

2018

Karl Mason Award

Walter A. Lyon Award

Pennsylvania Association of Environmental  
Professionals

May 3, 2018



Karl Mason

## 2018 Karl Mason Award

***Felicia Dell***  
Director,  
York County Planning  
Commission

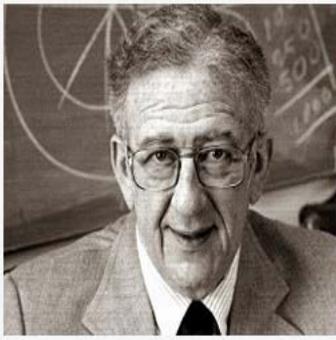
Felicia Dell became Director of the York County Planning Commission in the spring of 2000, after previously serving as Chief of the Transportation Division and Assistant Director. As Director, she manages the day-to-day operation, as well as the long-term direction, of the organization.

Early in her duties as Director, it became apparent water related issues would become very important, not only in York County, but also Statewide, especially in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. In an attempt to get continuity concerning water issues for York County, upon Felicia's recommendation, the York County Planning Commission (YCPC) became one of the first, if not the first, county planning offices to hire a full-time planner dedicated solely to water related issues. Very quickly, YCPC became a prominent player in water issues for Pennsylvania and continues to be an expected presence at local, State, regional, and Federal water related functions and meetings. Felicia keeps abreast of proposed water related legislation, policies, and plans and frequently directs the Water Resources Coordinator to prepare comments for submission.

Under Felicia's guidance, YCPC developed an Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP), which met the requirements of the PA Municipalities Planning Code and the PA Stormwater Management Act (Act 167). The County Commissioners adopted the Plan in 2011 as a component of the County Comprehensive Plan, making York County one of the first to incorporate a countywide Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan into a Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the IWRP contains a unique flow chart tool that demonstrates how everything related to water resources interacts and ties together. An inherent value of the flowchart tool is its applicability to all municipalities in York County and its transferability to other counties in Pennsylvania.

Felicia is an active member of Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay WIP Phase 3 Steering Committee, Co-Chair of the WIP Phase 3 Stormwater Workgroup, and a Board member of the Watershed Alliance of York and the Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County. She also administers the County's MS4 Permit and serves to advise and coordinate local water related projects. Additionally, Felicia has presented on the topic of water resources and York County's regional efforts at many conferences and workshops throughout the Commonwealth. She regularly assigns staff to attend water resource meetings, participate in water related educational functions, and conduct water legislative/policy research to keep informed.

Most importantly, Felicia is deserving of this award for her "big picture" vision and diligence in striving to coordinate the local, State, Regional, and Federal players in this picture. This is no small task in Pennsylvania. However, Felicia's efforts have "broken turf" as PennDOT has become an active participant in implementation of the YCSWC's CBPRP, thereby meeting its own MS4 requirements in York County. Coordination of the many regulators, agencies, programs, and stakeholders is necessary to maximize efficiency in reaching the common goal of having a reliable supply of clean water throughout all of York County and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



Walter Lyon

## **2018 Walter Lyon Award**

### ***Suskie Bassmasters***

The Suskie Bassmasters were founded in February 2005 when a group of anglers from the Wyoming Valley decided to start a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving public access and use of the Susquehanna River Watershed by promoting environmental protection and responsible use of the river, its wetlands, and wildlife resources. The organization's goals are enhancement of recreational angling, hunting, boating, and other outdoor activities along the river as well as promoting and supporting appropriate habitat improvements, educational projects, improving the Susquehanna River fishery, and working with public authorities and other conservation/recreational organizations toward these goals. Since inception, the organization's forefront has been improvements to the Nesbitt Park facility in Wilkes-Barre as well as assisting local, state, and federal authorities to improve the surrounding river ecosystem. The Suskie Bassmasters have facilitated such improvements as the installation of a 2-lane boat launch and canoe/kayak launch at Nesbitt Park. Installation of a paved parking lot at Nesbitt Park with wetland mitigation, provided river access to disaster recovery officials during the flooding in 2011, and most recently the purchase and installation of solar lighting in the parking lot and boat launch area. The Suskie Bassmasters nomination is in recognition of their past, present, and future efforts to protect and preserve the local fishery as well as habitat and community service goals and partnerships the organization has built.

After the flooding in September 2011, the organization helped with PEMA, EPA, and DEP to facilitate the transportation of hazardous material contractors to remote islands on the river for the collection and disposal of materials including propane and fuel oil tanks, aerosols containers, and household cleaning products that were accumulated during the flooding. The group was also instrumental in locating the areas of accumulated debris as traversing the miles of flood ravaged shorelines would have been nearly impossible. Recently, the Suskie Bassmasters were invited by the Riverfront Parks Committee to participate in the annual Riverfest event at Nesbitt Park. The Suskie Bassmasters partnered with Cabelas and local outdoor shops to provide fishing rods and all the essential gear to kids during the 2016 Riverfest event. The event was a huge success with the highlight of giving away over 75 fishing rods to kids that most had never fished before or had someone to take them fishing. Members provided all the essentials for a day of fishing and taught the basics of casting and use of the equipment. Also on display was a large aquarium

showcasing fish caught from the river earlier in the day so onlookers can visualize and learn from club member the truth about the river. The two-day event and the joy brought to kids and parents was more valuable than any imagined and set the bar even higher for future events. Not to be outdone, the organization partnered with the Riverfront Parks Committee in the fall with the annual Chalkfest/Hydromania where members once again showcased the fish of the river and helped over 20 children fish the river simultaneously for the duration of the event.

During the summer of 2016 a longtime goal of the organization became a reality with the installation of 5 solar lights at the Nesbitt Park boat launch and parking lot. Despite a failed request for grant money to purchase and install the lights, the organization managed to independently raise the funds and work with the City of Wilkes-Barre to purchase and install the lights. Not only do they provide much needed lighting and a safety/security measure but they are 100% solar powered and removable during high water events. The impact of the lights is obviously evident during nighttime hours but the real impact is in the people who notice them and ask questions and thank you for installing them. The publicity garnered during the fundraising and installation has turned into a following where more are interested in donating to community-based causes and many more are attending the fishing tournament events not to participate but to spectate and learn more about the Susquehanna River. Many who come to spectate are amazed at the fish brought in and consistently say "You caught that here" and "I thought the river was dirty and polluted".

The organization has taken the standpoint that no improvement too big or too small cannot be achieved. Whether it's talking to someone about environmental stewardship, best spots to fish, or how to improve the area, the Suskie Bassmasters have taken a proactive approach and reached out to any partner willing to assist. Currently the next project is to install park benches overlooking the river at Nesbitt Park and after that maybe picnic tables or pavilions. For a fishing club utilizing a very small portion of the park and the boat launch area once a week for a few months out of the year, these endeavors are all beyond the normal expectations for a "fishing club". The physical lasting effects in the park and attributable gain for the community along with outreach far surpass what one could reasonably expect for an organization in an industry that is primarily based solely on fishing and prizes. For the Suskie Bassmasters, the prize is the partnerships built and the lasting effects that those partnerships have created for the surrounding communities.