



# Pennsylvania's Future Outside



TRUST FOR  
PUBLIC  
LAND™

# Investing in Green Growth

Public lands are essential to healthy, thriving communities. Parks provide a sanctuary for exercise, relaxation, and community building, but they also stimulate the local economy and support good-paying, sustainable jobs. Trust for Public Land (TPL) launched the “Pennsylvania’s Future Outside” report to guide strategic investments in outdoor recreation.

**Through targeted efforts, Pennsylvania’s decision-makers can use this report to strengthen local communities and safeguard our future from climate change.**

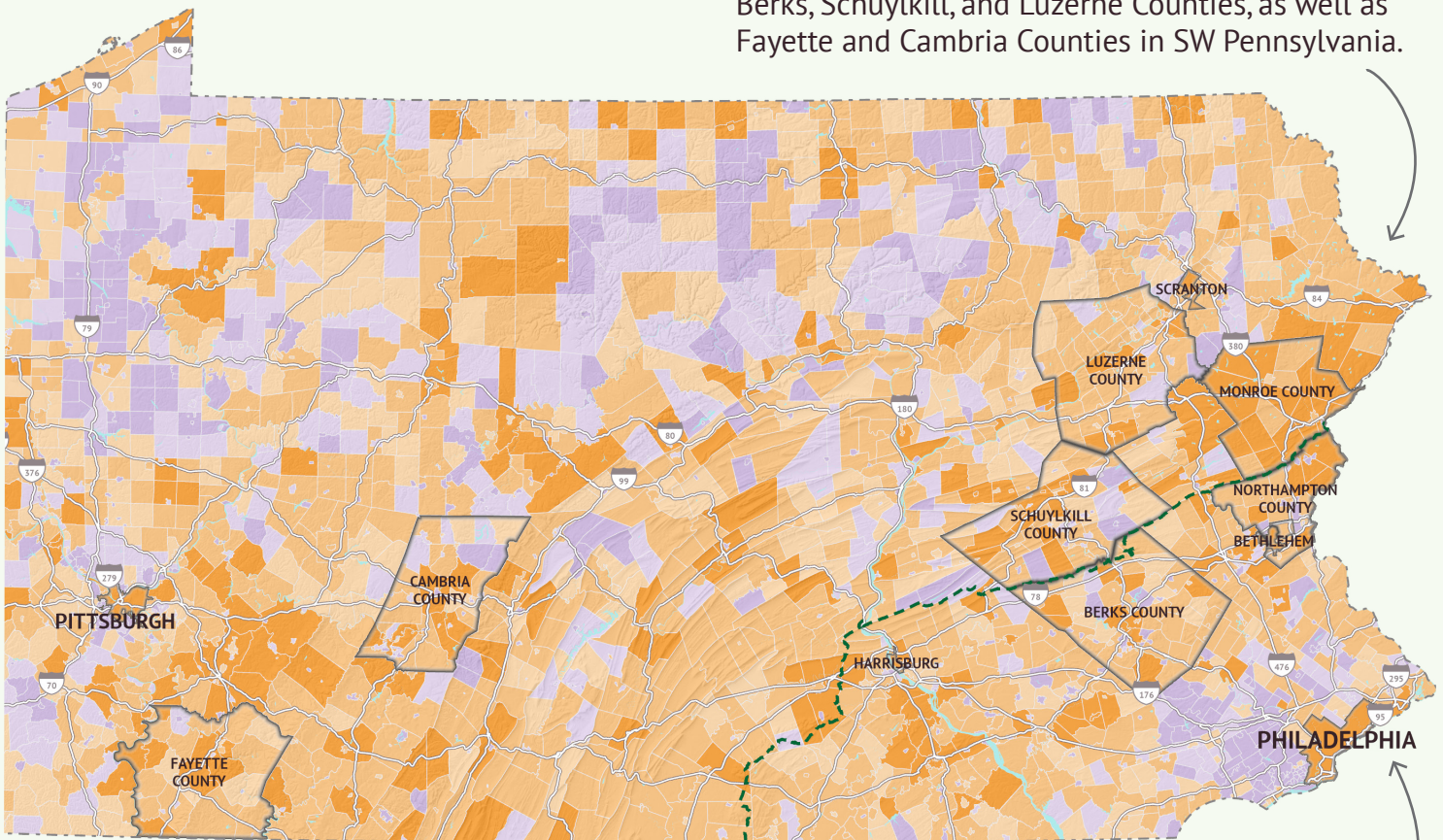
## Mapping Conservation Opportunity

TPL charted conservation opportunities across Pennsylvania using a color-coded map with municipalities in **darkest orange** indicating the highest scores across 4 key metrics: economic need and opportunity, recreation need, climate impact, and public funding opportunity.

### How to read the opportunity scores:



Out of over 1,600 townships and cities, 200 emerge as the strongest candidates for gains from conservation efforts, mainly in **rural areas** like Berks, Schuylkill, and Luzerne Counties, as well as Fayette and Cambria Counties in SW Pennsylvania.



Some of the highest-scoring townships hug the **Appalachian Trail**, reflecting the economic potential of capitalizing on proximity to the iconic greenway amid surging interest in outdoor recreation.

Philadelphia also ranks highly, underscoring conservation opportunities in **urban areas** to support vulnerable populations and mitigate climate risk.

# Our Collaborative, Data-Driven Approach

## Expert collaboration

TPL leveraged its expertise in climate science, conservation economics, federal funding, and park access to select priority areas and relevant datasets in collaboration with Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)



## Defining Priority Areas

**Need** integrates economic need and recreation access, ensuring a park is within a 10-min walk in urban areas or a 10-min drive in rural settings.

**Opportunity** considers funding prospects from recent federal initiatives like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, alongside sustained support from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

**Impact** assesses the potential for economic growth and climate resilience through the preservation of forests, wildlife corridors, and urban green spaces.

## GIS Modeling

With these datasets, TPL used GIS to evaluate municipalities against 4 key metrics: economic need and opportunity, recreation need, climate impact, and public funding opportunity.



## Scoring Opportunity

Municipalities were scored to identify where impact, opportunity, and need converged most effectively

## Pennsylvanians Rally Behind Conservation

Pennsylvanians' commitment to conservation has deep roots. In 2005, voters overwhelmingly approved the \$625 million "Growing Greener II" bond to enhance their parks and green spaces. This support was highlighted again in a recent public opinion poll by The Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg. Commissioned by Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy, the survey polled over 600 adults and revealed robust support for increasing state funding for conservation across all regions and demographic groups in the state.

### 90.7% of respondents indicated they would support

increasing state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms.



### 80.6% of respondents indicated they would support

increasing state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms, **even if it would cost the average household \$10-\$20 more annually.**



The maps produced through this project provide a strategic blueprint to meet the needs of Pennsylvanians now and in the future. Through thoughtful investment, both rural and urban communities can deepen their connection with

nature and harness the economic potential of local parks. **To dive into our research, including maps of specific priority areas, visit [tpl.org/PA-Outside](https://www.tpl.org/PA-Outside).**



### **About Trust for Public Land**

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where they are needed most. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 4 million acres of public land, created more than 5,420 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places, raised \$94 billion in public funding for parks and public lands, and connected nearly 9.7 million people to the outdoors. To learn more, visit [tpl.org](https://www.tpl.org).