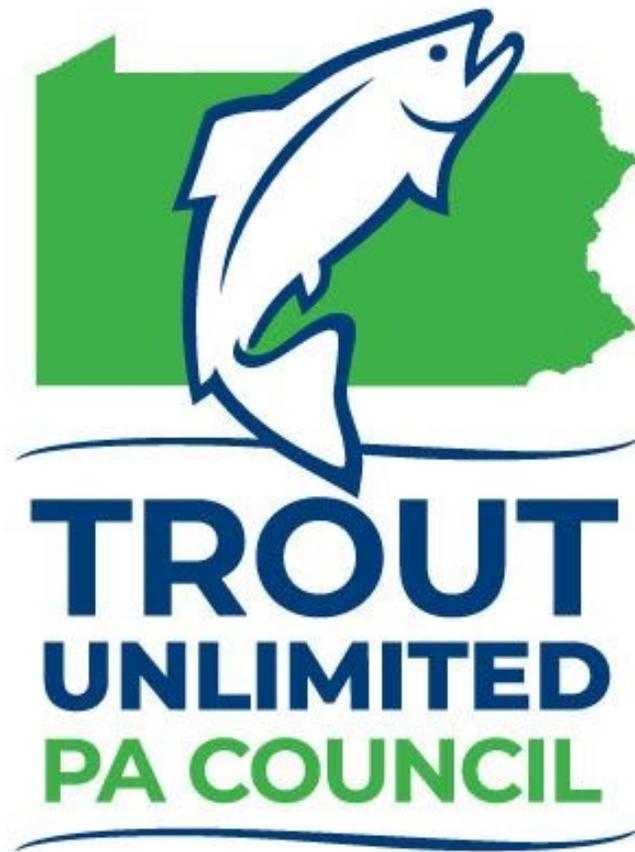


Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited Annual Report

October 2022 to September 2023



**Pennsylvania Council of Trout
PO Box 5148
Bellefonte, PA 16823**

Email: info@patrout.org

Phone: 814-359-5233

Web: www.patrout.org

LEADERSHIP

Since 1963, the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU) has been working with local, state, and federal partners to conserve coldwater habitat and promote healthy native and wild trout fisheries across Pennsylvania. We restore streams through habitat improvement projects, conduct education and outreach programs related to water conservation and fisheries management, and work to educate the next generation about the importance of clean water and wild trout. Our council serves as a unified voice for the 49 local chapters representing 15,000 members statewide.

Mission

To conserve, protect, restore, and sustain Pennsylvania's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, especially our wild trout resources.

Vision

By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of native and wild coldwater fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

Message from the Program Director

Welcome to the first PATU annual report! Since becoming Program Director in the fall of 2019, I have learned a great deal about our organization, our history, and our accomplishments over the years through talking with long-time members, looking through old files at the office, and examining electronic documents on the program directors' computer. While we have always had an annual financial report prepared by the treasurer, I haven't found evidence of consistent recordkeeping regarding our programmatic success over the years. For this reason, I felt it important to develop an annual report. This report will outline the work that we have accomplished between one annual meeting and the next, so that we can share our successes with our members, donors, partners, and supporters.

This document is by no means a complete record of all the good things that are going on in Trout Unlimited at the state level, but is, rather, a highlight reel aimed at capturing some of the most prominent accomplishments of the year. My hope is that we can prepare a report like this each year in preparation for the annual meeting, improving upon it each year and allowing it to serve as a record of our work from year to year.

Thank you to our volunteer board of directors, committee members, chapters, and partners – you are the lifeblood of our organization, and our success is dependent upon your dedication and hard work to improve the coldwater resources and wild trout fisheries of our Commonwealth.

I welcome feedback on this first PATU Annual Report. Please email me with any questions or suggestions at c-rkester@pa.gov.

Yours in Conservation,
Rachel Kester

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Rachel Kester – Program Director

WORK THAT CONNECTS

Through working with our chapters and partners across the state, PATU aims to develop strategies and provide resources that cultivate leadership, engage people (especially youth) in hands-on conservation projects and advocacy efforts, recruit and retain a diverse membership throughout our communities, and maximize synergies between our organization and like-minded agencies, organizations, and partners.

Trout in the Classroom

For over 15 years, PATU has been partnering with the PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) to administer the Trout in the Classroom program statewide. Through the program, teachers and their students raise rainbow trout from eggs to fingerlings in classroom aquariums before releasing them into an approved waterway each spring. The following statistics were recently compiled for the 2022-23 school year:

- There were 419 TIC programs implemented across the state.
- Over 49,000 students were engaged in the program.



- Over 8,700 hours were devoted to teaching TIC topics.
- 11,600 students received fishing instruction through the program.
- Over 3,800 volunteer hours were donated by TIC community partners.
- Utilizing PATU funding and PFBC R3 Education Grant funding, we were able to award grants to 66 teachers for aquarium supplies, fishing and fly-tying equipment, field trip and release day support, and curriculum materials to support their TIC activities.

For more information regarding the PA Trout in the Classroom program, visit www.patrouinthe classroom.org or contact Rachel Kester at c-rkester@pa.gov.

STREAM Girls/Keepers

Through the STREAM Girls/Keepers program, spearheaded here in Pennsylvania by Youth Education Chair Judi Sittler, students are introduced to watershed conservation and angling concepts utilizing principles of Science, Technology, Recreation, Engineering, Art, and Math.

Originally started as a Girl Scouts patch project, the program has been recently expanded to include youth of any gender and organizational affiliation. This year the STREAM Girls/Keepers program has held seven events with one more slated for early October. Over 80 youth were educated through the STREAM Girls/Keeper program this year. Chapters participating in the program this year include:



- Brodhead Chapter, #289
- Lackawanna Valley Chapter, #414
- Penns Creek Chapter, #119
- Penns Woods West Chapter, #042
- Spring Creek Chapter, #185
- Valley Forge Chapter, #290

For more information or to request equipment, materials, or planning assistance for STREAM Girls/Keepers or other youth education programs, contact Judi Sittler at jlsittler@comcast.net.



Women, Diversity, and Inclusion (WDI) Committee

The PATU WDI Committee, co-chaired by Amidea Daniel and Kelly Williams, has been working hard over the last several years to encourage more diversity at TU events and activities through hands-on leadership training and providing resources to chapters. Over the past year, the WDI Committee has:

- Held regular committee meetings to engage chapter members and partners across the state.
- Completed a PFBC R3 Education Grant to provide loaner fly fishing equipment in Environmental Justice communities. The original goal was to establish three new fishing tackle loaner sites, but seven were ultimately established. They are listed below.
 - Clearfield County – Clearfield Conservation District
 - Columbia County – Columbia County Conservation District
 - Indiana County – Indiana County Conservation District
 - Lancaster County – Lancaster Fly Girls
 - Lycoming County – Northcentral PA Conservancy
 - Montgomery County – Norristown Farm Park
 - Potter County – Potter County Conservation District
- Hosted the 4th Annual PATU Women’s Leadership Retreat (W3: Watersheds, Wellness, and Wading into Leadership) where 34 women participated in three days of activities and learning focused on leadership development, partnerships, developing introductory fishing programs, and building off those programs to engage folks from all walks of life in fishing and conservation. Participants represented:
 - Twenty different PA counties
 - Five different states
 - Eleven different TU chapters
 - Three partnering organizations
 - PATU and National TU staff



- Supported WDI Committee members as they implemented various trainings and events throughout the year including:
 - Central PA Mentor weekend(s) hosted by Spring Creek TU – September 9-18, 2022, and April 14-15, 2023.
 - Women’s Intro to Steelhead Programs hosted by PFBC – November 4-7, 2022.
 - Walk n’ Wade Wednesdays hosted by Lancaster Fly Girls – April 5, 12, and 19, 2023.
 - PA Steelhead Association Presentation by Amidea Daniel – April 12, 2023.
 - United Women on the Fly “Fish and Hang” weekend hosted by Lancaster Fly Girls – May 26 – 28, 2023.

- Maintained the PATU WDI website (www.patuwdi.weebly.com) which includes resources for chapters to utilize in their efforts to attract diverse audiences to their programs and events.

For questions or assistance, contact WDI Committee Co-chairs Amidea Daniel (adaniel@pa.gov) or Kelly Williams (kellyw@clfdccd.com).

Communications

Through improved communications, PATU has worked to better serve our members and engage new and existing community partners and supporters by:

- Developing a Communications Plan for the organization.
- Continuing publication of the *Pennsylvania Trout* newsletter and My PATU monthly emails.
- Increasing utilization of social media including Facebook, Twitter (now X), LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. This has led to a 47% increase in followers, a 16% increase in shares, and a 22% increase in post impressions across all social media platforms.
- Hiring a Conservation Communications Coordinator (CCC). Our first CCC was instrumental in helping us reboot our social media presence. She departed for a new opportunity earlier this year and we are currently in the process of hiring someone to fill the position and continue that momentum.

WORK THAT PROTECTS

Utilizing our strong network of chapters and partners across the state, PATU aims to protect our coldwater ecosystems and native and wild trout fisheries by providing funding, technical support, resources, and advocacy for projects and initiatives that will lead to improvements in water quality, instream and riparian habitat, and connectivity of existing wild trout populations. These efforts aim to help native and wild trout remain resilient against threats including climate change, habitat loss, resource extraction, development, and changing land use, while taking advantage of opportunities to restore and protect critical areas.

Coldwater Heritage Partnership

The Coldwater Heritage Partnership (CHP) was formed in 2002 as a collaborative effort between PATU,



the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds (FPW). The program is designed to provide funding and technical assistance for planning and implementation of coldwater conservation projects across the state. The first CHP grants were awarded in 2003 and have continued for the last twenty years.

Over the last year, we worked with our grantees to finalize Round 25 (2020) and

Round 26 (2021) CHP projects. Through these two rounds we were able to fund eight planning grants to assess the conservation needs of wild trout streams across the state and an aquatic organism passage (AOP) assessment of eight Class A and naturally reproducing wild trout streams in Clearfield County (Table 1).

Table 1: CHP Planning Projects Completed in 2023.

Stream Name	County	Project Type
Bens Creek	Cambria/Somerset	Conservation plan development
Cush Creek	Clearfield/Indiana	Conservation plan development
Doe Run	Chester	Conservation plan development
Farnsworth Branch	Warren	Conservation plan development
Mill Creek	Luzerne	Conservation plan development
Moshannon Creek	Centre/Clearfield	Conservation plan development
Starrucca Creek	Susquehanna	Conservation plan development
Upper Standing Stone Creek	Huntingdon	Conservation plan development
Bear Run	Clearfield	AOP assessment
Bell Run	Clearfield	AOP assessment
Clearfield Creek	Clearfield	AOP assessment
Chest Creek	Clearfield	AOP assessment
Cush Creek	Clearfield	AOP assessment
Deer Run	Clearfield	AOP assessment
East Branch Mahoning Creek	Clearfield	AOP assessment
Moshannon Creek	Clearfield	AOP assessment

In addition to the planning projects listed above, there were also 15 implementation projects that were completed this year (Table 2).

Table 2: CHP Implementation Projects Completed in 2023.

Stream Name	County	Project Type
Beaverdam Run (Phase II)	Clinton	Large wood addition
Beaverdam Run (Phase III)	Clinton	Large wood addition
Bennett Branch Sinnemahoning Creek	Clearfield	Streambank stabilization/fish habitat construction
Blue Run	Tioga	Large wood addition
Clear Creek (Phase I)	Jefferson	Streambank stabilization/fish habitat construction
Clear Creek (Phase II)	Jefferson	Streambank stabilization/fish habitat construction
Cooks Creek	Bucks	Riparian buffer installation
Falling Spring	Franklin	Riparian buffer installation
Gallagher Run	Elk	Streambank stabilization/fish habitat construction
Kettle Creek	Clinton	Streambank stabilization/fish habitat construction
Muddy Creek	Centre	Fish habitat construction

Shade Creek	Somerset	Alkaline addition
Tubmill Creek	Westmoreland	Streambank stabilization/fish habitat construction
Water Tank Run	Elk	Large wood addition
West Branch Perkiomen Creek	Berks	Fish habitat construction

In addition to the completed projects above, there are two planning and nine implementation projects underway for Round 27(2022) and three planning and eight implementation projects underway for Round 28 (2023). Funding to support Round 29 (2024) has been applied for and should be announced by the end of the year by the DCNR.

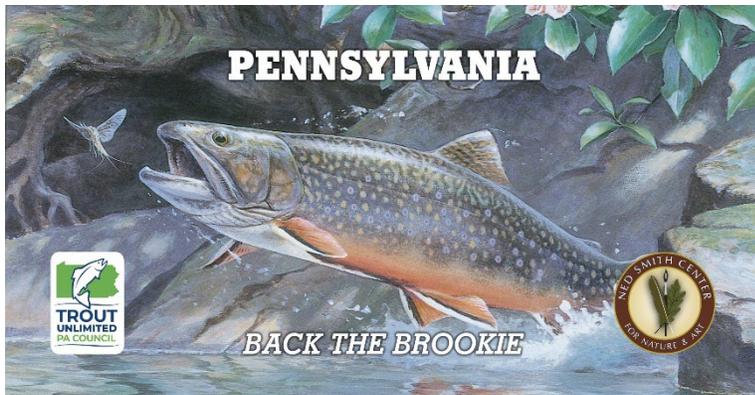
More information about the Coldwater Heritage Partnership can be found at www.coldwaterheritage.org or by contacting Rachel Kester at c-rkester@pa.gov.

Mariner East 2/Revolution Pipeline Funding

Another exciting development this year is the addition of \$500,000 in funding to the CHP program through the Mariner East 2/Revolution Pipeline settlement. PATU will be working with the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General to oversee grants for coldwater planning and implementation projects in 18 counties impacted by construction of the Mariner East 2 and Revolution pipelines. Organizations in the following counties will be eligible for future funding: Allegheny, Beaver, Berks, Blair, Cambria, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Huntingdon, Indiana, Lancaster, Lebanon, Juniata, Perry, Washington, Westmoreland, and York.

Questions regarding the Coldwater Heritage Partnership program or Mariner East funding can be directed to Program Director Rachel Kester at c-rkester@pa.gov.

Forever Wild



Each year, PATU awards small grants to our chapters to assist with conservation projects and education and outreach regarding coldwater conservation and wild trout streams. Since September of 2022, Council has awarded six Forever Wild grants to chapters across the state (Table 3).

Table 3: Forever Wild Grants Awarded to Chapters Since the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Chapter Name	Stream Name	Project
Bucks County, #254	Aquetong Creek	Aquetong Creek Habitat Project Site Visit, Design Plan, and Permit
Codorus, #558	Codorus Creek	Codorus Creek Data Logger Installation and Monitoring
Codorus, #558	Codorus Creek	Codorus Creek Large Wood Re-Purposing
Muddy Creek, #575	Muddy Creek	Fly Fishing Equipment for Education and Outreach to the Public
Northwest PA, #041	Benson Run, Lamson Run, and Trout Run	Monitoring of Three Local Trout Streams for pH and Temperature
Penns Creek, #119	Upper Kish Creek	Riparian Buffer Planting on 1000 ft of Upper Kish Creek

More information regarding Forever Wild grants can be requested by contacting Brian Wagner at bewagner482@gmail.com or Rachel Kester at c-rkester@pa.gov.

Trout Policy Committee

Committee Chair Dave Rothrock attended nearly all PFBC Fisheries and Hatcheries Committee meetings, as well as all but one of the quarterly Commissioners' meetings. He met with PFBC staff each quarter to discuss important topics related to upcoming Commissioners' meetings as well as issues PATU considers important.

PATU has supported the proposal to require all entities to provide a Notice of Stocking to the Commission which is expected to be implemented as of January 1, 2024. This will provide Commission staff with information regarding the stocking of all species across the state.



While the proposal to require all entities to request a Stocking Authorization from PFBC was tabled, PATU continues to pursue keeping the discussion alive with hope that this will be approved by the Commissioners for implementation soon. We believe this will be an important tool to allow PFBC to better manage the state's fisheries.

PATU has supported PFBC's effort to change the regulation of the 12 Class A wild brown trout stream sections which are also stocked and are currently managed under general trout regulations. The

proposal is to allow harvest of the stocked rainbow trout and require that all brown trout must be released unharmed. This will go a long way in protecting these valuable wild brown trout populations.

Trout Policy Chair Dave Rothrock can be contacted at daver2@comcast.net.

Conservation Committee

Over the last year, the Conservation Committee chaired by Brian Wagner has completed the following activities in support of PATU's strategic goals:

- Reviewed Forever Wild grant applications (see Table 3).
- Updated PATU's policy on Stream Channelization & Maintenance.
- Raised awareness of PFAS (Forever Chemicals) & Neonics.
- Provided a support letter to David Coughlin, Professor of Biology at Weidner University for a proposal to determine effects of climate change on native brook trout.
- Assisted chapters with local issues including:
 - Proposed water withdrawals by Nicholas Meats on Fishing Creek in the Narrows, Clinton County (Susquehanna Chapter and Lloyd Wilson Chapter)
 - Keystone Sanitary Landfill permit to discharge treated leachate into Little Roaring Brook, Lackawanna County (Lackawanna Valley Chapter)
 - Investigation of "cloudy" water conditions (possibly quarry related) in Honey Creek, Mifflin County (Penns Creek Chapter)

For more information or to request assistance regarding conservation related issues, please contact Brian Wagner at bewagner482@gmail.com.

WORK THAT SUSTAINS

Development Committee

This was the first year for the reconstituted PATU Development Committee. Bob Neu of the Penns Woods West Chapter was appointed Chair at the Annual Meeting in September 2022. Since that time the committee has undertaken the following activities to help sustain the work of our organization.

A fundraising database was created to track all aspects of individual and institutional giving going forward; we are in process to find a cost-effective way of sharing it among authorized users. We re-established PATU's certification by the Commonwealth as an Educational Improvement Organization, so that business contributors can receive tax credits for donations to Trout in the Classroom and STREAM Girls/Keepers under PA's EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) program. We recently received our first corporate contribution of this nature.

Through PATU member Al Budinsky we were able to access a Trout in the Classroom support grant from the Terracon Foundation; our thanks to Al for spearheading this effort.

We used the text of the Terracon Foundation application to develop a grant-request template, including current TIC participation statistics, for any chapter who needs assistance in applying for local funding for its TIC program.

For assistance with fundraising matters, contact the Development Committee at development@patrout.org.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT



The last few years have been challenging due to the global COVID-19 pandemic; however, PATU is poised to move forward with our efforts to protect and conserve coldwater habitat and wild trout fisheries across Pennsylvania.

Plans to Connect

Communications - To better engage our communities in our conservation mission, we plan to continue making improvements to our communications systems. This will entail hiring a Conservation Communications Coordinator (underway) and utilizing the recently developed Communications Plan to make sure we are using all available means to engage with our members, partners, and supporters. We will make a concerted effort to generate and share relevant content across both our print media and social media platforms. We will also work closely with our chapters to plan and advertise events and training opportunities.

Youth Education - We plan to continue working with chapters and other conservation partners

to host STREAM Girls/Keepers programs in each region of the state. Those wishing to host a program for the coming year should reach out to the Youth Education Committee for resources and support.

Diversity - The WDI Committee is planning to continue offering training and resources to support diversity within our organization. The WDI Committee will have a presence at the 2024 Lancaster Fly Fishing Show in March and will host the annual Women's Leadership Retreat on May 17-19, 2024, in Port Matilda. There are also regional events being planned by the WDI Committee for the coming year.

Keystone Coldwater Conference - The Keystone Coldwater Conference will be held February 23-24, 2024, in State College bringing together folks from across the state to network and learn about the latest in coldwater conservation. This year's theme will be "The State of Coldwater Conservation in PA – Identifying Priorities and Building Synergy to Enhance Conservation Outcomes". More information can be found at www.coldwaterconference.org.

Plans to Protect

Conservation – In order to support conservation of coldwater habitat and wild trout fisheries across the state, PATU will continue to offer Coldwater Heritage Partnership grants as well as Forever Wild grants to fund planning and implementation projects. The Conservation Committee will continue to monitor issues affecting wild trout and their watersheds and will offer support and guidance to our chapters as needed to protect coldwater resources.

Policy & Advocacy – The Trout Policy Committee will continue to engage with state level agencies (primarily PFBC) to communicate PATU's goals regarding wild trout management and ensure that Council has a seat at the table when management decisions are being made. Council will continue to work with National TU staff here in Pennsylvania to advocate for policies and legislation that benefit conservation of native and wild trout and coldwater resources.



Plans to Sustain

Development - In the coming year, we plan to develop a grant template to help chapters access funding to support local STREAM Girls/Keepers programs. We also plan to make an assertive fundraising effort with the forthcoming Annual Appeal letters, coming out in November. We also hope to begin accessing new foundations and corporations on a regular basis, to build a productive approach to both project-oriented and general-operating funds for the current and future years.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Become Involved

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. We are thankful to all those who give of their time and talents to support our mission. We encourage members to become involved at all levels of the organization. Whether you are interested in volunteering or leading at your local chapter, serving on Council or one of our committees, or even representing TU at the National level through the National Leadership Council, there is an opportunity for you!

Please reach out to any one of the members of the Board of Directors or Program Director, Rachel Kester, to discuss opportunities or ask any questions you may have about volunteering.

Put It on the Calendar

Trout Unlimited has an event calendar that allows interested folks to find and register for upcoming TU events near them, but we need your help to make sure these opportunities are included on the calendar.

PATU Calendar of Events: <https://patrout.org/index.php/about-us/chapter-events/>

For assistance adding an event to the calendar, email Rachel Kester at c-rkester@pa.gov.

Raise Your Voice

From time to time, you may see calls to action from National or PATU alerting you to issues affecting wild trout and/or their habitat. Sometimes these alerts include a request to act on behalf of our wild trout resources. Whether it be a request for you to make a phone call, write a letter, send an email, or show up at a public meeting, please take the time to voice your opinion on pertinent issues. Together our voices are powerful.

Policy and advocacy inquiries can be directed to TU's Mid-Atlantic Policy Program Manager Emily Baldauff at Emily.baldauff@tu.org.

Make a Donation

One of the easiest ways to support PATU is to donate. No amount is too large or too small to make a difference to our mission. Donations can be made in the following ways:

- Complete the annual appeal form (sent out in November).
- Donate online at www.patrout.org by clicking the "Donate" button.
- Mail a check made payable to "PATU" to PO Box 5148, Bellefonte, PA, 16823.

To discuss additional ways to support PATU financially, please contact the Development Committee at development@patrout.org.

THANK YOU

Without the generosity of our members and supporters, PATU would not have been able to accomplish the activities described in this report. Thank you to the individuals, chapters, and businesses that have supported us over the past year (October 2022 to present). We are grateful for your support.

A-D

Adams County Chapter #323 of Trout Unlimited	Todd G. Burns
Robert W. Agnew	Peter Butera
Ray M. Albany	Tom Cady
Don I. Albright	Ari Capotis
David J. Alerich	Michael Carrick
Allegheny Mountain Chapter #036 of Trout Unlimited	John F. Carson
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Terry Buchanan	Donegal Chapter #037 of Trout Unlimited
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Bucks County Chapter #254 of Trout Unlimited	Ronald A. Doub
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Kurt Bue	David M. Duffus
Richard Burdelsky	Glen Dukes
Jon Burgess	Lorraine Dupre

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Theodore Lebow	Mountain Laurel Chapter #040 of Trout Unlimited in Memory of Randy Buchanan
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Thomas Maczko Jr.	Robert Nolf

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PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Chris Shaffer
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Nicholas Scheid Jr.	Joseph Tulak
John Schmitt	Tulpehocken Chapter #150 of PA Trout Unlimited
Gary F. Schultz	Paul Turtzer

U-Z

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Joseph Velopolcak	Matt Winton
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The PATU Women, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of the 4th Annual Women’s Leadership Retreat:

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