
IMPRESSIONS: 50,718
REACH: 60,122

DIG IT! BLOG
VIEWS: 4,394
VISITORS: 3,289

WEBSITE
158K PAGEVIEWS
36K USERS

custom PRPS memes, videos and blogs. Expanded communications included special editions of The SCOOP, an online pandemic resource center, a “What’s Up P+R?!” Facebook page, “A New Outdoors Etiquette” guide, Recreation & Park Facility Reopening Guidelines and A Planning Framework for Recovery. PRPS served as the voice for Pennsylvania parks and recreation and provided invaluable pandemic resources for members. We are stronger together.

PENNSYLVANIA PARK MAINTENANCE INSTITUTE

Despite COVID-19’s interruption of planned business development actions, and a delayed launch of the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute subscription sales, the Institute has proven to be



a resilient endeavor through its first full year of staffed operations. In just the last quarter of the year, the Institute gained 39 subscribers (seven commercial and 32 individuals), and was actively growing through social media, email and publication marketing channels. The Institute’s branded website hosts a digital library, the “Tool Shed,” that consisted of 585 resources at year’s end, which also continues to grow.

Due to restrictions on physical gatherings, the Institute offered virtual training events through its “Shop Talk” webinar series and Park Maintenance Roundtables, hosting 12 events during 2020. The shift to a virtual platform also expanded its reach

to a much wider audience, drawing participation from more than 30 states and two provinces, and piquing international interest. The Institute continues to grow and nurture collaborations with the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, Professional Ground Managers Society, American Public Works Association, Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization and others.

COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

As PRPS expands its fiscal and professional partnerships, it continues to design partnerships based on assets, needs and outcomes that benefit all parties in ways that cannot be achieved individually. Such partnerships provide PRPS, businesses and organizations with common prospects, similar marketing needs and possibly complementary services, with opportunities to mutually advance our goals.

The Get Outdoors PA Flagship Partner

Team continues collaborating to develop educational resources, financial support and networking opportunities to serve the program’s 180 community partners comprising park and recreation departments, conservancies, land trusts, watershed organizations, friends of local and state park chapters, environmental education and nature centers, and trail organizations. The Flagship Team is comprised of eight partners including the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation, and Pennsylvania Association of

Environmental Educators. The program annually supports hundreds of recreation programs in Pennsylvania’s local and state parks.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and PRPS partnership corresponds and meets regularly to discuss and determine initiatives that are advantageous to park and recreation providers and users. DCNR staff members regularly present at the PRPS Conference & Expo and hold advisory roles on multiple PRPS initiatives including the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute, RecTAP, Get Outdoors PA, the Health and Wellness Committee, and the “Good for You. Good for All” campaign. PRPS served on the 2020-2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Advisory Committee.

REC TAP GRANTS

The Recreation and Parks Technical Assistance Program (RecTAP) is a statewide technical assistance grant program designed to help organizations receive expert advice on maintenance, recreation, park and trail issues. It matches recreation, park and trail professionals with municipalities and nonprofits to provide advice and assistance on specific issues that can be addressed within a limited amount of time. In 2019 the program experienced enormous growth; however, many of those projects scheduled for completion in 2020 were delayed due to the pandemic. In 2020, the following RecTAP participants included: City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County Parks and Recreation, Dushore Borough, Independence Conservancy, Mifflin County Parks and Recreation Council, Waymart Borough, and York County Rail Trail Authority.

OTHER PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

STRATEGIC COLLABORATORS

In 2020, PRPS built and/or maintained strategic collaborations with:

- Alpha Card
- ASAE D+I
- Degy Entertainment
- E.H. Griffith
- EarthShare
- Get Outdoors PA
- Grassland Equipment and Irrigation
- Growing Greener Coalition
- Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization
- L.L. Bean
- National Recreation and Park Association
- National Recreation and Park Association State Affiliates Council of Executive Directors
- New Jersey/Eastern Pennsylvania Therapeutic Recreation Association
- PA Association of Environmental Educators
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- PA Parks and Forest Foundation
- PA State Association of Boroughs
- PA State Association of Township Supervisors
- PA State Employees Credit Union (PSECU)
- Penn State University Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management

- Penn State University Extension Department of Agriculture
- Positive Coaching Alliance
- Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion
- Toro Company
- Turf Equipment and Supply Company
- WeConservePA

SPONSORS

PRPS is grateful to team up with the following 2020 sponsors:

- Allegheny Land Trust
- General Recreation Inc.
- George Ely Associates
- Get Outdoors PA
- Herbert, Rowland & Grubic Inc.
- Hersheypark
- Jeffrey Associates
- Morey's Piers
- Oglebay National Training Center
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- PA Department of Health
- Pashek + MTR
- Play and Park Structures
- Recreation Resource USA
- River Mountain Retreat
- Rock N Roll Racing
- Seven Springs Mountain Resort
- Six Flags
- Stroud Water Research Center
- SuperGames
- Vortex Aquatic Structures
- Zambelli Fireworks
- Amy/Bianco SpiderMentor
- Aquatic Facility Design Inc.
- Best Line Equipment – State College, PA
- Boyce Associates/Commercial Recreation Products LLC
- BSN SPORTS
- Challenger Teamwear
- CommunityPass
- Cub Cadet
- Designed for Fun Inc.
- E.H. Griffith/Turf Equipment and Supply Company
- EZ Dock/Diamond Waterfronts
- Gametime Park & Playground Equipment
- General Recreation Inc.
- George Ely Associates Inc.
- Get Outdoors PA
- Herbert, Rowland & Grubic Inc.
- Hersheypark
- Ijit Export Agency – Save the Environment Art
- Jabebo Earrings
- Jeffrey Associates
- Jump Start Sports LLC
- Keystone Purchasing Network
- Kompan Inc.
- Krigger and Company
- L.L. Bean
- Lehigh County Conservation District
- Lincoln Aquatics
- Lyons Recreation LLC
- Mackin Engineering Company
- Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College
- Morey's Piers
- Musco Sports Lighting
- MyRec.com Recreation Software
- National Alliance for Youth Sports
- Norwalk Concrete Industries
- Oglebay National Training Center
- PA Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council
- PA Correctional Industries, Department of Corrections
- PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- PA Game Commission
- PA Park Maintenance Institute
- PA Watershed Education Task Force
- Pannier
- Pashek + MTR
- Phantom Entertainment
- Play & Park Structures
- Prosser Power Group/Krawl Works Motorsports
- Protect PT
- PRPS Health & Wellness Committee
- PublicSource.org
- RecDesk
- Recreation Resource USA
- River Mountain Retreat – Digital Wellness Camp
- Saint Francis University Institute for Energy
- Seven Springs Mountain Resort
- Slippery Rock University
- Snapology
- Snider Recreation Inc.
- Sport Court of Pittsburgh LLC
- Sports & Recreation Associates
- Storytime STEM-packs
- Stroud Water Research Center
- SuperGames
- Sybertech Waste Reduction Ltd.
- Treatment Specialties/Mer-Made Filter
- Turf Equipment and Supply Company
- UniqueSource Products & Services
- USTA Middle States
- Vermont Systems
- Vortex Aquatic Structures
- Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club
- Xceed Recreation Group
- Young Voices for the Planet
- Zambelli Fireworks

EXHIBITORS

We thank the following 2020 vendors and exhibitors:

- Advanced Turf Solutions
- Adventure Sports in Hershey/Turkey Hill Experience
- AG-Industrial Inc.
- Allegheny Land Trust
- Alpha Card Compact Media LLC
- American Ramp Company
- American Red Cross