

## LETTER: Solutions to climate change are less costly than inaction

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At the website “Blistering Future Summers,” one can type in the name of a nearby city and find out the projected temperature change by the end of the century. Unless we change our climate mitigation strategies, Pittsburgh is projected to have temperatures like those at the southern tip of Texas.

While there are some who might love such warmer temperatures, said Greg Czarnecki, DCNR director of applied climate science, in a webinar Sept. 22 sponsored by Friends of White’s Woods, it is important to think of the impact that this temperature change will have on plants, animals and birds. Even trees will have to adapt to the warmer temperatures or move northward — or simply disappear.

Red-tail hawks are no longer migrating out of Pennsylvania in the winter. Carolina chickadees have already moved into some parts of our state. Kudzu, the invasive plant that “ate the South” has been found in 60 Pennsylvania locations. Almost all bird species are shifting north. Even the tree species population in Pennsylvania is projected to shift. Imagine fall without maples.

Without action, some parts of Pennsylvania will have temperatures of over 90 degrees Fahrenheit for three months a year.

Heavy rain events are up 70 percent. Ninety percent of all Pennsylvania flooding last year occurred outside of flood zones, according to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. The growing season is longer, which may be good for a lot of people. But the early warming that is often followed by frost can take a big toll on crops, even on trees.

No matter what we do at this point, the already-accumulated excess atmospheric carbon will warm temperatures for the next 30-40 years.

Where's the good news?

We can take action to adapt to the warming temperatures. DCNR is adapting infrastructure, working to minimize flood damage and preparing for a much longer summer recreation season.

And we can take action so things don't get even worse for future generations. Plant trees. Keep trees. Eat local. Shift to renewable resources. The solutions are far less costly than inaction.

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