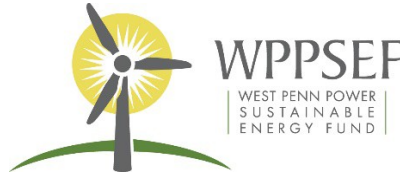




**PA WILDS CENTER**  
FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund Expands Investments and Partnerships in the Pennsylvania Wilds**

*Kane, Pennsylvania – July 11, 2019* – The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc. (PA Wilds Center), a regional nonprofit, has received a \$131,992 grant from West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund (WPPSEF) to support an energy assessment and the development of the PA Wilds Media Lab, to be housed on the second floor of Laughing Owl Press at 59 N. Fraley St. in Kane.

WPPSEF is also announcing the purchase of 63 N. Fraley St., located next door. They have also awarded a grant of \$7,500 for the Kane Area Community Center at 46 S. Fraley St. to fund an energy audit of the building. These investments in the PA Wilds Center and Kane are part of a broader WPPSEF initiative to help revitalize distressed Pennsylvania communities through clean energy innovation.

### **PA Wilds Media Lab**

The PA Wilds Media Lab will provide an economic stimulus to the borough of Kane and to the broader PA Wilds 12 ½ county region by assisting over 300 businesses and organizations from outdoor recreation outfitters, to micro-manufacturers and artisans, to craft agricultural producers that are members of the Wilds Cooperative of Pennsylvania (WCO). Through this grant partnership, the PA Wilds Center will document the building's thermal envelope and energy system audit and improvement process in an educational format that can be utilized by other distressed communities in the PA Wilds region.

Luciano Builders of Bradford, PA, was selected via a competitive proposal process to lead construction of the PA Wilds Media Lab. Work begins later this summer.

Tataboline Enos, CEO of the PA Wilds Center, said “Sustainable energy and stewardship is a core theme of the PA Wilds work. We are thrilled to have a partner willing to tackle one of the toughest jobs in rural revitalization with us – preserving main street buildings and our community character – while modernizing them for energy efficiency, cost efficiency and accessibility. Thanks to WPPSEF’s investment, mentorship, and the support of our other funders, including The Collins Companies Foundation and the USDA, I’m confident we’ll be able to share key learnings, tips and a model for other communities.”

PO BOX 285

SUGAR GROVE, PA 16350

814-757-9190

PAWILDSCENTER.ORG



pennsylvania  
WILDS

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (PA Wilds Center) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The official registration and financial information of PA Wilds Center may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

PAWilds.com WildsCoPa.org ShopThePaWilds.org



## **Models for Main Street Revitalization & Clean Energy**

All investments are part of a broader commitment by WPPSEF to pilot models for main street revitalization and energy sustainability for distressed communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds region and throughout the Commonwealth.

“Kane’s main street revitalization is just one example of many taking place in the Pennsylvania Wilds, but the partnership with WPPSEF is a new approach. This work connects environmental stewardship and historic preservation principles with more traditional community development models,” said Kristin Lewis, Executive Vice President of Economic Development for the PA Wilds Center and a resident of Kane.

Lewis continued, “Most of rural America is facing similar economic challenges, including struggling main streets and steep population declines. WPPSEF’s support for a green main street model is exciting for the whole region. Small businesses are the chief driver of job growth in the United States. Our main streets drive tourism and jobs, and help communities be more unique and vibrant, enhancing quality of life for residents. This in turn helps major employers in the region attract and retain talent. The Pennsylvania Wilds is better positioned than many rural parts of the country, because we are tackling these issues with a regional focus and innovative partnerships, like WPPSEF. That’s the key difference.”

The Pennsylvania Wilds, one of the state’s 11 official tourism regions, is a large rural area that covers about a quarter of the Commonwealth and is home to about 4 percent of the state’s population. The 12 1/2 –county landscape is known for its more than two million acres of public land — more than Yellowstone National Park.

Said Brandy Schimp, Kane’s Mayor, “It just makes sense for our rural communities and counties to partner on a regional level. Our partnership with the PA Wilds has helped us attract support from partners like WPPSEF and learn about new models for community development. On a rural landscape, we really are stronger together! I’m honored to serve a town that has inspired new models for rural development and collaboration.”

## **Purchase of 63 Fraley Street and Kane Area Community Center Grant**

WPPSEF also announced their purchase of 63 N. Fraley St., next door to Laughing Owl Press, formerly the Moose of Kane. Plans for the building are still in their infancy, but include clean energy upgrades and the potential for a multi-building elevator.

WPPSEF Executive Director Joel Morrison said, “When we first looked at the building, we realized that the biggest obstacle to the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stories of a building was the lack of an elevator. We began to investigate elevator options for the PA Wilds Media Lab, and thought about the potential of a multi-building elevator model that could really expand the impact of our investments in Kane. We see a unique spark of community partnerships and entrepreneurial investment here in Kane and in the PA Wilds, and our efforts and investments build upon one





another. We are also helping the Kane Area Community Center with a building energy audit, and hope to help with the long-term sustainability of that building and organization. These three building investments will help to elevate Kane and the PA Wilds as a true model for sustainable energy, main street revitalization and accessibility.”

Morrison continued, “We are currently developing a usage plan for 63 N. Fraley St., and we are excited to partner with the PA Wilds to come up with ideas, and a transition plan. There could be space for private businesses the community is lacking, professional work space, a museum or tourist attraction... there are many possibilities. First things first, is to secure the structure, modernize it with green energy technology, and make it accessible. There’s no shortage of visionaries in Kane and at the PA Wilds Center, so we are excited to explore possibilities with our partners.”

WPPSEF is also funding a clean energy audit at the Kane Area Community Center, located at 46 S. Fraley St.

Said Michelle Palmer, Executive Director of the Kane Area Community Center (KACC), “We’re excited WPPSEF is making KACC a part of this initiative; our historic main street building is a community anchor that serves so many families, community service providers and local organizations. The community center is excited to improve our facility to better serve the needs of our community and appreciates the opportunity to work with WPPSEF.”

“Outside investment like this is a testament to the collaborative momentum of Kane’s revitalization,” said Melanie Claubagh, a member of the Borough of Kane Council and the Kane Area Revitalization Enterprise. “This new growth has taken many years and many committed partners, but we’ve finally reached a tipping point. We’re thrilled to have a new partner like WPPSEF that will help us progress in ways that benefit both property owners and the planet.”

## **WPPSEF & PA Wilds**

WPPSEF has teamed up with PA Wilds Center in the past, helping it create marketing materials to better tell the story of several high-performance conservation visitor facilities that have come online in the Pennsylvania Wilds in the past few years, such as the Elk Country Visitor Center, Wildlife Center at Sinnemahoning State Park, Nature Inn at Bald Eagle and the visitor center at Kinzua Bridge State Park. All of the facilities are owned by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, a longtime partner in the effort to grow nature tourism in the region. WPPSEF also featured PA Wilds Center and the Keystone Elk Country Alliance, another Wilds partner, as part of its Quiet Ones video series. Those projects are featured at [www.pawilds.com/stewardship](http://www.pawilds.com/stewardship).

“WPPSEF’s ‘Quiet Ones’ video series inspired the PA Wilds Center to start a multi-year video series of our own to help tell the Wilds story through the great work of our many community partners,” Ta Enos said. “People and organizations in our region are marrying conservation and economic development in the most incredible, innovative, practical and inspiring ways. We plan





to call the series “The Wilds Are Working” – a nod to the fact that we are hard at work here in rural PA, figuring out how to revitalize our communities.”

Kristin Lewis continued, “With WPPSEF’s help, we are able to focus in on energy-themed stories in the Wilds Are Working video series, including the story of Kane’s main street revitalization and community partnerships, energy-efficiency construction and tactics, how we did it and how other communities can use similar models.”

“Individuals and organizations want to invest in communities that invest in themselves,” Enos says. “That’s certainly what we are seeing play out in Kane and across the PA Wilds region. It’s a lot of work and creativity and trust and ‘learning from your neighbor,’ and our region should be really proud of the momentum. It is hard earned.”

Said Kate Kennedy, Executive Director of the Kane Area Development Center, “There is a momentum and energy that has been happening from a grassroots level in Kane, so when reputable organizations like WPPSEF decide to invest in buildings on our main street it is another boost to the movement.”

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (PA Wilds Center) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to marry conservation and economic development in a way that strengthens and inspires communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds. The Pennsylvania Wilds region includes the counties of Warren, Forest, Elk, Potter, McKean, Tioga, Clinton, Lycoming, Clearfield, Jefferson, Cameron and Clarion, and Northern Centre. Learn more about the PA Wilds Center’s programs and services for communities at: [www.pawildscenter.org](http://www.pawildscenter.org).

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. [YouTube](#) - Listen to what our project partners have to say about us.

**Contacts:**

Kristin Lewis, PA Wilds Center 814-558-3705 [klewis@pawildscenter.org](mailto:klewis@pawildscenter.org)

Barbara Robuck, West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund 814-865-7380  
[wppsef@ems.psu.edu](mailto:wppsef@ems.psu.edu)

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