

2025 PAEE Award Winners



KEYSTONE AWARD



Angela Belli
Saint Vincent College

Angela Belli is Director of the Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve at Saint Vincent College. She has been engaged in environmental education for more than 25 years where she has developed and implemented an array of outreach programs in environmental science for Saint Vincent College and led the development of the 50-acre nature reserve. Angela integrates her love of nature, science education, conservation, and service to others into the mission and outreach of Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve and Saint Vincent College. She has extensive experience in conservation biology and education, conducting research at Powdermill Nature Reserve's Biological Field Station, assisting in watershed restoration projects, and environment and ecology curriculum development and integration.

Previously, Angela served as a Community Outreach Assistant with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Pittsburgh Regional Office for the Pollution Prevention Program, and a Regulatory Compliance Specialist for Fisher Scientific International, Inc. Her guidance in landscape conservation and education relating to the nature reserve and the Monastery Run Improvement Project Mine Drainage Remediation wetlands have been recognized by the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Pennsylvania Resource Council, and Westmoreland County Smartgrowth partnership. In addition, she holds the Outstanding Environmental Educator of the Year by PAEE in 2004 and was the recipient of the 2015 Saint Vincent College Projectenmacher Award. She holds a Master of Science in environmental science and management from Duquesne University and a Bachelor of Science in biology from Seton Hill University.

BUSINESS PARTNER AWARD

Kelly Strope
Arcadia Natives

Kelly Strope is the owner of Arcadia Natives plant nursery in Washington, PA. Her nursery focuses on propagating seed grown species indigenous to the Mid-Atlantic region. She believes that the addition of native plants in our communities is a step toward reversing the decline of wildlife that are struggling in these changing times. Kelly's hope is to inspire compassionate action through education, thus initiating positive change in Pennsylvania landscapes...one native plant at a time.



GOVERNMENT PARTNER AWARD

Greater Latrobe Parks & Recreation Dawn Vavick & Craig Shevchik

Dawn Vavick

Dawn is the Program and Aquatics Director for Greater Latrobe Parks & Recreation, a role they have held since 1997. Initially hired as an Administrative Assistant, Dawn has expanded their responsibilities over the years, becoming a key figure in managing Aquatics Programming and overseeing the Municipal Swimming Pool. In addition, they schedule and lead Senior Recreation programs and coordinate the bi-annual brochures for the organization.

Beyond their work with Greater Latrobe, Dawn serves as an elected member of the Latrobe City Council. Outside of work, they are a proud parent to two adult children, Ben and Addyson, and share their home with a lively Pitbull rescue named Pablo. A former Health & Physical Education major at WVU, Dawn enjoys thrifting, swimming, kayaking, and camping in their free time.



Craig Shevchik

Currently serving as the Executive Director, Craig has successfully led the organization for the past 10 years, after previously holding the role of Program Director for 13 years. In this capacity, Craig manages eight parks and playgrounds, along with two signature parks: Legion-Keener and Bob Evancho, which feature amenities such as a fishing pond, exercise paths, pickleball courts, dek hockey rink, baseball fields, picnic pavilions, and basketball courts.

With a deep commitment to community engagement, he coordinates and organizes over 110 recreation and leisure programs annually, as well as 15 special events, ensuring diverse and enriching experiences for all.

Holding a Bachelor's in Education with a major in Recreation & Tourism Management from Bowling Green University, Craig also holds professional certifications including CPSI (Certified Playground Safety Inspector), CPO (Certified Pool Operator), and CPRP (Certified Park and Recreation Professional).



OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AWARD

Creek Connections

Creek Connections is a watershed education outreach program of Allegheny College that has engaged students in Western Pennsylvania (and beyond) with hands-on learning since 1995. Students are scientists conducting monthly water quality monitoring of their local waterways. We strive to support middle and high school teachers dedicated to their students, provide practical experiences and networking opportunities for our college student assistants, and foster collaborations with our amazing regional partners.



OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR AWARD



Diane Madl

DCNR – Hickory Run State Park Complex

With over 30 years of service to Pennsylvania's state parks, I've been fortunate to play a role in shaping environmental education programming across some of the state's most beautiful parks. Currently, I have the privilege of overseeing the education programs at Hickory Run, Lehigh Gorge, and Nescopeck State Parks. It has been an incredibly rewarding career, and I am grateful for the continued support of DCNR, Bureau of State Parks and the opportunities to work alongside passionate individuals who share a commitment to our work in environmental education.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO EE AWARD

Scott Cope

For over 40 years, Scott Cope has created opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors and appreciate nature. He managed the environmental education programming at Wildlands Conservancy for the past 17 years, developing and offering 14,000 environmental education and experiential nature programs to about 750,000 participants. His other experience includes positions at DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and as Whitehall Township's Bureau Chief of Recreation. He is a past president, president-elect, and regional advisor of the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators (PAEE). Scott is a 1981 graduate of Slippery Rock University, and at the end of 2024, he retired from full-time work and continues to do conservation education volunteer and contract work.



Lyndsay Denny Tamarack Wildlife Center

I am so honored to call myself an environmental educator! For the last four years, I have gone from a homeschool mom that founded and ran a homeschool hiking group called Wild + Free Mercer County, to volunteering on the education team for the Tamarack Wildlife Center, to going back to college and getting into the certification program through PAEE, to becoming an environmental educator at the Creative Learning Christian School in Mercer, and it was all because of the outstanding environmental education community! This field has some of the most incredible humans that I am so grateful for as it was these people that encouraged, inspired and welcomed me into this field. Today, I get to collaborate with them in an effort to make the world a better, healthier place, which has been a passion of mine since I can remember. Thank you for this recognition!



2025 MWEE Award Winners



MWEE SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Amy O'Donnell

Warren County School District

I spent most of my 32 years as an elementary Math and Science teacher. The past three years, as an Academic Coach, I took on K-5 Science changes for our district. By joining the PennSEL (Pennsylvania Science Education Leaders) Network three years ago, I became immersed in everything Science including the Technology and Engineering, Environmental Literacy, and Sustainability components. Additionally, I oversee STEM operations for our district. This year, I have also taken on the role of Secondary Science Curriculum Coordinator.



MWEE PARTNER OF EXCELLENCE

Karen Woods

Central Intermediate Unit 10

Karen Woods serves as a Curriculum Consultant for Central Intermediate Unit 10 in Philipsburg, PA. She specializes in designing innovative professional learning for educators across Clearfield, Centre, and Clinton counties. A former special education teacher and instructional coach, Karen brings expertise in literacy, science, and social studies. She coordinates the CIU 10 Galaxy Arts in Education program and supports districts in curriculum development. Karen's innovative approach has developed new programs that connect Pennsylvania's Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) with teaching artists, providing schools with immersive, interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

