

# 2023 PAEE Award Winners



## KEYSTONE AWARD

### Doug Wentzel

#### Shaver's Creek Environmental Center

Doug Wentzel is a program director, instructor and naturalist at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center in central PA. For 30 years he has directed the education internship and numerous birding programs including helping to create The Birding Cup annual fundraiser. As a Penn State instructor, Doug teaches natural history and environmental interpretation and is a certified trainer through the National Association for Interpretation. As a naturalist, he regularly contributes field data to citizen science projects on birds, butterflies, and amphibians within the park, and his ongoing passion is to foster the awareness of the diversity of life in our own backyards.



## DAISY S. KLINEDINST MEMORIAL AWARD

### Katrina (Katie) Stanley

#### Latodami Nature Center

Katie became an Interpretive Naturalist at the Latodami Nature Center in North Park in June 2019 after graduating from University of Pittsburgh with a B.S. in Environmental Science. At Latodami, Katie focuses on leading nature hikes, improving wildlife habitats and park trail systems, and creating educational videos where she has reached a wide online audience and expanded environmental education access to those who may not be able to make their way to the parks. Katie has a specific affinity for aquatic ecosystems, leading her to become certified as a Master Watershed Steward and to create the Big Sewickley Creek Watershed Association in her hometown. In her free time, Katie enjoys camping, river floats, traveling, practicing yoga, and photography.



# OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AWARD

## The Floating Classroom Science Program Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy, Ryan Beltz

The mission of the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy is to protect the land and water resources of the local watershed as well as serve the community of people within it. The Floating Classroom is a state of the art research and educational vessel providing immersive STEM experiences for students of all ages. The specially equipped pontoon boat is powered by its unique solar array and electric motor. It is fully out-fitted with stereo-microscopes, aquarium, wifi, water sampling equipment, sonar, and iPads to facilitate experiential learning and interaction with the local watershed. Students are introduced to a myriad of topics as this one-of-a-kind Floating Classroom connects students to their local watershed in a unique way and challenges them to think about the importance of viable freshwater ecosystems globally.



### Ryan Beltz

Prior to his tenure with the Conservancy, Ryan worked as a land manager at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, as an instructor of English at Alvernia University, as a ranger with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska and as a canoe guide on the Inside Passage. He holds two degrees in English.

Ryan now lives in Lederach with his wife, Lisa, and two coon hounds. When he's not at the Conservancy, he can be found searching the woods and waterways by boat, boot and bike for native flora and fauna... and for comfortable spots to read.



# GOVERNMENT PARTNER AWARD



## Chris Fatzinger

Chris Fatzinger is a forester for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry of DCNR. He grew up in Ebensburg, PA and became involved in natural resources through plenty of family activities and scouting. After earning his Eagle Badge his senior year of high school, he attended Penn State University for a bachelor's degree in Forest Management. Since then, he has worked as an intern at Canoe Creek State Park, laborer for the PA Game Commission and a Park Ranger 1 at Keystone State Park. For the past 20 years Chris has worked as a forester in various roles in the Bureau of Forestry. For the last approximately 6 years, Chris has been part of the team at Gallitzin Forest District in the roles of service forester and fire forester. He has been extremely dedicated to working with school groups from K - 12 through Smokey Bear Programs, school programming focused on healthy forests, middle/ school county envirothons, healthy forest workshops for landowners, assisting state parks in school and community programs, and working with the Indiana County Conservation District.

## OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

### Jacquelyn Omotalade

Jacquelyn Omotalade is an environmental justice champion who works as Artificial Intelligence and environmental EdTech researcher. She examines environmental education through a Black feminist and child center lens adopting child driven algorithms to reframe environmental questions and provide innovation answers and solutions.

It is truly revolutionary research in the study of environmental education because it centers education of the students of color and empowers them to be agents of change in the environmental movement.



## BUSINESS PARTNER AWARD

### Mastic Trail Brewing Julia Meredith & Ben Williams



Mastic Trail Brewing is Pittsburgh's Caribbean Brewpub! It is owned and operated by the husband and wife team of Ben Williams and Julia Meredith. We opened in July 2020 and seek to combine our love of the Caribbean islands and craft beer. A key aspect of our operating philosophy is sustainability. We do not use single-use plastics, offering paper straws and corn starch-based stirrers; we compost all spent grains from our brewery and our kitchen and post-consumer food scraps at a commercial composting facility; we offer sustainably-raised shrimp in our entrees; we use high post-consumer recycled content paper products in our restrooms; we have LED fixtures and programmable thermostats throughout the building. We are Gold-level certified by Sustainable Pittsburgh for our efforts. In addition, we participate in PennDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program for a three-mile long section of our road, which borders Little Pine Creek, hosting regular cleanups followed by free lunch and beverages at our brewery. Please visit us at [www.mastictrail.com](http://www.mastictrail.com) or on Facebook and Instagram.

## OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR AWARD

### Cynthia Murdough

Cindy is retiring (or as she prefers 'transitioning') from 35 years of public school teaching this year. She will still be a co-director of NEED camp. She has been a constant member of PAEE since attending her first conference in 1993 which inspired her to focus her efforts in the classroom on environmental education. She has involved her classroom in the State Parks Watershed Education program, PA Land Choices, and MWEs. Cindy is also a Watershed Steward for DEP, and in the US Fish and Wildlife Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Program, among numerous other community initiatives like the Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Association. She is a proud aunt to Emma and Jake and values her time spent with family, friends, and pets especially her cattle dog, Indy.

