

# Introducing: Sherry Acevedo

Written by Gianna Caruso

## A Childhood Outdoors

Sherry Acevedo was born and raised in Plainfield Township along the Slate Belt. Her family home had an acre of land and Sherry was able to spend her time exploring it.

"I grew up in the outdoors. I learned how to fish starting at two or three years old; my father taught me along the Bushkill Creek."

Her family also had an orchard in East Bangor that was an "all hands on deck" operation. That's where Sherry learned about business operations, selling, delivering groceries, and even how to drive at age 10. But there was always something special about Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center.

"We love Jacobsburg, my family. We would have picnics down there. We'd take my aunt, uncle, cousins, grandparents, anybody that would come to visit. It was always a special treat to go down the Jacobsburg; to go into the stream and just explore, you know, all the different macroinvertebrates, but also the fish and hike on the trails. We would just be down there for hours."

## Following Her Passion

Sherry would go on to graduate from East Stroudsburg University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation and Leisure Services Management with a concentration in outdoor recreation and military recreation.

"I was the first in the history of the department to go towards military recreation as an internship. There were six of us interns that were selected out of 55 applicants from across the country, and we were interns at Fort Carson, Colorado and Colorado Springs. It was one of the best experiences in my life."

In Colorado, Sherry would lead camping trips and canoeing trips and would go rock climbing and mountain biking. As the internship progressed and ultimately finished, Sherry's love for the environment only bolstered.

## From Inception to Establishment

Sherry would work for a time at Picatinny Arsenal in Wharton, NJ. Her goal was to stay in the military system as a non-appropriated funds employee and work her way back out West. But then she met her husband. And then she was hired by Wildlands Conservancy as a full-time employee.

Image of a D&L Trail Tender event at Lock 28 in Lehigh Gorge State Park, one of Sherry's proudest achievements. TL Gettings.

Sherry was hired by Wildlands, but she was working under a grant that was given by the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (DLNHC). Sherry was charged with the task to create the D&L Trail Tenders program, modeled off the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's volunteer program.

"My duty was creating the program, establishing it, recruiting volunteers, training the volunteers and physically going out and actually working with the volunteers. I would meet with landowners to go over what projects and tasks they would do... We also developed incident reports and would do inspections."

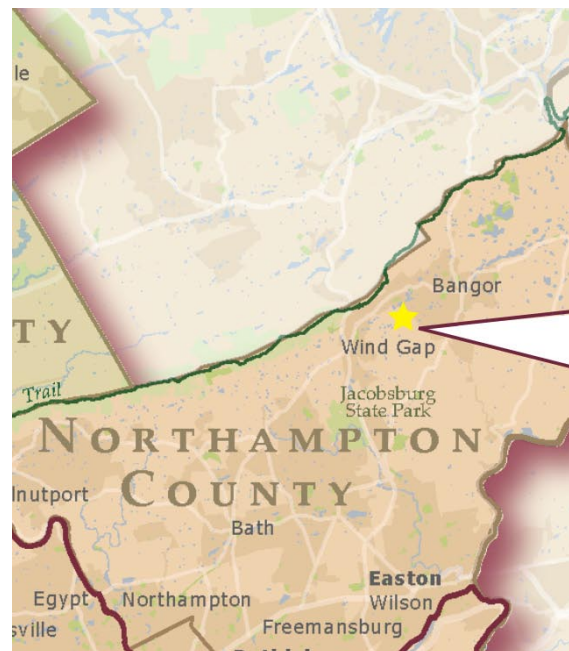
With Sherry's assistance, the D&L Trail Tenders program (still under Wildlands Conservancy at the time) won an Excellence in Program award from the Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society. Soon after, the ownership of the D&L Trail Tenders program was officially transferred over to DLNHC, and along with it came Sherry as an addition to the DLNHC team.

She was then tasked with focusing on ecological and native plant restoration, expanding the D&L Trail Tenders program and refining the landowners' portion of the program which is what evolved to the current D&L Trail Ownership Council.

"One of my most prized achievements, besides cleaning up the high lift locks in Lehigh Gorge State Park, was hand seeding the mountain at Lehigh Gap Nature Center. I did that with the juvenile probation department kids."



A Blue Heron at Sunrise. Sherry Acevedo.



**Sherry Acevedo**  
Northampton County  
Conservation Coordinator  
Photographer



A Blue Heron at Sunrise. Sherry Acevedo.

In 2004, the Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape program was created with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Sherry's position then shifted to become the Conservation Landscape's first Initiative Manager, where she would be the local lead of the program for 10 years. With the assistance of DCNR, Sherry was able to help create a Mini-grant program that became the state standard for Conservation Landscapes.

## Moving Up & On

With all things, there is an end. Sherry left DLNHC in 2014 to become the Executive Director of Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission. The commission was an intergovernmental agreement with three municipalities and two school districts. Under this agreement, Sherry managed 26 parks, two pools, two skate parks, and a Stroud kids camp program.

She missed the Lehigh Valley though. More than just the location, she missed the comradery she felt with her colleagues, peers, and partners.

## Returning Home

In her position, she provides administration of the Northampton County Open Space Program, Livable Landscapes Grant Program, regional planning, and regional trail networks. She also facilitates the County's acquisitions and easements, adding 250 acres of open space to the County Park and Conservation Area system, so far in her tenure.

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