

The Narrows

Access Information

Feb 2022



**Eastern
Pennsylvania
Alliance of
Climbers**



Photo credit: M. Delany



Nockamixon Cliffs

- DCNR Delaware Canal State Park, designated Natural Area
- This area contains, among other things, rare northeastern U.S. *Roseroot*, an arctic-alpine herb, grows on shelves and in crevices. Nockamixon Cliffs is the plant's southernmost reach.
- It has been open to ice climbing because the ice enshrouds the *Roseroot*, thereby protecting it. In addition, once the ice melts, there is no evidence of any recreational activity.
- Nockamixon cliffs has a long history of nesting by peregrine and osprey pre-DDT and were essentially wiped out by the 1960s.

Photo credit: A. Dressnandt

Raptor Status and Protection

- Peregrines were delisted from federal endangered species list in 1999, mostly due to the population resurgence in the West.
- In PA, Peregrines were delisted in Sept 2021 after meeting all required growth metrics in the management plan.
- They are still protected under **The Migratory Bird Treaty Act** which implements four international conservation treaties that the U.S. entered into with Canada, Mexico, Japan and Russia. It is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species.



Who controls the closure?



Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) controls the land.



Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) manages the wildlife.

What makes this closure tricky?

- Closures are put in place to protect pairs during their most vulnerable times. Closures for the raptors are generally Feb-July. The most critical times are when the pairs courting and establishing a nest site (Feb-March), which aligns with ice season. Then, once again when the offspring are fledging(April-May).
- PGC: “The primary purpose of these lands is the management of habitat for wildlife and provide opportunities for lawful hunting and trapping. Secondary recreational uses are permitted in accordance with the Game Commission’s regulations.”
- DCNR: “A Natural Area is an area within a state park of unique scenic, geologic, or ecological value which will be maintained in a natural condition by allowing physical and biological processes to operate usually without direct human intervention.”

Closure Efforts

- Jan 13, 2016: Closure was announced and Access Fund was contacted.
- Dec 12th, 2016: Closure meeting. In attendance were representatives of the climbing community, DCNR, PGC and Access Fund National Policy Director Erik Murdoch.
- The closure been in place every year since with full compliance by climbers and great appreciation from DCNR Park Officials.
- With Peregrines being delisted as of Sept 2021, the question was posed to DCNR and PGC if that changes anything about the closure for the 2022 season. It was decided that the closure was to remain in place, as is, for 2022. EPAC has requested a meeting prior to the 2023 closure decision.

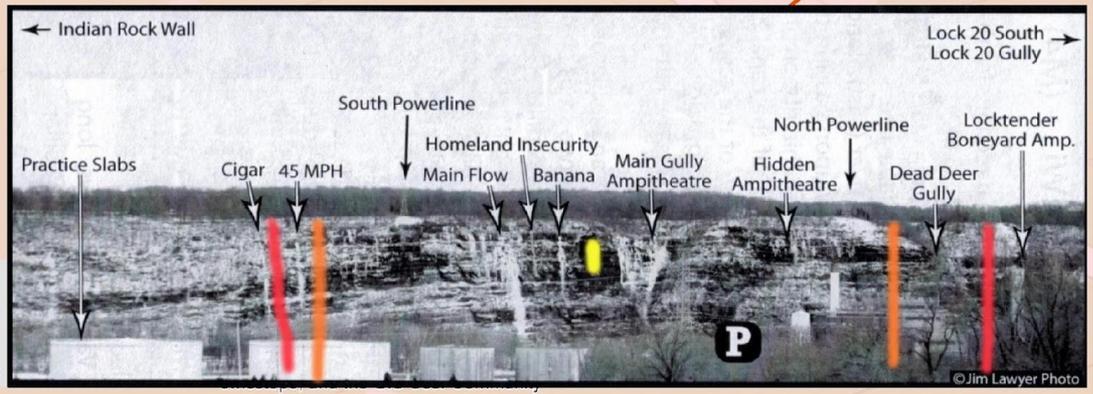
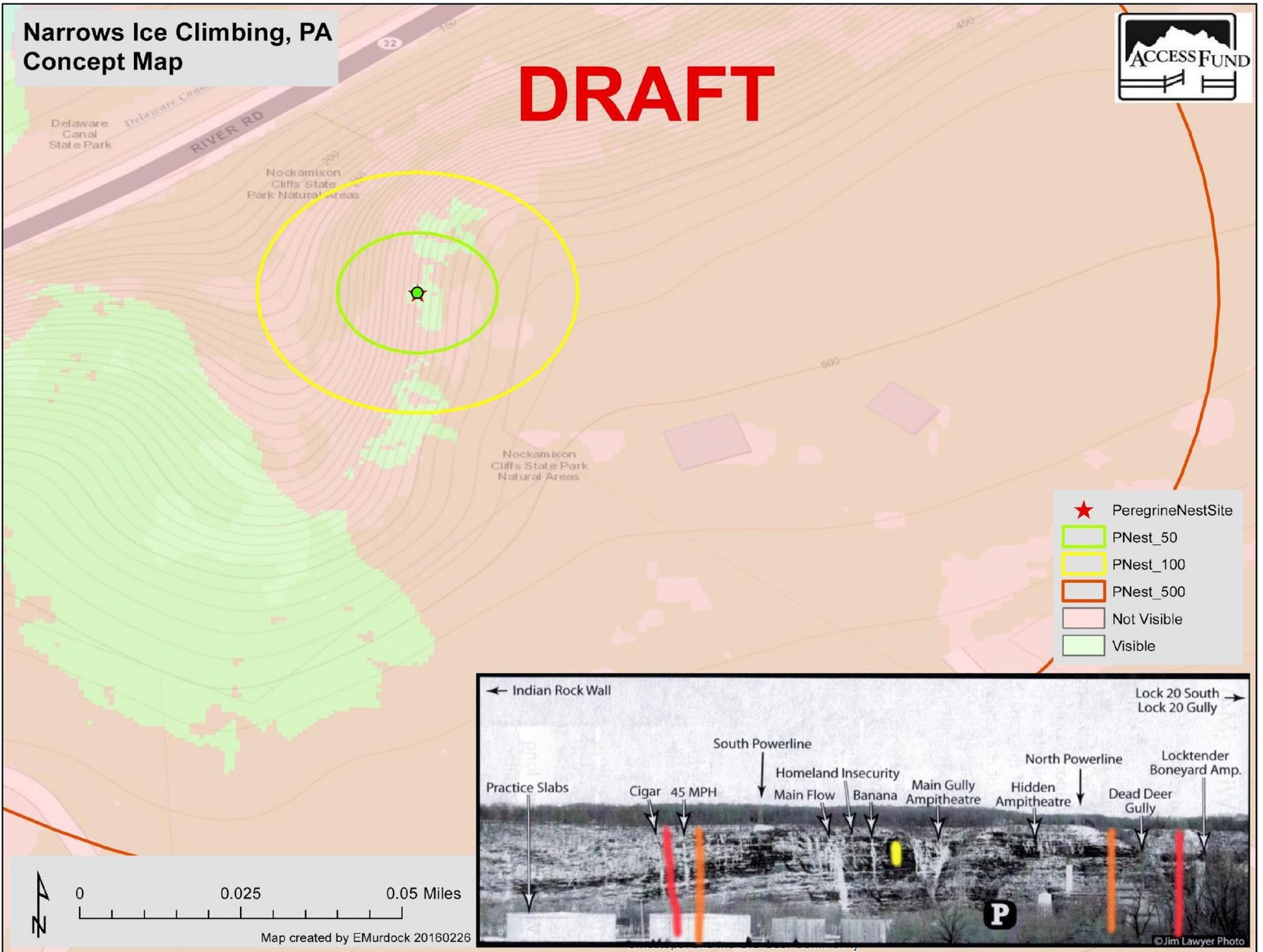
Our Position

1. Raptor nesting has been successfully managed in many climbing areas in coordination with the climbers and land managers.
2. A viewshed closure is appropriate given the topography of the area and nesting site.



**Narrows Ice Climbing, PA
Concept Map**

DRAFT



The concerns regarding raptor management policy in PA goes beyond The Narrows.

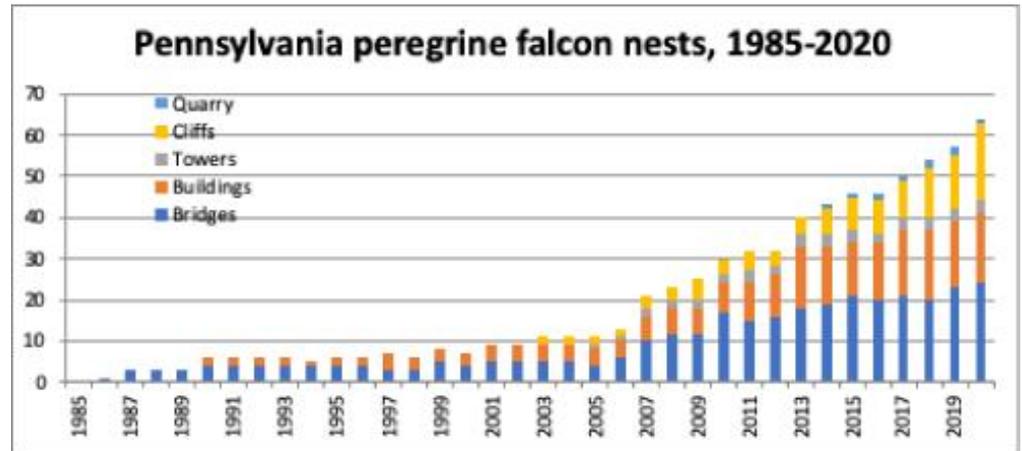
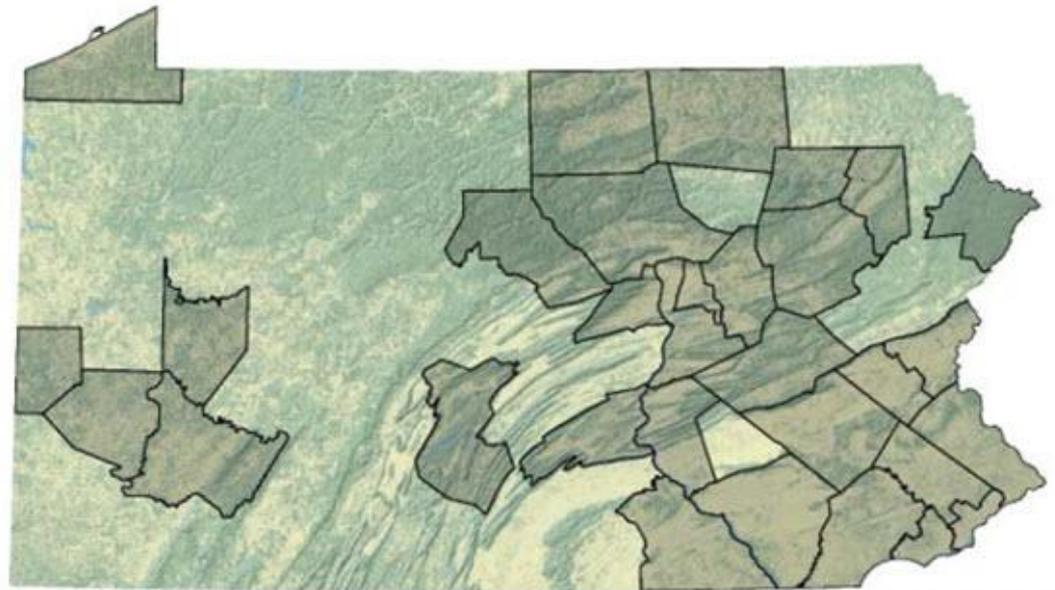
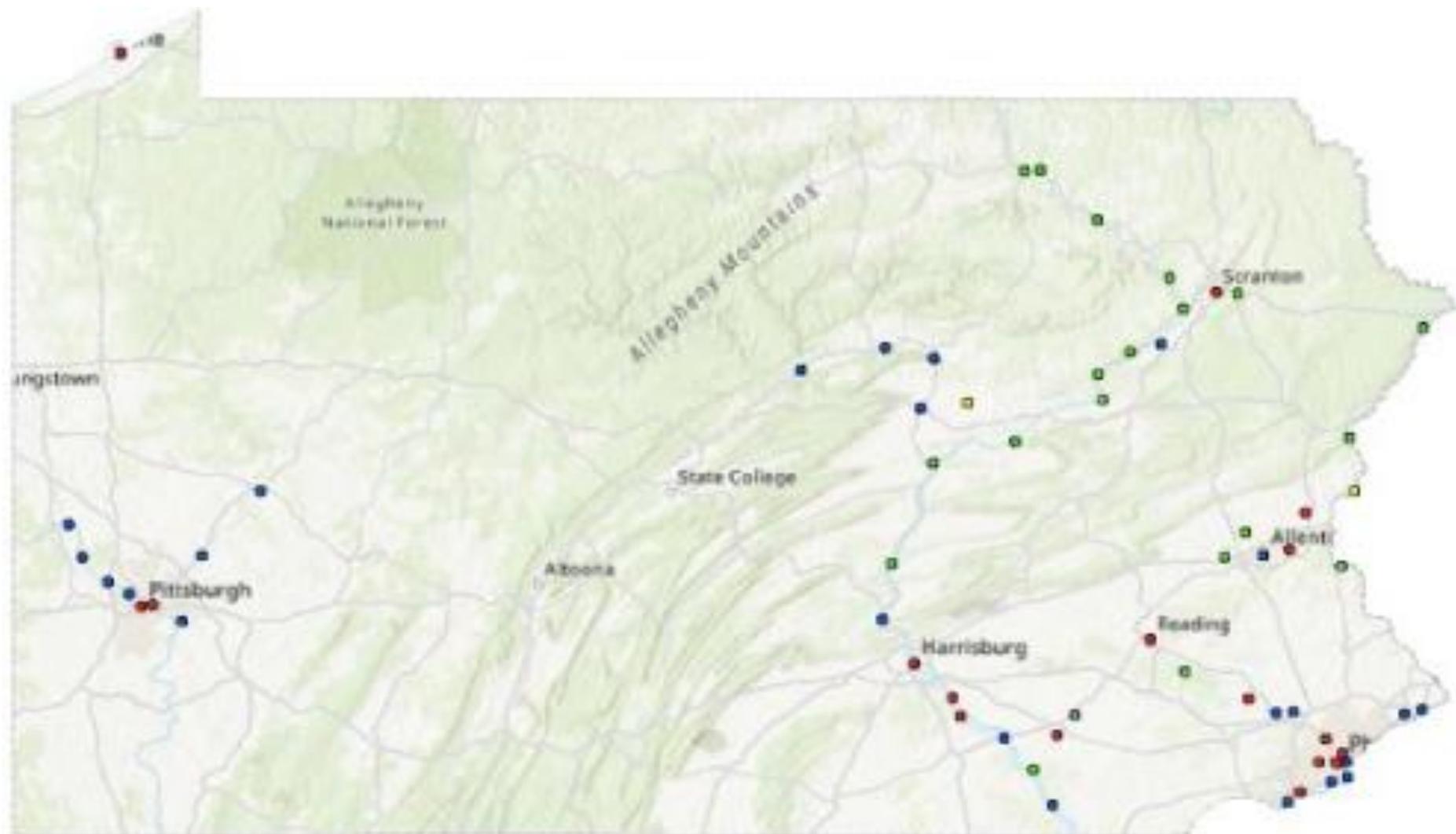


Figure 2. Number of peregrine falcon pairs in Pennsylvania by nest site type, 1985-2020



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Pennsylvania counties with active peregrine falcon territories in 2021



Nest Substrate ● Bridge ● Building ● Cliff ● Tower ● Quarry



Our Goal

To advocate for raptor management policies, based on the most recent science and research, that will protect a species while maximizing climbing access throughout Pennsylvania.

RESOURCES

[Access Fund Raptor Management Handbook](#)

[PGC: Peregrine Falcon](#)

[PGC: Wildlife Management Reports](#)

[County Natural Heritage Inventories](#)

[DCNR Climbing Guidelines](#)

[US Fish & Wildlife: Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#)

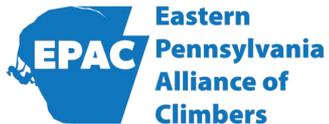


Photo credit: A. Dressnandt



**This advocacy work is being conducted by the
Access Fund and
Eastern Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers.**

**Please consider a Joint Membership option or
direct donation to help support these efforts.**



Protect America's Climbing

