



Investing in Mission, Capacity & People

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Overview

Rapid advancements in society, technology and association management drive PRPS innovations to remain relevant to its varied members, partners and stakeholders. PRPS intentionally invests in spreading its mission, expanding its technological capacity and developing its people and relationships to impact the profession and the public it serves. This brief report highlights many of the Society's initiatives and missional progress.

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

2024 Board of Directors

Ken Lehr, CPRP
President
Todd Roth, CPRP, AFO
President-Elect
Doug Knauss, CPRP, CPSI
Secretary
Jeremy Mortorff, CPRP
Treasurer

Paula Willis, CPRP
District 1 President
Tammy Agesen, CPRP
District 2 President
Ashley Broudy, CPRP
District 3 President
Erin Timby, CPRP
Director-at-Large
Kelsey Paul, CPRP
Director-at-Large

Culture of Giving

An internal priority of the Board focused on establishing a culture of giving within the Society and the need for 100 percent Board giving. Such a commitment would not only benefit PRPS directly but also meet a criterion of many grant applications for which PRPS is otherwise eligible. By championing this culture, the Board hopes to further the philanthropic and sponsorship connections of the Society.

2024-2027 Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Plan identifies practical actions to advance specific outcomes in four

broad issues affecting the statewide recreation and park industry: Public Policy and Advocacy, Sustainable Funding, Collaborative Development and Stakeholder Engagement. With an understanding of conditions, trends and relevant drivers of social and association change, the new plan maps an intentional future for PRPS. Annual progress of plan's strategies and outcomes is documented by the staff and monitored by the Board of Directors to assure its timely and relevant implementation by all its prime agents.

People, Parks and Community Foundation

In November 2023, the Board of Directors established the People, Parks & Community Foundation as a 501(c)(3) subsidiary of PRPS, which subsequently incorporated with the Pennsylvania Department of State, registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations and received its nonprofit determination notice from the IRS. In 2024, PRPS transferred \$1.2 million from its dedicated People, Parks & Community Fund to the new Foundation. Start-up tasks included creating a website (www.peopleparks.org), digital application and scoring system, and other operational infrastructure. In September, the PRPS Board of Directors appointed the Foundation's Board of Trustees, which assumed all responsibilities for the governing and operational management of the Foundation.

The Foundation supports recreational, educational and capacity development opportunities through grants to municipalities and nonprofits, with a priority to projects that assist under-resourced communities. The Foundation's first grant application period was set for April 21-May 30, 2025.

Administration Staff

Brian "BK" Koehler, CPSI, CPRP
Director, The Maintenance Institute
(through February 2024)

Dan Hendey, CPRE, CPSI
Sr. Education Manager &
The Maintenance Institute

Emily Schnellbaugh
Director of Communications

Jane LaMar
Administrative and Marketing Assistant
Kealy Daye, CPRP
Education Manager (started June 2024)

Molly Hetrick, CFRM
Director of Advancement
(through September 2024)
Niki Tourscher, CPRE, CPSI
Director of Professional Development
Tim Herd, CPRE
Chief Executive Officer
Tracy Robert
Membership Services Manager

Administrative Plan

The annual Administrative Plan forms the operational response to the longer-term organizational strategies outlined in the PRPS Strategic Plan. Much of the research that informed the new Strategic Plan also guides data-driven decisions for PRPS operational plans. These sources include national and state-specific research on recreation and park perceptions, funding, impacts, influence, demographics and societal and workforce changes. The 2024 Plan included updates to our investments in mission, technology and capacity, and people and relationships, and summarized the operational innovations to meet the year's needs, challenges and outcomes.

Financial Standing

Annual Audit. PRPS financial statements are audited annually by the independent CPA firm Maher Duessel. For 2023, 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, 2024, these funds include 117 shares of Microsoft Corp. and 21,831 shares of the Vanguard Balanced Index Fund Admiral, with a combined current value of \$1,107,702. From its inception in September 2015, the fund has yielded 9 percent and has produced a cumulative investment return of \$867,032.

Establishment of PPCF Account. In October 2024, PRPS transferred \$1,221,689 from the PRPS Vanguard account to the People, Parks, and Community Foundation's Vanguard account, pursuant to the November 2023

Board resolution to establish the foundation as a subsidiary of PRPS. The transfer included the initial \$1 million commitment, plus \$221,689, which represented the foundation's share of investment gains and dividends from November 2024 to October 2025.

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. Of the portion that is Board-designated in the Vanguard Fund, \$1,095,702 is set aside as Operating Reserve, which is equal to 75 percent of total annual expenses.

2024 Financial Statement. For the annual budget year that ended December 31, 2024 (unaudited), net revenues, less the transfer to PPCF, amounted to \$29,1929, with net assets of \$1,557,628 (consisting of total assets of \$1,802,180 minus total liabilities of \$244,552).

Member-Driven Committee Work Conference

The 2024 Conference & Expo, held Tuesday, March 12, to Friday, March 15, at Seven Springs Resort, hosted 387 registrants and 66 vendors. While PRPS has hosted the conference at this location for many years, the facility is now under new management, which saw changes in operations and facility fees. Even so, the event successfully exceeded budget estimates, and feedback was positive from attendees and vendors.

Initial conversations and meetings have commenced regarding the 2026 National Recreation and Park Association Conference, scheduled for September 29 to October 1 in Philadelphia. PRPS will play an integral part in the Local Host Committee.

Governmental Affairs

In 2024, the Governmental Affairs Committee developed a new Advocacy Toolkit, accessible at www.prps.org/advocacy-toolkit, to introduce governmental affairs and make advocacy easy, accessible and understandable for all PRPS members.

The Committee also worked on a wide range of legislative issues during 2024, among

them bills concerning programming grants for disabilities, playground safety, swimming education, sports betting, Sunday hunting, legal marijuana and public infrastructure grants. Two bills that required a greater amount of attention were:

Municipal Preschool Recreation Programs.

PRPS continues to advocate on behalf of legislation that would preserve the ability of municipalities to offer popular and valuable preschool recreation programs. Unfortunately, the Department of Human Services and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) maintain their opposition to the PRPS Municipal Preschool Recreation Protocol and insist on interpreting the law to extend their jurisdiction to control even recreation programs that are not day cares. The legislation did not reach a vote, and the effort will need to begin anew in 2025.

Updating Pennsylvania's Swimming and Bathing Regulations.

Pennsylvania's swimming and bathing regulations have not been updated since 2005. PRPS and members of our Aquatics Learning Network have consulted closely with legislators and staff on House Bill 1565 that would update Pennsylvania's Bathing Code and require the Department of Health to consult the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) when developing new regulations. The legislation will need to be reintroduced in 2025.

PRPS worked with the bipartisan, bicameral Park and Recreation Caucus to facilitate a meeting on collaborations for the outdoor economy and successfully obtained a Pennsylvania House Resolution and the Governor's Proclamation for recognizing July 21 as Park and Recreation Professionals Day in Pennsylvania.

In other advocacy efforts, PRPS updated its Legislative Priorities and Position Statements for 2024 and issued letters of support for Community Block Development Grants, youth mentoring, federal trails funding, the federal EXPLORE Act, recreational therapy licensure and support for initiatives of the National Recreation and Park Association, the Trust for Public Land, and the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation. PRPS also participated in drafting the Growing Greener Coalition's Pennsylvania Conservation, Waterways & Outdoor Investment Act framework.



Finance

The Finance Committee, chaired by the member-elected treasurer, assesses 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. The committee also reviews Career Advancement Scholarship applications and make recommendations for awards and amounts.

Education Committee

The Education Committee, made up of Learning Network and District representatives, worked with staff to facilitate Learning Network meetings, collate topics for discussion and future trainings, and created a 2025 schedule for network gatherings. Notably, for the first time, this Committee helped recruit educational sessions for the 2025 annual conference, reviewed all submissions and developed a slate of highly qualified speakers on relevant topics.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Committee coordinated the Urban Exchanges in Philadelphia and Harrisburg in 2024 and are planning regional "Inclusivity is Good for Tourism Business" workshops for 2025/26 in partnership with Temple University.

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 2024, the Membership Committee continued its commitment to increase awareness of member benefits through the Did You Know item in the weekly SCOOP, personal welcome outreach to new members, Level Up engagement recognition, an upgraded

online Job Center, association management software customizations, new “Tips & Tricks” resource and Zoom Meet & Greet for first-time conference attendees.

The committee continued their successful Enroll-a-Friend promotion, which resulted in the recognition of 32 recruiters introducing the benefits of PRPS membership to 59 new members, created new marketing materials and launched a targeted email campaign to 15 audiences.

The committee annually evaluates the membership dues structure for the upcoming year, and for the first time in eight years, recommended an approximate 15 percent increase in annual dues for most membership categories, which was approved by the majority of member votes.

Recognition and Awards

The PRPS Recognition and Awards Program acknowledges outstanding individuals, agencies and organizations for their significant contributions to the parks and recreation profession.

Award winners in 2024 include:

- **Outstanding Achievement Award in Honor of Fred M. Coombs:** Karen M. Schreiber, CPRP
- **Distinguished Member Award in Honor of Robert D. Griffith:** Cathy L. Wegener, Berks County Parks & Recreation
- **Community Champion Awards:** Bryan Benson, Moon Parks & Recreation
- **Outstanding New Professional:** Kelsey Paul, Carlisle Parks & Recreation
- **Agency of the Year Award:** Dauphin County Parks & Recreation
- **Excellence in Recreation & Parks:** 11 recipients
- **Green & Sustainable Park Award:** Dover Township Parks & Recreation

These award winners exemplify excellence and dedication in enhancing the parks and recreation profession and helping communities thrive through access to quality leisure activities and green spaces.

Membership Services

Member Benefits and Enrollment

PRPS actively promotes the economic, environmental, social and personal benefits

Member Type	Dec. 2023	Dec. 2024	Change	%
Professional	845	818	-27	-3%
Associate	94	112	17	18%
Student	582	439	-143	-25%
Retiree	31	35	4	13%
Patron	1	1	0	0%
Life	18	19	1	6%
Complimentary	30	28	-2	-7%
Honorary	46	44	-2	-4%
Board	305	310	5	2%
Corporate	101	133	32	32%
Total	2,054	1,939	-115	-6%
Friends	29,379	11,866	-17,513	-60%

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 and Awards program.

Enrollment notes:

- Student memberships are trending downward, matching university enrollments in park and recreation major programs.
- Professional membership reflects the loss of state park members, who have realigned with the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation.
- The sharp decrease in Friends members follows marketing decisions and changes of the Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union.

Professional Development

PRPS Professional Development staff underwent a period of transition, leading to lower-than-planned schedule of events but remaining consistent with prior years. This is due primarily to the increase in Learning

Network meetings, which increased the total participation by 29 percent.

Highlights include enhanced Urban and Community Recreation Exchanges, the new CPRE with Me Study Group, Certified Pool Operator Course, PRPS Programming Summit and another successful Virtual Therapeutic Recreation Institute. Numbers below reflect PRPS and The Maintenance Institute workshops and trainings as well as Learning Networks.

The Maintenance Institute. The Maintenance Institute has continued to grow in 2024. Acting on the recommended operational changes, it is now functioning as a complementary division of PRPS. Memberships are shared, and all members can reap the benefits. The Institute has also expanded its reach through a revenue-sharing partnership with other states. In addition to being more responsive to our members, the Institute has developed a diverse range of activities, including a calendar and marketing plan for roundtables, workshops, events and related materials, ensuring that we cater to the varied interests of our members.

In 2024, The Maintenance Institute provided numerous online workshops, Maintenance Roundtables and Shop Talks. We exhibited and/or presented for several organizations, including the Pennsylvania

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change
Programs/Events	41	62	61	61	63	61	-3%
Participants	1,445	2,626	1,916	1,584	2,325	3,021	29%
CEU awardees	273	377	298	311	699	814	16%
CEUs earned	197.4	121.8	183	149	367	321.8	-12%

State Association of Township Supervisors, and are developing a Trail Maintenance Workshop for several organizations in the Philadelphia area. In 2025, we will continue to develop these models and add content to the website and the Tool Shed Library, while producing webinars, workshops and in-person training opportunities that meet the needs of our members.

Communications and Marketing

PRPS' communication and marketing efforts utilize various digital channels, including social media, website and email messaging,

to connect with our members. In print, we produce materials such as a triannual *Pennsylvania Recreation & Parks* magazine, a membership directory and buyers' guide, conference guides, flyers and postcards.

In 2024, we launched the new expanded Job Center, which includes additional resources and an easy-to-use job upload feature, along with a new programming ideas page developed by the PRPS Leadership Academy Class of 2023 as its group project.

The statewide marketing and branding campaign for local parks and recreation, Good for PA, continues to build awareness with the production of monthly blog posts, a

newsletter, continuous and frequent social media content, as well as traditional public relations efforts. Enhancements to the web-based Local Park Finder, spearheaded by DCNR and the GOOD Team, created a more user-friendly tool. A GOOD rack card, distributed to all PA Turnpike Welcome Centers, features a QR code directed to the Local Park Finder and website.

Each third Friday in July on National Park & Recreation Professionals Day (originated in Pennsylvania by PRPS in 2019), we host Spotlight Celebrations in each of our three districts to recognize particular agencies for their contributions to their respective communities.

GOOD Things Happened in 2024!

We Got Our Name Out There:

42K+ Visits to goodforpa.com

12 Newsletters to 9,200 Recipients

37K+ Visits to Park Finder

24 Blogs Published

3K+ Rack Cards to PA Welcome Centers

We Got Social:

35-40 Posts Per Month

15K+ People Monthly Social Reach

Park Spotlight Instagram Featured Weekly Takeover in Harrisburg

Recognized by Leading Media:

The Philadelphia Inquirer
CBS News Philadelphia
ABC News Harrisburg
Bucks County Herald
And More!

New Features & Collaborations:

- Added Accessible Playgrounds Filter to Park Finder
- Launched Park Admins for Park Page Management
- Sent GOOD Stickers to the set of upcoming HBO Miniseries

Top Searched Parks of 2024:

Newburg Park, Penn Pump Park, Emmerling Community Park, Graham Park, The Roof

GOOD Job Award Winner:

#1

Dave Burger - Parks Maintenance & Assistant, Director of Public Works, Doylestown Borough

#goodforpa goodforpa.com

PA PARKS & REC good for you.

2024 COMMUNICATION STATS

Dig It! Blog

25 Blogs published

1,050 Views

Social Media

79.7K Facebook Reach

3.8K Instagram Reach

Website

148K pageviews

Emails

544K Total Emails

Top Posts of the Year

Facebook: Tim Herd's Retirement Announcement

3.4k Views

Instagram: Susquehanna Twp. goes to the PRPS Urban Exchange

675 Views

Collaborations and Partnerships

PRPS continues to develop an ever-expanding portfolio of industry partners and donors, with 133 corporate members (a gain of 32 percent over 2023). PRPS continues to build and strengthen a variety of educational, advocacy and business partnerships to advance mutual goals.

The PA 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 holds advisory roles on multiple PRPS initiatives including updating and republishing recreation and park manuals, The Maintenance Institute, RecTAP and the Good for You, Good for All campaign.

RecTAP 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. Projects completed in 2024 include those of Cherry Township, Lansford Borough, Bowmanstown Area Residents Connected, Eldred Township, Sugar Notch Township and Little Theatre Workshop of Perkasio.

A Choice Career. In a new national collaboration, PRPS produced a short video to introduce high school and college students to recreation and parks as a career choice and partnered with the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for its national marketing and distribution. Eighteen other state park and recreation associations elected to add their own logo and website to the end credits to help publicize and disseminate the video in their states. "A Choice Career: Parks and Recreation" is found at www.prps.org/careers, and at www.nrpa.org/choicecareer, along with a promotional toolkit and other career development materials.

Strategic Collaborators

In other projects in 2024, PRPS built and/or maintained strategic collaborations with:

- American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) Mentorship Program, Career Development Task Force
- Council of State Executives (NRPA National Affiliates)
- Dementia Friendly PA Board
- Growing Greener Coalition
- Growing Outdoor Recreation in Pennsylvania, Recreation Engagement Coalition
- Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization
- National Association of Park Foundations, Board of Directors
- National Recreation and Park Association Advocacy, Conference Education, Workforce Development Committees, Editorial Advisory Board
- New Jersey/Eastern PA Therapeutic Recreation Association
- PA Turnpike Welcome Centers
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps
- Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation
- Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
- Pennsylvania State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Technical Advisory Committee
- Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union
- Pennsylvania State University Extension Service
- PlayCore/GameTime/MRC Recreation
- Young Lungs at Play in PA

Sponsors, Advertisers and Other Funding Partners

- A Pocono Country Place
- A&H Equipment Company
- A.M. Logging LLC
- Ag-Industrial Inc.
- AstroTurf Corporation
- B & R Pools and Swim Shop
- Berliner
- Best Line Equipment

- CivicPlus
- Daxko
- DaySmart Software
- Diamond Waterfronts
- EH Griffith Incorporated
- Ferguson Waterworks
- General Recreation & Landscape Structures
- George Ely Associates Inc. & Playworld
- Gyms For Dogs Natural Dog Park Products
- Herbert, Rowland & Grubic Inc.
- iZONE
- Jeffrey Associates
- Lawn and Golf Supply Company
- Michael Baker International
- Most Dependable Fountains
- MRC Recreation & Gametime
- National Aquarium
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Pashek+MTR
- Patriot Pool Heating & Leak Detection
- Penn State Extension
- Playground Guardian
- PRPS District 3
- R.J. Thomas Mfg. Co. Inc.
- Recreation Alliance of North Pittsburgh
- Recreation Resource USA
- Secura Insurance
- Snider Recreation
- Sport Court
- Terrabilt Inc.
- TreeTrails Adventures
- USTA Middle States
- Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation Alliance
- Young Lungs at Play
- Zambelli Fireworks

