

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Protect PT



ABOUT PROTECT PT

Protect PT (Penn-Trafford) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring residents' safety, security, and quality of life by engaging in education and advocacy to protect the economic, environmental, and legal rights of the people in Westmoreland and Allegheny counties.

Since starting as a group of neighbors working together to protect their neighborhood from fracking in late 2014, Protect PT has grown to a community-based organization with staff, volunteers, and members.

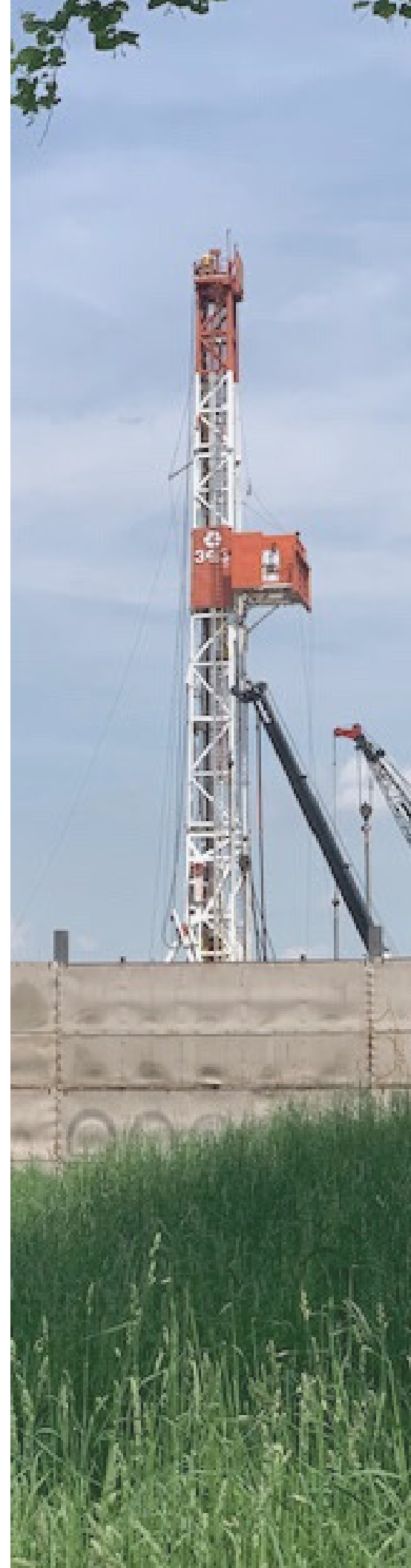
OUR GOALS:

Educate, Empower, and Engage

Educate residents and local lawmakers with factual and important information so they may better protect themselves. We hold educational meetings, invite guest speakers, conduct research, and publish resources for public benefit.

Empower residents to get involved in the local government process.

Engage our lawmakers directly at local meetings and hearings to ensure our rights are protected.



A vertical strip on the left side of the page features a close-up photograph of yellow wildflowers with thin green stems, set against a blurred teal background. The rest of the page is a solid teal color.

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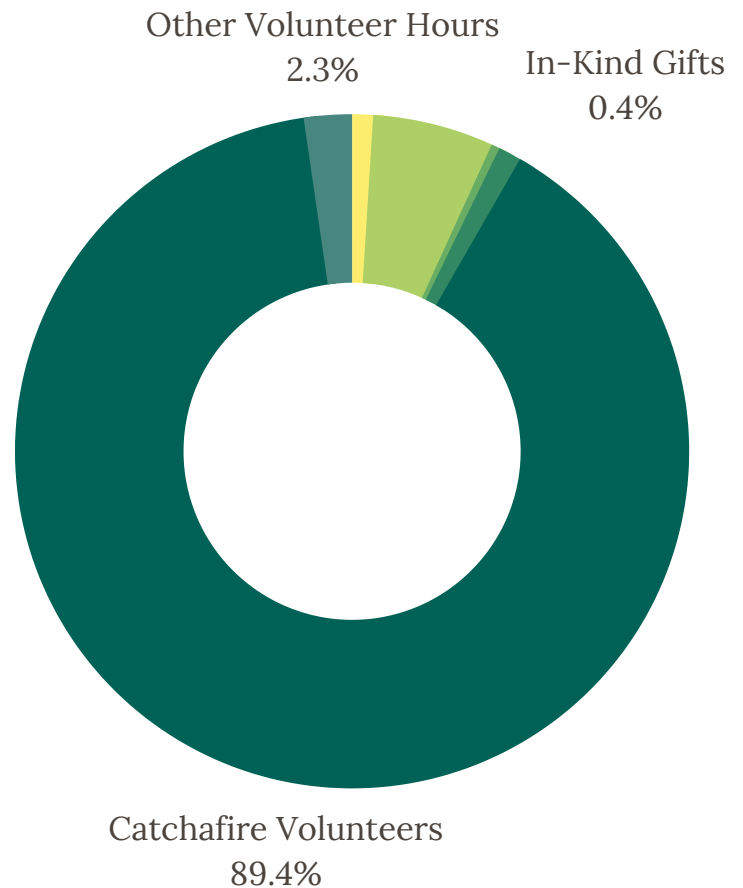
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Protect PT's 2020 Financials came from public contributions, corporate contributions, and grants.

PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to individual contributions and membership dues, Protect PT receives in-kind donations from volunteers and Catchafire professionals who give their time to capacity-building projects like employee handbooks and informational brochures.

Membership Dues	\$1,057
Individual Contributions	\$6,052
In-kind Gifts of Goods	\$460
Sales of Merchandise	\$1,120
Catchafire Volunteers	\$93,446
In-kind Volunteer Hours	\$2,433

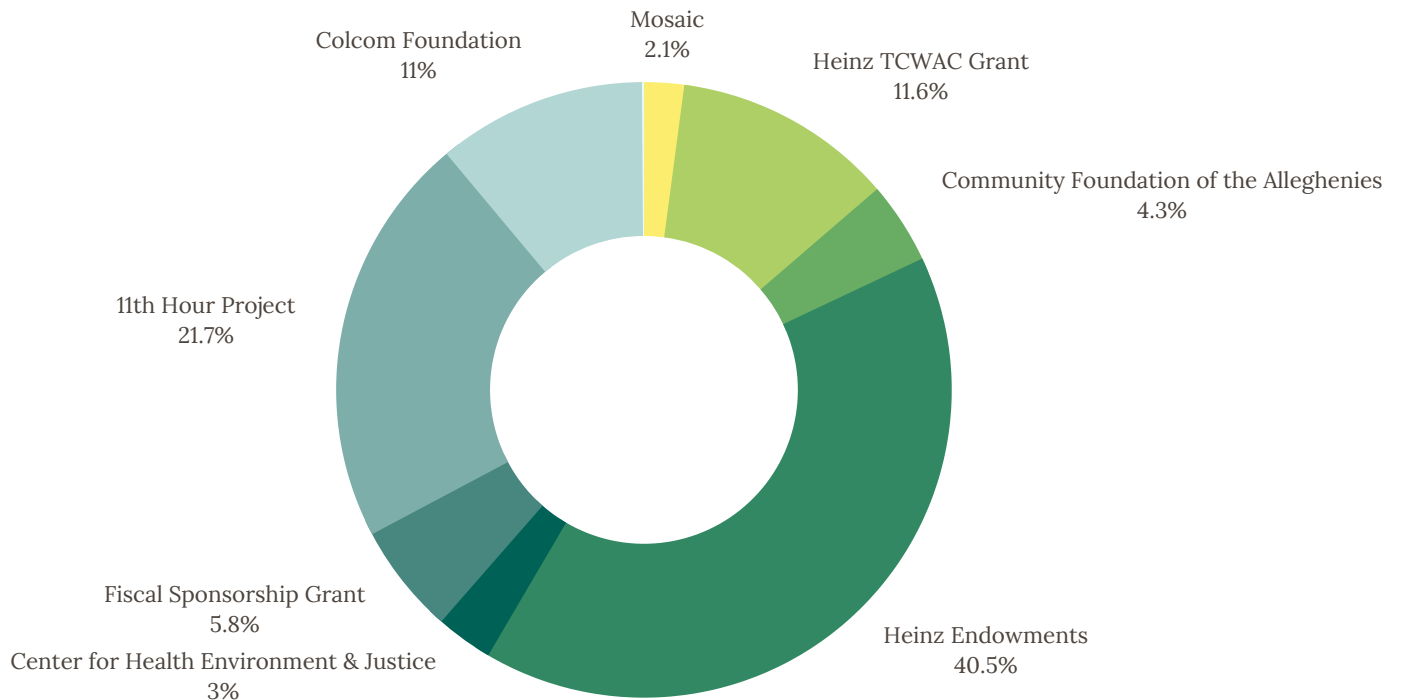











\$95,879

Additional value from
Volunteers

GRANT & CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS

Protect PT's programs and initiatives are funded by a variety of grantors that help to make community efforts possible through providing resources.



	Center for Health, Environment & Justice	\$10,279
	Fiscal Sponsorship Grants	\$20,000
	11th Hour Project	\$75,000
	Colcom Foundation	\$38,000
	Corporate Contributions	\$175
	Mosaic	\$7,210
	Heinz TCWAC Grant	\$40,000
	Community Foundation of the Alleghenies	\$15,000
	Heinz Endowments	\$140,000

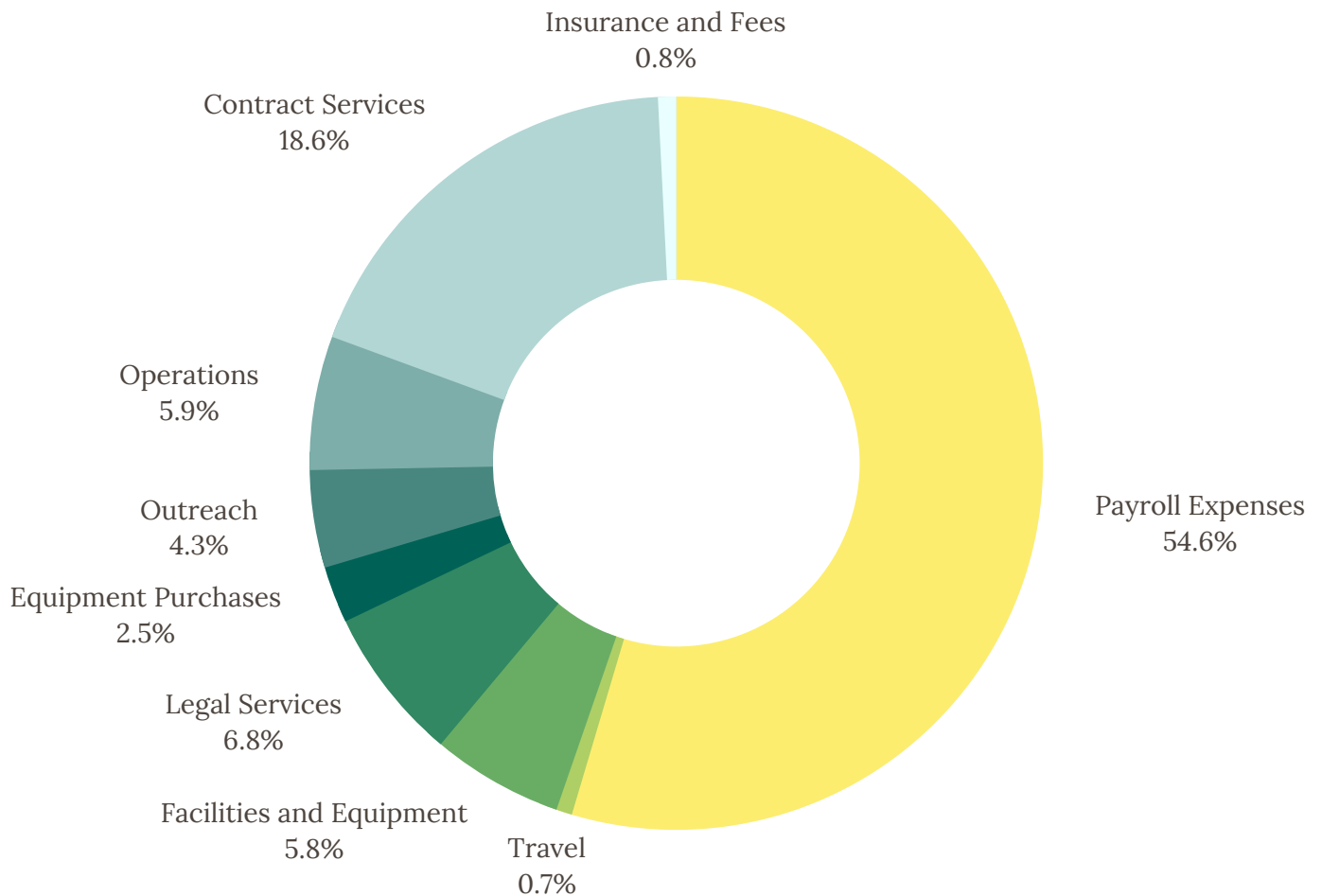


\$456,851

Total grant contributions

EXPENSES

While expenses vary across different initiatives, Protect PT prioritizes funding its people-power, the most valuable resource we have in tackling our community-centered goals.



2020 GOALS

The Year's Unique Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the way we live, play, and work in our communities. It is unlikely that any organization has not been affected, and Protect PT is no exception. We have needed to move all of our work virtually in order to keep employees, interns, volunteers, and the community safe. Our office has been closed to the public for most of 2020 and remains closed to the public to this day. We only permit one employee at a time to work in the office to keep up with necessary office tasks. COVID-19 has impacted our employees too. We had a major change in staff when our Project & Outreach Coordinator changed in Quarter II of this year.

Additionally, Protect PT has worked hard to ensure that all of our organizational work contributes to developing Pittsburgh into a just community. We ensure that our employees have opportunities for professional growth and development while providing adequate compensation, paid time off, a health reimbursement plan for full-time employees, and a retirement plan option for all employees. We continue to support the youth in our community as well as interns and volunteers to work in an equitable manner that promotes climate justice and leadership. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted economic disparities in a way unseen in decades. Keeping this in mind, we have moved many of our educational events onto Youtube to make information regarding the impacts of unconventional natural gas development accessible to the community. We have built trusting relationships within our community, the region, and the state. Community members turn to us when they are in trouble because they know we will stop at nothing to empower their lives and work together for a more just future.

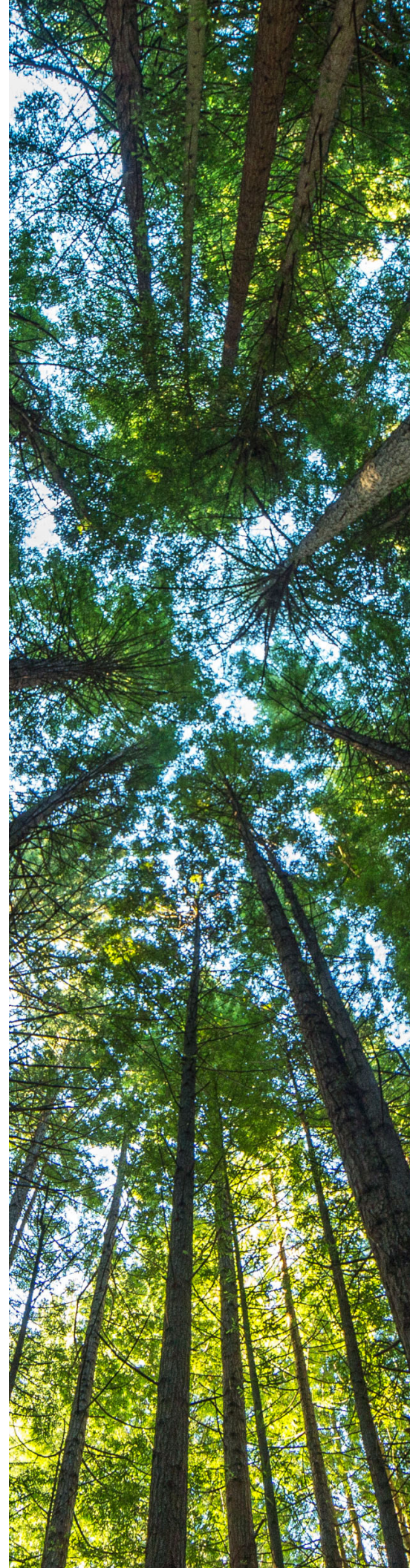


2020 GOALS

GOAL 1: Employee Training Opportunities and Enrichment

Protect PT sought to enhance organizational effectiveness through staff enrichment and training. In total, our staff participated in 31 different training workshops over the course of 2020, including an intensive Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Environmental Justice (DIE-EJ) training for all employees. We drafted and enacted an Employee Handbook, with assistance from a Catchafire Volunteer, to be used as a guide for employees to understand our mission, goals, and working style. We added a defined set of parameters to the Employee Handbook for employees to review that provides greater clarity and transparency to solving potential workplace issues.

Additionally, we conducted employee surveys to identify ways to maintain a positive workplace environment and enhance the employee experience. To that end, we started the Virtual Friday Coffee Break after COVID-19 necessitated only virtual work because the staff missed our culture of in-person teamwork and a sense of in-office comradery.



2020 GOALS

GOAL 2: Strategic Planning for Donor Cultivation

In 2020, Protect PT developed a donor outreach and updated strategic plan. In January 2020, we started planning for stewarding relationships with donors we identified as potential major donors. We recognized the Covid-19 pandemic meant we needed to switch gears and focus on maintaining contact with all of our donors through virtual events, phone calls, and other digital avenues. We launched our Membership Drive in April 2020 after adjusting it to a virtual format. The Spring Membership Drive celebrated milestones with our members through interactive virtual events as well as recruited new members, recurring donors, and re-engaged several lapsed members. While each monthly-recurring gift amount is relatively small (\$5, \$10, etc.), our experience and research show that these contributions provide a predictable source of income for the long-term and increase donor retention. In December 2020, we launched our annual Day of Giving and End of Year Campaign with great success, raising over \$2,200 (over \$300 more than we raised in the same time period in 2019), by reconnecting with lapsed donors and making connections with new donors.



Our Spring Membership Drive was dedicated to one of our members who passed in 2019, Charles Ocepek. In honor of Charles' giving nature and love of gardening, we gave seeds to donors who gave during this time.



2020 GOALS

GOAL 3: Opportunities for Youth Involvement

Protect PT recognizes the importance of continuing to engage youth and the community to support the mission of our organization. We have been actively recruiting high school, college, and graduate school students to participate in our internship positions. During the summer, we had nine interns from local and out-of-state colleges and universities, over double our typical class. The interns worked closely with the staff and filled important roles like environmental monitoring, mobile application engineering, scientific report writing, and social media design. Working with this group of interns was an excellent experience for the staff and the interns. At the end of summer, we kept two interns on as independent contractors who worked on Operator Accountability Projects and Social Media design.

Since the summer, we have also been working with a high school intern who has done an amazing job building our contact list with public and private school administrators and has played a crucial role in our youth outreach. Additionally, she delivered over 1,000 educational radon calendars to local schools. This intern has also contributed to our *Team Building for Climate Action: Empowering Youth to Change the World* project by reaching out to guidance counselors, friends, and others who are interested. We have developed relationships with school administrators so we can effectively advertise for internship positions and recruit from the best possible pool of candidates.



2020 GOALS

GOAL 4: Promote PT Initiatives for Sustainability and Social Change

Throughout 2020, Protect PT continued its inter-organizational work in initiatives focused on promoting sustainability and positive social change as well as providing fiscal sponsorship and mentorship to groups throughout the region. Protect PT has been one of the lead collaborators on the *ReImagine Turtle Creek Watershed and Airshed Communities Plus (TCWAC+)* initiative. We have helped to organize virtual community events, provided resources, and mentored working groups for project planning and fundraising. In September 2020, we hired a Community Organizer to take a leading role in ReImagine TCWAC+. Our organizer has been setting agendas for meetings with the steering committee, facilitating monthly community events over Zoom, and expanding outreach for each of the working groups within the initiative.

GOAL 5: Legal Advocacy

Protect PT continued our legal strategy to gain justice for our community, neighbors, and region. This work protects our constitutional rights under Article 1 Section 27 as well as reduces the impact on citizens' quality of life. We tackled legal issues in 2020 by continuing several legal challenges that address the influx of gas infrastructure in Southwestern Pennsylvania that threatens human health and safety.



2020 GOALS

GOAL 6: Continue state-centered campaigns to highlight the inability of our essential institutions to protect us from large industry

In 2020, Protect PT expanded our organization's reach to tackle the greater vision of a unified front with our surrounding neighbors in Southwestern Pennsylvania and across the state. We continued our campaign to hold both gas operators and government authorities accountable for their actions. We also engaged in opportunities to increase our impact through collaboration with regional partners such as the Environmental Health Project, Mountain Watershed Association, and the Breathe Collaborative as well as local stakeholders like Emergency Management Coordinators, and public water purveyors.

Protect PT collaborated with other groups in the #HaltMarinerNow Coalition to coordinate a Virtual People's Hearing where residents shared their personal stories about harms by the Mariner East Pipelines. Governor Tom Wolf, PA DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell, and PA PUC Commissioner Gladys Dutrielle were invited to attend the hearing to listen to the people's testimonies. This hearing was recorded and streamed live on YouTube and the recording was sent to invitees.

bit.ly/YouTubeProtectPT



2020 GOALS

GOAL 7: Continue fiscal sponsorships and mentorship region-wide

Recognizing that pollution doesn't stop at political or regional boundaries, Protect PT strives to help individuals and other communities by providing educational support, sharing of resources, and mentorship to ensure that others maintain or obtain clean and healthy communities. To expand the reach of our impact, we offered mentorship and guidance to ReImagine TCWAC+ and the Safety 7. We provide assistance to partners by sharing knowledge on how to organize groups, participate in the local process and educate, engage, and empower their own communities for social change. We also offered fiscal sponsorship to ReImagine Food Systems and ReImagine TCWAC+, groups that needed grant funding for their organizing efforts but do not have 501(c)3 nonprofit status.

GOAL 8: Advocate for more stringent protections for residents

Protect PT continued to advocate for stronger protections for residents from the public agencies tasked with protecting human health and the environment. We wrote letters to the Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies on a variety of issues, including the proposal to evaporate toxic leachate containing radioactive fracking elements at the Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill and the permitting of new wells around a protected water source, Beaver Run Reservoir, which provides drinking water for 150,000 residents in Westmoreland County and parts of surrounding counties.



2020 GOALS

GOAL 9: Expand Work with Partner Organizations

Despite challenges in the transition to remote work, Protect PT expanded opportunities for partnership in 2020 with other community organizations. We had to continually be flexible with our organizational partners as they work to adapt to the pandemic. We also needed to be more innovative than ever before to continue our vital work in the community, region, and state. This has been exciting and difficult work particularly as fundraising and grantmaking opportunities are constrained. Our reputation as a collaborative organization has resulted in community organizations approaching us on key issues like oil and gas waste streams and setback distances.

Protect PT has found that public-facing events provide a great opportunity for engaging with community organizations that have similar goals. One innovative solution to expanding partnerships remotely was our Virtual Lunch Hours, weekly events that combined partnership with community education by creating space for our partners to share their knowledge and skills, or highlight their advocacy and projects. In May, we hosted an *Amity and Prosperity* book discussion in partnership with Physicians for Social Responsibility that featured Pulitzer Prize-winning author and journalist Eliza Griswold. Before the pandemic, Protect PT organized outreach efforts and informational sessions with Solar United Neighbors to build a solar co-op in Westmoreland County. We continue to search for strategic partnerships and ways to creatively make positive, sustainable change within our communities.



2020 GOALS

GOAL 10: Expand Air Monitoring

Protect PT expanded and strengthened data for researchers, residents, and advocates alike to use to protect themselves and their families from the quality of life and health impacts from Unconventional Natural Gas Development (UNGD) by our Environmental Science team. After a temporary suspension of home equipment installments due to Covid-19, we resumed new installations and information gathering in June of 2020. During the period of February 2020 through January 2021, we conducted air quality studies for thirteen residents in the Penn-Trafford, Jeanette, Rostraver, and Wexford municipalities and distributed eight reports completed by one of our partners, the Environmental Health Project.

GOAL 11: Hazard Mitigation

Protect PT worked with first responders in Westmoreland County to finalize the update to the County Hazard Mitigation Plan while educating communities by highlighting the benefits of citizen science monitoring, emergency preparedness, recognizing and reporting gas operator non-compliance to clean stream and air laws, and providing residents the tools to be watchdogs in their community by facilitating our *Home Resource Guide Community Workshop*. Due to Covid-19, we transitioned our educational programs to a virtual format and began organizing a weekly Virtual Lunch Hour. Each week, we invited guests from partner organizations and community groups to discuss subjects like radioactive leachate (liquid waste), the importance of radon testing in homes and schools, and the importance of participating in noise and air monitoring programs.



CONCLUSION

Although 2020 proved to be a challenging year, Protect PT's resilience, flexibility, and creative thinking fueled our transition to remote and meaningful work. Our funders, members, and partners were vital in ensuring our continued efforts to serve communities in the region.

In 2020, our staff adapted to new methods of working and attended trainings to further develop their skills. We transitioned our fundraising to virtual platforms, learning along the way and ending with a successful fundraising campaign in December. Interns from all over the United States worked with us on a variety of projects. Our new community organizer expanded the capacity of the ReImagine Turtle Creek Watershed and Airshed Communities Plus Initiative. Our legal advocacy efforts continued virtually, and the Stories of Mariner East: Virtual People's Hearing promoted the voices of those who have been impacted by the pipeline network. Individuals and groups joined us for collaborative efforts around sustainability, and our mentorship and fiscal sponsorship helped groups like ReImagine Food Systems launch community projects. We wrote several letters to government agencies to advocate for stronger protections for residents and continued to conduct air monitoring and education programs to equip residents with the information they need to advocate for themselves.

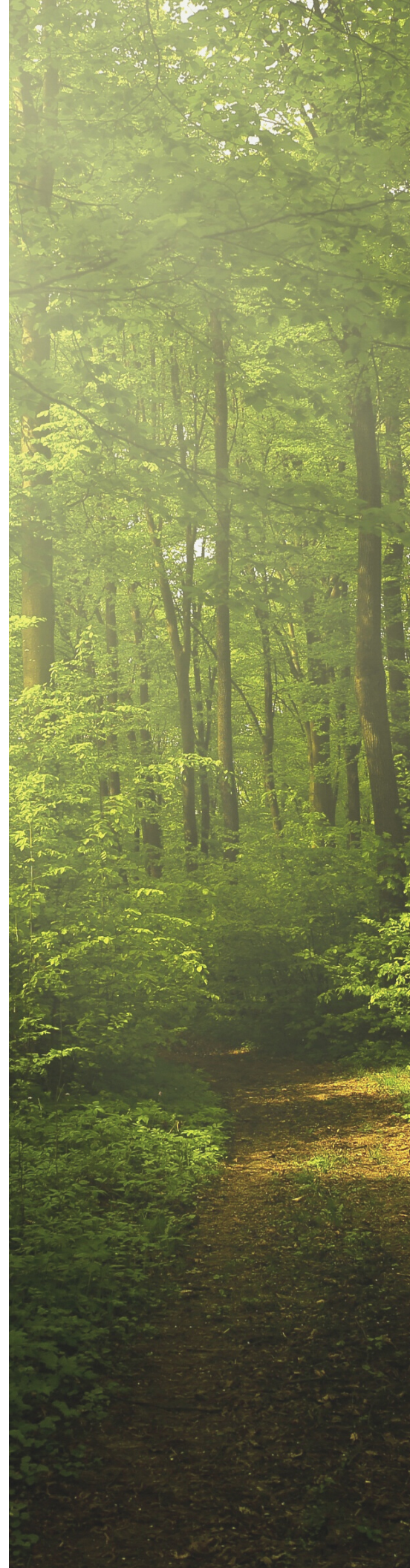


2021: Moving Forward and Expanding Vision

The challenges of a global pandemic have been difficult on everyone and every organization, however, Protect PT has been able to increase our organizational strength in 2020. Those lessons will be implemented in our 2021 programs, projects, and initiatives. We plan to continue our work for community mobilization, advocacy, and education to both protect our region from unconventional natural gas drilling and promote a sustainable and regenerative future for all.

Our past stories and experiences have provided us a strong foundation to envision a world where public health and safety are protected rights, the most vulnerable residents are safe from pollution, and every person lives, plays, and works in health. To move towards this future we will continue to expand our statewide collaborations, invest in our staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and interns, and enhance our strategies to hold operators and government agencies accountable.

We are grateful for the trust our community has placed in our organization and we will continue to work tirelessly to protect our treasured world and ensure that "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come." (Article 1 Section 27, PA Constitution)



Acknowledgments

Protect PT Staff

Gillian Graber: Executive Director, Co-Founder

Patrick Campbell: Project & Outreach Coordinator

Mary Obringer: Outreach Assistant

Annie Deely: Community Organizer, *ReImagine Turtle Creek Watershed & Airshed Communities Plus*

Kathleen Brosseau: Environmental Scientist

Tamara Swanson: Bookkeeping Administrator

Protect PT Board

Lois Drumheller: Board Chair

Darlene Leslie: Board Treasurer

Ryan Graber: Board Secretary

David Mintz: Board Member

Patricia Emich: Board Member

Patricia Wendell: Board Member



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