

PENNSYLVANIA'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN THE KEYSTONE RECREATION, PARK, AND CONSERVATION FUND



The Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund invests in community recreation projects, state and local parks and trails, land and water conservation, libraries, historic preservation, and higher education projects in communities throughout the state. The Trust for Public Land conducted research summarizing and quantifying the economic benefits to local communities of Keystone Fund investments.

Projects made possible by the Keystone Fund support hundreds of thousands of jobs across Pennsylvania. Additionally, for every \$1 invested in land and water conservation, \$7 in natural goods and services is returned to the state of Pennsylvania, according to The Trust for Public Land. 2013 marks the 20th anniversary of Keystone investments that have enriched communities, businesses, and residents throughout the state.

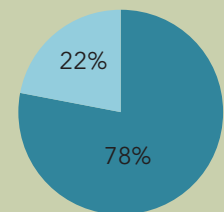
Generate Jobs and Strengthen Local Economies by Protecting Open Space

Between 1995 and 2012 the Keystone Fund protected over 100,000 acres, helping to create jobs and business and support the tourism and outdoor recreation industry.

- Outdoor recreation is a major component of Pennsylvania's economy. Each year it generates 219,000 jobs, \$21.5 billion in consumer spending, \$1.6 billion in state and local tax revenue, and \$7.2 billion in wages and salaries in the state.¹
- State parks are supported by the Keystone Fund, helping them stay premier outdoor recreation destinations. Nearly 38 million people visit state parks each year spending \$859 million. These visitors support 12,600 jobs in local communities, accounting for \$398 million in wages and salaries for Pennsylvanians.²

The public supports maintaining and enhancing funds for a healthy environment and vibrant communities.

92 percent of Pennsylvanians surveyed think that state funds dedicated to preserving farmland and open space, providing parks and trails, and protecting rivers and streams should continue to be used for these purposes.



78 percent of Pennsylvania voters also want to increase state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms, even if it would cost the average household \$10 more annually.

Source : Fall 2012 Penn State Poll

A Valuable Return on Investment: Natural Goods and Services

Natural lands and water resources conserved by the Keystone Fund provide a host of benefits that have a measurable economic benefit to the State of Pennsylvania and its communities, including natural services such as drinking water protection, flood control, and air pollution removal.

- The Trust for Public Land analyzed the economic value of natural goods and services provided by Keystone Fund protected lands between 1995 and 2012. For every \$1 of Keystone funds invested, \$7 in economic benefits is returned to the State of Pennsylvania.³

Revitalizing Communities and Creating Jobs

Investments made by the Keystone Fund in parks, trails, libraries, and historic preservation help to revitalize neighborhoods and communities while creating new jobs.

- National studies have shown that multi-use trails generate nearly 10 jobs for every \$1 million invested.⁴
- Parks and trails make neighborhoods more desirable to live in. This increases property values and leads to reinvestment in communities. According to a recent analysis, Philadelphia's park system increases the market value of nearby residential properties by \$689 million.⁵
- Historic preservation increases heritage tourism which attracts visitors who spend money that supports local jobs. Visitors to just the state's 50 heritage sites, 12 Heritage Areas, and the Independence Mall Historic Area spend \$1 billion annually supporting 37,000 jobs.⁶
- Libraries contribute to a strong economy by providing jobs and injecting money into local communities through \$68 million in annual in-state purchases and \$180 million in annual wages paid to library employees.⁷

A Healthy Bottom Line for Local Governments

Open space conservation provides a fiscal benefit to both residents and municipalities through cost savings on infrastructure and services and enhanced property values.

- Open space and working lands contribute more in taxes than they require in municipal costs; residential land does not. Studies of 15 Pennsylvania communities found that open space and working farms and forests require on average only \$0.18 in services for every \$1 generated to the community in tax revenues. Residential lands in these communities, meanwhile, require \$1.26 in services for every \$1 in tax revenues.⁸
- In southeastern Pennsylvania, protected open space adds \$16.3 billion to the value of the region's homes. The increase in home values attributed to open space is responsible for \$240 million in annual property and transfer tax revenues in the region.⁹

Maximize Impact of State Dollars

Pennsylvania's investment in conservation through the Keystone Fund leverages funding from private (e.g., individual donors) and local sources (e.g., local municipalities). By attracting support from other sources, the state does not have to bear the entire cost of a conservation project and therefore maximizes its investment.

- From 1995 to 2012 Pennsylvania's Keystone Fund leveraged \$324 million in matching funds from other sources for land conservation. That means every \$1 of Keystone Fund spending on land conservation was matched by \$2.16 in additional contributions (i.e., the Keystone Fund paid \$0.32 for every \$1 worth of land and water conservation). When all Keystone projects (i.e., looking beyond land and water conservation) between 1994 and 2012 are considered, the Keystone Fund has leveraged \$3.13 for every \$1 invested.¹⁰

End Notes

1. Outdoor Industry Association, 2012. The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Pennsylvania.
2. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 2012. The Economic Significance and Impact of Pennsylvania State Parks: An Updated Assessment of 2010 Park Visitor Spending on the State and Local Economy.
3. See full report for methodology at tpl.org/pennsylvania
4. Garrett-Peltier, H., 2011. Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts. Political Economy Research Institute.
5. The Trust for Public Land, 2008. How Much Value Does the City of Philadelphia Receive from its Park and Recreation System? For the Philadelphia Parks Alliance.
6. The Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation Activities in Pennsylvania, 2011. Prepared for Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and Preservation Pennsylvania by Econsult Corporation and Urban Partners.
7. Griffiths, J., D.W. King, and S.E. Aerni, 2007. Taxpayer Return-on-Investment in Pennsylvania Public Libraries. University of North Carolina School of Information and Library Science.
8. American Farmland Trust, 2010. Cost of Community Services Fact Sheet. Farmland Information Center, Northampton, Massachusetts.
9. Greenspace Alliance and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2011. The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania.
10. Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, 2012. Excludes state parks and state forests.

Full report available at tpl.org/pennsylvania

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