

WILDLIFE  
LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

I am proud to share the 2023 annual report with you, a personal celebration of my first year as Executive Director. More importantly, this report celebrates significant milestone accomplishments at the Academy established on the foundation upon which the Academy was built. Within these pages, you will read about the incredible work being done by our Academy students, staff, and partners based on the momentum of years of progress. We are deeply grateful for your role in making these achievements possible and are eagerly looking forward to the future initiatives of the Academy.

Yours in conservation,



**SARA MUELLER, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director

## 3 YEAR VISION

In 2023, under the leadership of the new Executive Director, Dr. Sara Mueller, Ph.D., the Academy is embarking on a new 3-year vision:

### TAKE ACTION TO INCREASE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE WILDIFE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

These actions are focused on engagement with youth and families: the marketing and application process, post-acceptance on-boarding, the field school experience, and the alumni experience after field school. Specific places of action include accessibility of the application process for youth and families, aiding in tuition cost and transportation, increasing opportunities to celebrate diverse wildlife experiences at field school, and increasing the diversity of our instructors, staff, and board members by building genuine community partnerships.

### INCREASE OUR CAPACITY AND EXPAND OUR EXCLUSIVE CONSERVATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Academy aims to increase our field school offerings from five to six by the summer of 2026. To expand our program offerings and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion action, the Academy envisions increasing from three to six full time staff which includes a partnerships manager to build relationships with communities of color. In addition, the summer staff experience will expand with increased training and full summer job opportunities.

### SERVE OUR ALUMNI FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE AND/OR CAREER

The Academy Alumni Network will offer connection and support as our students continue to grow in their careers through educational/career support webinars that engage diverse voices, in-person Advanced Educational Trainings, and in 2026, an Alumni Leadership Conference. The Academy will use the team-driven design process facilitated by the Novalia Collective to ensure these programs are centering belonging for all students, including those at the margins.

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# 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.

A year round program, the Academy begins with residential programming that focuses on wildlife/fisheries biology and conservation as well as leadership skills development and continues with community outreach through education, service, media engagement, creative arts, and outdoor mentorship.

# OUR PROGRAM

## CONSERVATION AMBASSADOR TRAINING SUMMER FIELD SCHOOLS + OUTREACH

Each weeklong summer field school uses a single species to teach students about the conservation of Pennsylvania's wildlife, fisheries and natural resources. After completing the program, students are official Conservation Ambassadors and continue their involvement through outreach projects in their home communities.



# OUR TEAM



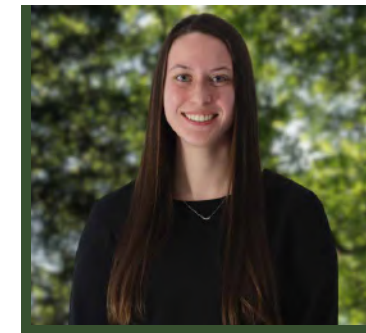
**DR. SARA MUELLER**  
*Executive Director*



**KATIE CASSIDY**  
*Director of Outreach and Alumni Engagement*



**LEXI CHISHOLM**  
*Field School and Office Manager*



**KATIE MACE**  
*Multimedia Marketing Specialist*



**DR. GARY ALT**  
*Terrestrial Curriculum Coordinator*

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**JOSEPH REIBMAN, ESQ.**  
*President*

**R. CHARLES STEHLY**  
*Vice President*

**ANN DEPAULIS, ESQ.**  
*Secretary*

**JOHN KLINE**  
*Treasurer*

**TRACIE WITTER**

**PAUL PIERPOINT**

**RALPH MARTONE**

**JAMES BRETT**  
*Honorary Director*

**PETER DUNCAN**  
*Honorary Director*

## IN MEMORIAM

In 2023, we lost Honorary Director, James Brett. James was the co-founder of the PA Institute for Conservation Education (PICE) which preceded the Wildlife Leadership Academy and has received recognition from across the state for its development of innovative natural history education and stewardship programs offered to a diverse audience.



## IMPLEMENTING AND CONTINUING DEI EFFORTS

In early 2023, the Academy’s engagement with Odelia Younge and Vina Vo of the Novalia Collective culminated in an organizational Roadmap to Center Belonging at Wildlife Leadership Academy. The development of this Roadmap was based on a series of interviews with students and their families, a discussion with staff focused on their field school experience, and facilitated engagement with the Novalia Collective. Building belonging became a prime focus in 2023 as the Academy strived to provide an environment where everyone feels like they are accepted, included, and supported. Below are some of the ways the Academy is building belonging at field school.

### INCLUSIVE HOUSING

We support our participants and families of all identities—this means we work hard to affirm all those we engage with for who they are. To nurture and support all involved with the Academy, we offer boys, girls, and all-gender cabin units.

### INCLUSIVE LEARNING

We are dedicated to creating an environment where all students can grow and are empowered to succeed. As a team, we work with families to meet the needs of students who need extra support in and out of the classroom and celebrate the unique strengths of each individual. In 2023, the Academy provided inclusive learning support at each summer field school.

### INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVES

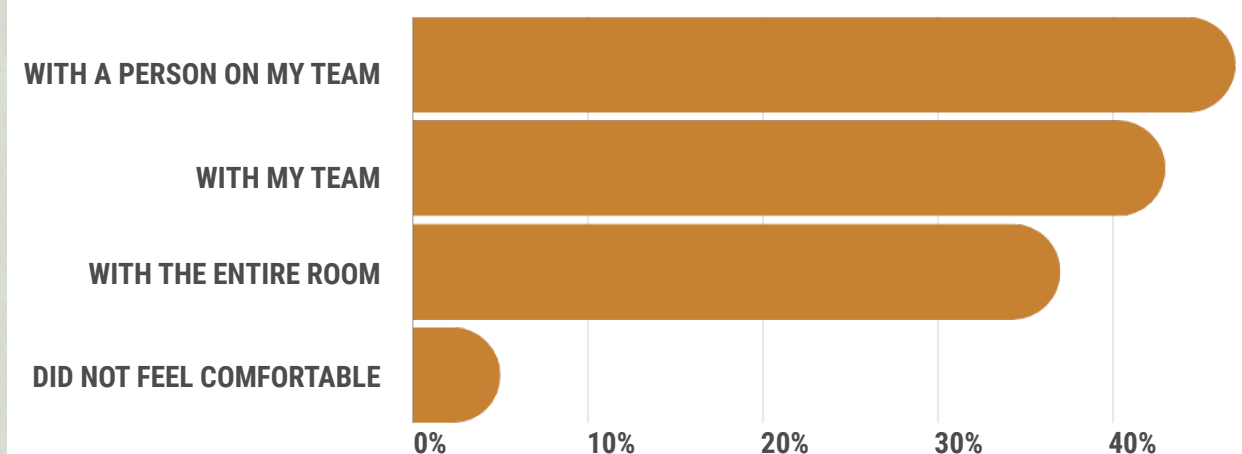
By incorporating the viewpoints of different cultures and lived experiences, we aim to provide an enriching experience for all participants at field school. Our commitment to embracing varied perspectives ensures a comprehensive educational experience, promoting a broader understanding of the natural world. In 2023, the Academy continued to teach Indigenous Natural Perspectives which included the addition of Cherokee National Treasure/Professor of Art, Robert Lewis, who taught through story telling at three of the field schools.

## BUILDING BELONGING

In 2023, a Campfire Connections session was built into the curriculum to increase opportunities to celebrate students’ diverse wildlife experiences, with the intention of creating a greater sense of belonging. Students were guided with prompts to share their connection to nature, times when they felt they belonged, and their favorite moments in nature. The session instructor connected the similarities in their stories between small groups and then the larger classroom allowing the students to see and hear the mutual connections between each other.

In the post-field school survey, youth participants indicated that during Campfire Connections they shared stories about their personal connection to nature with the entire room (37%), with their team (44%), and with a person on their team (47%); a smaller percentage (5%) indicated they did not feel comfortable sharing.

### SHARED STORIES OF CONNECTION TO NATURE



**93%**

**STUDENTS REPORTED THEY FELT A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING**

In the same post-field school survey, to gain a better understanding of overall sense of belonging, students were asked to rate the statement “I felt a sense of BELONGING at Field School.” on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Ninety-three percent (93%) of students chose 4 or 5.

*“I feel like everyone at field school created a safe environment for all people. I feel like despite all of our differences, we were all here for the same thing and that gave us a common factor. For that, I feel like we all respected each other and made sure no one was excluded.”*

2023 Academy Student

# FINDING OUR CONSERVATION AMBASSADORS

Our nomination process, whereby teachers, counselors, and other mentors are encouraged to nominate qualified teens to apply to the Academy, resulted in **282** nominations in 2023 and continues to contribute to our recruitment success annually. Students who were nominated were sent an invitation to apply highlighting the benefits of the program.

**282**

STUDENTS WERE  
NOMINATED TO  
APPLY

**124**

YOUTH APPLIED  
TO ATTEND A  
FIELD SCHOOL

**100**

STUDENTS WERE  
ACCEPTED TO  
THE PROGRAM



Since the inception of the nomination process in 2016, the Academy has garnered nominations for over **2,000** passionate teens interested in conservation and wildlife.



*"Ange is the aquatics expert on our Envirothon team and she is in my AP Environmental Science class. She is passionate about aquatic environments and plans to pursue a career in the field. She has a deep interest and care for our environment and advocates for proper treatment and regulation surrounding the ecosystems. She is always seeking to learn more and to advocate for amphibians and reptiles."*

Nominator of Ange M.  
PA Bass



*"Haden is an outdoorsman and an avid fisherman. He has competed in Major League Fishing (MLF) tournaments across Maryland where he placed in the top 5. I nominated him because he has a love of the outdoors. I have watched him grow into leadership positions within our 4-H club and have seen him speak with confidence at 4-H events. I feel that what he learns at the Wildlife Leadership Academy he will be able to share with others in his life."*

Nominator of Haden S.  
PA Ursids



*"Anusha has been a member of our high school Envirothon team for three years. She is excited to keep learning more and more about any topic related to conservation. Anusha is also currently a student in my honors biology class and I know that in terms of academics she is a conscientious student who will put forth great effort if chosen to attend the WLA."*

Nominator of Anusha K.  
PA Bucktails

# CLASS OF 2023 PARTICIPANTS

Each field school hosts four teams consisting of five students, a returning student as a Youth Mentor, and an Adult Mentor volunteer who learns alongside and guides their team throughout the week. In 2023, students, Youth Mentors, and Adult Mentors hailed from 48 Pennsylvania counties as well as New York, Maryland, and Oklahoma.

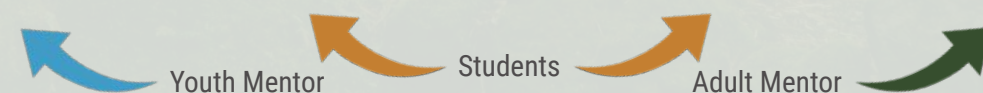


● Youth Mentors ● Students ● Adult Mentors



With the attendance of a student from Pike County in 2023, the Academy has graduated youth from all **67 Pennsylvania counties**.

To see the student distribution of all alumni since 2007, see page 24.





# PA BUCKTAILS

Focusing on white-tailed deer and the management of their habitat, students learned about forest ecology (top left), practiced using radio telemetry equipment used for locating deer (middle left), and honed their archery skills (bottom left).

## CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Deer biology
- Plant collections
- Research techniques
- Range time
- Habitat evaluation

*"My favorite activity during field school was going out into nature and identifying plants. It was enjoyable to be outside with my friends and have fun. I feel that the information taught was beyond just the environment. We also learned vital communication and public speaking skills that you can apply to your everyday life."*

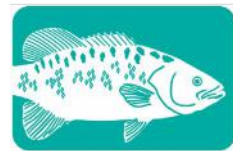
Anonymous Student  
PA Bucktails

## 2023 FIELD SCHOOLS

This summer, the Wildlife Leadership Academy provided the opportunity for high-achieving youth, ranging in age from 14 to 17 years old, to immerse themselves in a comprehensive study of Pennsylvania's diverse wildlife and fish species along with their natural habitats. This educational experience was divided into five specialized field schools, each focusing on a particular species: deer, bass, trout, turkey, and bear. In addition to the intensive wildlife studies, these field schools emphasized the development of leadership skills, ensuring that students not only gained knowledge but also grew as future conservation leaders. All five field schools took place at Krislund Camp and Conference Center in Centre County.



**PA BUCKTAILS**  
17th year  
June 13-17



**PA BASS**  
8th year  
June 20-24



**PA BROOKIES**  
11th year  
July 18-22



**PA GOBBLERS**  
7th year  
July 25-29



**PA URSIDS**  
5th year  
August 1-5

Across all curriculums, students were encouraged to deeply connect with their surroundings. Nature journaling sessions allowed them to document their observations and reflections. Additionally, they were taught the basics of photography, enabling them to capture the natural world from their unique perspectives.

Throughout the week, students prepared to take on the role of Conservation Ambassadors in their home communities. This preparation included engaging in a series of leadership skills development activities such as mock town hall meetings, group presentations, and team-building exercises.

Since 2007, the Academy has hosted **57 field schools** centered around white-tailed deer, bass, brook trout, turkeys, bear, and ruffed grouse.



## PA BASS

Focusing on bass and watershed management, students spent an evening bass fishing (top right), learned about stream health through macroinvertebrate surveys (middle right), and participated in a habitat construction project with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (bottom right).

### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Aquatic biology
- Bass fishing
- Fish dissections
- Stream assessments
- Fisheries management

*"My favorite activity during field school was kayak fishing. I grew up fishing my whole life but never had the opportunity to go kayak fishing until field school. I enjoyed being out on the water and having many different elements while fishing."*

Anonymous Student  
PA Bass



## PA BROOKIES

Focusing on brook trout and cold water conservation, students tried their hand at fly fishing (top left), learned about trout anatomy (middle left), and were taught how to tie their own flies (bottom left).

### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Aquatic biology
- Fly fishing
- Fly tying
- Trout dissections
- Macroinvertebrate collections
- Watershed management

*"I don't think I can pick a favorite. I loved fishing and looking for macroinvertebrates, but more than that, I loved the friends I made. The activities were all fun, but it was the people around me who made it that much better."*

Anonymous Student  
PA Brookies



## PA GOBBLERS

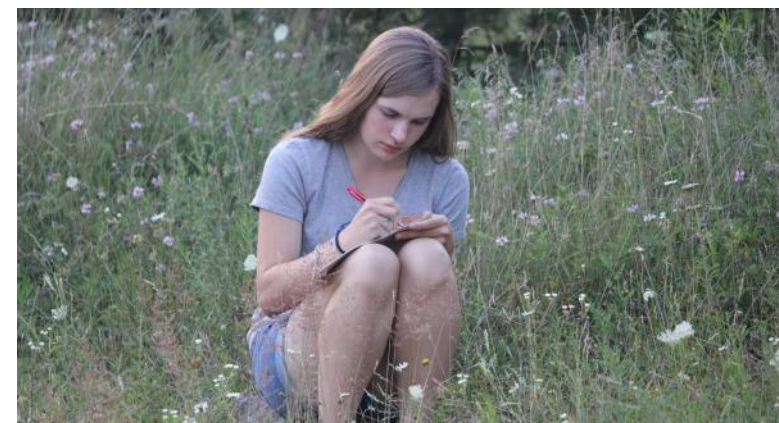
Focusing on wild turkeys and the management of their habitat, students learned about native plants by mounting their own herbarium specimens (top right), were taught how to use a turkey call (middle right), and participated in a mock town hall meeting focused on environmental issues (bottom right).

### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Turkey biology
- Field research techniques
- Turkey calling
- Range time
- Plant collections
- Habitat evaluation

*"My favorite activity during field school is the classroom discussions we have. I feel I came here to learn and I achieved that through the lessons."*

Anonymous Student  
PA Gobblers



## PA URSIDS

Focusing on bears and the management of their habitat, students identified and collected plants for a herbarium specimen collection (top left), connected with their surroundings through their nature journals (middle left), and spent time at the range learning about firearms safety by engaging in target shooting (bottom left).

### CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Bear biology
- Plant collections
- Range time
- Field research techniques
- Bear data collection

*"My favorite activity was the [bear data collection] and the nature journaling. The processing was a great experience that taught me a lot about real-world applications and the nature journaling was something that I had never tried before and really enjoyed."*

Anonymous Student  
PA Ursids



# SUPPORTING THE CURRENT CLASS

In order to ensure the success of our students after the field school, Katie Cassidy, Director of Outreach and Alumni Engagement, serves as a resource to all of our Conservation Ambassadors by connecting and linking outreach opportunities, offering college and career advice, and being available to answer their questions five days a week. The Class of 2023 was supported through 2024 with the following opportunities.

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A monthly e-newsletter was sent to all participants at the first of the month including tips for community outreach, a “student of the month”, and timely engagement opportunities.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Students were recruited to apply for positions as NextGen Blog Correspondents to write for the Academy’s weekly blog and/or Photo Friday Specialists to submit their own nature photography for our Facebook page’s “Photo Friday” posts. **17 students** were recruited as Photo Friday Specialists and **7 students** were recruited to be Monthly Blog Correspondents.



**500+** youth written blogs have been published to date on the Academy’s website!



Photo Friday post submitted by Lily G., a Brookies alumni.



Photo Friday post submitted by Evangeline T. an Ursids alumni.

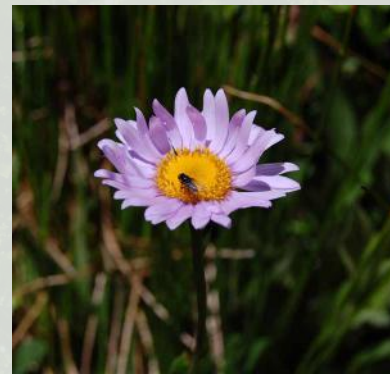


Photo Friday post submitted by Caleb T., a Gobblers alumni.

## WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS

Webinars were offered to students focusing on educational topics, professional development, and how to stay involved with the Academy.

## PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Students are offered the opportunity to attend various professional meetings including **The Wildlife Society, PA Chapter meeting** and the **Keystone Coldwater Conference**.



Ten (10) students attended the Penn State Dubois college visit day on September 6, 2023.

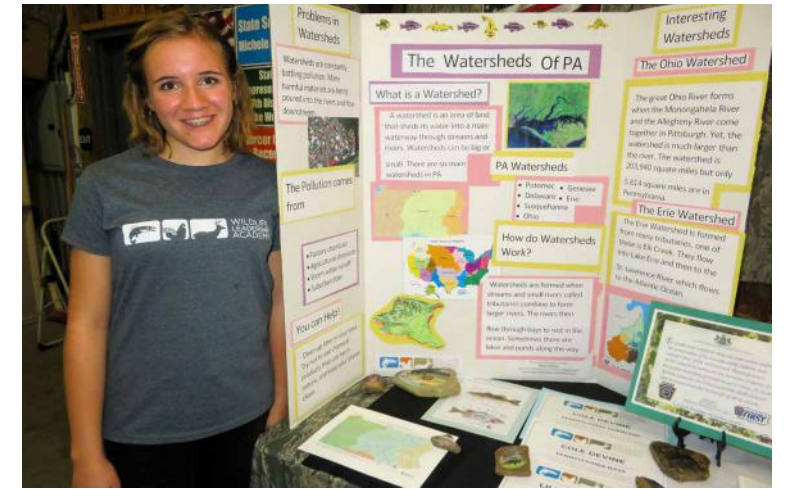
## COLLEGE VISIT DAYS

The Academy partners with several universities to provide college tours created exclusively for Academy students. Two college tours took place this past fall/spring at **Penn State Dubois** (Wildlife Technology program) and **Chatham University Eden Hall** (Sustainability program).

## WINNER’S EDUCATIONAL WEEKEND

Educational Winner’s Weekend was held at Krislund Camp and Conference Center on September 29 - October 1, 2023. The individuals and parents from the “top team” at each field school were extended an invitation for a weekend gathering that included outdoor and team building sessions - stream exploration, a birding walk, hikes, and a ropes course. **Eighteen (18)** students and parents attended for the full weekend.





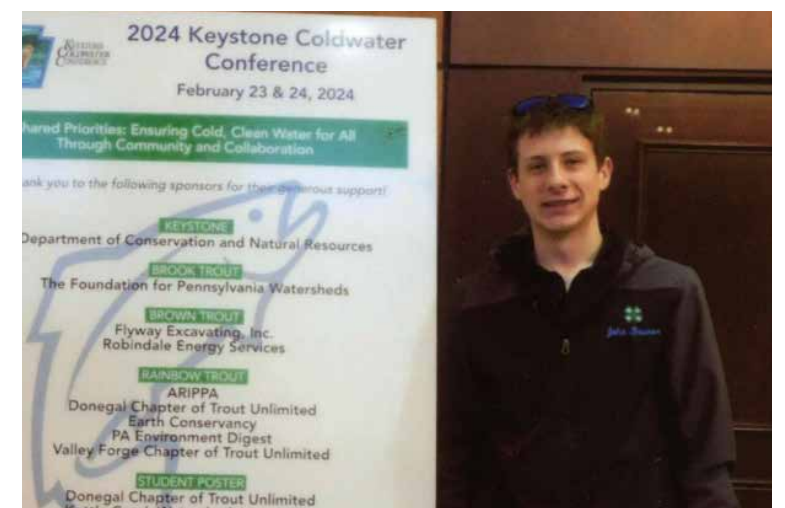
Brayden R. went fishing with friends as an outdoor mentorship project.

Lillian D., posing with the trifold she made and displayed at a local fair as an education project.



Josh T. and Caleb T. cutting up firewood as a service project.

Ryleigh L. captured this nature photo as a creative arts project.



Josephine R. passed the Pennsylvania Game Commission Hunter-Trapper safety course as an education project.

John B. attended the Keystone Coldwater Conference as an education project.

**SINCE 2007**

**10,300+**

**OUTREACH PROJECTS COMPLETED**

**193,000+**

**CITIZENS ENGAGED BY CONSERVATION AMBASSADORS**

**40,500+**

**HOURS OF WORK GIVEN BACK TO COMMUNITIES**

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

After attending a summer field school, the Academy asks youth to return to their communities to conduct outreach projects, sharing their knowledge throughout their communities through education, service, media engagement, creative arts, and outdoor mentorship.

Students document their outreach accomplishments in a record book and submit them to be scored by Katie Cassidy, Director of Outreach and Alumni Engagement.

High scoring record books qualify students for unique opportunities such as an invitation to return to field school as a Youth Mentor and invitations to attend professional conferences. In addition, the top scoring record books from each field school are awarded the Ralph Abele Excellence in Outreach Award for their accomplishments and receive a college scholarship.

*Above: Savannah G. and Lily G. recruited classmates to join the Horticulture Club as an education project.*



Camille T. standing with the solitary bee house that she constructed as a service project.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As of March 2023, Grace Z., a Bucktails alum holds the highest individual scoring outreach book at **6,085 points**. Grace spent **86 hours** engaging her community after her field school experience.

*Pictured above: Grace ran a booth encouraging others to join 4-H as a service project.*



*Grace created a trifold about Chronic Wasting Disease and displayed it at Ag Progress Days as an education project.*



*Grace captured these nature photos on a hike with friends as creative arts and outdoor mentorship projects.*

*"One of my outreach activities last year was giving a presentation in the White House to some of the president's advisors. We pitched a youth advisory council under the Environmental Protection Agency which was adopted and put into place last fall! Through this process I got to use some of the public speaking skills I learned at Wildlife Leadership Academy."*

Grace Z.  
PA Bucktails



## RALPH ABELE EXCELLENCE IN OUTREACH AWARD

Named in honor of conservation leader Ralph Abele, each year, this award is given to students who excel as Conservation Ambassadors. For each field school, a \$500 scholarship is awarded to the student who is top in their class for outreach. Receiving their awards in 2023 are the following Class of 2022 recipients.



**GRACE Z.**  
**PA BUCKTAILS**

Gave **86 hours** hours to her community. Reached **1,271 people** with her outreach.



**NORMAN S.**  
**PA BASS**

Gave **28 hours** hours to his community. Reached **1,040 people** with his outreach.



**CATY S.**  
**PA BROOKIES**

Gave **595 hours** hours to her community. Reached **560 people** with her outreach.



**COLE D.**  
**PA GOBBLERS**

Gave **349 hours** hours to his community. Reached **1,952 people** with his outreach.



**MATTHEW C.**  
**PA URSIDS**

Gave **43 hours** hours to his community. Reached **523 people** with his outreach.

# PAY IT FORWARD

The Pay It Forward challenge encouraged students to raise \$500 each to “Pay It Forward” to next year’s incoming class of Conservation Ambassadors. In 2023, the Pay It Forward team was challenged by a 1-to-1 to matching grant from the Campbell Foundation up to \$11,000!

**134**

**INDIVIDUAL DONORS**

**\$7,932**

**RAISED BY THE CLASS OF 2023 BEFORE DECEMBER 31**

**75%**

**DONATIONS UNDER \$100**



Since its launch in 2012, the Pay It Forward campaign has successfully raised **\$70,934** from student efforts, with the support of **999 generous donors**.

In addition, the Campbell Foundation has matched **\$37,000** of student raised funds since 2020.

*Pictured right: Brayden R. poses with a print that he earned as the Class of 2023 “Top Fundraiser”. Brayden raised over \$600 for the Pay It Forward campaign.*

*“The knowledge and experiences I gained at the Wildlife Leadership Academy were priceless. I wanted to ensure that others could also benefit from these amazing opportunities.”*

Brayden R.  
PA Bass

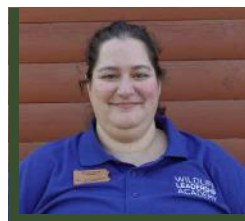


# BLUE POLO SOCIETY

Students become a distinguished member of the Blue Polo Society when they raise \$500 or more towards Pay It Forward.



EMMA C. \*



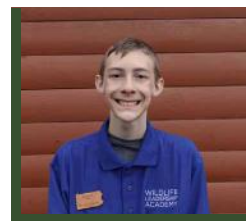
DANAE F. \*



STEPHEN P.



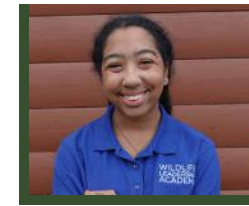
JOSEPHINE R.



BRAYDEN R.

\* Summer staff and Adult Mentors who fundraised as part of the Pay It Forward campaign.

# 2023 PAY IT FORWARD PARTICIPANTS



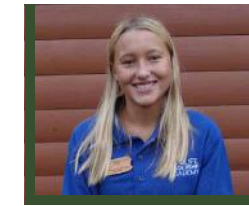
ELENA A.



LYNDEN B.



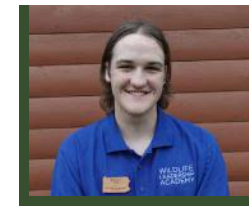
CAELEB B.



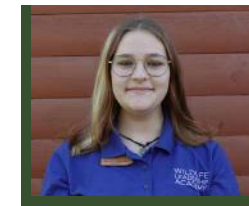
SKYLA B.



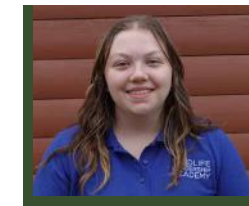
NATASHA B.



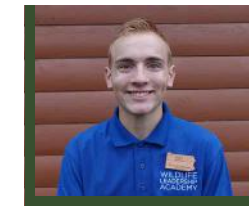
MATTHEW C.



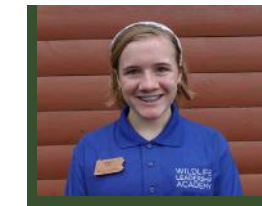
CORINNE C.



BROOKE D.



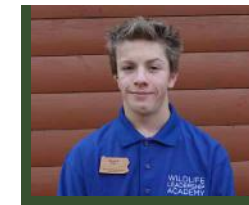
COLE D.



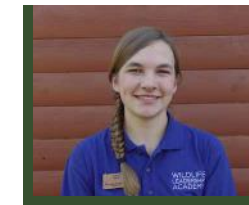
LILLIAN D.



ESTHER F.



HUNTER F.



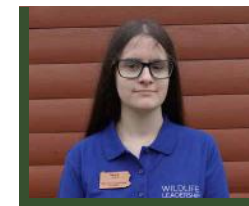
LILY G.



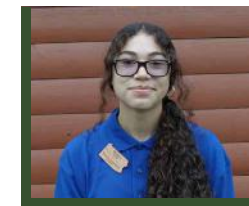
JULIANNA G. \*



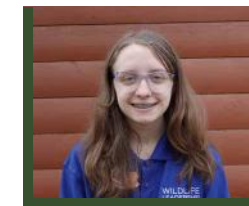
LILY J.



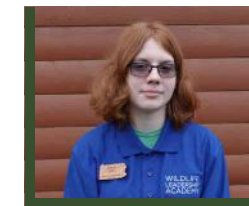
SARAH K.



CHRISTY L.



NADIA L.



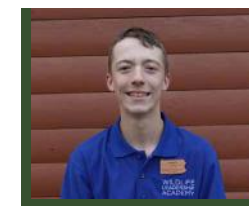
ANGE M.



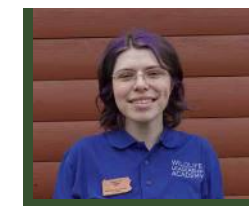
NADIA P.



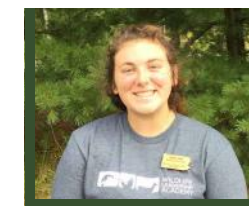
JOSIAH R-L.



CONNOR R.



JOSEPHINE S.



KAELA S. \*



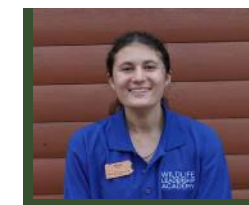
CODY S.



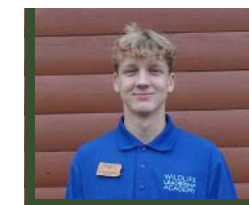
RIQUEL T.



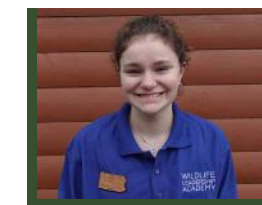
CAMILLE T.



JESSIE W.



BRYCETON W.



RILEY Z.

# ACADEMY ALUMNI NETWORK

To date, as we celebrated our 17th class of Conservation Ambassadors in 2023, the Academy has engaged 1,005 high achieving youth from 67 counties across the state as well as students from District of Columbia, Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

67

PA COUNTIES REPRESENTED

1,005

YOUTH GRADUATED FROM THE PROGRAM

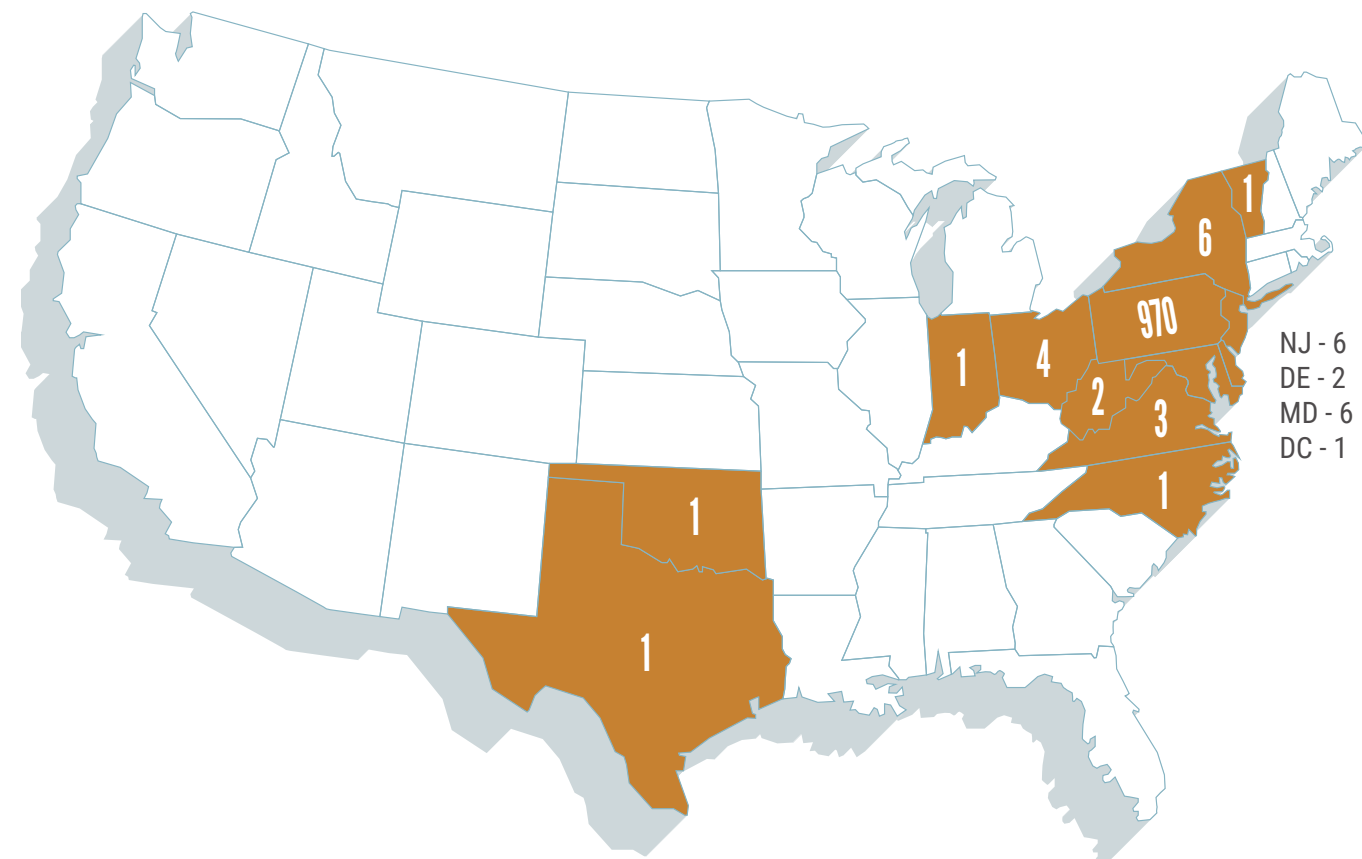
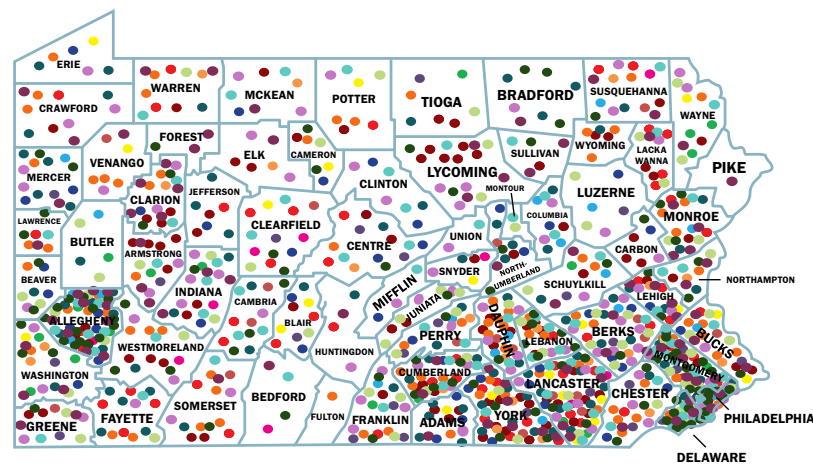
13

STATES REPRESENTED



The Academy has graduated 1,005 students from all 67 Pennsylvania counties and 13 other states.

Each color of dot on the Pennsylvania map represents a class of Conservation Ambassadors and the county they reside in.



## ALUMNI SUPPORTING AT THE ACADEMY

In 2023, 47 alumni provided program support. They returned to field school and served as summer staff, camp photographers, apprentices, Adult Mentors, volunteers, and instructors. Additional alumni also participated in Q&A sessions with participants focusing on college and careers.



Kaitlin returned to field school as an apprentice - learning the behind the scenes operation of field school through mentored opportunities.



John and Sophia were a part of the Coordinating Team - taking on a leadership role while being responsible for program logistics.



Kyle returned to PA Bass as an instructor - teaching the students about research techniques with an electrofishing demonstration.



## PARTNERING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

American Fisheries Society - PA Chapter  
 Back Country Hunters and Anglers  
 Bucknell University  
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
 Clinton County Conservation District  
 Southern Clinton County Sportsmen's Club  
 Huntingdon County Conservation District  
 Kutztown University  
 National Deer Association  
 PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 PA Department of Environmental Protection  
 PA Fish and Boat Commission  
 PA Game Commission  
 PA National Wild Turkey Federation  
 PA Conservation Heritage Project  
 PA Outdoor Writers Association  
 The Pennsylvania State University  
 Penn State Extension  
 Penn State Dubois  
 Penn State Hazleton  
 Penn Vet | Wildlife Futures Program  
 PA Trappers Association  
 The Wildlife Society - PA Chapter  
 Trout Unlimited - Spring Creek  
 US Fish and Wildlife Service  
 USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

## PARTNERS IN ACTION

We are incredibly grateful for the unwavering support and dedication of our partnering agencies and organizations who contribute their valuable resources to our programming.

Through the generous donation of staff time as instructors/mentors, use of facilities, provision of equipment, and donation of materials - these partners play a crucial role in educating and empowering our students.

In 2023, our partnering agencies and organizations went above and beyond in their support of the Academy's mission. We are proud to recognize these partners and celebrate their role in engaging the next generation of conservation leaders!



*Tony Musselman (Pennsylvania Game Commission) mentoring a group of students on using radio telemetry for wildlife population studies.*



*Tim Schaeffer (Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission) giving career advice to PA Brookies students and staff.*



*Cat Pugh (Penn State Extension) and Dr. Chris Sacchi (Kutztown University) teaching about leaf type during a "Plant of the Day" session at PA Ursids.*



*Tim Smail (National Deer Association) instructs an archery lesson at PA Bucktails.*



*Mitch Blake (National Wild Turkey Federation) teaching turkey calling techniques at PA Gobblers.*



*Bob Frye (Pennsylvania Game Commission) speaks to students about engaging print media outlets in their home communities.*



*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission crew conducting an electrofishing demonstration at PA Bass.*

# THANK YOU

The Wildlife Leadership Academy is only possible because of support from every level. We are grateful to the corporations, organizations, and state agencies that support our mission to educate and empower the next generation of conservation leaders!

## HABITAT \$10,000+



## HEMLOCK \$5,000+



## OAK \$2,500+



## MOUNTAIN LAUREL \$1,000+



## GRASSROOTS \$250+

Ducks Unlimited  
 Elstonville Sportsmen's Association  
 Greene County Conservation District  
 Lakeland Longbeards Chapter 41 Nwtf  
 National Deer Association  
 PA Chapter of the American Fisheries Society  
 PA Trappers' Association  
 PA Trappers Association - District 9

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Campbell Foundation  
 Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds  
 NRA Foundation  
 PA DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program  
 PPL Foundation  
 Reidler Foundation  
 Richard King Mellon Foundation  
 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



# SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Many of our Academy students apply for financial assistance based on need and academic qualifications. To achieve this, we actively work on expanding our scholarship fund through generous donations from our community, alumni, and supporters. These contributions enable us to provide financial aid to our students, empowering them to excel as Conservation Ambassadors.

*"The donations made to the scholarship fund allowed me to attend field school this summer and helped pay for my tuition costs. I was lucky enough to be accepted and attend the PA Brookies field school this July. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the importance of our natural waterways and the impact humans have on the environment."*

*I am truly grateful for the opportunity to attend WLA and hope to use the knowledge and leadership skills gained from the course to better serve my community and spread the positive message about environmental and wildlife conservation."*

Anna M.  
 PA Brookies

## \$250+ SCHOLARSHIP FUND SUPPORTERS

Adirondack-Catskill Sables Safari Club International  
 Appalachian Audubon Society  
 Black Forest Conservation Association  
 Dwight Lewis Lumber Company, Inc.  
 Earth Conservancy  
 Elisabet Bjanas  
 Franklin County Conservation District  
 The Case Family  
 Iron Furnace Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
 Joseph Reibman  
 Lankenau Environmental Science Magnet High School  
 Lebanon County Conservation District  
 North Central PA Pheasants Forever 630  
 Nwtf Susquehanna Long Beards  
 PA Chapter of The Wildlife Society  
 PA Wildlife Federation  
 Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association  
 Shirley Grantier  
 South Mountain Audubon Society  
 Steven Brewer  
 The Mulfingers  
 The Sacchis  
 White Covered Bridge Association  
 York Audubon Society

51

STUDENTS PROVIDED WITH  
 TUITION SUPPORT

\$22,140

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS  
 DISTRIBUTED TO THE 2023 CLASS

24

DONORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE  
 2023 SCHOLARSHIP FUND

# WAYS TO SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION

Help us educate and empower the next generation of Conservation Ambassadors! **YOU** can make a difference!



## GIVE

[wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/support](https://wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/support)

Make a one time gift or give monthly and invest in the next generation of conservation leaders!

## VOLUNTEER

[wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/adult-mentor-application](https://wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/adult-mentor-application)

Did you know that adults can attend a field school too? Volunteer as an Adult Mentor and learn alongside a team of students. Adult Mentors are eligible to earn graduate level college credits!

## NOMINATE A TEEN

[wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/nominate](https://wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/nominate)

Do you know of a student who would benefit from our programs? Nominate a teen to attend one of our summer field schools next summer.

## STAY CONNECTED

[wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/join](https://wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/join)

Receive some positive news in your inbox and hear from the next generation of conservation leaders! Join our email list and receive our weekly NextGen youth written blog and updates about the Academy (including when nominations open each season)!

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[@wildlifeleadershipacademy](https://www.instagram.com/wildlifeleadershipacademy)

Follow the Wildlife Leadership Academy on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube for program updates, field school updates and content created by our Conservation Ambassadors.



# 2023 FINANCIALS

INCOME	
Government Grants	\$177,515.10
Foundation Grants	\$199,000.00
Individual/Business Contributions	\$40,514.70
Pay it Forward	\$8,967.32
Camp Tuition Scholarship Fund	\$9,249.56
Field School Tuition	\$54,900.00
Field School Tuition Scholarships	(\$17,040.00)
Misc Revenue	\$1,614.22
Interest Income	\$126.06
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$474,846.96</b>

## IN KIND SUPPORT

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

69 instructors volunteering for 25+ organizations and agencies with a total of **667 hours** of instructional support with an estimated cost of **\$23,336**.

### VOLUNTEER SERVICES

90 individuals volunteering **3,945 hours** of support with an estimated cost as **\$73,061**.

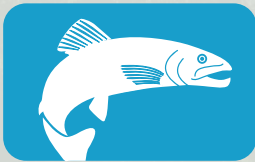
### EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DONATIONS

At an estimated cost of **\$13,831** this includes items such as printing of educational binders for students by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, donation of fishing equipment by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, donation of telemetry equipment by ATS, Inc., and salt watch kits from Izaak Walton League of America - Harry Enstrom Chapter (Greene County).

*Special Note: As per accounting standards, all income is reported in the year received. Therefore, our surplus not only reflects as operating reserve but also multi-year grant surpluses that are allocated to support the operating budget.*

EXPENSES	
Salaries and Wages	\$193,403.19
Payroll Tax Expense	\$17,173.50
Health Benefits	\$13,246.26
Workers Comp Insurance	\$4,759.83
Program Meals	\$43,346.19
Program Facility	\$36,502.00
Program Supplies	\$16,320.51
Curriculum Coordinator/Instructor Services	\$22,200.00
Program Transportation	\$8,526.69
Equip Rental/Maintenance	\$2,765.73
Printing	\$15,178.19
Background Checks	\$60.25
Postage	\$3,354.91
Event - Reward Weekend	\$5,297.57
Fundraising Supplies	\$2,109.10
Rent	\$12,557.00
Utilities	\$309.11
Office Supplies	\$2,562.37
Telephone	\$1,951.27
Software & Computer Supplies	\$12,418.47
Internet Expense	\$2,056.37
Travel	\$9,669.48
Advertising and Promotion	\$619.51
Accounting and Auditing	\$13,850.00
Payroll Service Fees	\$362.50
Other Professional Services	\$86,666.50
Website Services	\$1,102.61
Dues and Subscriptions	\$1,310.00
College Scholarships Provided	\$3,000.00
Insurance	\$5,816.20
Bank and Finance Expenses	\$1,169.16
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$539,664.47</b>





WILDLIFE  
LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY

## CONTACT US

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Lock Haven, PA 17745

570-245-8518

[wildlifeleadershipacademy.org](http://wildlifeleadershipacademy.org)

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

The official registration and financial information of Wildlife Leadership Academy may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.