

3344 Route 130, Suite A  
PO Box 137  
Harrison City, PA, 15636



## 2024 Holiday Party

This December, Protect PT partied with our staff, board, and members at our annual Holiday Party. We enjoyed a lovely dinner, homemade desserts, a fun raffle, and even karaoke! We want to thank everyone who came out in the cold to celebrate with us, and all of our members who make this work possible. Don't forget to join the party next year!



Pictured: Protect PT staff at our Holiday Party!

to create a beautifully festive ribbon wreath, perfect for sprucing up their homes for the holiday season. This fundraiser proved to be a huge success! Not only were guests pleased with their creations, but Protect PT was also able to raise some money! In light of its success, we hope to bring similar wreath-making events during different times of the year so that guests can make a wreath to ring in every season with a bit of creativity. Keep an eye on our event page for our next Wreath Fundraiser and other fun events!



Pictured: Wreath making festivities this December.

## Winter Wreath Fundraiser Fun

To kick off the season of giving with a little festive cheer, Protect PT hosted its first ever Wreath Fundraiser on December 7th. At the Winter Wreath Workshop, our Project Coordinator, Natalie Ford, guided guests on how

to create a beautifully festive ribbon wreath, perfect for sprucing up their homes for the holiday season. This fundraiser proved to be a huge success! Not only were guests pleased with their creations, but Protect PT was also able to raise some money! In light of its success, we hope to bring similar wreath-making events during different times of the year so that guests can make a wreath to ring in every season with a bit of creativity. Keep an eye on our event page for our next Wreath Fundraiser and other fun events!

## Give Big Success

## Upcoming Events

- **Jan 18:** Member Breakfast | 9:30 AM | Blue Room at the Slovenian National Home
- **Jan 22:** Run for Office Training | 6:30 PM | Online
- **Jan 23:** Radon Awareness Webinar | 7:00 PM | Online
- **Jan 23:** Lunch & Learn w. Billy Randal | 12:00 PM | Online
- **Feb 13:** Native Plant Winter Sowing Workshop | 6:00 PM | CC Mellor Library
- **Feb 25:** Lunch & Learn w. Heinz Hub | 12:00 PM | Online
- **Mar 22:** Local Environmental Art Reception | 4:00 PM | PPT's Office

Scan me to see all upcoming events and RSVP!  
[www.protectpt.org/events](http://www.protectpt.org/events)



# Penn Township Rezoning

## Protect PT keeps residents informed

This October, when Penn Township put rezoning on the Planning Commission's agenda, Protect PT sprung into action by alerting residents in the impacted area to the proposed changes to their community going on without their input. Through sustained outreach and community engagement, Protect PT has played a large role in the 100+ residents that have been showing up to Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission meetings, demanding transparency from the Township.



Pictured: NO REZONE yard sign in PPT member's yard.

Without residents stepping up when we sounded the alarm, the Township would have most likely already passed a new ordinance and rezoned a large portion of the northeastern corner of the municipality from Rural Resources to Industrial Commerce, all without resident input. The dramatic zoning shift would negatively impact those living near the proposed rezone area, shocking the rural residential community with loud industrial development that would most likely contribute to excess pollution for those who have called PT home for generations.

But now the Township's timeline has shifted, thanks to residents standing with Protect PT. To stay updated on

the Township's timeline and prepare for the public hearing likely to take place this February, go to [protectpt.org/rezone](https://protectpt.org/rezone).



Scan me to learn more about the PT rezoning!

## Local Well Pad Trial

### Drakulic Hearings to begin this January

The Environmental Hearing Board (EHB), the adjudicative body that hears appeals from permits granted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), will begin hearings on January 15, 2025 on the PA DEP's issuance of drilling and operating permits for fracking wells by Apex Energy (PA), LLC at the Drakulic Well Pad.

The Drakulic well pad is located in Penn Township, on the border of Trafford Borough, Westmoreland County. It is situated in the middle of sprawling suburban housing developments where about 3,500 people reside. The site is located about 1000 feet from the closest residence, about 800 feet from PA State Route 130, and a mile from the Westmoreland Heritage Trail. It is also within a mile of an elementary school and a half mile of at least one children's playground.



Pictured: Other local well pad being built in Westmoreland County, adjacent to residential property.

"If there is a large fire at the Drakulic site and all those nearby trees that surround homes catch on fire, how are all of us going to be safely evacuated, especially if Route 130 becomes impassable?" asks Larry Irr, a resident who lives about 2,000 feet from the site. "We have seen it happen before," said Irr, pointing to a large well fire in Belmont County Ohio in 2018 where about 100 people living within 1 mile were evacuated by door to door notification. "At the Drakulic well site we are talking about thousands, not hundreds, many families with young kids," said Irr.

Recently, supervisors in Cecil Township, a rural community in Washington County, instituted a 2,500 foot setback from protected structures and 5,000 foot setback for schools and hospitals after residents were impacted by fracking development. Residents of Penn Township are not so lucky, even after over 200 residents of Penn Township signed a petition drafted by Protect PT advocates requesting local commissioners increase setbacks.

The EHB hearing regarding the Drakulic well is scheduled to begin January 15th, 2025 and will continue through January 31st. Protect PT will continue working to protect the residents of Penn Township and Trafford through legal action on this case.

## Run for Office

### Prepare for 2025 local elections

As 2025 is a local election year, Protect PT hosted another non-partisan "How to Run for Local Office" training. We covered how to file your paperwork, how to manage a campaign according to laws and best practices, and how to contact voters.

Sixteen residents of communities all across Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties attended our last session, with potential future officeholders calling in from West Deer, Murrysville, Elizabeth, Penn Township, and other municipalities. Although we are not allowed to engage in political activity, we are allowed to say this much: we are excited by the public's appetite for contributing to their local communities!

There will be a third "Run for Office" training on January 22nd at 6:30 PM online. It will present the same information as the previous training. Go to [protectpt.org/events](https://protectpt.org/events) to RSVP!

## New Permits for Violators?

### WSL Reapplies for Title V Air Permit

Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill (WSL) has requested a renewal of its Title V Air Quality Operating Permit. Due to the extensive history of environmental and health impacts to the surrounding communities, Protect PT is requesting a public hearing on this matter for the residents living in the vicinity of the landfill, but also for all the residents downwind of the facility in the Southwest Pennsylvania region.

"This facility has been a burden on this community for decades, so residents should be given the opportunity to speak directly to decision-makers and advocate for their health before the permit is issued," said Gillian Graber, Executive Director of Protect PT.

Protect PT has made its own comment to send to the PA DEP but feels that resident voices are the most

important voices to be heard by the state agency. "WSL has continued to fail in its obligations and has not been a good neighbor to the community despite multiple consent orders from the PA DEP," said Dylan Basescu, Staff Attorney for Protect PT. "WSL should not receive a renewed permit to emit even more air pollutants until it has fixed its prior mistakes," says Basescu.

Protect PT is currently working on a comment to the EPA to urge them not to allow the PA DEP to issue this permit. To read more about our work around the Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill, go to [protectpt.org/wsl](https://protectpt.org/wsl).



Pictured: Air monitors at a CAFA participant's home, located near the Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill.

## Sustainability in the New Year

### TCWAC prepares for 2025

To conclude the growing season, Reimagine Food Systems (RiFS) planted garlic in participant's gardens and helped them prepare their beds for the winter. Low-income residents in Jeanette and Greensburg interested in growing vegetables in their backyard are encouraged to apply for RiFS Westmoreland County 2025 (applications are due on February 15th!). Allegheny County will not be accepting applicants at this time. Please contact [reimaginefoodsystems@gmail.com](mailto:reimaginefoodsystems@gmail.com) if

you're interested in becoming a RiFS volunteer in the spring and summer seasons!

Starting in February, Turtle Creek Watershed & Airshed Communities will no longer have a Sustainability Coordinator, however with the help of our dedicated volunteers, Reimagine Food Systems and Native Urban Garden Stewardship will continue to serve Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties through 2025!

## PPT Member Receives AARP Award

### Patricia Wendell, PPT Board Member, is the Recipient of AARP Pennsylvania Andrus Award



Pictured: Gillian Graber (left), Patricia Wendell (center), and Lois Drumheller (right).

We are proud to share that Protect PT board member, Trish Wendell, is a 2024 recipient of the AARP Andrus Award for Community Service! Ms. Wendell is a dedicated member of the PT community, working hard to protect her community and the environment from the harmful effects of shale gas development.

As a member of Protect PT since our inception, she has been an instrumental part of our advocacy work for the past decade. We cannot be prouder of her hard work. Congratulations, Trish!