

February 26, 2019

Honorable Stanley Saylor
Majority Chairman Appropriations Committee
House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
245 Main Capitol Building

Chairman Saylor:

The following information is being provided in response to questions raised at the recent hearing before the House Appropriations Committee regarding the budget of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. We have listed each question with our response immediately following each question. We have also provided two attachments in response to questions.

Rep. Culver requested that we send the House Appropriations Committee a complete list of projects on our multi-million-dollar infrastructure backlog, with project description and dollar amount.

The first Attachment is a list comprising our backlogged maintenance projects with project descriptions and associated costs. I would like to note that Governor Wolf's \$4.5 billion Restore Pennsylvania infrastructure plan could address a majority of the backlogged projects on our list through state park and forest infrastructure rehabilitation, repair or replacement of approximately 36 high hazard dams, flood mitigation through stream bank rehabilitation and riparian buffer implementation, rural dirt road maintenance and development, and, other quality of life improvements to local and state parks.

Rep. Lawrence asked if he could get a copy of our Conservation Easement plan with Lyme Timber.

The Lyme Timber/DCNR Easement Agreement is attached as the second document.

Rep. Gabler asked a two-part question. First, how do we treat State Park lands versus State Forestry lands when making In-Lieu-of-Tax payments?

We make \$6.00 per acre In-Lieu-of-Tax payments for all Forestry lands owned by DCNR. We make \$6.00 per acre In-Lieu-of-Tax payments for all State Park lands that were purchased with Project 70 funds. In addition, we have two State parks that have fixed payments not related to a per acre charge. We make an exception for Evansburg State Park because there are 50 homes in the park, located in two school districts, with families and children requiring schooling. We also make an exception for Pymatuning State Park, where the fixed payment amount was part of the original agreement when we acquired the property that made-up the Park.

Rep. Gabler then asked, when we consider purchasing land in various areas of the state, do we consider the amount of lands that are already publicly-owned before we purchase the land?

In general, land acquisition is part of DCNR's legislated mission to promote and preserve the Commonwealth's State Park and Forest System. We prioritize land acquisition to enhance public access for outdoor recreation, protect and conserve water resources, and provide critical habitat.

Specifically, the Bureau of Forestry considers land acquisitions a key part of our strategy to conserve working forest lands in the Commonwealth and to promote public access and recreation. The bureau has multiple acquisition priorities, expressed within the State Forest Resource Management Plan, that focus efforts on areas primarily with existing public lands and conserved properties. We prioritize properties that promote public access, but also link and tie together existing public lands and recreational opportunities and infrastructure. Other important considerations are protecting riparian areas that help protect water quality and reduce flooding. We also aim to purchase lands that conserve working forests and ensure access to timber resources for the long-term. Each region of the Commonwealth presents different opportunities and challenges when it comes to conserving forest land through acquisitions. We work with conservation partners throughout the Commonwealth to identify important projects and leverage funding. Additionally, through our management plan public input process and local involvement, we work to identify what is important to the communities in each region as far as priority landscapes and recreational needs and opportunities. In the northcentral region specifically, because of the amount of existing public land, many of the bureau's land purchases focus on inholdings, linkages to other public lands and access points.

The Bureau of State Parks' considerations for potential acquisitions to add land to a park include, the amount and type of local public lands near a particular park that may present an operational and/or programmatic relationship. In general, acquisitions are usually contiguous with existing state park land and align with our trustee responsibilities for protection and conservation of critical natural and cultural resources.

I am hopeful that these responses satisfactorily address the House Appropriations Committee members concerns.

If you require additional information, please contact my Legislative Affairs Director, Joe Graci, at (717) 772-9062 or jgraci@pa.gov.

Sincerely,

Cindy Adams Dunn
Secretary

cc: Chairman Bradford