



## CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FIREFLY FUTURE

Pennsylvania Firefly Festival's (PAFF) mission is to educate the public about fireflies and support conservation efforts to maintain healthy firefly populations for future generations to enjoy.

PAFF sponsors various activities some of which involve real time viewing of fireflies in their natural habitats. These "firefly tourism" events give the public an opportunity to experience firefly activity first hand with trained guides. However, the very act of getting to and observing fireflies in the field can result in damage to the fireflies and the habitat that sustains them.

The PAFF Board of Directors has made the decision to follow the recommendations put forth by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for sustainable firefly tourism events. The recommendations were created using science-based data from worldwide firefly researchers and their experience with worldwide firefly tourism events.

These recommendations can be found at [conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com](http://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com) in the article "Firefly Tourism: Advancing a Global Phenomenon toward a Brighter Future" from the Conservation Science and Biology science journal.

PAFF has already implemented many of the recommendations offered by the IUCN. They include:

- Limiting the number of participants at each observation site.
- Utilization of several different firefly observation sites and dates during the season in Pennsylvania to minimize the impact at any one particular site.
- Use of trained personnel to conduct guided firefly tours and provide interpretive information.
- Enforcement of approved visitation areas by trained personnel and use of appropriate barriers/signage.
- Use of handouts and verbal instructions to tour attendees outlining best practices for firefly encounters including impacts of light pollution (commonly known as "Firefly Etiquette")
- Use of seating bleachers at a known firefly site to insure safety and comfort of attendees while minimizing disruption to firefly habitat.
- Working with local organizations such as US Army Corp of Engineers and US Forest Service to promote firefly ecological awareness within each jurisdiction.
- Off-season firefly education presentations to schools and special interest groups
- Development and maintenance of a website, blogspot, video channel, social media sites and quarterly newsletter to inform the public and followers of the latest firefly news and topics.
- Involvement of local government and businesses such as lodging/campgrounds/food stores to support the needs of firefly tour attendees.

PAFF will review its firefly tourism plans throughout the year to determine if new ones are required or existing efforts need modification or elimination. These discussions will be conducted at the Board of Directors meetings and documented in the Board meeting minutes. The Firefly Specialist Group of the IUCN will be consulted on an as-needed basis to assist PAFF with development or modification of any new or existing firefly conservation effort.