



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pittsburgh Botanic Garden to Grow by 66 Acres with Support from DEP Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Pilot Program

Program focuses on combined environmental, economic, and community outcomes

Pittsburgh, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced phase 2 of a coal mine cleanup project that will enhance 66 acres of the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden.

DEP selected the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden, in North Fayette Township, Allegheny County, to receive a share of \$30 million in federal funding from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) through its Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization Pilot Program.

The Garden project is one of [14 mine reclamation projects in Pennsylvania](#) chosen for the pilot funding on the basis of strong potential for combined community, economic, and environmental outcomes. The Garden project received over \$700,000.

“The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden project showcases what our coal mine reclamation work can achieve,” said DEP Acting Secretary Patrick McDonnell. “Reflecting the collaboration of committed partners, the results of this project are many: needed public safety improvements, restoration of environmental health, enhancement of the area’s native natural beauty, and expansion of this regional tourist destination, with resulting economic benefits.”

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, Hedin Environmental, Allegheny County, North Fayette Township, Collier Township, the American Chestnut Foundation, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy join the DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, OSMRE, and Pittsburgh Botanic Garden as project partners. The project will take two years to complete.

An innovative component is the passive water treatment system installed at the Lotus Pond to remove acid mine drainage in phase 1. The Garden received the 2014 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence for this work.

In addition to water quality improvement, work includes removing dangerous highwalls, filling subsidence holes and vertical mine shafts, removing coal refuse piles, and installing a new sludge control system in place. American chestnut trees will be planted in an effort to bring back this all-but-lost native tree species. In short, the location will be transformed.

"Receiving this funding is extremely important to our planning and preparing for development of the site," said Keith Kaiser, interim president of the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden. "It will help us provide the connection between the site's industrial history and its current role as a public garden, a place of beauty for all."

The [Pittsburgh Botanic Garden](#) is located on 430 acres owned by Allegheny County. When plans for the gardens were first envisioned, the location was deemed perfect, with wooded slopes, broad vistas and four streams. However, because the area had been deep mined in the 1920s and surfaced mined in the 1940s, the location was discovered to have many problems associated with old coal mines.

Phase 1 of the reclamation project began in 2011, and the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden opened in 2014. It has since welcomed thousands of visitors from around the region and, when complete, will be one of the largest botanic gardens in the United States.

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