

# Insights, Innovation, Implementation

# 2022 Annual Report



## Overview

Despite the ever-increasing rate of change in the world, PRPS continues to constructively lead and adapt to keep its services relevant to its members, partners and stakeholders. To do so in 2022 required gaining insights from the relevant drivers of societal and association trends, identifying operational innovations to meet the projected needs and challenges, and engaging our members to implement them. This brief report highlights many of the Society's initiatives and progress toward missions.

## 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, 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

## 2022 Board of Directors

Tonya Brown, CPRP, AFO, CPS

*President*

Ken Lehr, CPRP

*President-Elect*

Jason Lang, MS, CPRE

*Secretary*

Todd Roth, CPRP, AFO

*Treasurer*

Kim Batty, PhD

*Educators Director*

Jeremy Mortorff, CPRP, CPO

*Aquatics Branch President*

Courtney Meehan, CPRP

*Community Branch President*

Derek Dureka, CPRP

*Interim PR Branch President*

Lee Dillon

*PA State Parks Branch President*

Becky Kandrac, CTRS

*Interim TR Branch President*

Michele Harmel, CPRP

*District 1 President*

Chalet Harris, CPRP

*District 2 President*

Emily Baiada, CPRP

*District 3 President*

## Administration Staff

Tim Herd, CPRE

*Chief Executive Officer*

Niki Tourscher, CPRE, CPSI

*Director of Training and Get Outdoors PA*

Emily Gates

*Director of Strategic Partnerships*

Brian “BK” Koehler, CPSI,  
CPRP *Director, Pennsylvania Park  
Maintenance Institute*

Tracy Robert  
*Membership Services Manager*

Emily Schnellbaugh  
*Communications Manager*

Joleen Kough  
*Controller (Jan-May)*

Dan Hendey, CPRP, CPSI  
*Education Manager*

Jane LaMar  
*Administrative & Marketing Assistant*

## Revisions to the PRPS Constitution

The PRPS Board of Directors, in ongoing efforts to meet the relevant needs of the membership, recommended a transition in its organizational and operational structures with two recommendations put to a vote by the membership. The first was to dissolve the formal structures of Branches and Sections in favor of the establishment of Learning Networks, created according to member-driven professional interests. The second was to reduce the elected Board of Directors representation to nine, including President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, each District President and two At-large Directors. The revisions to the Constitution were approved by a membership vote, with the changes becoming effective at the next Annual Meeting in March 2023.

## Administrative Plan

Each year, the staff develops an Administrative Plan and Budget to meet the needs and trends, facilitate change, remain competitive and relevant, and to implement the broad objectives of the PRPS Strategic Plan, Leadership 2025 and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plan.

In 2021, a greater emphasis emerged on integrative planning and technology. Every traditional function can now be done via technology: meetings, education, networking, fundraising, registrations, communications and marketing. The pandemic has proven to be a game-changer in tech apps and use. Further, our stakeholders now bring such consumer expectations to all their interactions with PRPS.

With hopes that the pandemic’s lingering social and economic shadow fades soon, PRPS renewed its drive to connect in more ways to more collaborators in all our core purposes:

- Industry Collaborators in mutual marketing, sponsorship and business ventures.

- Advocacy Partners in shared expression of values, messaging, networking and influence.
- Education Partners in cooperative learning and professional development opportunities.
- Governmental Partners in enabling funding, programs and projects.

## PRPS Research: 2022 Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Provider Study

PRPS engaged Pennsylvania’s Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management (RPTM) to evaluate local park and recreation providers’ perceptions of local parks and recreation relative to funding, COVID-19 impacts and systemic racism in parks.

The study comprised the findings and analysis of two surveys: one of local park and recreation directors of the PRPS membership and the other of municipal recreation and park providers. Both were conducted among the memberships of Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs, the Pennsylvania Municipal League and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. The study concluded in early 2022, with its results presented at the Annual Conference and published following.

## Financial Standing

**Annual Audit.** PRPS financial statements are audited annually by the independent CPA firm, Maher Duessel. For 2021, the auditors identified no material deficiencies in internal control and declared that the financial statements are fairly stated in all material respects.

**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, 2022, these funds include 115 shares of Microsoft Corp, and 48,472 shares of the Vanguard Balanced Index Fund Admiral, with a combined current value of \$1,949,528. From its inception in September 2015, the fund has yielded 8.7 percent and has produced investment returns of \$169,235.

**Operating Reserve.** The Operating Reserve is an unrestricted fund balance set aside to stabilize finances by providing a cushion against unexpected events, losses of income and large unbudgeted expenses, and it consists of operating surpluses invested in the Vanguard Investment Fund, and

other unrestricted net assets (such as cash, retained earnings and other assets). Of the portion that is Board-designated in the Vanguard Fund, \$1,136,380 is restricted for the People, Parks, & Community Fund. \$937,337 is set aside as Operating Reserve, which is equal to 83 percent of total annual expenses.

**2022 Budget.** As of the end of the year (unaudited), total support and revenues amounted to \$1,698,348, with expenses of \$1,375,523, resulting in a \$322,825 increase in net assets. Results outperformed the budget due in large part to a significant increase in Friend Memberships.

**Assets & Liabilities.** As of December 31, 2022, net assets (unaudited) amount to \$2,542,881 (consisting of total assets \$2,921,270, minus total liabilities \$378,389).

## 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 & Expo

PRPS celebrated 75 years of education and networking by bringing attendees and exhibitors back together in-person for the first time since 2019. The 2022 PRPS Conference & Expo was held at the Kalahari Resort in Pocono Manor from March 29-April 1, 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in both a cancellation in 2020 and virtual option in 2021. This year, health and safety protocols were in place to ensure a safe environment for conference attendees and guests. While travel and budget restrictions resulted in a slight decrease in numbers, the overall event was well received and feedback reported satisfaction in the in-person event.

## Governmental Affairs

PRPS contributed to two major legislative victories during the 2021-2022 session of the Pennsylvania General Assembly that ended on November 30 and made significant progress on other legislative priorities. PRPS worked with many partners to help pass the largest investment — nearly \$700 million — in conservation, parks and recreation in almost 20 years. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) received \$100 million in



federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding for an Outdoor Recreation Program that will fund investments in state park and state forest infrastructure, community parks and recreation centers, trails and greenways, riparian buffers and other purposes.

#### *Provisional Hiring Law*

PRPS took the lead on the provisional hiring issue and worked closely with Rep. Brett Miller (R-Lancaster) on legislation that was signed into law as Act 12 of 2022 by Gov. Wolf on February 17. This legislation created a 45-day provisional hiring period for all employers but is especially beneficial for seasonal employers such as municipal park and recreation programs, summer camps, pools, etc.

#### *Municipal Pre-school Recreation Programs*

House Bill 1155, which would have preserved the ability of municipalities to offer popular and valuable preschool recreation programs, fell one step short of passage in the Senate after being unanimously approved by the House Children & Youth Committee, the full House of Representatives and the Senate Aging and Youth Committee. The bill as amended referenced the PRPS Protocol for Public Pre-school Recreation Programs. In 2023, we will continue to work closely with the sponsors of House Bill 1155, prime sponsor Rep. Barry Jozwiak (R-Berks) and lead co-sponsor Rep. Mary Jo Daley (D-Montgomery) to introduce a new bill.

#### *Helping Volunteers who Help our Parks and Trails*

House Bill 1694 would have provided limited liability protections from frivolous lawsuits against volunteers and volunteer organizations such as Park Friends and trail groups. Like HB 1155, HB 1694 fell one step short of final passage in the Senate after being unanimously approved by the House Tourism & Recreational Development Committee, the full House of Representatives and the Senate Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee. PRPS is working closely with the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation on this legislation. Our organizations plan to introduce bipartisan bills soon in the House and Senate.

#### *Lyme Disease and Other Tickborne Illnesses*

Pennsylvania by far leads the nation in the incidence of Lyme disease, and our citizens also suffer from other tickborne illnesses. PRPS

supports legislation that would require insurance companies to cover the diagnosis and treatment of these complex diseases. We will continue to work with Pennsylvania Lyme Resource Network and other stakeholders on this legislation next session.

#### *Updating Pennsylvania's Swimming and Bathing Regulations*

Pennsylvania's swimming and bathing regulations have not been updated since 2005. The Centers for Disease Control in the federal government has developed a national swimming pool standard known as the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC). PRPS and members of our Aquatics Branch have had discussions with legislators and staff regarding legislation that would update Pennsylvania's Bathing Code and link the regulations to the MAHC. We expect legislation to this effect to be introduced in 2023.

#### *Recreational Therapy Licensure*

PRPS has been working with the Recreational Therapy Licensure for Pennsylvania Committee on legislation that would provide licensure and scope of practice protection for recreational therapists in Pennsylvania. We expect to introduce new bills in 2023.

## **Finance**

The Finance Committee, chaired by the member-elected Treasurer, reviews the annual budget and investments and monitors their management. It also reviews the annual audit and its recommendations to the Board of Directors and updates the Financial Management policy as needed.

## **Health and Wellness**

The Health & Wellness Committee develops and disseminates information related to health priorities, trends and partnerships to highlight the connection between parks & recreation and personal and community health. In 2022, the committee continued its work with the DCNR to advance wellness in nature by encouraging park and recreation departments to host Walk with a Doc events as part of a statewide movement to promote health, nature, parks and trails. In addition, work was completed on the Culture of Health program guide, designed to help summer camp and youth program managers incorporate healthy activities and habits in their programs.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Due to continued COVID concerns, the Urban Park and Recreation Exchanges were limited to a single event in 2022. However, the November exchange in Lancaster was well attended and received. The DEI Toolkit was completed and more than 400 copies were distributed to local professionals throughout the state. A PDF version is also available on the PRPS website. PRPS education staff developed and test-ran a DEI training for Dauphin County Recreation. The DEI committee was made a standing committee with direct reporting responsibility to the PRPS board.

## **Education**

The recent reorganization of schools by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education has resulted in the loss of several park and recreation programs across the state. To assist agencies with raising awareness and recruiting new professionals, PRPS is developing social media efforts on careers and has compiled and posted on the website a comprehensive listing of postsecondary education programs related to parks and recreation.

## **Membership**

The Membership Committee meets monthly to monitor, develop and implement member recruitment and retention strategies. The committee's members continually strive to connect our new and existing members to practical training, resources and networking opportunities, and they strive to encourage full use of member benefits.

In 2022, the committee promoted the 2021 PRPS Leadership Development Academy's Level Up member engagement program, reviewed member benefits for relevancy and value and conducted outreach to smaller municipalities, community associations and vendors.

The committee annually evaluates the membership dues structure for the upcoming year and, for the sixth consecutive year, recommended no change in annual dues, crediting PRPS's dedication to fiscal responsibility in keeping dues stable/affordable for members.

## **Recognition and Awards**

The PRPS Recognition and Awards Program continues to honor individuals, agencies and organizations that have made significant contributions to the parks and recreation profession. The program offers several awards in various categories, including outstanding achievement, distinguished member, outstanding new professional, agency of the year, community champion,

green parks and awards for excellence in recreation and parks.

The awards recognize individuals, groups and organizations that have demonstrated excellence, innovation, leadership and resourcefulness in advancing the role and importance of public parks and recreation, improving the quality of life in the community and providing meaningful community impact.

## Membership Services

### Member Benefits and Enrollment

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 2022, PRPS membership increased an overall 6 percent in paid membership categories and saw a decrease of 13 percent in complimentary memberships. The biggest loss of membership was in the Student Member category, due to the elimination of park and recreation degree programs in Pennsylvania and declining enrollment.

## Professional Development

In 2022, PRPS Professional Development started to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels with a variety of in-person and virtual training opportunities. Some highlights include the largest class of the PRPS Leadership Academy since its inception, the reintroduction of the Parks, Programs and Conservation Resources Workshops (formerly Citizen Symposiums), and DEI trainings. The further cohesive partnership between PRPS and the Park Maintenance Institute allowed staff to create a better menu of programs to members and subscribers.

It also provided insight into some additional internal changes that will even further enhance the partnership in 2023.

While total offerings remained the same as 2021, a small decrease in attendance can be attributed to a higher percentage of in-person events and some continued restrictions on travel and budgets.

## Park Maintenance Institute



PARK MAINTENANCE INSTITUTE

The Maintenance Institute experienced positive growth in brand awareness, industry recognition and subscription base. The

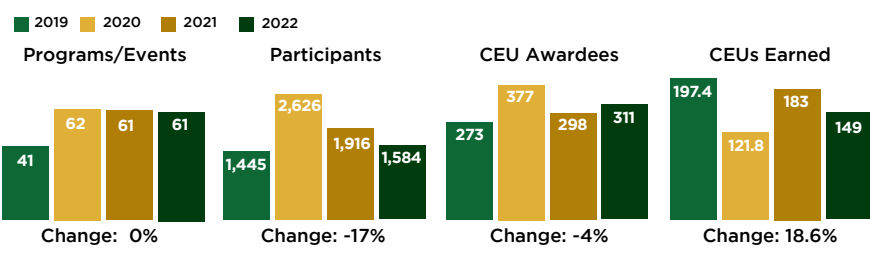
Institute was highlighted in multiple industry periodicals over the year, and exhibited and/or presented for several organizations, including the PA State Association of Township Supervisors, the PA State Association of Boroughs, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the American Public Works Association and the PA Municipal League, along with serving on several statewide committees.

The Institute continued to offer virtual training opportunities with expanding interest from audiences beyond the confines of the commonwealth, hosting five Shop Talks, three Round tables, three Tech Tuesdays and assisting the Park Resources Branch with their virtual workshop. Meanwhile the opportunity to host in-person workshops returned, benefiting both members and non-member stakeholders in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. The Institute hosted three field days in 2022, with one session in the spring and two sessions in the fall. Beginning in the second half of 2022 and continuing forward, all CPSI, playground maintenance and pool workshop coordination are the responsibility of the Maintenance Institute Director.

## Communications and Marketing

Over the past year, our organization has seen significant success in our communications and marketing efforts. Through targeted email campaigns and effective messaging, we have continued to increase our brand awareness and engagement with our target audiences. Our social media presence has grown and we have leveraged various digital platforms to reach new audiences and promote our events and services. Additionally, we have developed relationships with other partners and organizations, resulting in increased coverage and positive publicity. Overall, our communica-

### PRPS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING ENROLLMENTS



MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENTS	DEC. 2021	DEC. 2022	CHANGE
Professional	810	827	2%
Associate	105	112	7%
Student	646	550	-15%
Retiree	37	33	-11%
Patron	1	1	0%
Life	20	20	0%
Complimentary	31	30	-3%
Honorary	43	43	0%
Board	323	361	12%
Corporate	70	95	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>2,072</b>	<b>-1%</b>
Friends	44,063	56,520	28%

# Another "Good" Year 2022 Review

**Reached**  
**1,848,725**

**Engaged**  
**25,092**  
park lovers in PA  
across social media  
and email efforts

**Directed**  
**11,694**  
park lovers in PA  
to our website

**Welcomed**  
**12,368**  
new park lovers  
to the Good for  
PA community

**Featured**  
**6,251+**  
local parks with our  
Park Finder tool



# 2022 Communications Snapshot

<b>6,186</b> Followers FB, IG, Twitter	<b>44,577</b> Reach/Engagement FB, IG, Twitter	<b>11,773</b> Impressions Twitter, IG
<b>Total Emails</b> 786,499	<b>Website Pageviews</b> 221,210	<b>Blog Views</b> 3,929

## TOP PERFORMING FACEBOOK POST



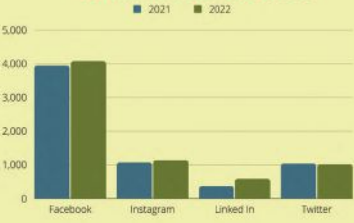
## TOP PERFORMING INSTAGRAM POST



## TOP PERFORMING BLOG

Finding Your Way Through Parks & Trails with Technology

## SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH



tions and marketing strategies have contributed to strengthening our position in the market.

In addition to our efforts to market the PRPS brand, we have continued to promote the "Good for You" campaign funded by DCNR. With the 2023 engagement of a new marketing firm, PINE Philly, we look forward to growing our audience substantially.

## Collaborations and Partnerships

PRPS continues to develop an ever-expanding portfolio of industry partners and donors with 95 corporate members. PRPS continues to build and strengthen a variety of educational, advocacy, and business partnerships to advance mutual goals.

**The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** and PRPS meet regularly to discuss and determine initiatives that are advantageous to park and recreation providers and users. DCNR staff regularly presents at the PRPS Conference & Expo and hold advisory roles on multiple PRPS initiatives including the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute, Healthy Lands Week, RecTAP, Get Outdoors PA, Health and Wellness Committee, and the Good for You, Good for All campaign.

**Healthy Lands Week** The inaugural launch was held September 24, 2022 (National Public Lands

Day), and extend through October 2, 2022 (Walk in Penn's Woods). It was marketed to land trusts, friend groups, park and recreation departments, state park volunteers, trails groups and community volunteer citizens. Led by PRPS, the Healthy Lands Week (HLW) partnership team provided necessary resources for success, including the development of marketing materials and a marketing plan, technical assistance resources and a website. HLW partners include Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, WeConservePA, Pennsylvania DCNR, Fairmount Park Conservancy, Philadelphia Parks Alliance, and the City of Philadelphia. Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation will take over as lead partner for 2023.

**Get Outdoors PA** After PRPS provided DCNR with recommendations regarding the future of Get Outdoors PA, the program was put on hold for the foreseeable future. The creation of the new Office of Outdoor Recreation will help guide and determine next steps for the initiative. Until that time, PRPS continues to manage the Get Outdoors PA mini-grant program and website.

**RecTAP Grants** The Recreation and Parks Technical Assistance Program (RecTAP) is a state-wide 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. Projects completed in 2021 include the Waymart Borough, Erie-Western Port Authority, Dalton Borough and Milford Borough.

## Strategic Collaborators

In 2022, PRPS built and/or maintained strategic collaborations with:

- Adagio Health
- American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) Mentorship Program
- Been There Done That With Kids
- City Parks Alliance/Greater & Greener International Urban Parks Conference
- Council of State Executives
- GP RED State of Education Committee
- Growing Greener Coalition
- Growing Outdoor Recreation in Pennsylvania, Recreation Engagement Coalition
- Happy Valley Adventure Bureau
- Keep PA Beautiful
- National Association of Park Foundations, Board of Directors
- National Recreation and Park Association



- Advocacy, Conference Education, DEI Committees
- National Recreation and Park Association Editorial Advisory Board, Mentor Program
- National Youth Sports Strategy Champion
- NRPA Advocacy Committee
- PA American Water Company
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Partnership, Stakeholders Group
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Invasive Species Management Plan Workgroup
- Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation
- Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union
- The Toro Company distributors E. H. Griffith, Grassland Equipment & Irrigation Corp. and Turf Equipment and Supply Company
- Visit Erie
- WeConservePA

## Sponsors, Advertisers & Other Funding Partners

PRPS is grateful to have teamed up with the following partners in 2022:

- Academy of Academy of Amazement

- Ag-Industrial Inc.
- Aquatic Facility Design Inc.
- B & R Pools and Swim Shop
- Best Line Equipment
- Bluegrass Recreation
- Carter van Dyke Associates
- Centre Foundation
- Cunningham Recreation
- DaySmart Software
- Designed for Fun
- EarthShare
- General Recreation & Landscape Structures
- George Ely Associates Inc.
- Herbert, Rowland & Grubic Inc.
- Landscape Structures Inc.
- Lawn and Golf Supply Company
- M&W Precast LLC
- Martin Stone Quarries
- Most Dependable Fountains
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Pannier Graphics
- Pashek + MTR Ltd.
- Pennsylvania American Water
- Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union
- Play and Park Structures

- Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau
- PSU Recreation, Park and Tourism Management World Campus
- R. J. Thomas Mfg. Co. Inc.
- Recreation Alliance of North Pittsburgh
- Recreation Resource USA
- Recreation Resource USA
- RK Mellon Foundation
- SERVEPRO Team McCabe
- Snider Recreation
- STIHL
- Sybertech Waste Reduction Ltd.
- Terrabilt Inc.
- The Toro Company
- United States Tennis Association
- USTA Middle States
- Vortex Aquatic Structures
- Wilson Consulting Group PC
- Private donors to PRPS General Fund, Member Support Fund, Advocacy Fund, Larry Williamson Scholarship, Paul Radzevich Memorial Scholarship, Donald V. Joyce Memorial Scholarship, People, Parks & Community Fund, Giving Tuesday and Year End Campaigns



THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING  
NEW TO DISCOVER  
IN THE POCONOS

This year, check off everything on your outdoor adventure bucket list in the Pocono Mountains! From thrilling whitewater rafting excursions to cruising our bike trails, you'll find the perfect adventure for everyone in your group. Find a gorgeous view when you hike one of our mountains, and afterwards, refuel and choose from a variety of eateries in our downtowns. Learn more at [PoconoMountains.com](https://www.PoconoMountains.com).

