



Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund

Long Swamp

Ice Age Relic Protected, Enjoyed by Public

A relic of the last ice age, Long Swamp is now a permanently protected haven for children from all around the world seeking a unique outdoor experience.

15,000 years ago Pennsylvania was covered in glaciers. As the climate warmed and the glaciers receded, a massive melting formed a boreal bog. Over time this bog became blanketed with a floating mat of vegetation, shaded by black spruce.

Long Swamp's damp, dark woods offer a much different experience than most Pennsylvania forests. Upon entering the bog, visitors experience a plunge in temperature. The thick canopy of trees above and the dense carpet of moss emulate a tropical rainforest.

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy had identified Long Swamp for conservation protection due to its boreal bog and high quality cold water fisheries which, together with adjacent forestlands, form an extensive wildlife corridor.

Camp Speers-Eljabar YMCA owns Long Swamp and its surrounding acreage, a little more than 1100 acres. It provides outdoor education and summer camp for youth of all backgrounds.

Camp staff became concerned of development pressures in the region. Recognizing the need to conserve the land on behalf of the community and future generations, the Camp's leadership agreed to sell a conservation easement to the Conservancy. The easement allows continued camp operations but prohibits development that would harm Long Swamp's conservation values.

A grant from the Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund, matched by a Pike County grant, made the Conservancy's purchase of the easement possible. 458 acres, which make up the non-developed, ecologically valuable area, are now permanently protected thanks to the landowner, land trust, county and state.

The land benefits the public by providing recreational and educational opportunities; the Camp also continues to use the land to teach campers about the local ecosystem and importance of protecting the environment. 



Project Spotlight

Keystone investment: \$740,000

Total project cost: \$1.48M

Project leader:

Delaware Highlands Conservancy

Key local partners:

Pike County

County: Pike

Fun fact: Walking along the suspended wooden trail, visitors might notice unusual species like pitcher plants and a rare breed of albino mosquito which thankfully feeds off bog plants rather than human blood.



The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund was established in 1993 with overwhelming bipartisan support both in the General Assembly and through a voter referendum. A portion of the state Realty Transfer Tax has been dedicated to the Keystone Fund for more than two decades. Each dollar of Keystone Fund investment typically leverages three dollars or more in direct local investments in our parks, trails, community green spaces and libraries.

Read more about the Keystone Fund at KeystoneFund.org