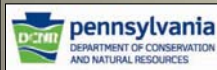




PA Conservation Explorer

Conservation Planning & PNDI Environmental Review

April 3, 2019



Who is the PA Natural Heritage Program?

Member of International Network of Heritage Programs



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

Partners



In Cooperation With



Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer *Conservation Planning & PNDI Environmental Review Tool*



www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us

- **Rolled out April 2016**
- Stats In 2018
 - 20,545 users
 - Ran 87,000 sessions on tool
 - Submitted 21,600 Projects
 - 74% of projects screened required no agency consultation

Conservation Planning: land-use and conservation planning

- Anyone can view and create maps of conservation areas, protected lands
- Access to Conservation Planning is open to all users
- 4,000 conservation planning reports ran in 2018

Project PNDI Screening: PNDI Environmental Review and obtain a PNDI receipt

- Perform screenings for potential impacts to T&E and special concern species and resources.

Conservation Explorer vs. Old “PNDI” tool

- Visible species information
 - State agency environmental review polygons now visible (no more “black box”)
 - User can plan projects more efficiently and avoid and minimize conflicts with visible ER information
- Users can save and update projects
- Projects can be submitted online to state agencies, shortening response times significantly
- More conservation planning information available (e.g., stream designations, natural heritage areas, protected lands, etc.)
- Much more user friendly interface
- Users now have upfront information, easily accessible, early on in the permitting or planning process.

Conservation Explorer: Information Currency

- Explorer is updated quarterly
 - New species data added based on field work, new data received by Natural Heritage Program
 - Some records removed (populations extirpated, habitat converted, etc.)
- Regulatory Updates
 - Explorer updated ASAP when regulatory changes are made (may occur between quarterly updates if necessary)
- Regulatory change notices posted on Natural Heritage website and on Conservation Explorer tool
- Goal is to keep information in tool as current as possible

Communications

Homepage can be used to communicate regulatory changes to species in tool



Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer
Conservation Planning and PNDI Environmental Review

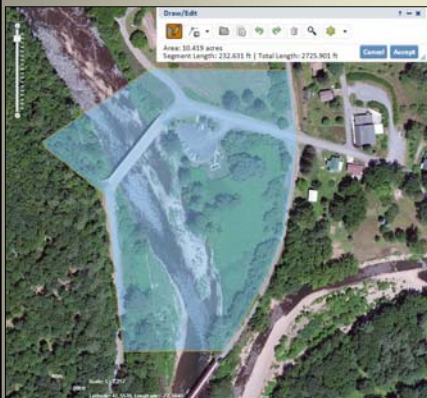
Welcome to **Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer**—a one stop shop for conservation planning and PNDI environmental review. The Explorer provides conservation information on biological diversity, protected lands, streams and other natural resources for planning purposes and also allows users to screen a project area for potential impacts to threatened, endangered, and special concern species.

DCNR Wild Plant Regulations Finalized
Saturday Dec. 22, 2018, DCNR's plant regulations will be published in final-form in the *PA Bulletin*. Monday Dec. 24, 2018, plant statuses changes will be implemented in the PA Conservation Explorer according to the regulation update. A total of nine plant species are being added to the regulation, nine are moving from a lower classification to a higher classification, two species are moving from a higher classification to a lower classification, and 31 are being removed. There are 79 plant name changes, within the classifications (no classification changes). There will be 22 fewer classified species as a result of this regulation change. No significant changes should be experienced by PNDI users. This rulemaking was proposed on Nov. 28, 2017. More information about the plant regulation changes can be found on DCNR's website: <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/RareThreatenedAndEndange...>



Access to County Natural Area Inventory Reports

Define an Area of Interest



Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources
Conservation Planning Report

8/12/2015 09:11:21 AM
Meadow Run Conservation Area

Natural Heritage Areas
Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are sites that have been identified as critical habitat for species or natural communities of concern. This dataset is designed to identify, map and discuss areas that support species of concern, exemplary natural communities, and broad expanses of intact natural ecosystems that support components of Pennsylvania's native species biodiversity. These areas are prioritized based upon their ecological qualities and provided with recommendations regarding their management and protection. Most of the existing NHAs have been developed through PNHIP's County Natural Heritage Inventories—systematic studies of the critical biological resources of a county.

Natural Heritage Site Name	Description	Reference
America Swamp	This site includes a boreal conifer swamp that supports a small but vigorous population of a plant species of concern. This swamp is within a large forested area and there is no evidence of immediate threat of disturbance. It is located within Lackawanna.	Link
Bald Mountain Road Swamp	A "Red spruce palustrine forest Natural Community" appears ideal habitat for several plant species of concern, though no rare plant species seen.	Link
Balsam Swamp-Lackawanna Co	This site includes a "Red spruce palustrine forest Natural Community" that supports a plant species of concern. It is characterized by an open canopy of Eastern Larch and Red Spruce which grow above the mostly ericaceous shrubs and the sphagnum-covered h	Link
Bear Lake / Grassy Pond	Bear Lake and nearby Grassy Pond include an "Acidic Glacial Lake Natural Community" with clear water and low nutrient levels. These wetland habitats support three plant species of concern.	View the CNHI report for more information
Behler Swamp	Wetland habitats support several species of concern.	Link
Canada Bog	Fairly intact floating "L. multiflorus-cranberry peatland Natural Community" surrounded by beaver impacted spruce and tall shrub swamp. Plant species of concern occurs in bog associated with sundews and yellow-eyed grass. A portion of this site lies on 51a	Link
Haas Route 115	One odonate species of concern documented at this site in 2005.	Link
Horseshoe Swamp	This site includes a boreal conifer swamp with an open canopy and a dense shrub understory including a small population of a plant species of concern. The swamp and surrounding woodlands are state forest lands.	Link

Generate a Conservation Report

What is Environmental Review?

Environmental Review is: The review of projects (e.g. development, restoration, energy etc.) throughout the state for potential impacts to Endangered or Threatened species, Special Concern Species, or Rare and Significant Ecological Features.

Special Concern Species are: Plant and animal species that are not listed as threatened or endangered by a jurisdictional agency, but are identified on a PNDI Receipt as an at risk species. These include: (1) plant and animal species that are classified as rare, vulnerable, tentatively undetermined or candidate, (2) taxa of conservation concern and (3) special concern plant populations.

Rare and Significant Ecological Features: Non-species resources identified on a PNDI Receipt. These may include unique geological features, significant natural features or significant natural communities.



Who Performs Environmental Review?

Environmental Review is performed by 4 different agencies:

DCNR: Plants, Natural Communities, Moths & Butterflies, Geologic Features

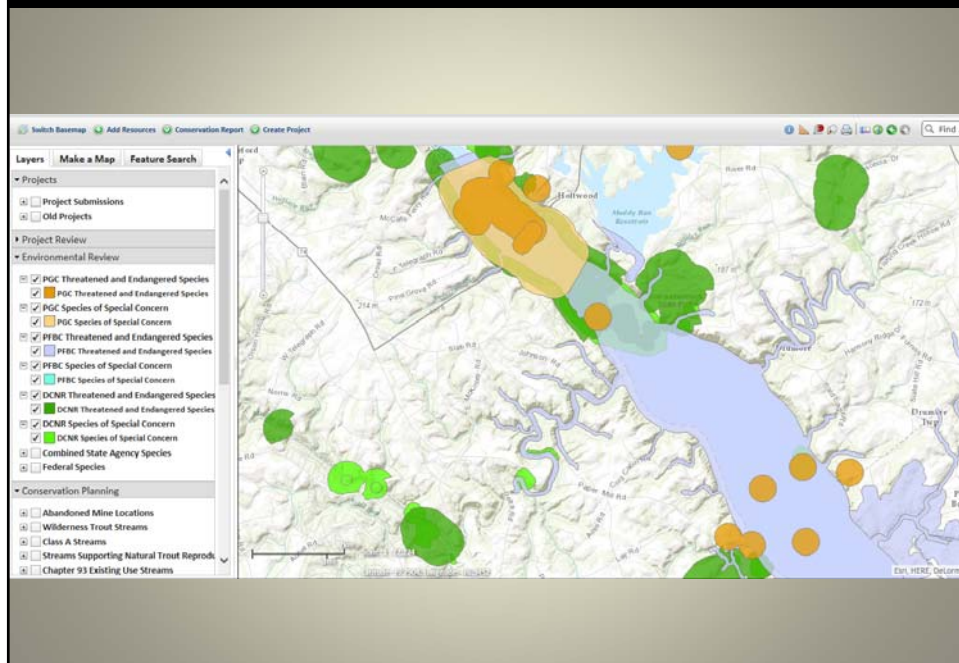
Fish & Boat Commission: Fish, Aquatic Invertebrates, Amphibians, Reptiles

Game Commission: Birds, Mammals

USFWS: Federally-listed Species



PNDI Environmental Review



Summary of Enhancements

- **Improved User interface**
 - Clicking conservation info on/off
 - Improved mapping
 - User accounts—save projects
- **Visual Species Habitat Info**
 - Public: see conservation information for planning
 - Environmental Review: users register see visible species habitat for the review process
- **Updated species polygons:**
 - Move from the use of mostly Generic species buffers vs. Species Habitat-based polygons
 - Improved ability to see areas of potential habitat conflict/impact
- **Project Submission**
 - Submit to agencies online via tool
- **Administrative functions**
 - Improved ability to make tool changes, upgrades and fixes

PNDI Receipt Convenience Charge

\$40 per PNDI project

- T&E Names are displayed on PNDI Receipt (unless sensitive)
- User can submit project for further review to FBC, PGC and DCNR through Explorer
- PNDI Receipt can be modified if needed (e.g., project area changes)
- No cost option—obtain review directly from agencies
- Government agencies exempt from charge—request exemption (approximately 8,000-9,000 exempt PNDI receipts in 2018)
- Approximately 12,000-13,000 PNDI receipts/year (using convenience charge option)

Contact Information

- sttsmit@pa.gov
- 717.783.4543