

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



WILDLIFE
LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY



WILDLIFE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The mission of the Wildlife Leadership Academy is to engage and empower high school age youth to become Conservation Ambassadors to ensure a sustained wildlife, fisheries and natural resource legacy for future generations.

In this year's annual report, we are excited to share the stories and accomplishments of our Conservation Ambassadors as well as how we are expanding our staff, program and fundraising vision.

Student Benefits

In spring of 2015, we created a nomination process to recruit youth. The nomination process

has given us a mechanism to send a direct invitation to the nominated students to apply, letting them know about the benefits of becoming Conservation Ambassadors, which include a letter of a recommendation for college applications, certification of community service work, and a certificate designating them as Conservation Ambassadors. Our students are also eligible to

receive three college credits from Cedar Crest College, return to the Academy tuition free the following year, compete for college scholarships, and join an Academy Alumni Network of 100+ wildlife, fisheries, and conservation professionals. This new method of recruitment allowed us to successfully run four field schools with almost 100% enrollment.



A TEAM EFFORT

The Institute Board of Directors, Executive Director Michele Kittell (left) and Program and Outreach Coordinator, Katie Cassidy (right), work wholeheartedly to ensure that our program is not only successful programmatically and financially, but that every student feels supported in their needs.





“ WLA transformed an interest I had at a young age into a passion that I want to pursue as a career. Connecting with the instructors and completing my outreach gave me the confidence and skills that have helped to motivate me thus far. - Academy Alum

What We Have Learned

What we continue to learn about is the impact that the investment of education and mentorship can have on these students. We see this in not only the number of hours the students put in for their outreach but in the communities they impact with their conservation message. In 2015, Katie Cassidy, was hired as full time Program and Outreach Coordinator. With the addition of Katie, we are able to have even more consistent engagement and mentorship for our youth after the field school. She has improved our monthly outreach e-newsletters and created

a team of youth NextGen Blog Correspondents resulting in a weekly student written nature-focused blog on our website. We feel we have a responsibility to continue to invest in these students and nurture their willingness to make a difference in the world on behalf of conservation and the environment. For the second year, we partnered with Penn State Dubois on a college visit day to the wildlife department and added an additional visit to Susquehanna University, supporting students' interests in the wildlife/fisheries conservation field. All of these measures are

being implemented to ensure the success of our students as they move from high school to college to career.

Thank you for supporting our efforts this past year to educate and empower the next generation of conservation leaders!

Michele Kittell, Executive Director
PA Institute for Conservation Education

CONSERVATION AMBASSADORS

In 2015, 94 youth participants attended four fieldschools from 39 counties across the Commonwealth. Sixteen adults participated as mentors.

KEYS TO WILDLIFE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S SUCCESS

PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION



Wildlife biologists, media professionals, and educators from across the state engage students in hands-on learning about the anatomy, behavior, botany, population dynamics, ecology and habitat management of a particular Pennsylvania wildlife or fish species. Because of the extensive curriculum, students are eligible to obtain three college credits from Cedar Crest College.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Students practice public speaking and learn how to communicate through print media, television and radio interviews, and educational programs. During the field school, students participate in group presentations and projects, a mock town meeting, and team-building exercises to build leadership and interpersonal skills.

SCHOOL TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

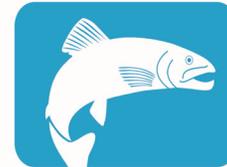


At each field school, school teachers who participate learn alongside the youth participants, serving as the primary mentors and motivators of their team, guiding the students as they push themselves academically, physically, and emotionally. Teachers leave the field school excited and inspired with tools that enhance their classroom skills and with the opportunity to obtain college and ACT 48 credits.



Pennsylvania
Bucktails
 June 16-20, 2015
 Stone Valley Recreation Area

THE DETAILS:
 19 new Students
 4 youth mentors
 4 adult mentors
 YEAR EST: 2007



Pennsylvania
Brookies
 July 7-11, 2015
 Sieg Conference Center

THE DETAILS:
 20 new Students
 4 youth mentors
 4 adult mentors
 YEAR EST: 2013



Pennsylvania
Drummers
 July 21-25, 2015
 Powdermill Nature Reserve

THE DETAILS:
 18 new Students
 4 youth mentors
 4 adult mentors
 YEAR EST: 2010



Pennsylvania
Ursids
 August 2-6, 2015
 Stone Valley Recreation Area

THE DETAILS:
 20 new Students
 4 youth mentors
 4 adult mentors
 YEAR EST: 2015

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Through our mentorship, after each field school, students take their knowledge and leadership skill back to their communities.

Leaders in Training

Led by experts, each field school requires students to engage in hands on learning about each focus species and its habitat. Subjects range from anatomy and physiology to plant collection and identification. During the week, the students are also challenged to become leaders by participating in media interviews, speaking to their peers about what inspires them, and debating current conservation topics.



Listening to a bear's heartbeat.



Documenting plant species.



Collecting macroinvertebrates.



Observing wildlife.



Nature journaling.



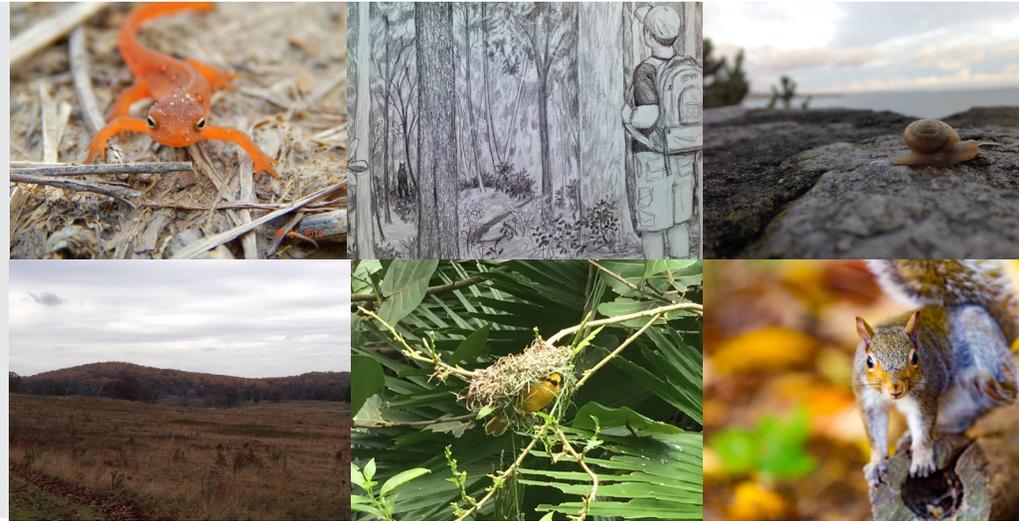
Learning how to communicate.



The proper education and engagement of youth in the conservation field is the most imperative ideal for the future of our Earth. Molding a generation of creative, educated, involved and service-oriented conservationists can do nothing but fashion good stewards of the land. The Wildlife Leadership Academy provided me with the skills, connections and knowledge to take my first steps toward being the best Conservation Ambassador I can be. Mac R., 2015 Academy Student

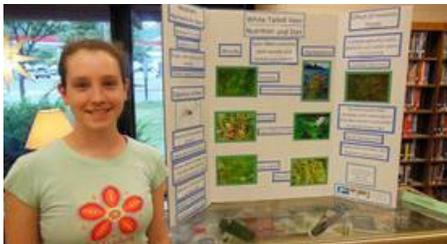
The NextGen Blog

In 2015, a weekly youth written blog was established. Six Youth Blog Correspondents submit articles reporting on their experiences in nature - from the native wildlife in our backyards to the wilds of the Minnesota forest to the trees of Africa! The blog is posted weekly on our Facebook page!



A Framework for Engagement

Through a framework for engagement, Academy youth keep a record book of their accomplishments. This documentation includes who they worked with and how they connected with them. These record books are evaluated and students are rewarded for their accomplishments through incentive trips, college scholarships and the opportunity to return to field school.



Julie shares her educational tri-fold.



Kelly cleans up a local stream.



Nate assists at a local hatchery.



Eli assists with brush removal.



EDUCATION

Youth give educational presentations at their local sportsmen's clubs and school classrooms, share their tri-folds at local locations like their libraries, businesses, and community organizations.



SERVICE

Youth are encouraged to participate in activities with wildlife biologists and assist local conservation organizations with field projects like stream cleaning and habitat enhancement.



MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Youth write articles for the Academy's Next Gen Blog, their local papers, and conservation magazines. They also engage the media through interviews with their community newspapers and radio stations.



CREATIVE ARTS

Youth are encouraged to connect with the outdoors through the arts. Students create portfolios of nature photos, write journal entries about their experiences in the natural world, sketch, paint and more!



BY THE NUMBERS

The impact of the Wildlife Leadership Academy Conservation Ambassadors since establishment in 2007.

60

Number of counties, since 2007, that our youth hail from across PA.

1,270

Number of projects conducted by our youth in the areas of conservation education, community service, media communications and the arts.

5,400

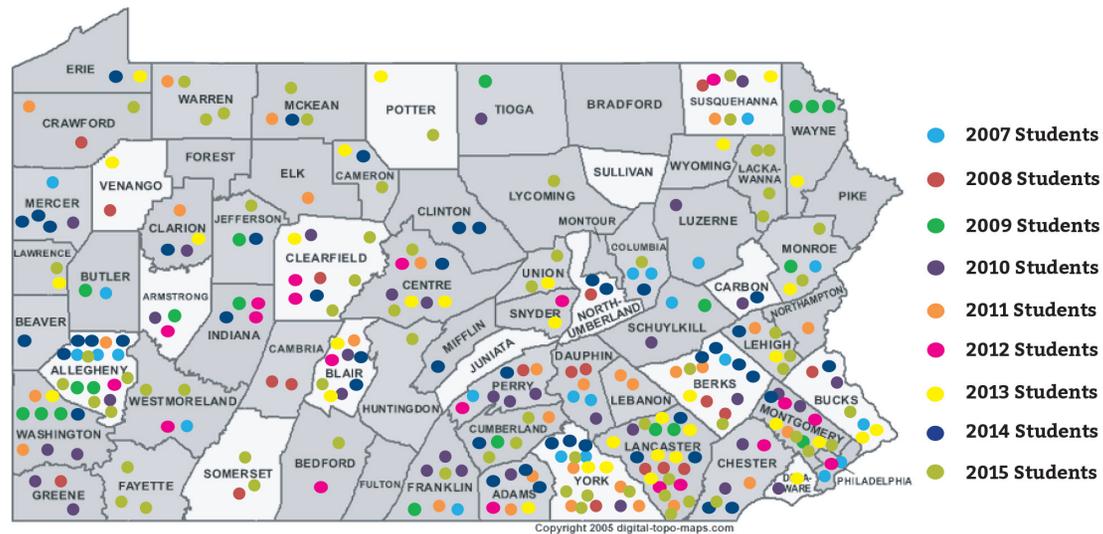
Number of hours our Conservation Ambassadors have put towards education, communication, service and the creative arts.

In the last nine years, **274 Pennsylvania teens** from 60 counties in the state have participated in Wildlife Leadership Academy. Beyond the direct impact of the Academy on participating students, the program has reached a much larger audience of Pennsylvania citizens including other youth and adults as Academy youth

participate in outreach projects. To date, graduates have conducted 1,270 conservation education, communication, service and creative arts projects; engaged in more than 5,400 contact hours with the public; and reached an audience of more than **25,000 citizens** across the commonwealth.



Distribution of Wildlife Leadership Academy Graduates



OUR STUDENTS HAVE WORKED WITH CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS AND STATE AGENCIES INCLUDING:

Audubon PA
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 ClearWater Conservancy
 Conservation Officers of Pennsylvania
 Association
 National Wild Turkey Federation

Ruffed Grouse Society
 Trout Unlimited
 Quality Deer Management Association
 The Wildlife Society, PA Chapter
 Local and State Parks
 Conservation Districts

Pennsylvania Game Commission
 Pennsylvania Fish and Boat
 Commission
 Pennsylvania Department of
 Conservation and Natural Resources

3-YEAR VISION

With this vision, we hope to provide more opportunities for young conservation leaders across PA and beyond.

EXPAND OUR EXCLUSIVE CONSERVATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAM.

Through partnerships and additional staffing, three additional field schools will be developed focusing on bass, turkey, and elk. **By meeting this goal, 432 more youth will be engaged and in turn will contribute to conservation education and service work in their communities.**

CONNECT OUR CONSERVATION AMBASSADORS THROUGH AN ACADEMY ALUMNI NETWORK.

The Academy Alumni Network will offer connection as our students continue to grow in their careers by offering support in the form of career advice and networking opportunities. **Meeting this goal will ensure success for our Academy Alumni, 700 strong by the end of 2018, through a network of support as they move from high school to college to career.**

LAUNCH THE ADVANCED CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP TRAINING (ACLT) PROGRAM.

The ACLT will be an advanced leadership and professional development program for Academy alumni that expands their leadership skill set, engages them with environmental policy makers, and enriches their transition into college and the work place. **Meeting this goal will mean that our first class of ACLT students will graduate by 2017.**

2016

BASS FOCUSED
FIELD SCHOOL

2017

TURKEY FOCUSED
FIELD SCHOOL

2018

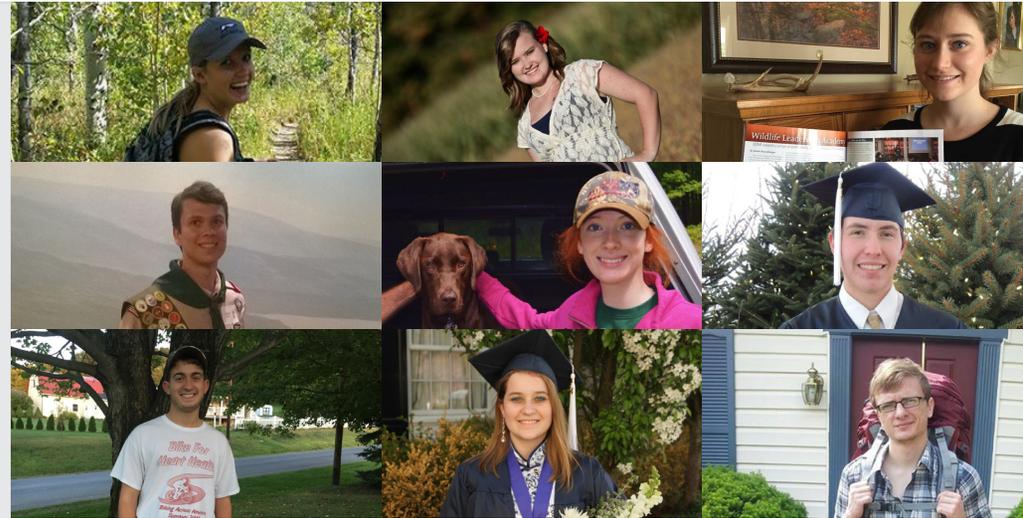
ELK FOCUSED
FIELD SCHOOL

432

MORE YOUTH ENGAGED
OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS

Alumni Connections

In 2015, we surveyed our Academy Alumni about where they were and how the Academy had impacted them. In alignment with our three year vision, development of an Academy Alumni Network will offer connection as our students grow in their careers by offering support in the form of career advice and networking opportunities.



“ The Wildlife Leadership Academy started my fascination for botany, as plants are the keystone of most ecosystems. While I have always had a deep connection and appreciation for the natural world, attending this program cemented my decision to pursue a degree and occupation in the environmental science field. I learned that I needed to step up to combat today’s numerous environmental problems. - Academy Alum

Looking Forward, President’s Message

As we reflect on the last 10 years, the board of directors is very proud that the Wildlife Leadership Academy has become the flagship program for the Institute. Over the last several years, I have had the pleasure of visiting all of our field schools and have been thoroughly impressed not only by the quality of education that we are providing for our youth but by the immeasurable impact we are having long term on the lives of our students. I spoke with an Alumna, Jackie, who told me that before the Academy she was a different person – shy and introverted – and now in college she

is confident and outgoing ready to fulfill her goal to become a wildlife biologist. I also spoke with Alumna, Elisabet, who will become a career cellular biologist but assured me that, inspired by the Academy, she will be a life-long conservationist. Looking forward into the next 10 years, we have a vision to empower more students like Jackie and Elisabet as we grow our number of field schools, support our Alumni, and develop an Advanced Conservation Leadership Training Program. As we face more conservation issues than ever, the board of directors is proud to support

and advocate for the Wildlife Leadership Academy as the program trains our next generation of conservation leaders, leaders who will become professionals, consumers and voters, to be engaged and informed citizens. We look forward to staying connected with our alumni, supporters and partners as we fulfill this vision, together.

Handwritten signature of Joseph M Reibman, Esq.

Joseph M Reibman, Esq.

Board President

FUNDRAISING + FINANCIALS

2015 was a year of growth and new development initiatives.

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY

The end of 2015 was the launch of our 1 MILLION dollar Establishing a Legacy campaign to support the Academy's 3-Year Vision. Our new fundraising strategy includes (1) foundation requests for larger and multi-year asks, (2) Sponsorship solicitation, (3) Scholarship Fund solicitation and (4) grassroots crowd-source solicitation including our #10forthenextgen challenge and "Pay It Forward" youth driven fundraising challenge. More information can be found on our campaign website at www.PICEweb.org/give.



#10forthenextgen

This campaign encourages our grassroots supporters, friends, alumni and past parents who believe in the mission of the Academy to give donations of \$10 or more.



SPONSORSHIP

This campaign encourages businesses who are interested in having their brand associated with the next generation of conservation leaders to give donations at \$1,000 and above.



SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This campaign encourages conservation organizations and individuals who are interested in supporting youth in need as well as our college scholarship awards to give donations at \$250 and above.



PAY IT FORWARD

This campaign challenges our students to raise \$500 each to "Pay It Forward" to next year's incoming class of Conservation Ambassadors.

2015 EXPENSES	TOTAL
Scholarships	\$4,703
Salaries & Wages	\$103,062
Intern Wages	\$5,100
Payroll Expenses	\$11,387
Workers Comp Insurance	-\$97
Accounting Fees	\$4,778
Professional Fees - other	\$16,800
Office Supplies	\$1,448
Program Supplies	\$15,032
Technology: Computer/Software	\$2,044
Fundraising	\$326
Telephone	\$968
Postage, Shipping, Delivery	\$975
Website & Internet	\$366
Program Transportation Rental	\$5,518
Equipment Vehicle Rental	\$1,647
Printing & copying	\$5,749
Promotions & Publications	\$6,882
Program Facility	\$12,103
Program Meals	\$23,862
Office Rental - Utilities & Storage	\$8,166
Travel and Meeting Expenses	\$7,881
Auto Fuel	\$789
Depreciation & Amort. Expense	--
Insurance - Auto, Liability, Directors	\$4,873
Membership Dues	\$430
Background Checks	\$660
Bank Charges	\$23
Misc - Other	\$312
TOTAL	\$248,789

2015 INCOME

Individual Contributions	\$46,584
Scholarship Contributions	\$13,447
Foundations	\$95,253
State/Federal Grants	\$3,000
Earned Revenue - Tuition	\$24,162
Other Income	\$815
Funds from Reserves	\$65,528
TOTAL INCOME	\$248,789

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

Tuition for the field school is \$500.

Each year, the Institute offers three types of scholarship support for our students:

- tuition scholarships for new youth,
- tuition scholarships for students who return as mentors to the new class and
- college scholarships for top youth outreach.

2015 Awarded Scholarships

New Youth (57)	\$17,650
Youth Mentors (12)	\$6,000
College Scholarships (3)	\$1,500



WILD GAME DINNER

A NEW TRADITION

In the fall of 2015, a new tradition was started with our first Wild Game & Wine Dinner held at Schuylkill Country Club. Over \$2,000 was raised with 42 people in attendance. This dinner will become an annual event!

10K IN 10 DAYS

A NEW CHALLENGE

With the launch of our end of the year #10forthenextgen campaign, we set a challenge on Facebook to raise \$10K in 10 days. Over \$5,000 was raised from over 100 donors giving \$10 or more. This will become an annual challenge!

▶ THANK YOU

The Wildlife Leadership Academy is made possible with the donations of time and money by so many passionate supporters.

Institute Board of Directors

The Academy is administered by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education and led by the efforts and vision of our board of directors.

Joseph Reibman, Esq., *President*

Peter Duncan, *Vice President*

David Keim, *Treasurer*

James Brett, *Honorary Director*

Rick Carlson

Gary Wessner

Elmer Ebling

IN MEMORIAM

In 2015, we lost board member David Keim.

David was a generous and passionate person. His kindness and thoughtful demeanor is very missed.

Academy Advisory Committees

Provide support and input on program development, implementation, and long-term sustainability.

PA BUCKTAILS

Dr. Gary Alt, wildlife biologist

Dr. Chris Sacchi, Kutztown University

Wayne Sierer, Wilson High School Faculty – retired

Lisa Smith, private consultant and ecologist

Tim Smail, Quality Deer Management Assn

Kim VanFleet, Dickinson College

PA DRUMMERS

Mark Banker, Appalachian Forestry Consultants

Tammy Colt, Pennsylvania Game Commission

Linda Ordiway, Ruffed Grouse Society

Lisa Williams, Pennsylvania Game Commission

PA BROOKIES

Dee Fisher, PA Fish and Boat Commission

Greg Hoover, Penn State Extension

Rebecca Holler, Trout Unlimited (TU)

Scott Koser, Clinton County Conservation District

Samantha Ferguson, PA Council of TU

Judy Sittler, PATU, Spring Creek Chapter

Ken Undercoffer, PA Council of Trout Unlimited

Adrienne Gemberling, Clearwater Conservancy

PA URSIDS

**In development, Led by Dr. Gary Alt*

HABITAT LEVEL SPONSOR \$10,000 +



HEMLOCK \$5,000 +



MOUNTAIN LAUREL \$1,000 +

The Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation
Oliver Bros.
The WHM Group

GRASSROOTS \$250 +

Organizations/foundations who gave specifically to Academy tuition scholarships as well as college scholarships to youth who excel in their outreach activities.

Allegheny Highlands Bird Club	PA Quality Deer Management Association,(QDMA), SE PA Branch, <i>In memory of Mike Gerth</i>
Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities	PA QDMA, Mason Dixon Branch
Federated Sportsmen of Lancaster County	PA QDMA, North Central Whitetails Branch
Lancaster County Conservation District	PA National Wild Turkey Federation, Cascade Thunderin Chapter
The Wildlife Society, Pennsylvania Chapter	Black Forest Conservation Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association
Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited	
PA Trout Unlimited, Donegal Chapter	
Somerset Health Services	

FOUNDATION & AGENCY SUPPORT

The following foundations and agencies have invested in the Academy's mission..

Richard King Mellon Foundation
Colcom Foundation
Grable Foundation
PA Department of Environmental Protection
Eastern Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation
Laurel Foundation
The NRA Foundation
PNC Charitable Trust
Schuylkill Area Community Foundation
Sordoni Family Foundation
Amaranth Foundation
Reidler Foundation

PARTNERING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Provide support in the form of staff time as instructors/mentors and/or Advisory Team members, facility use, equipment or materials.

Advanced Telemetry Systems, Inc.	Kutztown University	Pennsylvania State University	Temple Fork Outfitters
Buffer Creek Sporting Clays	Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art	PSU Dubois	Texas Brigades
Cedar Crest College	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission	Penn State Extension	Trout Unlimited, Pennsylvania Council
Cedar Springs Trout Hatchery	Pennsylvania Game Commission	Powdermill Nature Reserve,	Trout Unlimited, Lloyd Wilson Chapter
Clearwater Conservancy	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	QDMA, PA Council and Chapters	Trout Unlimited, Spring Creek Chapter
Clinton County Conservation District	Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association	Ruffed Grouse Society	Tylersville State Fish Hatchery
Hunters Sharing the Harvest Department of Environmental Protection		Susquehanna University	USFWS, Northeast Fishery Center
		The Wildlife Society, PA Chapter	U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers

THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION LEADERS

THE WILDLIFE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY IS A COOPERATIVE INITIATIVE OF STATE AGENCIES AND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS. IT IS COORDINATED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION, A 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.

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