



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Wesley Robinson, [werobinson@pa.gov](mailto:werobinson@pa.gov), 717.877.6315

## **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Unveils New Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan, Celebrates 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Outdoors for All Day in Lancaster**



*DCNR is committed to conserving and stewarding Pennsylvania's public natural resources for the benefit of all people — now and for future generations.*

**Lancaster, PA** – On Saturday, members from the **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** joined local officials and community partners at Culliton Park in Lancaster to celebrate the Commonwealth's second annual *Outdoors for All Day* and unveil the [2025–2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) — Pennsylvania's five-year blueprint for expanding and enhancing outdoor recreation across the state. **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **Lieutenant Governor Austin**

**Davis** provided a proclamation and resolution, respectively, recognizing **July 19 as Outdoors for All Day**.

The new plan, [\*Outdoor Places, Shared Spaces\*](#), outlines **14 goals and 55 action steps** to meet the outdoor recreation needs of Pennsylvanians. With more than 6,400 local parks, 2.3 million acres of state forests and parks, and 1.5 million acres of state game lands, Pennsylvania offers countless opportunities to get outside, connect with nature, and build community.

“This plan is about making a place for everyone in the outdoors in Pennsylvania,” said **DCNR Deputy Secretary Claire Jantz**. “Input from thousands of Pennsylvanians — including recreation providers, outdoor enthusiasts, and the general public — was critical in shaping the exciting next phase of outdoor recreation in our state.”

### **A Public-Driven, Focused Plan**

In January 2024, DCNR launched a more than year-long public engagement process to develop the plan, which is required every five years to maintain eligibility for funding from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund — a program that has invested **\$216 million** across **1,600 recreation and public lands projects** across Pennsylvania.

Guided by a 40-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the plan emphasizes the role of public recreation spaces in building social connection, economic opportunity, and ecological resilience. It is organized around five key priorities:

- Promoting community and economic development
- Advancing health and wellness
- Supporting access and inclusion
- Addressing infrastructure and maintenance
- Advancing sustainability and climate resilience

DCNR is committed to conserving and stewarding Pennsylvania’s public natural resources for the benefit of all people — now and for future generations. The department is taking intentional steps to make public lands more accessible, offer welcoming and inclusive programs and services, and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Commonwealth.

“Launching the new statewide outdoor recreation plan on Outdoors for All Day directly aligns with DCNR’s mission to conserve and sustain Pennsylvania’s natural resources for present and future generations’ use and enjoyment,” **DCNR Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Director Arlene Marshall-Hockensmith** said. “We thank Governor Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor Davis for their continued support of the expanding access and opportunities to the outdoors. I am hopeful that Outdoors for All Day helps all Pennsylvanians to see themselves in the outdoors and to consider exploring a new park or outdoor activity going forward.”

Since 1995, DCNR has invested **\$1.2 billion in 8,800 outdoor-related projects** across Pennsylvania. In 2021, the department awarded a \$300,000 grant to the City of Lancaster to improve green infrastructure at Culliton Park — including rain gardens and tree plantings — as part of the *Green It! Lancaster* initiative.

“In a dense city like Lancaster, green space is indispensable,” said **Lancaster Mayor Danene Sorace**. “Everyone deserves access to parks and recreation options in their neighborhood. *Outdoors for All* is a celebration of that, and I’m delighted DCNR is bringing this event to Lancaster City.”

Programming for the event was developed by **Let’s Go 1-2-3**, a nonprofit focused on eliminating barriers to outdoor access. Activities included wildflower planting in the rain gardens, a tree scavenger hunt developed by SoWe and a leaf and bark identification activity created by the City, environmental education sessions, a kayak demonstration with the Conestoga River Club, and opportunities for community members to connect with environmental partners at the local, county, and state levels.

“Outdoors for All Day showcases many opportunities that Lancaster residents have to engage with their local greenspaces and environmentally focused organizations, said **Keisha Scovens, executive director of Let’s Go 1-2-3**. “We are so grateful to be a part of this celebration, as it aligns perfectly with our work to alleviate barriers to outdoor experiences for underserved communities. It is a joy to see people involved with nature, taking part in recreation, and understanding all that the outdoors has to offer, in a fun, engaging way.”

SoWe is a neighborhood non-profit in the southwest of Lancaster city that works directly with residents to build a powerfully connected neighborhood where everyone can thrive.

“Culliton Park is one of three public parks in our neighborhood and these green spaces are the most popular gathering spots in the neighborhood and as such, they are critical to our quality of life,” **SoWe Communications and Engagement Manager Jacquie Morges** said. “For this reason, SoWe has done a lot of advocacy over the years to ensure our parks are maintained, they have beautiful and impactful vegetation and we frequently host free programming so that our neighbors of all ages can continue meeting one another and making beautiful memories right here in their backyard. We were honored to be a part of this important event which allows even more of our neighbors to experience the great outdoors so close to home!”

## **A Growing Industry, A Welcoming Future**

Through [\*Pennsylvania: The Great American Getaway\*](#) campaign and [\*DCNR’s “Still Open. Still Awesome.”\*](#) initiative, the Commonwealth is welcoming residents and visitors alike to explore its **124 state parks, 2.2 million acres of forestland, and more than 7,000 campsites** — offering affordable, accessible, and unforgettable outdoor

experiences for everyone. As DCNR marks its 30th anniversary in 2025, the Shapiro Administration remains focused on delivering safe, welcoming, and well-maintained public lands for all.

Since day one, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has made [strategic investments](#) to elevate outdoor recreation, transforming it into a cornerstone of Pennsylvania's economy and communities. These efforts are driving economic growth, fostering entrepreneurial opportunities, and creating jobs across the Commonwealth.

Outdoor recreation is a growing economic engine in the Commonwealth. In 2023, the industry contributed **\$19 billion to Pennsylvania's economy** — a 10 percent increase from the previous year — representing **2 percent** of the Commonwealth's gross domestic product (GDP). According to the [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#), the sector now supports over **168,000 jobs**, providing **\$9 billion in wages** to Pennsylvanians.

“Outdoor recreation offers so much more than fun and fitness — it unites communities and supports economic prosperity that improves quality of life across Pennsylvania,” said **Pennsylvania Director of Outdoor Recreation Nathan Reigner**. “It’s our responsibility to ensure that all Pennsylvanians feel welcome and valued as part of our outdoor recreation community.”

From ATV riding to whitewater boating, Pennsylvania's public lands offer something for everyone. To learn more about outdoor recreation opportunities at state parks, forests, and local parks across the Commonwealth, visit [dcnr.pa.gov](https://dcnr.pa.gov) and explore the [Calendar of Events](#) for seasonal programming happening across the state.

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