



# Advocacy Agenda 2021

## Four Policy Priority Areas

-  **Sustainable, dedicated clean water funding:** Now more than ever clean water is essential to everyone. Ninety percent of Delaware’s waterways are polluted from excess nutrients and legacy toxins. Contaminated water affects more than fish and wildlife living in our local waters, it impacts our everyday lives through the food we eat, the streams, rivers, lakes, and bays near our homes, our health, and our economy.
-  **Land, Habitat and Wildlife protections:** Protection and preservation of open spaces provides habitat for wildlife, replenishes our drinking water supply, and removes air pollutants while restoring wildlife populations. Protecting and repairing wildlife populations ensures that future generations of Delawareans have the opportunity to experience our state's unique natural world. Thriving, biodiverse ecosystems here in Delaware are also critical to our populations' health, as well as the overall health of our planet.
-  **Fighting Climate Change:** Climate change is a complex and challenging issue facing our society. It is no longer just a threat to future generations, but a modern-day challenge for people across the world, and right here in Delaware. We must act now and commit across our community to remediating and mitigating its impact on Delawareans and on our wildlife and lands.
-  **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice:** DelNature is committed to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in our work. The reality is that today, environmental injustices disproportionately affect communities of color or low-socioeconomic status. Our goal is to collaborate with these communities to ensure all Delaware communities’ voices are heard. We will review all legislation, no matter it is deemed purpose, with a critical DEI lens and work with partners to seek legislation to address the toxins and pollution in impacted communities.



## Federal, State and County

-  **State Clean Water Funding - \$25 million per year:** The development and implementation of water infrastructure investments, reduction of stormwater runoff, and removal of legacy toxics is critical to further reduce pollution in Delaware's waterways. DelNature will continue to advocate for sustainable, dedicated clean water funding, green infrastructure, grants (not loans) targeted at low-income communities without clean water, and enabling legislation to build a stronger clean water infrastructure.
-  **\$10 Million Each for State Open Space and Farmland Preservation Funding:** Providing financial assistance for the preservation of land, protection of wildlife and habitat, and conservation of natural resources is critical at the local, state, and federal levels. DelNature seeks a return to state FY 2020 funding amounts in FY 22.
-  **Federal conservation funding for the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program and the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program:** DelNature will continue to advocate for federal funding for our regional watersheds in partnership with the Choose Clean Water Coalition and the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed.
-  **New Castle County GreenNCC Legislative Package, 2050 Comprehensive Planning, and Programs:** DelNature is supporting County Executive Matt Meyer's environmental initiative, including protecting water quality, protecting byways, conserving forests and habitats, and developing committees to guide the process of open space and farmland preservation. DelNature will serve as a leading voice on the New Castle County 2050 Comprehensive Planning initiative to advocate on behalf of wildlife, habitats, smarter growth policies, environmental justice, and clean water.
-  **Federal and State Freshwater Wetlands:** Delaware is one of the few remaining states along the East Coast that does not independently regulate freshwater wetlands. The federal Clean Water Rule, a joint effort between Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the ACOE originally increased protections for Delaware's non-tidal, freshwater wetlands but the rule has been rolled back. DelNature will also advocate for state efforts to protect freshwater wetlands.
-  **Federal Recovering American's Wildlife Act (RAWA):** State fish and wildlife agencies have identified more than 12,000 species in need of proactive conservation efforts in the United



States, including the more than 1,600 U.S. species already listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. RAWA will provide states, territories, and tribes with vital funding to catalyze proactive, on-the ground, collaborative efforts to restore essential habitat.

 **Increase federal protections of air, water, wildlife, and lands:** After four years of weakening federal protections across a spectrum of natural resources, DelNature calls upon the new presidential administration to take rapid and decisive action to return the Environmental Protection Agency to its rightful place. DelNature is seeking the rescission of the Final Clean Water Act Rule and updating Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, among others.

## Climate Change and Environmental Justice: Federal, State, and Local

 **Climate Change Investments:** Climate change is the most complex and challenging environmental issue facing our society. We must act now and commit across our community to remediating and mitigating its impact on Delawareans and on our wildlife and lands. DelNature will advocate for urgent action on climate change, including in state FY22 budget investments and legislative proposals, including:

- The formation of Climate Change Action Committee (including representatives from environmental justice communities) to move any climate change recommendations to concrete actions.
- Increasing the renewable energy portfolio standard and increasing access to wind power, community solar and other renewable resources
- Investments in community education on how to fight climate change and helping local governments create resilient communities.

 **Environmental Justice:** DelNature will advocate for investments in environmental justice on the federal, state and local level, and seek additional protections from toxins and pollution for environmental justice communities.



 **Reaching and Engaging through Nature to Empower Wilmington (RENEW):** Engagement outdoors can be a transformative experience. DelNature is committed to creating outdoor opportunities that resonate with all people. Lead by DuPont Environmental Education Center, DelNature is working with the community to collaborate on locally identified environmental issues and neighborhood concerns, including environmental education, youth development opportunities, and community engagement.

 **Demonstrating Regenerative Agriculture:** How we grow food can have a profound impact on the environment. The DelNature Regenerative Agriculture Program at Coverdale Farm Preserve mimics natural processes that contribute to healthy soil, animals, and ecosystems. The farm is a model for land conservation, preservation, and wildlife habitat while growing food in a healthy, sustainable way. DelNature will work with agricultural leaders, elected officials, and community members to demonstrate the benefits of regenerative agriculture statewide.

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