

### Board of Directors

Ken Lehr – President  
Todd Roth – President-Elect  
Doug Knauss – Secretary  
Treasurer – Vacant  
Paula Willis – District 1 President  
Tammy Agesen – District 2 President  
Emily Baiada – District 3 President  
Erin Timby – Director-at-Large  
Kelsey Paul – Director-at-Large

### District 1 Executive Committee

Paula Willis – President  
Marissa Haynes – President-Elect  
Carly Greene – Secretary  
Dave Hutner – Treasurer  
Chris Jeffrey – Representative  
Josh Werner – Representative  
Pete Geis – Representative

### District 2 Executive Committee

Tammy Agesen – President  
Heavenly Smith – President-Elect  
Audrey Logar – Secretary  
Eric Stauffer – Treasurer  
Tyler Fairchild – Representative  
Matt Hutchinson – Representative  
Brandon Pentz – Representative  
Dr. Julie Saville – Representative

### District 3 Executive Committee

Emily Baiada – President  
Ashley Broudy – President-Elect  
Sarah Prebis – Secretary  
Andie Graham – Treasurer  
Andrew Oles – Representative  
Ally Spielman – Representative  
Patrick Graham – Representative  
Rob Vandegrift – Representative  
Karen Hegedus – Representative  
Mike Richino – Past President

### PRPS Staff

Tim Herd – CEO  
Tracy Robert – Membership Services Manager  
Emily Schnellbaugh – Director of Communications  
Niki Tourscher – Director of Training & IT  
Dan Hendey – Education Manager  
Jane LaMar – Administrative & Marketing Assistant  
Molly Hetrick – Director of Advancement

# PA RECREATION & PARK SOCIETY

## 2024 AWARDS BANQUET

2024 PRPS

**Ri**DE  
the **Ti**DE  
to **PRPS**  
CONFERENCE & EXPO



**THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024**

**77TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO**

**SEVEN SPRINGS, PA**

***SPONSORED BY RECREATION RESOURCE USA***



## PROGRAM

<b>Welcome</b>	Barry Bessler, Chair Recognition & Awards Committee
<b>Presidential Citations</b>	Ken Lehr, President
<b>Recognition of Committees</b>	Barry Bessler
<b>Invocation</b>	Tammy Agesen
<b>Dinner</b>	
<b>Society Awards</b>	Barry Bessler
<b>Photographs</b>	Award Recipients

### **2024 RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE**

*Barry Bessler, Chair, CPRP, Retired*

*Tammy Agesen, CPRE, AFO, Lancaster County Dept. of Parks & Recreation*

*Phil Brady, CPRP, AFO, Plymouth Township Recreation & Park Department*

*Heather Cuyler, CPRP, CPSI, Pashek + MTR*

*Dave Hutner, Cranberry Township Parks & Recreation*

*Daphne Klahr, Ed.D., CPRE, Reading Recreation Commission*

*Jason Lang, MS, CPRE, East Goshen Township Park & Recreation Department*

*Audrey Logar, CPRP, Camp Hill Recreation*

*Deanna Schall, PA State Parks*

*Joe Seltzer, Montgomery County Parks*

*Jim Watenpool, CPRP, Retired*

### **AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARD BLUE RIBBON PANEL OF JUDGES**

*Karen L. Hesser, Chief of Operations, Five Rivers Metroparks, Dayton, OH*

*Michael Shiosaki, Director of Parks & Community Services, Bellevue, Washington*

*Cindie Sullivan, American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration, former  
Park Facilities Manager, Somerset County (NJ) Park Commission*

*Jamie Rae Walker, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Urban and Municipal Park Specialist,  
Texas A & M University*



### **Health and Wellness Committee**

**Chair:** Kathryn Hunninen  
Jason Lang, Ann Toole, Mike Kukitz, Tom Marino, Cheri Matter

### **2024 Annual Conference & Expo Committee**

**Co-chairs:** Michele Harmel and Paula Willis  
Ashley Marsteller, Faith Wentz, Kevin Hindes, Lance Welliver, Pete Geis,  
Nate Diegel, Jason Lang, Courtney Meehan, Cheri Matter, Katy Heslop, Jay  
Cerkon, Heavenly Smith, Josh Werner, Dan Miller, Marissa Haynes, Amy  
Wengrzyn

### **Education Committee**

**Staff Lead:** Niki Tourscher  
Brian Malcarne, Craig Shevchil, Dan Hendey, Erin Long, Jen Fean, Jeremy  
Mortorff, Jessica Tholey, Kelly Rebitz, Kylene Gill, Lisa Pearsall, Lisa Sum-  
mers, Marissa Haynes, Tammy Agesen, Tyler Walker, Walt Mulholland

### **Blogging Team**

**Staff Lead:** Emily Schnellbaugh  
Gwen Loose, Jason Cerkon, Chalet Harris, Jeff Witman, Tim Herd,  
Stephanie Larson, Bob Dolan, Dustin Hyder, Robert Campbell, Derek Mul-  
ler, Stacey Widenhofer, Monica Tierney, Kelly Ditson

### **Historical Committee**

Bob Griffith

## ***Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society***

*Thank you to all volunteers who serve on the*

*PRPS boards and committees.*

### ***Governmental Affairs Committee***

**Chair:** Doug Knauss

Angie Nagle, Alex Doty, Andie Graham, Andy Oles, Annette Logan, Brian Barrett CJ Weigle, Devon Serena, Don Holmes, Heather Cuyler, James Snow, Jason Cerkan, Megan Prusienski, Larry Williamson, Marci Mowery, Monica Tierney, Rebecca Richards, Steve Stroman, Tim Herd, Tom Ford  
**Preschool Committee:** Andy Oles, Brian Barret, Dan Sharapan, Derek Dureka, Joanne Sharapan, Pete Geis, Tammy Cohen

### ***Membership Committee***

**Chair:** Todd Roth

Ashley Broudy, Cathy Wegener, Tammy Agesen, Emily Baiada, Erin Timby, Jason Cerkan, Judy Houck, Katie Kollar, Marissa Duffy, Lynn Todd, Kelsey Paul, Tracy Robert, Molly Hetrick

### ***Finance Committee***

**Chair:** PRPS Treasurer

Tim Herd, Joe Minich, Heather Cuyler, Jeremy Mortorff

### ***Leadership Development Committee***

**Chair:** Tyler Walker

Dave Hutner, Jessica Cirilo, Heavenly Smith, Ashley Broudy, Ken Lehr, Courtney Meehan, Bill Salvatore, Kelsey Paul, Erin Timby

### ***Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee***

**Chair:** Kathi Muller

Ally Spielman, Andrea Crouse, Ashley Broudy, Chalet Harris, Dan Hende, Daphne Klahr, Debra Blair, Doug Knauss, Gina Batavick, Heavenly Smith, Judy Houck, Lisa Summers, Marissa Duffy, Tonya Brown, Walt Mulholland

**The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society extends its sincere congratulations to all those being recognized this evening. Each individual, group, and agency is acknowledged for the positive impact they have made on those served by our profession.**

## **A SUMMARY OF THE AWARDS PROCESS**

*The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society Awards Program is a competitive process.*

- The Awards Committee solicits nominations each year beginning with summer media announcements including the PRPS Weekly SCOOP and the PRPS website.
- Information and applications are available beginning in the summer on the PRPS website, by contacting the Recognition and Awards Chair, or the PRPS office. Those interested submit their entries electronically in January.
- Each member of the Recognition and Awards Committee receives an electronic copy of the nomination form for their review and evaluation against established criteria.
- Committee members vote anonymously and **do not vote** on their own agency submissions.
- The Agency of the Year Award is judged by an independent panel of experts in the field of parks and recreation.



## EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

### Carlisle Parks & Recreation “Skateboarding Lessons”

*Agency Director: Andrea Crouse*

*Recreation & Community Center Manager: Kelsey Paul*

*Recreation and Pool Manager: Anne Mitzel*

The idea of skateboarding lessons developed when the need for adding a skate spot at our new park came about. Several volunteers came together, acquired donations, and offered FREE skateboarding lessons to the community to introduce them to this misjudged sport. Lessons were held for two sessions prior to the completion of the Carlisle Skate Spot, in preparation for new boarders to use it to its full capacity. Lessons continued, at full capacity, each season since the opening of the Skate Spot, including expanding to beginner and advanced lessons. These continue to this day at no cost, including providing new boarders all the equipment needed to join. Due to the new interest and need in skateboarding in our community, a new small business opened its doors this past summer.

### Concord Township Parks & Recreation “Race for the Watershed: 5K Trail Run & Rubber Duck Regatta”

*Agency Director: Steve Jacobs*

This first-year fundraiser was held in partnership with the Newlin Grist Mill and featured 125 runners and 350 rubber ducks ‘racing’ in a two-part event. The day kicked off with a trail run followed by rubber duck races in the creek. \$10,000 was raised to purchase new water quality monitoring equipment, in addition to awareness being raised about the importance of supporting and protecting the local waterways that run through the community.

### PA DCNR “Priority Communities Analysis”

*Director of DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation: Tom Ford*  
*Section Chief, Landscape Partnerships & Educational Services: Kelly Rossiter*

DCNR and the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) updated an online interactive mapping tool to better account for diversity and equity characteristics. Josh was the primary DCNR staff that worked with TPL to create the initial mapping tool and the updated Priority Communities Analysis. He assisted with creating the tool, providing and verifying data, and collaborating on the analysis methodology. This mapping tool is now available online to assist park and recreation planners in achieving the goal of park equity.

### Hatfield Township Parks & Recreation “Pop-Up Events”

*Agency Director: Ashley Broudy, CPRP*

Hatfield Township’s Parks & Recreation Department recognized the need to offer events that were easily adaptable to constantly changing circumstances. There are always a variety of reasons events may not run and having the ability to be flexible in today’s world is crucial.

## AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARD Dauphin County Parks & Recreation Agency Director: Anthea Stebbins

In 2023, Dauphin County Parks & Recreation provided over 400 diverse recreation programs, including 33 large-scale special events, 175 nature programs, 150 Park Rx programs, ten virtual lectures, and other online programming, 12 summer day camps, 40 school, private, and group tours, 30 history programs, and a Community Garden program with 358 garden plots. Additionally, the department manages over 1,000 acres of wetland, forest, meadows, various buildings, playgrounds, pavilions, trails, and facilities, including a museum, nature center, and various historic sites. The department prioritized participation in professional development to improve skills, expand services, and increase efficiency. To fund upcoming programming and significant capital improvement projects that will expand access to new user groups, the department secured over 500,000 dollars in grants and sponsorships; they partnered with numerous volunteers, support groups, and organizations; assisted various parks, recreation, and open space preservation entities through grant dollars, peer consulting, and maintenance assistance; and provided a variety of parks, trails, and standing facilities.

### Award Sponsored by BAB Enterprises

*A very special thank you to Recreation Resource USA for sponsoring the Awards Reception and Dinner.*

*Following dinner & recognition of our colleagues’ fabulous accomplishments, please join us for a wee bit o’fun as we go green heading into St. Patrick’s Day! Live music, Irish dancing, and crowning of the District Champions.*

## SAVE THE DATE

PRPS CONFERENCE & EXPO



MARCH | 16-19 | 2025  
HERSHEY LODGE & CONVENTION CENTER

## **OUTSTANDING NEW PROFESSIONAL**

**Kelsey Paul, CPRP  
Carlisle Parks & Recreation**

During her last seven years as a Parks and Recreation professional, Kelsey has been a positive impact and natural leader in her community. She has always been passionate about the parks and recreation field and remains enthusiastic and innovative, sharing her love for recreation, the outdoors, nature, and sports with her community. Kelsey is dedicated to making a difference, serving on various boards professionally and voluntarily, including serving the last year on the PRPS Board of Directors as a Director-at-Large and the last two years as Board Chairman of a non-profit organization promoting community/engagement and providing free opportunities to the community for ten days around the July 4th holiday.

## **DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD IN HONOR OF ROBERT D. GRIFFITH**

**Cathy L Wegener, CPRP  
Berks County Parks & Recreation Department**

Cathy Wegener, with over 43 years of dedicated service, embodies unwavering commitment to the parks and recreation profession. During her career, she has served on the PRPS Board of Directors as Community Branch Chair, Conference Co-Chair, and on numerous banquet and education conference committees. As the Director of Berks County Parks & Recreation Department, Cathy drove the completion of the Gruber Wagon Works Restoration Project—a multi-million and multi-year historic preservation project. Additionally, is responsible for the Hiester Canal Center, the development of large-scale festival and events, an innovative program series, and a highly-lauded volunteer program that has grown over 300% during her tenure.

## **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN HONOR OF FRED M. COOMBS**

**Karen M Schreiber, CPRP**

During her career, Karen Schreiber has left an indelible mark on parks and recreation, showing her dedication to the profession and residents through her tireless efforts to improve recreation opportunities and parks for her community. As Director of Parks and Recreation for Muhlenberg Township, Karen has guided numerous park improvement projects, including the 109-acre Jim Dietrich Park, which received the 2021 PA Great Public Spaces award; created and led countless community programs; and guided Muhlenberg Parks and Recreation Department to become a significant contributor of tourism and economic benefit to Berks County. Through her efforts, Karen has strengthened partnerships with local service groups within the Township, which support and volunteer with their recreation programs. Karen has served many roles within PRPS committees, volunteered on several conference committees, and continues to mentor young professionals and organize a network of parks and recreation professionals in Berks County. Karen Schreiber's high commitment to her community and the Parks and Recreation profession is

Hatfield Parks & Recreation implemented Pop-Up Events as a way to continue to bring larger events to the community, cultivate local partnerships, and highlight different aspects of recreation; while allowing for the flexibility to acclimate to changes and evolving community needs each year. After two years, these have become some of the most popular community events!

## **Lancaster County Dept. of Parks & Recreation “Community Partnership to Expand MWEE in Lancaster City”**

*Program Manager: Tammy Agesen, CPRE*

*Executive Director of Let's Go 1-2-3: Keisha Scovens*

In partnership with Let's Go 1-2-3, the Community Partnership to Expand MWEE in Lancaster City provided innovative environmental science education programs to more than 950 under-served middle school students and their families. Through systematic implementation of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences, this 3-year, federally-funded program involved cooperation from 7 public and non-profit organizations and served 5 schools. This partnership effort helped to fill the gaps in environmental science education left by a global pandemic and forever changed the approach of classroom lessons all while introducing hundreds of families to local parks and greenspaces.

## **Lancaster County Department of Parks & Recreation “Rescue Ready”**

*Program Manager: Tammy Agesen, CPRE*

Rescue Ready is the successful lifeguard recruitment tool that saved Lancaster County Swimming Pool from being closed for the past two summers due to lack of staff. Working collaboratively with administrators from J.P. McCaskey High School, Lancaster Country Day, the YMCA of the Roses and local organizations, Rescue Ready identified potential lifeguard candidates and removed the economic barriers that may have prevented these youth from being gainfully employed as lifeguards—such as transportation, certifications, and uniforms. The result of this program was that over 38 new lifeguards were recruited and hired and ensured that our summer seasons were successful! Much more than a means of employee recruitment, it is an investment in the community's youth and their future.

## **Lancaster Recreation Commission “Lancaster Beer Gardens”**

*Agency Director: Heather Dighe, MAED, CPRP*

*Program Director: Jack Bingeman*

Lancaster Beer Gardens has quickly become a popular family friendly attraction in the city of Lancaster. Partnering with local entertainment venue, Tellus 360, the Lancaster Rec provided a traveling, pop up bar, showcasing the local parks. The Lancaster Beer Gardens not only highlighted local parks, but featured different local restaurants and food trucks, treating attendees to a variety of options. Whether it's the beautiful green space, time spent with friends or great drinks, Lancaster Beer Gardens brought the community together.

## EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS

### Philadelphia Parks & Recreation “Camp Philly”

*Commissioner: Orlando F. Rendon, Jr.*

*Deputy Commission of Programs: Bill Salvatore, CPRP*

*Assistant Director: John Murawski*

Camp Philly is a unique opportunity for Philadelphia children from the ages of 8 to 12 to attend a FREE, overnight camping week in the Pocono Mountains. For most campers, this is their first experience camping, swimming in a lake and being away from home. Camp Philly takes place on the magnificent 40-acre property of Camp Speers located in Dingman's Ferry. We believe that every child deserves an over night camp experience to enjoy all that nature has to offer. We feel that this experience helps foster the sense of pride in and love for the love of nature in the next generation of park goes.

### Pottstown Parks & Recreation “Manatawny Green Spooky Golf 2023”

*Agency Director: Michael Lenhart, CPRP, CPSI*

*Program Leader: Andie Graham, M.Ed., CPRP*

Pottstown Parks and Recreation operates an 18-hole, ADA-accessible miniature golf course, Manatawny Green, as part of the park system. Built on a vacant industrial site in the downtown gateway district, it was envisioned as a means invigorate blighted industrial property, reclaim greenspace, and provide a low-cost, family-friendly activity for residents and visitors from neighboring communities. Although Manatawny Green's business model has struggled through its first 10 years of operation, surviving floods, a pandemic, and a third-party lease, the 2023 season concluded with a hugely successful, multiple-day event for Halloween, Manatawny Green Spooky Golf. The program ran extended evening hours with spooky decorations and sound and lighting effects designed and implemented by Borough staff. The event brought 300+ visitors to the facility over 4 evenings of operation, accounting for 13% of 2023 sales. Dozens of families and friends from throughout the greater metropolitan region were drawn to Pottstown for the event, which showcased an original municipal amenity enhanced through the hard-work and ingenuity of the staff.

### Upper Allen Township Parks Department “Certified Autism Center”

*Agency Director: Chad Krebs, CPRP, CPSI*

The Upper Allen Township Parks Department is the first municipal park agency in Pennsylvania to earn Certified Autism Center (CAC) designation from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). A CAC is a facility or organization in which at least 80% of their staff is highly trained, fully equipped, and certified in the field of autism. Every CAC facility ensures that families with autism and other sensory disorders are properly accommodated.

### Upper Gwynedd Township “Unplugged Week”

*Agency Director: Sarah A Prebis, CPRP*

*Program Leader: Leigha Adduci Getty*

Unplugged Week is a week-long event that helps families put down their electronics and come recreate with Upper Gwynedd Township. We utilize all aspects of our township such as the parks, police, waste water treatment plant, administrative staff and public works staff. We do everything from Family Gaga, to a tour of our Waste Water Treatment Facility, to Crafting with the Commissioners, to Mosaics with the Manager. Residents have a chance to see all aspects of their community during this week.

## GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE PARK AWARD

### Dover Township Parks & Recreation

#### Eagle View Park

#### Agency Director: Chalet Harris, CPSI

Dover Township's Eagle View Park leverages ecological restoration to service the community by enhancing connectivity, resiliency, water quality and recreational opportunities. The new park contains a pavilion, outdoor fireplace adjacent to sledding hills, outdoor classroom, and 3/4 of a mile of walking trails and bridges connecting the park to Dover Area Middle School in neighboring Dover Borough. The park includes a 10-acre wildflower meadow and a 5-acre restored floodplain wetland system. Two unnamed tributaries to Fox Run flow through the heart of the park. Floodplain restoration practices carried out along these tributaries manage stormwater associated with the park improvements, improve regional water quality, increase local flood resiliency, and enhance recreational and educational opportunities. The ecological enhancements entailed restoring 3,440 feet of degraded stream channel, creating 5 acres of critical wetland habitat, and establishing a 10-acre wildflower meadow buffer around the floodplain wetland.

## COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARDS

### Bryan Benson

#### Moon Parks & Recreation

Bryan Benson, a vital member of our Public Works team, exceeds expectations in his role. Whether as Santa Claus at festive events, transforming spaces into winter wonderlands with light displays, or spearheading the successful "Wheels, Wings & Wishes" initiative, he epitomizes community engagement. Bryan's tireless efforts raised over \$218,500 for Make-A-Wish, granting 47 wishes, aligning seamlessly with PRPS goals. As a true Community Champion, Bryan Benson's impact on our community is profound.