

WILDLIFE
LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

2016 Annual Report

**Celebrating 10 YEARS of educating and empowering
the next generation of conservation leaders!**



Note from the Director

I feel lucky.

When I was growing up and into adulthood, I had a plethora of mentors at my reach. My father would take me hunting for the first day of buck, my biology teacher encouraged my interest in wildlife, my college advisor supported my love of nature journaling. I feel lucky because, in my role with the Academy, I get to lead an amazing team of people who make sure that our students have these same opportunities. From our full time staff to our summer instructors, we get to engage with our students and Alumni and hear their successes and sometimes their failures and encourage them to keep going - to keep making a difference on behalf of our natural resources.

As we continue to grow, we not only want to create depth by adding more field schools but we want to create breadth to ensure our students feel supported as THEY continue to grow into adulthood. Thank you for sticking with us on this journey. Yours in doing what matters,



Michele Kittell, Executive Director
Wildlife Leadership Academy



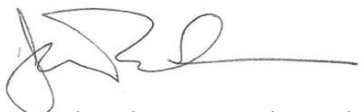
Academy Director, Michele Kittell (middle) with Alumni Elisabet Bjanes (left) and Program and Outreach Coordinator, Katie Cassidy at the 10 year anniversary celebration in October 2016. Over 100 Alumni and their families as well as instructors, volunteers and advisors traveled from across Pennsylvania to join the celebration!

Note from Academy Board President

The Board of Directors was excited to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Wildlife Leadership Academy this year. We are all very proud of the accomplishments and growth of the program since 2009.

As we look forward to the coming years, we wholeheartedly agreed to change the organizational, non-profit name simply to the Wildlife Leadership Academy. This shift in identity will allow us to tell our story better to our supporters, parents and participants.

Each time I engage with the participating youth of the Academy, I am continually impressed by their passion and fortitude to make a difference for our natural resources and the world around us. We are all looking forward to supporting this passion with you in the next 10 years.



Joseph Reibman, Board President
Wildlife Leadership Academy



As we look forward to the coming years, we, the board of directors, wholeheartedly agreed to change the organizational, non-profit name simply to the Wildlife Leadership Academy.

An Overview of the Academy

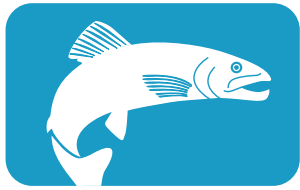
The primary goal of the Wildlife Leadership Academy is to develop a corps of well-informed youth who are committed to serving as spokespersons for wildlife, fisheries and natural resource conservation in Pennsylvania. The Academy begins with rigorous summer field schools that focus on wildlife/fisheries conservation and leadership skills development. Students complete the field schools with extensive knowledge about conservation, leadership, and communication skills that are measured through testing and critical thinking projects. Students are prepared to inform the public about conservation through educational programs, media contact, service work, the creative arts, and outdoor mentorship.



OUR MISSION

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.





WILDLIFE
LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY

3 YEAR VISION 2016-2018



EXPAND OUR EXCLUSIVE CONSERVATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAM.

Through partnerships and additional staffing, three additional field schools will be developed focusing on bass, turkey, and plants. 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 LEADERSHIP TRAINING (ALT) PROGRAM.

The ALT 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 ALT students will start by August 2018.

Alumni Network

The ACADEMY ALUMNI NETWORK serves our students in the following ways:

CONNECTION – Through a new website students can connect with instructors and each other as well as keep up to date on the Academy.

SUPPORT – In a new online platform, students can connect in a private group where they can seek career advice, job opportunities, and general support in their journey from college to career.

SERVICE – Students can take advantage of the opportunity to give back to the Academy by volunteering, working or teaching at the Academy summer field schools.



In the summer of 2016 Academy Alumni served as Academy Support Team members, Field School Coordinators, Field School Instructors, and Lead Field School Coordinators. Above are several of our Alumni representing ages from high school to college to a Ph.D. candidate!

The Wildlife Leadership Academy Year-Round Staff



MICHELE KITTELL
Executive Director

Leads administration and program growth and development for the Wildlife Leadership Academy.



KATIE CASSIDY
Program & Outreach Coordinator

Leads youth field school recruitment and marketing and post field school youth mentorship as students complete their community outreach.



GARY ALT
Curriculum Coordinator

Leads curriculum development, implementation, and assessment for all Academy field schools.



SARA BANKER
Administrative Specialist


Manages bookkeeping, alumni and donor records, participant admissions, and hiring summer staff.

TEAM WORK: A KEY TO SUCCESS

As the Academy has grown, so has our staff and field school instructor and volunteer teams. The support of these people plays a vital role in our success of educating and empowering the next generation of conservation leaders.



Nominate a Teen



Do you know of a student who would benefit from our program? Nominate them today!

*In 2016, a new nomination process was launched to recruit the best and the brightest teens from across Pennsylvania. Teachers, school counselors, coaches and other adult mentors were engaged to help us to us continue to build a network of inspired and dedicated young leaders for conservation. **In total, 263 students across Pennsylvania were nominated by teachers, school counselors, and other mentors to apply to the Academy!***

New Student Benefits

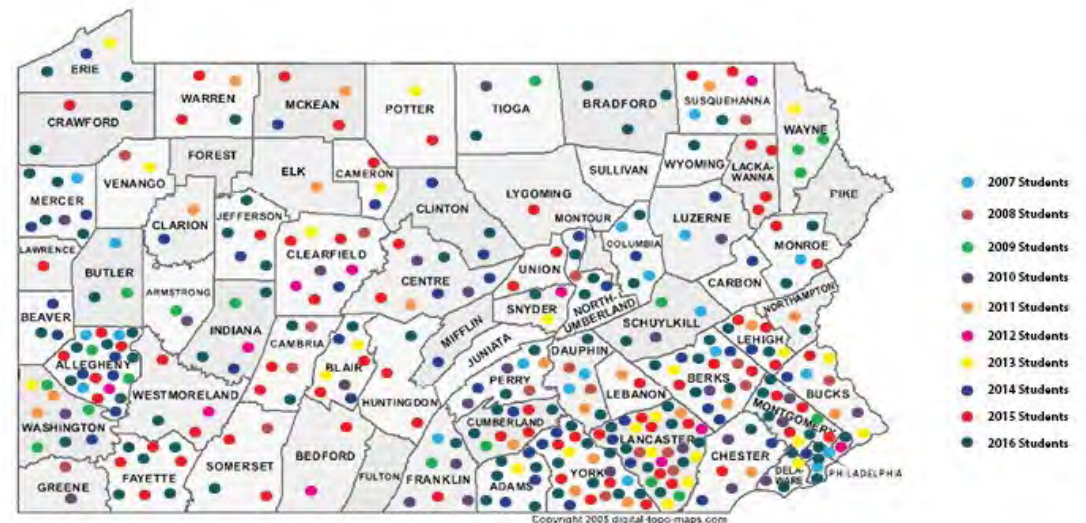
Our Conservation Ambassadors receive:

- Letters of Recommendation from the Executive Director for college applications;
- Certification of community service work, and,
- Certificates designating them as Conservation Ambassadors.

PLUS, Conservation Ambassadors are also eligible to:

- Receive 3 College Credits from Cedar Crest College;
- Apply to become a Youth Mentor and return to the program tuition free the following year;
- Compete for college scholarships;
- Attend college visit days at colleges and universities that have wildlife and conservation programs; and,
- Join an Academy Alumni Network of 100+ wildlife, fisheries, and conservation professionals.

Student Distribution



In the last 10 years, the Academy has graduated 371 high achieving youth from 62 counties across the state as well as students from Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Texas, North Carolina, New Jersey and Vermont.

What makes field school unique?



CONNECTION

What did you want to be when you grow up? At the Academy, we hope to give our students the opportunity to explore this question as they engage with a variety of conservation professionals - veterinarians, botanists, foresters, deer biologists, entomologists, and more!



RIGOR

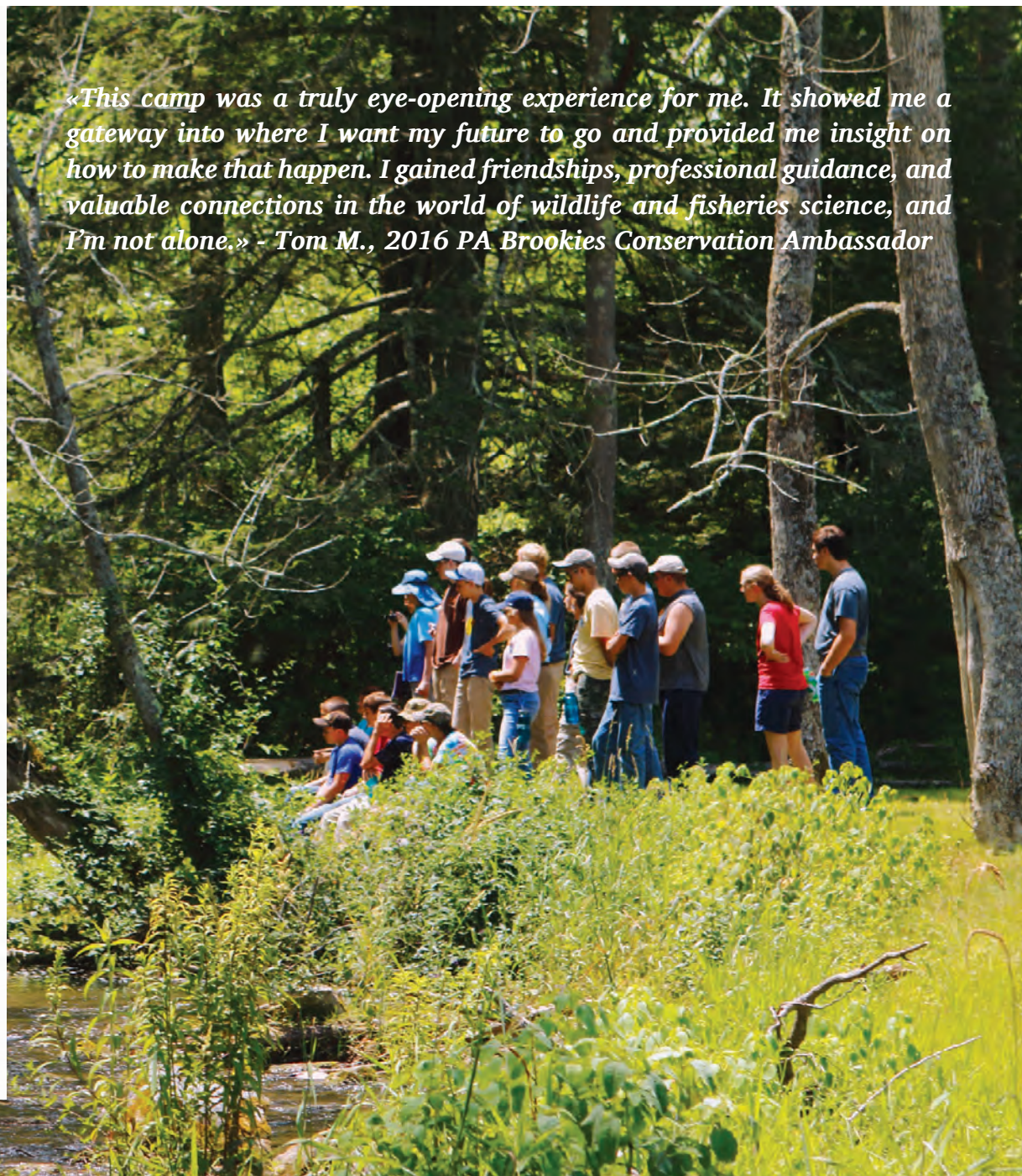
Days start at 6 AM and end at 11 PM! The rigor of the Academy field school breaks down barriers between teens and build team work - allowing connections and friendships to be made that will last a lifetime.



COMPETITION

How do we keep these kids going all week? Competition! At field school, students are placed into teams, these teams compete against each other all week. From quizzes to trivia to town hall meetings - the excitement of winning "TOP TEAM" keeps the our students having fun and learning!

«This camp was a truly eye-opening experience for me. It showed me a gateway into where I want my future to go and provided me insight on how to make that happen. I gained friendships, professional guidance, and valuable connections in the world of wildlife and fisheries science, and I'm not alone.» - Tom M., 2016 PA Brookies Conservation Ambassador



DISSECTIONS

Students jump right in at each field school as they dissect the species they are there to study for the week.



TOWN HALL MEETING

Students engage in a mock town hall meeting where teams represent different points of view on conservation issues.



Becoming Experts

“To me the Wildlife Leadership Academy is something that I will never forget. I went in with an open mind hoping to learn the issues with the small mouth bass in the river and came out feeling like an expert. I hope to take the knowledge that I received from the bass field school to do what I can to improve the health of our water supply and the Susquehanna River.” - Brenden M., 2016 PA Bass Conservation Ambassador

Hand-On Engagement

At each field school, students are educated about wildlife or fisheries biology, ecology, management, monitoring and research, and natural history; are encouraged to explore and reflect in the outdoors; and are guided to develop leadership and interpersonal skills.

NATURE JOURNALING

Time is taken each day for the students to engage quietly with the outdoors and their connection to the natural world.



WORDS OF WISDOM

Each student receives “words of wisdom” that they share throughout the week along with what those words mean to them.



Community Outreach

After the summer field schools, the Academy asks youth return to their communities to conduct a minimum of four outreach projects sharing their knowledge throughout their communities through EDUCATION, SERVICE WORK, MEDIA ENGAGEMENT, CREATIVE ARTS, and OUTDOOR MENTORSHIP.

Students submit record books of their outreach accomplishments to compete for opportunities to assist with the next year's field schools, attend special field trips including scientific conferences and receive college scholarships. Through these outreach activities, our students reach a much broader audience of Pennsylvania citizens and serve as role models for the youth and adults in their communities.



A Noble Cause

“The field school’s rigorous education style and conservation centered project requirements have been very helpful to me in channeling my motivation about the environment towards projects that promote the education of the public, and I am grateful to be involved in such a noble cause.” ~Neva G., 2016 Conservation Ambassador

3,093 PROJECTS

completed in the areas of education,
service, media engagement &
the creative arts!

12,000 CONTACT HRS

by students with the public
in Pennsylvania
and beyond!

45,000+ PENNSYLVANIANS

engaged by Wildlife Leadership
Academy Conservation
Ambassadors!



Academy Students and Alumni attended the PA Botany Symposium this year (above) as well as the PA Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Conference (above right).



A lifetime of engagement with the Wildlife Leadership Academy

From high school to college to career!

As our students grow, we want them to grow with us. The Wildlife Leadership Academy is not just a one week experience. After field school, we want our students to continue to advance in their skill and leadership levels within the Academy. This system creates not only a support system for our students but a sustainable long-term program because of long-term Alumni engagement as they give back through logistical and instructional support.



Student

20 new students attend each field school each year. Students are accepted into the program through an application process.



Youth Mentor

If students excel in their outreach, they are eligible to return as an Assistant Team Leader and serve as a youth mentor to a new class of Conservation Ambassadors.



Apprentice

Students who continue to follow through with their community outreach efforts are invited to attend in their third year as apprentices helping “behind the scenes” at the field schools.



Academy Elite

Academy Elites are trained to become Lead Coordinators for a field school taking on the more advanced role leading the week of field school and being responsible for staff, program logistics, as well as risk management and safety. Academy Elite are selected based on maturity, responsibility and leadership potential.

Academy Support Team

Alumni who are interested can work for the Academy Support Team (AST) at one or more field schools each summer; ASTs provide logistical support as well as take a leadership role in team building activities and more!



10 YEARS of Success

In 2016, the Wildlife Leadership Academy celebrated its 10 year anniversary with a total of 22 FIELD SCHOOLS offered!

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PARTNERSHIPS WITH AGENCIES AND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS:

Financial and in-kind support from over 30 organizations creates an exceptional educational experience and sustainable program. Some of our partners include: PA Game Commission, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and PA Department of Environmental Protection.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CEDAR CREST

COLLEGE: Three college credits are available for both youth and adult participants in the Wildlife Leadership Academy field schools.

10 YEARS OF CONSERVATION AMBASSADORS



HOW WE HAVE GROWN

Pennsylvania Bucktails was the first field school established in 2007. To date, as we celebrate our 10th year in 2016, the Academy has graduated 371 youth from 62 counties across the state.

371

conservation
ambassadors

10

bucktails
field schools
est. 2007

5

drummers
field schools
est. 2010

4

brookies
field schools
est. 2013

2

ursids
field schools
est. 2015

1

bass
field school
est. 2016

The Wildlife Leadership Academy has grown exponentially in the last several years expanding our reach to Conservation Ambassadors and their communities across the state!



BUCKTAILS 2009



BUCKTAILS 2010



DRUMMERS 2010



BUCKTAILS 2011



DRUMMERS 2011



BUCKTAILS 2012



BUCKTAILS 2013



BROOKIES 2013



BUCKTAILS 2014



BROOKIES 2014



DRUMMERS 2014



BUCKTAILS 2015



BROOKIES 2015



DRUMMERS 2015



URSIDS 2015



BUCKTAILS 2016



BROOKIES 2016



BASS 2016



DRUMMERS 2016



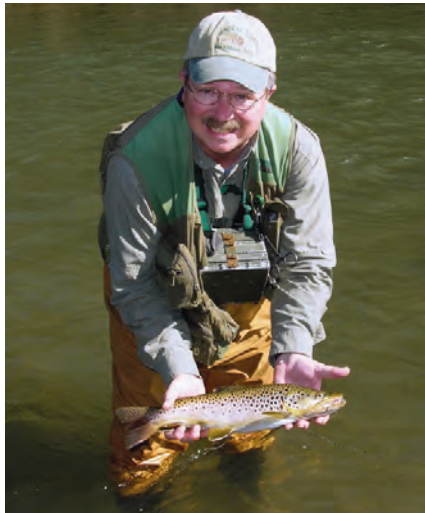
URSIDS 2016

Fundraising Highlights

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY

In 2016, we continued towards our 1 MILLION dollar Establishing a Legacy campaign to support the Academy's 3-Year Vision (2016-2018). Our fundraising strategies include (1) foundation requests for larger and multi-year gifts, (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 at wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/give

WILD GAME & WINE



Led by our board of directors and hosted by the Schuylkill Country Club 2nd annual WILD GAME AND WINE dinner was held in the spring with Academy Instructor, entomologist, and avid fly fisherman, Greg Hoover, as our keynote speaker. **ATTENDED BY 65 PEOPLE, \$3,452 WAS RAISED!**

PAY IT FORWARD - \$2,845 FROM 45 DONORS !

The Pay It Forward challenge encourages students to raise \$500 each to "Pay It Forward" to next year's incoming class of Conservation Ambassadors. Below are our 2016 youth fundraisers. \$500+ fundraisers become members of the Academy's Blue Polo Society!



Donovan Faith
Blue Polo Society \$1,000+



Matt Ford
Blue Polo Society \$500+



Hannah Krause
Blue Polo Society \$500+



Sara Benzio



Amber Konarski



Freya Bairdsen



Leah Stern

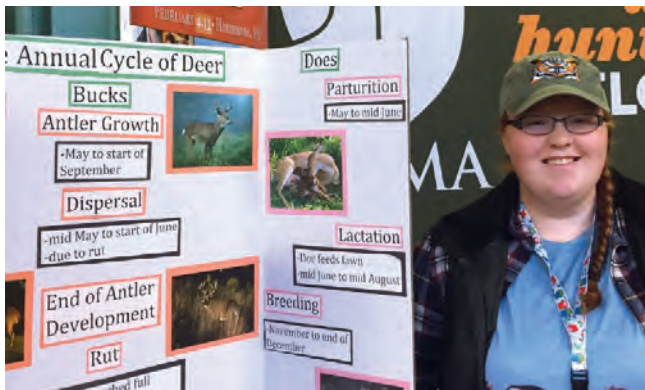


Jacob Danko

2016 Financials

We continued to grow in 2016 to 5 field schools with the addition PA Bass focusing on the bass and the Susquehanna River.

In addition, we continue to grow our Scholarship Fund to support students in need of tuition help and for our "Excellence in Outreach" college scholarship awards.



"This is experience was the best part of my summer and inspired me to do more with wildlife. The Bucktails field school helped me find the perfect college for me and be sure of my major. Without your donation, I wouldn't have been able to attend field school. Thank you for helping me experience this opportunity." -Sydni B. to her Scholarship Fund Donor

THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

55

Students

requested tuition support to
attend the Wildlife
Leadership Academy

\$9,924

Donated

by individuals and
conservation organizations
to help the Academy support
these students

2016 WILDLIFE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FINANCIALS	TOTAL
Individual Contributions	\$49,291
Scholarship Fund Contributions	\$9,924
Foundations	\$134,966
State/Federal Grants	\$62,013
Earned Revenue - Tuition	\$25,700
Other Income	\$606
TOTAL INCOME	\$286,935
Salaries and Wages	\$101,804
Intern Wages	\$4,200
Payroll Expenses	\$10,972
Workers Comp Insurance	\$1,222
Accounting Fees	\$4,851
Professional Fees (Instructor Stipends)	\$43,380
Office Supplies	\$2,033
Program Supplies	\$13,098
Computer and Software	\$2,578
Fundraising (Wild Game Dinner)	\$4,689
Academy Reunion	\$5,353
Telephone	\$1,510
Postage, Shipping, and Delivery	\$4,218
Website and Internet	\$16,627
Equipment Vehicle Rental	\$2,730
Program Transportation Rental	\$6,752
Printing and Copying	\$14,640
Promotions and Publications	\$1,761
Program Facilities	\$16,590
Program Meals	\$31,028
Office Rental	\$7,645
Utilities	\$774
Travel and Meeting Expenses	\$13,162
Insurance - Auto, Liability, Directors	\$5,395
Membership Dues	\$415
Background Checks	\$328
Bank Charges	\$106
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$303,151
Net Operating Loss/Used from Reserve	-\$16,216

THANK YOU

Academy Board of Directors

The Wildlife Leadership Academy is led by the efforts and vision of our board of directors.

Joseph Reibman, Esq., *President*

Peter Duncan, *Vice President*

Randy Hensinger, *Treasurer*

James Brett, *Honorary Director*

Rick Carlson

Gary Wessner

Tim Romig



2016 Academy Advisors by Field School

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 URSIDS

Dr. Gary Alt, wildlife biologist
Mark Ternet, 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
Judy Sittler, PATU, Spring Creek Chapter
Ken Undercoffer, PA Council of Trout Unlimited
Adrienne Gemberling, Clearwater Conservancy

PA BASS

Dr. Gary Alt, wildlife biologist
Geoff Smith, PA Fish and Boat Commission

PA DRUMMERS

Mark Banker, Appalachian Forestry Consultants
Tammy Colt, Pennsylvania Game Commission
Linda Ordiway, Ruffed Grouse Society
Lisa Williams, Pennsylvania Game Commission

HABITAT LEVEL SPONSOR \$10,000 +



GRASSROOTS \$250 +

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

Appalachian Audubon

Clinton County Conservation District

Federated Sportsmen of Lancaster
County

Lancaster County Conservation District

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited

PA Quality Deer Management Assn.

(QDMA), SE PA Branch, In memory of
Mike Gerth

PA QDMA, Mason Dixon Branch

PA QDMA, Susquehanna Branch

Black Forest Conservation Assn.

Midland Sportsmen's Club

Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Assn.

Potter County Conservation District

South Mountain Audubon Society

White Covered Bridge Assn.

The Wildlife Society, PA Chapter

Wilson County Wildlife Management

MOUNTAIN LAUREL \$1,000 +

The Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation

The WHM Group

Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Assn.

FOUNDATION & AGENCY SUPPORT

Foundations and agencies that have invested in the Academy's mission.

Richard King Mellon Foundation

Colcom Foundation

Department of Environmental Protection

Eastern Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation

Foundations for Pennsylvania Watersheds

Laurel Foundation

The NRA Foundation

Schuylkill Area Community Foundation

Sordoni Family 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. | Buffer Creek Sporting Clays | Cedar Crest College | Chester Water Authority | Clearwater Conservancy | Clinton County Conservation District | Hunters Sharing the Harvest | Department of Environmental Protection | Kutztown University | Lancaster County Conservation District | Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art | Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission | Pennsylvania Game Commission | Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources | Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association | Pennsylvania State University | PSU Dubois | Penn State Extension | Powdermill Nature Reserve | QDMA, PA Council and Chapters | Ruffed Grouse Society | Susquehanna University | The Wildlife Society, PA Chapter | Temple Fork Outfitters | Texas Brigades | Trout Unlimited, Pennsylvania Council

The Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

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. The Academy, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a cooperative initiative involving state agencies and conservation organizations.

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wildlifeleadershipacademy.org

