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**Existing Dams at State Parks to be Evaluated for Hydroelectric Projects**

**Pittsburgh,** — The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) announced today that it has received a \$20,000 grant from the West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund (WPPSEF) to complete feasibility assessments for three potential hydropower projects in Western Pennsylvania state parks.

“Many of Pennsylvania’s state parks have existing infrastructure that could be retrofitted to produce clean energy without negatively impacting the ecosystem or recreational uses,” explained Lindsay Baxter, PEC’s Program Manager for Energy and Climate.

Two of the projects under consideration, Moraine State Park and McConnell’s Mill State Park, would integrate hydroelectric generation equipment into existing dam structures, to produce clean energy with the infrastructure that is already in place. The third project at Ohiopyle State Park considers producing electricity by installing a turbine into an underground pipe carrying water downhill.

The clean energy that could potentially be produced by these projects would not only reduce the environmental impact of park operations but would also result in cost-savings, allowing the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to spend this money on its core mission, rather than a utility bill.

“DCNR is committed to sustainability throughout our operations, and the use of hydropower would be an excellent complement to the existing solar installations and small wind turbines we have at several of our state parks and forests,” said John Norbeck, DCNR Deputy Secretary for State Parks and Forestry. “Installing sustainable practices on public lands provide models that our visitors can learn from, and also information for us to consider at other places on the lands that we manage.”

The potential projects' locations in highly-utilized state parks also provides an opportunity for education of the public. "The state parks are an ideal location for these types of projects because millions of Pennsylvanians, from all walks of life, visit each year, having the opportunity to see sustainable energy projects up close," said Joel Morrison, Executive Director, West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund, whose mission includes a focus on public education about sustainable energy solutions.

The studies funded by this grant should be completed in the fall. Pending the results, additional assessments may be needed to determine if the projects are technically and economically feasible.

#### **About the Pennsylvania Environmental Council**

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council is a statewide organization that brings people, government, and business together to find real world solutions for environmental challenges. These solutions bring about sustainable communities, protect our water resources, and address energy and climate issues. PEC was founded in 1970 and serves the entire state through offices in Luzerne, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia.

For more information, visit [www.pecpa.org](http://www.pecpa.org).

#### **About the West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund**

The West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund (WPPSEF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that invests in the deployment of sustainable energy technologies that benefit West Penn Power ratepayers in Pennsylvania. WPPSEF investments are focused in three broad categories:

- ✓ Deployment of sustainable and clean energy technologies;
- ✓ Deployment of energy efficiency and conservation technologies; and
- ✓ Facilitating economic development, environmental betterment, and public education as they relate to sustainable energy deployment in the WPP service region.

Visit <http://www.wppsef.org> for further information.

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